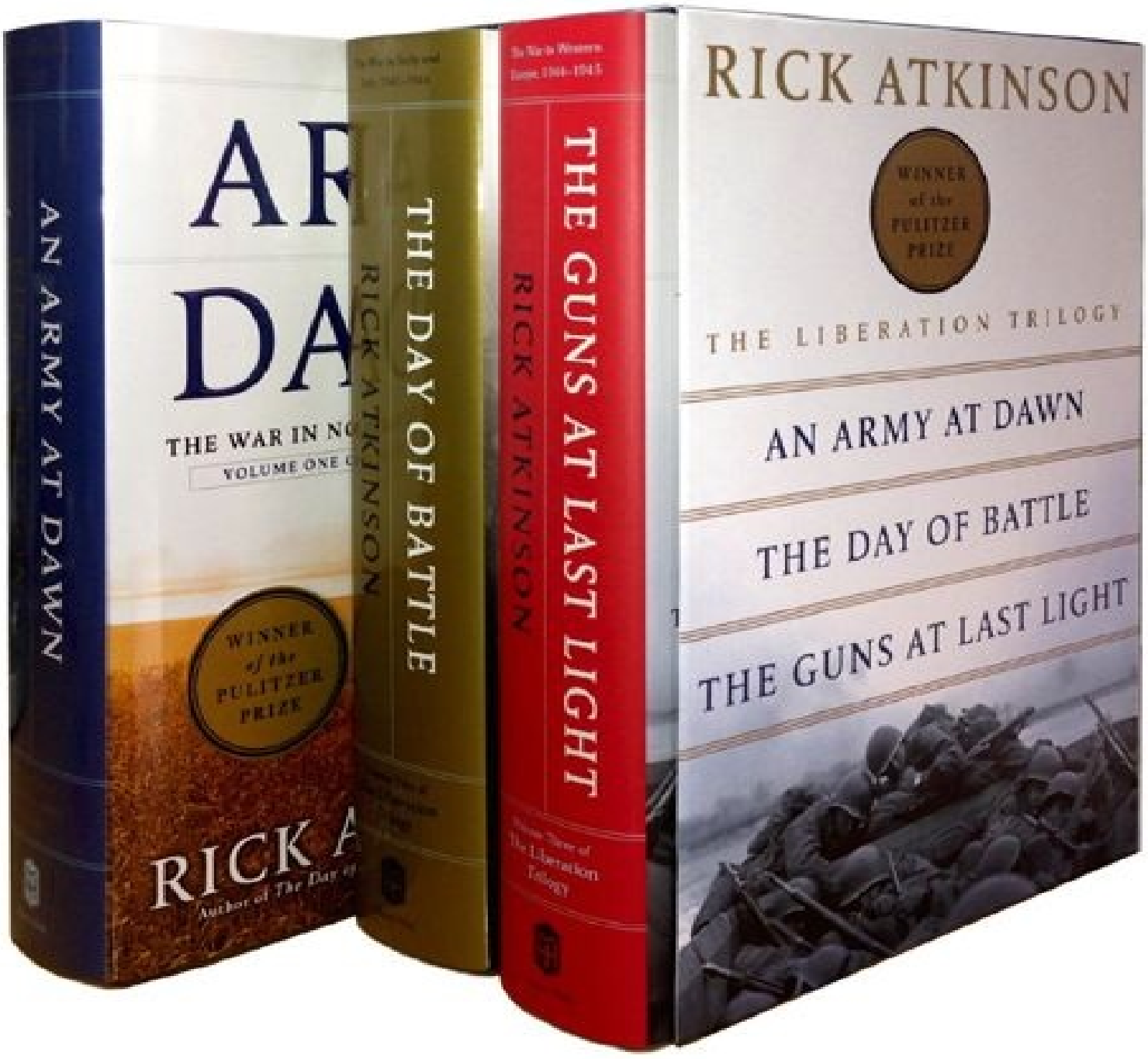

AN ARMY AT DAWN
THE WAR IN NO
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THE LIBERATION TRILOGY
AN ARMY AT DAWN
THE DAY OF BATTLE
THE GUNS AT LAST LIGHT

The Liberation Trilogy Box Set

AN ARMY AT DAWN

THE DAY OF BATTLE

THE GUNS AT LAST LIGHT

Rick Atkinson



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Also by Rick Atkinson

An Army at Dawn

THE WAR IN NORTH AFRICA, 1942–1943

VOLUME ONE OF THE LIBERATION TRILOGY

Rick Atkinson

Praise for
An Army at Dawn

"A monumental history of the overshadowed combat in North Africa during World War II that brings soldiers, generals, and bloody battles alive through masterful storytelling."

—citation for the 2003 Pulitzer Prize for History

"A book that stands shoulder to shoulder with the other major books about the war, such as the fine writing of Cornelius Ryan and John Keegan."

—Associated Press

"Atkinson's writing is lucid, vivid…. Among the many pleasures of *An Army at Dawn* are the carefully placed details—shells that whistle into the water with a smoky hiss; a colonel with 'slicked hair and a wolfish mustache' a man dying before he can fire the pistols strapped in his holster."

—Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

"One of the most compelling pieces of military history I've ever read, *An Army at Dawn* will become a military history and strategy studies classic. Atkinson writes with incredible insight and mastery of the details, and he is always mindful of the larger picture. He goes from the highest political levels to the deepest foxhole without missing a beat. This is history at its finest."

—General Wesley K. Clark, U.S.A. (ret.), former NATO supreme commander

"An engrossing narrative…Atkinson has an impressive command of words, a flair for simplifying complex issues, and a vast reservoir of information…. This is a fascinating work which any reader can enjoy, and professional historians will find perusal of it eminently worth their while."

—Arthur L. Funk, *Journal of Military History*

"A masterpiece. Rick Atkinson strikes the right balance between minor tactical engagements and high strategic direction, and he brings soldiers at every level to life, from private to general. *An Army at Dawn* is history with a soldier's face."

—General Gordon R. Sullivan, U.S.A. (ret.), former Army chief of staff

"What distinguishes his narrative is the way he fuses the generals' war…with the experiences of front-line combat soldiers."

—Raleigh News & Observer

"Atkinson's book is eminently friendly and readable, but without compromising normal standards of accuracy and objectivity. More than a military history, it is a social and psychological inquiry as well. His account of the Kasserine Pass disaster alone is worth the price of the book and stands as an exciting preview of the rich volumes to come. I heartily recommend this human, sensitive, unpretentious work."

—Paul Fussell, author of *Doing Battle* and *Wartime*

“Rick Atkinson’s *An Army at Dawn* is a superb account of the Allied invasion of North Africa. From the foxhole to Eisenhower’s supreme headquarters, Atkinson has captured the essence of war in one of the most neglected campaigns of World War II.”

—Carlo D’Este, author of *Patton* and *Eisenhower*

“Given his success with modern military history, the penetrating historical insights Atkinson brings to bear on America’s 1942–43 invasion of the North African coast are not surprising…. The most thorough and satisfying history yet of the campaigns in North Africa.”

—*Kirkus Reviews* (starred review)

“This is a wonderful book—popular history at its best. It is impressively researched and superbly written, and it brings to life in full detail one of the vitally important but relatively ‘forgotten’ campaigns of World War II. What Bruce Catton and Shelby Foote did for the Civil War in their trilogies, Rick Atkinson is doing for World War II in the European Theater.”

—Professor Mark A. Stoler, author of *Allies and Adversaries*

“Atkinson’s book puts him on a fast track toward becoming one of our most ambitious and distinguished military chroniclers….[He] has unpacked facts that will lift many eyebrows.”

—*Bookpage*

“For sheer drama, the Tunisian campaign far overshadowed any other phase of the Second World War. Rick Atkinson has told the story with zest and brutal realism. His account will be a monument among accounts of World War II.”

—John S. D. Eisenhower, author of *Allies* and *The Bitter Woods*

“*An Army at Dawn* is an absolute masterpiece. Atkinson conveys both the human drama and historical significance of this campaign with a power and intensity that is nothing short of electrifying. This book is storytelling—and history—at its most riveting.”

—Andrew Carroll, editor of *War Letters: Extraordinary Correspondence from American Wars*

“Rick Atkinson has done a beautiful job of research and writing in *An Army at Dawn*. This is the North African campaign—warts, snafus, feuding allies, incompetents, barely competents—unvarnished. It whets my appetite for the rest of the Liberation Trilogy Atkinson has promised us.”

—Joseph L. Galloway, coauthor of *We Were Soldiers Once…and Young*

“Rick Atkinson combines meticulous research and attention to detail with an extraordinary ability to tell a story. It is a rich and powerful narrative which is certain to become a classic.”

—Ronald Spector, author of *At War at Sea* and *Eagle against the Sun*

An Army at Dawn

To my mother and father

At last the armies clashed at one strategic point,
They slammed their shields together, pike scraped pike
With the grappling strength of fighters armed in bronze
And their round shields pounded, boss on welded boss,
And the sound of struggle roared and rocked the earth.

The Iliad, Book 4


MEDITERRANEAN AND EUROPEAN THEATERS IN WORLD WAR II
NOR.
FIN.
SWEDEN
EST.
Leningrad
North Sea
DENMARK
Baltic Sea
LAT.
LITH.
U.S.S.R
Moscow
GER.
Dublin
FRE.
BRITAIN
NETH.
Amsterdam
Berlin
Warsaw
London
Brussels
BEL.
GERMANY
POLAND
LUX.
Prague
CZECH.
Paris
Atlantic Ocean
Vienna
AUSTRIA
Budapest
HUNGARY
Bern
SWITZ.
FRANCE
Vichy
ROMANIA
Bay of Biscay
YUGOSLAVIA
Genoa
Spezia
Sarajevo
ITALY
Adriatic Sea
Toulon
CORSICA
Rome
Tirana
Madrid
Naples
ALB.
Taranto
MINORCA
SARDINIA
PORTUGAL
SPAIN
Tyrrhenian Sea
MAJORCA
Lisbon
Trapani
Palermo
Messina
Mediterranean Sea
SICILY
Bizerte
Cartagena
Tabarka
Tunis
Cap Bon
Algiers
Cherchel
Bougie
Djidjelli
Bône
La Calle
Mediez el Bab
Cadiz
Gibraltar
Tangier
Ceuta
Oran
Sousse
MALTA
ALGERIA
Tébessa
Kasserine
SPANISH MOROCCO
ATLAS
Mehdia
Rabat
Port Lyautey
Sfax
Casablanca
Fedala
Gabès
DJERBA
TUNISIA
Tripoli
FRENCH MOROCCO
Safi
SAHARAN
Marrakesh
ATLAS MOUNTAINS
LIBYA

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MAP LEGEND


River/Stream

HIGHWAY/MAJOR ROAD


MINOR ROAD/TRAIL


RAILROAD

SWAMP


SALT FLAT

TERRAIN


HILL/MOUNTAIN

City/town/village with urban area

Capital city

Airfield


Clash

AXIS		ALLIED
	Front line	
	ship	
	gun emplacement	
	Advance	
	Retreat	
	Infantry	
	Armor	
	Mechanized	
	Airborne	
I	Company	
II	Battalion	
III	Regiment	
X	Brigade	
XX	Division	
XXX	Corps	
XXXX	Army	


UNITED STATES

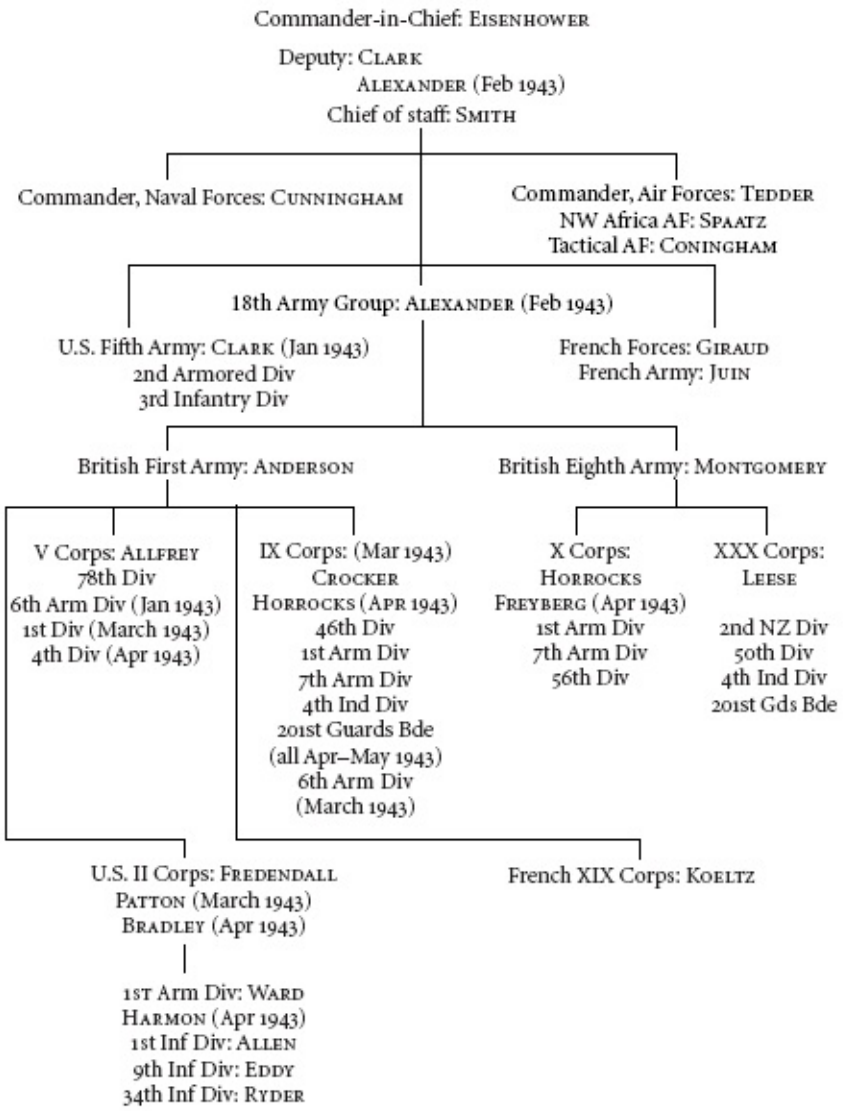

UNITED KINGDOM


FRANCE


GERMANY


ITALY

ALLIED CHAIN OF COMMAND
TUNISIAN CAMPAIGN, 1942–43



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An Army at Dawn

PROLOGUE

TWENTY-SEVEN acres of headstones fill the American military cemetery at Carthage, Tunisia. There are no obelisks, no tombs, no ostentatious monuments, just 2,841 bone-white marble markers, two feet high and arrayed in ranks as straight as gunshots. Only the chiseled names and dates of death suggest singularity. Four sets of brothers lie side by side. Some 240 stones are inscribed with thirteen of the saddest words in our language: “Here rests in honored glory a comrade in arms known but to God.” A long limestone wall contains the names of another 3,724 men still missing, and a benediction: “Into Thy hands, O Lord.”

This is an ancient place, built on the ruins of Roman Carthage and a stone’s throw from the even older Punic city. It is incomparably serene. The scents of eucalyptus and of the briny Mediterranean barely two miles away carry on the morning air, and the African light is flat and shimmering, as if worked by a silversmith. Tunisian lovers stroll hand in hand across the kikuyu grass or sit on benches in the bowers, framed by orangeberry and scarlet hibiscus. Cypress and Russian olive trees ring the yard, with scattered acacia and Aleppo pine and Jerusalem thorn. A carillon plays hymns on the hour, and the chimes sometimes mingle with a muezzin’s call to prayer from a nearby minaret. Another wall is inscribed with the battles where these boys died in 1942 and 1943—Casablanca, Algiers, Oran, Kasserine, El Guettar, Sidi Nsir, Bizerte—along with a line from Shelley’s “Adonais”: “He has outsoared the shadow of our night.”

In the tradition of government-issue graves, the stones are devoid of epitaphs, parting endearments, even dates of birth. But visitors familiar with the American and British invasion of North Africa in November 1942, and the subsequent seven-month struggle to expel the Axis powers there, can make reasonable conjectures. We can surmise that Willett H. Wallace, a private first class in the 26th Infantry Regiment who died on November 9, 1942, was killed at St. Cloud, Algeria, during the three days of hard fighting against, improbably, the French. Ward H. Osmun and his brother Wilbur W., both privates from New Jersey in the 18th Infantry and both killed on Christmas Eve 1942, surely died in the brutal battle of Longstop Hill, where the initial Allied drive in Tunisia was stopped—for more than five months, as it turned out—within sight of Tunis. Ignatius Glovach, a private first class in the 701st Tank Destroyer Battalion who died on Valentine’s Day, 1943, certainly was killed in the opening hours of the great German counteroffensive known as the battle of Kasserine Pass. And Jacob Feinstein, a sergeant from Maryland in the 135th Infantry who died on April 29, 1943, no doubt passed during the epic battle for Hill 609, where the American Army came of age.

A visit to the Tunisian battlefields tells a bit more. For more than half a century, time and weather have purified the ground at El Guettar and Kasserine and Longstop. But the slit trenches remain, and rusty C-ration cans, and shell fragments scattered like seed corn. The lay of the land also remains—the vulnerable low ground, the superior high ground: incessant reminders of how, in battle, topography is fate.

Yet even when the choreography of armies is understood, or the movement of this battalion or that rifle squad, we crave intimate detail, of individual men in individual foxholes. Where, precisely, was Private Anthony N. Marfione when he died on December 24, 1942? What were the last conscious thoughts of Lieutenant Hill P. Cooper before he left this earth on April 9, 1943? Was Sergeant Harry K. Midkiff alone when he crossed over on November 25, 1942, or did some good soul squeeze his hand and caress his forehead?

The dead resist such intimacy. The closer we try to approach, the farther they draw back, like rainbows or mirages. They *have* outsoared the shadow of our night, to reside in the wild uplands of the past. History can take us there, almost. Their diaries and letters, their official reports and unofficial chronicles—including documents that, until now, have been hidden from view since the war—reveal many moments of exquisite clarity over a distance of sixty years. Memory, too, has transcendent power, even as we swiftly move toward the day when not a single participant remains alive to tell his tale, and the epic of World War II forever slips into national mythology. The author's task is to authenticate: to warrant that history and memory give integrity to the story, to aver that all this really happened.

But the final few steps must be the reader's. For among mortal powers, only imagination can bring back the dead.

No twenty-first-century reader can understand the ultimate triumph of the Allied powers in World War II in 1945 without a grasp of the large drama that unfolded in North Africa in 1942 and 1943. The liberation of western Europe is a triptych, each panel informing the others: first, North Africa; then, Italy; and finally the invasion of Normandy and the subsequent campaigns across France, the Low Countries, and Germany.

From a distance of sixty years, we can see that North Africa was a pivot point in American history, the place where the United States began to act like a great power—militarily, diplomatically, strategically, tactically. Along with Stalingrad and Midway, North Africa is where the Axis enemy forever lost the initiative in World War II. It is where Great Britain slipped into the role of junior partner in the Anglo-American alliance, and where the United States first emerged as the dominant force it would remain into the next millennium.

None of it was inevitable—not the individual deaths, nor the ultimate Allied victory, nor eventual American hegemony. History, like particular fates, hung in the balance, waiting to be tipped.

Measured by the proportions of the later war—of Normandy or the Bulge—the first engagements in North Africa were tiny, skirmishes between platoons and companies involving at most a few hundred men. Within six months, the campaign metastasized to battles between army groups comprising hundreds of thousands of soldiers; that scale persisted for the duration. North Africa gave the European war its immense canvas and implied—through 70,000 Allied killed, wounded, and missing—the casualties to come.

No large operation in World War II surpassed the invasion of North Africa in complexity, daring, risk, or—as the official U.S. Army Air Forces history concludes—"the degree of strategic surprise achieved." Moreover, this was the first campaign undertaken by the Anglo-American alliance; North Africa defined the coalition and its strategic course, prescribing how and where the Allies would fight for the rest of the war.

North Africa established the patterns and motifs of the next two years, including the tension between coalition unity and disunity. Here were staged the first substantial tests of Allied landpower against Axis landpower, and the initial clashes between American troops and German troops. Like the first battles in virtually every American war, this campaign revealed a nation and an army unready to fight and unsure of their martial skills, yet willful and inventive enough finally to prevail.

North Africa is where the prodigious weight of American industrial might began to tell, where brute strength emerged as the most conspicuous feature of the Allied arsenal—although not, as some historians suggest, its only redeeming feature. Here the Americans in particular first recognized, viscerally, the importance of generalship and audacity, guile and celerity, initiative and tenacity.

North Africa is where the the Allies agreed on unconditional surrender as the only circumstance under which the war could end.

It is where the controversial strategy of first contesting the Axis in a peripheral theater—the Mediterranean—was effected at the expense of an immediate assault on northwest Europe, with the campaigns in Sicily, Italy, and southern France following in train.

It is where Allied soldiers figured out, tactically, how to destroy Germans; where the fable of the Third Reich's invincibility dissolved; where, as one senior German general later acknowledged, many Axis soldiers lost confidence in their commanders and "were no longer willing to fight to the last man."

It is where most of the West's great battle captains emerged, including men whose names would remain familiar generations later—Eisenhower, Patton, Bradley, Montgomery, Rommel—and others who deserve rescue from obscurity. It is where the truth of William Tecumseh Sherman's postulate on command was reaffirmed: "There is a soul to an army as well as to the individual man, and no general can accomplish the full work of his army unless he commands the soul of his men, as well as their bodies and legs." Here men capable of such leadership stepped forward, and those incapable fell by the wayside.

North Africa is where American soldiers became killing mad, where the hard truth about combat was first revealed to many. "It is a very, very horrible war, dirty and dishonest, not at all that glamour war that we read about in the hometown papers," one soldier wrote his mother in Ohio. "For myself and the other men here, we will show no mercy. We have seen too much for that." The correspondent Ernie Pyle noted a "new professional outlook, where killing is a craft." North Africa is where irony and skepticism, the twin lenses of modern consciousness, began refracting the experiences of countless ordinary soldiers. "The last war was a war to end war. This war's to start 'em up again," said a British Tommy, thus perfectly capturing the ironic spirit that flowered in North Africa.

Sixty years after the invasion of North Africa, a gauzy mythology has settled over World War II and its warriors. The veterans are lionized as "the Greatest Generation," an accolade none sought and many dismiss as twaddle. They are condemned to sentimental hagiography, in which all the brothers are valiant and all the sisters virtuous. The brave and the virtuous appear throughout the North African campaign, to be sure, but so do the cowardly, the venal, and the foolish. The ugliness common in later campaigns also appears in North Africa: the murder and rape of civilians; the killing of prisoners; the falsification of body counts.

It was a time of cunning and miscalculation, of sacrifice and self-indulgence, of ambiguity, love, malice, and mass murder. There were heroes, but it was not an age of heroes as clean and lifeless as alabaster; at Carthage, demigods and poltroons lie side by side.

The United States would send sixty-one combat divisions into Europe, nearly 2 million soldiers. These were the first. We can fairly surmise that not a single man interred at the Carthage cemetery sensed on September 1, 1939, that he would find an African grave. Yet it was with the invasion of Poland on that date that the road to North Africa began, and it is then and there that our story must begin.

September 1, 1939, was the first day of a war that would last for 2,174 days, and it brought the first dead in a war that would claim an average of 27,600 lives every day, or 1,150 an hour, or 19 a minute, or one death every 3 seconds. Within four weeks of the blitzkrieg attack on Poland by sixty German divisions, the lightning war had killed more than 100,000 Polish soldiers, and 25,000 civilians had perished in bombing attacks. Another 10,000 civilians—mostly middle-class professionals—had

been rounded up and murdered, and 22 million Poles now belonged to the Third Reich. “Take a good look around Warsaw,” Adolf Hitler told journalists during a visit to the shattered Polish capital. “That is how I can deal with any European city.”

France and Great Britain had declared war against the German aggressors on September 3, but fighting subsided for six months while Hitler consolidated his winnings and plotted his next move. That came in early April 1940, when Wehrmacht troops seized Denmark and attacked Norway. A month later, 136 German divisions swept into the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, and France. Winston S. Churchill—a short, stout, lisping politician of indomitable will and oratorical genius, who on May 10 became both Britain’s prime minister and defense minister—told President Franklin D. Roosevelt, “The small countries are simply smashed up, one by one, like matchwood.” It was the first of 950 personal messages Churchill would send Roosevelt in the most fateful correspondence of the twentieth century.

France was not small, but it *was* smashed up. German tactical miscalculation allowed the British to evacuate 338,000 troops on 900 vessels from the northern port of Dunkirk, but on June 14 the German spearhead swept across the Place de la Concorde in Paris and unfurled an enormous swastika flag from the Arc de Triomphe. As the French tottered, Germany’s partner in the Axis alliance, the Italian government of Benito Mussolini, also declared war on France and Britain. “First they were too cowardly to take part,” Hitler said. “Now they are in a hurry so that they can share in the spoils.”

After the French cabinet fled to Bordeaux in shocked disarray, a venerable figure emerged to lead the rump government. Marshal Philippe Pétain, the hero of Verdun in World War I and now a laconic, enigmatic eighty-four-year-old, had once asserted, “They call me only in catastrophes.” Even Pétain had never seen a catastrophe like this one, and he sued for terms. Berlin obliged. Rather than risk having the French fight on from their colonies in North Africa, Hitler devised a clever armistice: the southern 40 percent of France—excluding Paris—would remain under the sovereignty of the Pétain government and unoccupied by German troops. From a new capital in the resort town of Vichy, France would also continue to administer her overseas empire, including the colonies of Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia, which together covered a million square miles and included 17 million people, mostly Arab or Berber. France could keep her substantial fleet and an army of 120,000 men in North Africa by pledging to fight all invaders, particularly the British. To enforce the agreement, Germany would keep 1½ million French prisoners-of-war as collateral.

Pétain so pledged. He was supported by most of France’s senior military officers and civil servants, who swore oaths of fidelity to him. A few refused, including a forty-nine-year-old maverick brigadier general named Charles André Joseph Marie de Gaulle, who took refuge in London, denounced all deals with the devil, and declared, in the name of Free France: “Whatever happens, the flame of French resistance must not and shall not die.” Hitler now controlled Europe from the North Cape to the Pyrenees, from the Atlantic Ocean to the River Bug. In September, Germany and Italy signed a tripartite pact with Japan, which had been prosecuting its own murderous campaign in Asia. The Axis assumed a global span. “The war is won,” the Führer told Mussolini. “The rest is only a question of time.”

That seemed a fair boast. Britain battled on, alone. “We are fighting for life, and survive from day to day and hour to hour,” Churchill told the House of Commons. But German plans to invade across the English Channel were postponed, repeatedly, after the Luftwaffe failed to subdue the Royal Air Force. Instead, the bombardment known as the Blitz continued through 1940 and beyond, slaughtering thousands and then tens of thousands of British civilians, even as RAF pilots shot down nearly 2,500 German planes in three months, killing 6,000 Luftwaffe crewmen and saving the nation.

Churchill also received help from Roosevelt, who nudged the United States away from neutrality even as he promised to keep Americans out of the war. Roosevelt’s true sympathies were given voice

by his closest aide, Harry Hopkins. “Whither thou goest, I will go,” Hopkins told Churchill in January 1941, quoting the Book of Ruth. “And where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.” Hopkins added softly, “Even to the end.” Roosevelt sent Churchill fifty U.S. Navy destroyers in exchange for the use of British bases in the Caribbean and western Atlantic, and by the spring of 1941 had pushed through Congress a vast program of Lend-Lease assistance under the charade of “renting” out the matériel. By war’s end the United States had sent its allies 37,000 tanks, 800,000 trucks, nearly 2 million rifles, and 43,000 planes—so many that U.S. pilot training was curtailed because of aircraft shortages. In 1941, though, the British were “hanging on by our eyelids,” as General Alan Brooke, chief of the Imperial General Staff, put it.

Hitler faced other annoying disappointments. Spain refused to join the Axis or abandon her neutrality to permit a German attack against the British fortress at Gibraltar, which controlled the mouth of the Mediterranean. Italian troops invaded Greece without warning on October 28, 1940—“Führer, we are on the march!” Mussolini exclaimed—and immediately found themselves so overmatched that Wehrmacht divisions were needed to complete the conquest and rout an ill-conceived British expeditionary force sent to save the Balkans. Greece fell in April 1941, a week after Yugoslavia, where 17,000 people had been killed in a single day of Luftwaffe bombing.

Mussolini’s legions had also been on the march in Africa, attacking from the Italian colony of Libya into Egypt, a former British protectorate still occupied by British troops. A British and Australian counteroffensive in December 1940 smashed an Italian army twice its size, eventually inflicting 150,000 casualties. With the Axis southern flank imperiled, Hitler again came to Mussolini’s rescue, dispatching a new Afrika Korps to Libya under a charismatic tank officer who had previously commanded the Führer’s headquarters troops in Poland. General Erwin Rommel reached Tripoli in mid-February 1941 and launched a campaign that would surge back and forth across the North African littoral for the next two years, first against the British and then against the Americans.

Two monumental events in 1941 changed the calculus of the war. On June 22, nearly 200 German divisions invaded the Soviet Union in abrogation of the nonaggression pact that Hitler and Soviet leader Joseph Stalin had signed in 1939, which had allowed a division of spoils in eastern Europe. Within a day, German attacks had demolished one-quarter of the Soviet air force. Within four months, the Germans had occupied 600,000 square miles of Russian soil, captured 3 million Red Army troops, butchered countless Jews and other civilians, and closed to within sixty-five miles of Moscow. But four months after that, more than 200,000 Wehrmacht troops had been killed, 726,000 wounded, 400,000 captured, and another 113,000 had been incapacitated by frostbite.

The second event occurred on the other side of the world. On December 7, Japanese aircraft carriers launched 366 aircraft in a sneak attack on the U.S. Navy Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor, sinking or damaging eight battleships at their moorings, destroying or crippling eleven other warships, and killing 2,400 Americans. Simultaneous attacks were launched on Malaya, Hong Kong, and the Philippines. In solidarity with their Japanese ally, Hitler and Mussolini quickly declared war on the United States. It was perhaps the Führer’s gravest miscalculation and, as the British historian Martin Gilbert later wrote, “the single most decisive act of the Second World War.” America would now certainly return to Europe as a belligerent, just as it had in 1917, during the Great War.

“I knew the United States was in the war, up to the neck and in to the death,” Churchill later wrote. “I went to bed and slept the sleep of the saved and thankful.”

Two years, three months, and seven days had passed since the invasion of Poland, and the United States had needed every minute of that grace period to prepare for war. Churchill’s chief military

representative in Washington, Field Marshal Sir John Dill, told London that, notwithstanding the long prelude, American forces "are more unready for war than it is possible to imagine."

In September 1939, the U.S. Army had ranked seventeenth in the world in size and combat power, just behind Romania. When those 136 German divisions conquered western Europe nine months later, the War Department reported that it could field just five divisions. Even the homeland was vulnerable: some coastal defense guns had not been test-fired in twenty years, and the Army lacked enough anti-aircraft guns to protect even a single American city. The building of the armed forces was likened to "the reconstruction of a dinosaur around an ulna and three vertebrae."

That task had started with the 16 million men who registered for the draft in the fall of 1940, and who would expand Regular Army and National Guard divisions. By law, however, the draftees and newly federalized Guard units were restricted to twelve months of service—and only in the western hemisphere or U.S. territories. Physical standards remained fairly rigorous; soon enough, the day would come when new recruits claimed the Army no longer examined eyes, just counted them. A conscript had to stand at least five feet tall and weigh 105 pounds; possess twelve or more of his natural thirty-two teeth; and be free of flat feet, venereal disease, and hernias. More than forty of every hundred men were rejected, a grim testament to the toll taken on the nation's health by the Great Depression. Under the rules of conscription, the Army drafted no fathers, no felons, and no eighteen-year-olds; those standards, too, would fall away. Nearly two million men had been rejected for psychiatric reasons, although screening sessions sometimes went no further than questions such as "Do you like girls?" The rejection rate, one wit suggested, was high because "the Army doesn't want maladjusted soldiers, at least below the rank of major."

Jeremiads frequently derided the nation's martial potential. A Gallup poll of October 1940 found a prevailing view of American youth as "a flabby, pacifistic, yellow, cynical, discouraged, and leftist lot." A social scientist concluded that "to make a soldier out of the average free American citizen is not unlike domesticating a very wild species of animal," and many a drill sergeant agreed. Certainly no hate yet lodged in the bones of American troops, no urge to close with an enemy who before December 7, 1941, seemed abstract and far away. *Time* magazine reported on the eve of Pearl Harbor that soldiers were booing newsreel shots of Roosevelt and General George C. Marshall, the Army chief of staff, while cheering outspoken isolationists.

Equipment and weaponry were pathetic. Soldiers trained with drain-pipes for antitank guns, stovepipes for mortar tubes, and brooms for rifles. Money was short, and little guns were cheaper than big ones; no guns were cheapest of all. Only six medium tanks had been built in 1939. A sardonic ditty observed: "Tanks are tanks and tanks are dear / There will be no tanks again this year." That in part reflected an enduring loyalty to the horse. "The idea of huge armies rolling along roads at a fast pace is a dream," *Cavalry Journal* warned in 1940, even after the German blitzkrieg signaled the arrival of mechanized warfare. "Oil and tires cannot like forage be obtained locally." The Army's cavalry chief assured Congress in 1941 that four well-spaced horsemen could charge half a mile across an open field to destroy an enemy machine-gun nest without sustaining a scratch. "The motor-mad advocates are obsessed with a mania for excluding the horse from war," he told the Horse and Mule Association of America, four days before Pearl Harbor. The last Regular Army cavalry regiment would slaughter its mounts to feed the starving garrison on Bataan in the Philippines, ending the cavalry era not with a bang but with a dinner bell.

To lead the eventual host of 8 million men, the Army had only 14,000 professional officers when mobilization began in 1940. The interwar officer corps was so thick with deadwood that one authority called it a fire hazard; swagger sticks, talisman of the Old Army, could serve for kindling. Secret War Department committees known as plucking boards began purging hundreds of officers who were too old, too tired, too inept. Not a single officer on duty in 1941 had commanded a unit as large as a

division in World War I; the average age of majors was forty-eight. The National Guard was even more ossified, with nearly one-quarter of Guard first lieutenants over forty, and senior ranks dominated by political hacks of certifiable military incompetence. Moreover, Guard units in eighteen states were stained with scandal—embezzlement, forgery, kick-backs, and nepotism.

Yet slowly the giant stirred. Congress in 1940 had given the Army $9 billion, more than all the money spent by the War Department since 1920. The fabled arsenal of democracy began to build steam, although nearly half of all military production in 1941 went to Lend-Lease recipients (including 15,000 amputation saws and 20,000 amputation knives to the Soviets). A remarkable cadre of promising professional officers began to emerge. The two-year, three-month, and seven-day preparation period was over. It was time to fight.

But where? American strategists since the early 1920s had considered Tokyo the most likely enemy, as the United States and Japan vied for dominance in the Pacific. But in 1938 a series of informal conversations with the British marked the start of an increasing Anglo-American intimacy, nurtured by a growing conviction in Washington that Germany was mortally dangerous and that the Atlantic sea-lanes must always be controlled by friendly forces. Among potential adversaries, Germany had the largest industrial base and the greatest military capacity, and therefore posed the biggest threat. A U.S. strategy paper of November 1940 concluded that if Britain lost the war "the problem confronting us would be very great; and while we might not lose everywhere, we might, possibly, not win anywhere."

An evolving series of American war plans culminated in a strategic scheme called RAINBOW 5, which in the spring of 1941 posited joint action by the United States, Britain, and France in the event of America's entry into war, with the early dispatch of U.S. troops "to effect the decisive defeat of Germany, or Italy, or both." Forces in the Pacific would remain on the strategic defensive until European adversaries had been clubbed into submission. Even the debacle at Pearl Harbor failed to shake the conviction of Roosevelt and his military brain trust that "Germany first" was conceptually sound, and this remained the most critical strategic principle of the Second World War.

The smoke had hardly cleared from Pearl Harbor when Churchill arrived in Washington for extensive talks. The conference, code-named ARCADIA, failed to produce a specific Anglo-American plan of attack, but the prime minister and president reaffirmed the Germany-first decision. Moreover, on January 1, 1942, twenty-six countries calling themselves the "united nations" signed an agreement to forswear any separate peace without mutual concurrence and to make a common cause of "life, liberty, independence, and religious freedom, and to preserve the rights of man and justice."

The American idea of how to defeat the Third Reich was simple and obvious: drive straight for Berlin. "Through France passes our shortest route to the heart of Germany," declared Marshall, the Army chief of staff. It was only 550 miles from the northwest coast of France to the German capital, over flat terrain with a sophisticated road and rail network that also sliced through the core of Germany's war industry. If Hitler was the objective, the American instinct was to "go for him bald-headed and as soon as possible, by the shortest and most direct route," a British general later noted. The Yanks, another British officer agreed, "wanted revenge, they wanted results, and they wanted to fight."

Direct, concentrated attack was an American strategic tradition often linked to Ulysses S. Grant in the Civil War. The surest route to victory was to obliterate the enemy's army and destroy his capacity to make war. As the world's greatest industrial power, with a military expanding to 12 million men, the United States could do that—particularly now that the nation belonged to a powerful

alliance that included the British empire, the Soviet Union, and China. The prevailing impatience to get on with it was voiced by a young American general from Kansas, whose diligence, organizational acumen, and incandescent grin had made him a rising star in the War Department. "We've got to go to Europe and fight," Dwight David Eisenhower scribbled in a note to himself on January 22,1942. "And we've got to quit wasting resources all over the world—and still worse—wasting time."

As the new chief of war plans for the Army's General Staff, Eisenhower helped draft the blueprint that would convert these strategic impulses into action. A three-part American proposal evolved in the spring of 1942. Under a plan code-named BOLERO, the United States would ferry troops and matériel across the Atlantic for more than a year to staging bases in Britain. This massing of forces would be followed in April 1943 by ROUNDUP, an invasion across the English Channel to the coast of France by forty-eight American and British divisions supported by 5,800 aircraft. The spearhead would then seize the Belgian port of Antwerp before wheeling toward the Rhine. If Germany abruptly weakened before that invasion, or if Soviet forces in the east appeared in danger of collapse and needed diversionary help, a smaller, "emergency" assault by five to ten divisions—code-named SLEDGEHAMMER—would be launched in the fall of 1942 to secure a beachhead in France, perhaps at Cherbourg or Calais, and tie up as many German soldiers as possible.

Churchill and his commanders concurred in principle with this strategy in April 1942, then immediately began backing away. The British already had been expelled from the Continent three times in this war—from Dunkirk, from Norway, and from Greece—and they were reluctant to risk a fourth drubbing with a hasty cross-Channel attack. "We shall be pushed out again," warned Alan Brooke. More than two dozen German divisions were now based in France, and the Germans could operate on interior lines to shift additional forces from the east and seal off any Allied beachhead.

SLEDGEHAMMER particularly discomfited the British, who would have to provide most of the troops for the operation while American units were still making their way across the Atlantic. Studies of Channel weather over the previous decade showed the frequency of autumn gales that could dismast an Allied expeditionary force as surely as the Spanish Armada had been wrecked in 1588. The Axis enemy would also have a 6-to-1 air advantage and could reinforce the point of attack three times faster than the Allies could; in all likelihood, the Wehrmacht defenders in France would need no reinforcement from the Russian front to bottle up or even massacre an Allied bridgehead that would be so weak some skeptics called the plan TACKHAMMER. Hitler had begun constructing formidable coastal fortifications from above the Arctic Circle to the Spanish border on the Bay of Biscay, and a few planners considered *Festung Europa*, Fortress Europe, impregnable: in their view, the Allies would have to land in Liberia—midway down the west coast of Africa—and fight their way up.

Churchill shared his military commanders' misgivings. "He recoiled in horror from any suggestion of a direct approach" in attacking Europe, one British general later recalled. A disastrous Allied defeat on the French coast, the prime minister warned, was "the only way in which we could possibly lose this war." If eager to accommodate his American saviors, he was also mindful of the million British dead in World War I. A French invasion, he believed, could cost another half million and, if it failed, accomplish nothing. "Bodies floating in the Channel haunted him," George Marshall later acknowledged. Marshall's own reference to SLEDGEHAMMER as a "sacrifice play" to help the Russians hardly was comforting.

Whereas the dominant American strategic impulse was a direct campaign of mass and concentration, the British instinctively avoided large-scale land campaigns. For centuries, Britain had relied on superior naval power to protect the Home Islands and advance her global interests. She was accustomed to protracted wars in which she minimized her losses and her risks, outmaneuvering opponents and restricting combat to the periphery of the empire. The catastrophic stalemate in the trenches from 1914 to 1918 was an exception to the wisdom of the strategic rule. Churchill even hoped

that, by encircling and squeezing Hitler's empire, Allied forces could foster rebellions by the subjugated peoples of Europe; with the Wehrmacht enervated by such revolts, an Anglo-American force could swiftly dispatch a depleted, exhausted Germany.

North Africa seemed a plausible place to start. British officers had first floated the possibility of joint Anglo-American action there in August 1941. Churchill raised the notion again during the ARCADIA conference in Washington at the end of the year, when the plan was assigned the code-name SUPER GYMNAST, and he continued to bring it up throughout the spring with the dogged enthusiasm of a missionary.

Punctuating each point with a stab of his trademark cigar, the prime minister ticked off the advantages to anyone within earshot: the occupation of Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia could trap the Afrika Korps between the new Anglo-American force and the British Eighth Army already fighting Rommel in Egypt; Allied possession of North Africa would reopen the Mediterranean routes through the Suez Canal, shortening the current trip around the Cape of Good Hope by thousands of miles and saving a million tons of shipping; green American soldiers would get combat experience in conditions less harrowing than a frontal assault on France; the operation would require fewer landing craft and other battle resources than a cross-Channel attack; the Vichy government might be lured back into the Allied camp; and the operation could be mounted in 1942, in keeping with Roosevelt's wishes to help the Soviets as soon as possible and to expedite the entry of American soldiers into the war.

"This has all along been in harmony with your ideas," Churchill told the president. "In fact, it is your commanding idea. Here is the true second front of 1942."

The American military disagreed, adamantly and then bitterly. North Africa was a defeatist sideshow, a diversion, a peck at the periphery. Even before Pearl Harbor, a War Department memo warned that an attack in Africa would provide only an "indirect contribution to the defeat of the Nazis." That obdurate conviction hardened through the first six months of 1942. Another memo, in June 1942, concluded that the invasion of North Africa "probably will not result in removing one German soldier, tank, or plane from the Russian front."

To many American officers, the British proposal seemed designed to further London's imperial ambitions rather than win the war quickly. The Mediterranean for centuries had linked the United Kingdom with British interests in Egypt, the Persian Gulf, India, Australia, and the Far East. Old suspicions resurfaced in Washington that American blood was to be shed in defense of the British empire, particularly after Japanese armies swept across Hong Kong, Singapore, and Burma to threaten India. U.S. Army officers recalled a bitter joke from 1917: that "AEF" stood not for "American Expeditionary Force" but for "After England Failed."

Following another visit by Churchill to Washington in mid-June 1942, the fraternal bickering intensified and the Anglo-Americans entered what turned out to be the most fractious weeks of their wartime marriage. On July 10, Marshall and the chief of naval operations, Admiral Ernest J. King, suggested to Roosevelt that if the British continued to insist on "scatterization" in North Africa, "the U.S. should turn to the Pacific for decisive action against Japan." The irascible King, who had once been accused by Roosevelt of shaving with a blowtorch, went so far as to predict that the British would never invade Europe "except behind a Scotch bagpipe band." Roosevelt likened this repudiation of Germany-first as "taking up your dishes and going away" he asked Marshall and King to send detailed plans for "your Pacific Ocean alternative" that very afternoon—knowing that no such plans existed.

Roosevelt was so enigmatic and opaque that his own military chiefs often had to rely on the British for clues to his inner deliberations. But increasingly he seemed beguiled by Churchill's arguments rather than those of his own uniformed advisers. Although Roosevelt never had to enunciate his war principles—and they could surely have been scribbled on a matchbook cover—

foremost among them was “the simple fact that the Russian armies are killing more Axis personnel and destroying more Axis matériel than all the other twenty-five United Nations put together,” as he had observed in May. The War Department now estimated that the Red Army confronted 225 German divisions; six faced the British in Egypt. If Soviet resistance collapsed, Hitler would gain access to limitless oil reserves in the Caucasus and Middle East, and scores of Wehrmacht divisions now fighting in the east could be shifted to reinforce the west. The war could last a decade, War Department analysts believed, and the United States would have to field at least 200 divisions, even though it was now hard pressed to raise fewer than half that number. A gesture of Anglo-American good faith beyond Lend-Lease was vital to encouraging the Soviets. After promising Moscow in May that the United States “expected” to open a second front before the end of the year, Roosevelt in July told his lieutenants that “it is of the highest importance that U.S. ground troops be brought into action against the enemy in 1942.”

Other factors also influenced the president’s thinking. More than half a year after Pearl Harbor, restive Americans wanted to know why the country had yet to counterpunch against the Axis; November’s congressional elections would provide a referendum on Roosevelt’s war leadership, and polls indicated that he and his Democratic Party could take a drubbing. Demonstrators in London’s Trafalgar Square and elsewhere were chanting “Second front, *now*!” in sympathy with the besieged Russians. By seizing Africa, the Allies would deny the Axis potential bases for attacking shipping lanes in the South Atlantic or even striking the Americas. The Pacific campaign, although hardly swinging in the Allies’ favor, had stabilized, permitting the strategic defensive envisioned in the RAINBOW 5 plan; but unless another battlefront opened across the Atlantic, U.S. forces would drain into the Pacific. In May, the U.S. Navy in the Coral Sea had attacked a Japanese fleet escorting invasion troops bound for the Solomon Islands and New Guinea; losses on the two sides had been nearly equal. A month later, four Japanese aircraft carriers were sunk at the battle of Midway, marking the first unambiguous American victory of the war. Operation WATCHTOWER, the first Allied counter-offensive against Japan, was about to unfold with the landing of 16,000 American troops on an island in the Solomons: Guadalcanal.

The campaign against Germany and Italy, on the other hand, was faltering. Wehrmacht troops had overrun the Don River in southern Russia and were approaching Stalingrad, on the Volga. Except for Britain and neutrals such as Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland, all Europe belonged to the Axis. In Egypt, the Afrika Korps was only sixty miles from Alexandria and the Nile valley, gateway to the Suez Canal and Middle East oil fields. In Cairo, refugees jammed the rail stations, and panicky British officers burned secret papers in their gardens. After a long siege, Rommel had captured 30,000 British Commonwealth troops in the Libyan port garrison of Tobruk. Hitler rewarded him with a field marshal’s baton, to which prize Rommel replied, “I am going on to Suez.”

By chance, the bad news from Tobruk reached Churchill on June 21, 1942, while he stood next to Roosevelt’s desk in the Oval Office. Marshall’s face was grimmer than usual as he strode in with a pink dispatch sheet. Churchill read the message and took a half step back, his ruddy face gone ashen. Roosevelt’s response was a thrilling gesture of magnanimity to a friend in need. “What can we do to help?” the president asked.

In the short run, the Americans could, and did, strip 300 new Sherman tanks from the newly outfitted U.S. 1st Armored Division for shipment to British troops in Egypt. Marshall, Admiral King, and Harry Hopkins returned Churchill’s visit by flying as a delegation to London for more strategic negotiations, but the talks bogged down even as the Americans conceded that an attack across the Channel that year was unlikely. In a limp gesture of mollification, the British took the three Yanks to see Oliver Cromwell’s death mask and Queen Elizabeth’s ring before they flew home.

Roosevelt had had enough. The time had come to end the protracted stalemate and get on with the

war. After informing both Churchill and his own senior military advisers on July 25 that he intended to invade North Africa, he slammed the door on further discussion. At 8:30 P.M. on Thursday, July 30, he summoned his lieutenants to the White House and announced that, as he was commander-in-chief, his decision was final. North Africa was "now our principal objective." There would be no SLEDGEHAMMER against France. The African offensive was to occur "at the earliest possible date," preferably within two months.

The president had made the most profound American strategic decision of the European war in direct contravention of his generals and admirals. He had cast his lot with the British rather than with his countrymen. He had repudiated an American military tradition of annihilation, choosing to encircle the enemy and hack at his limbs rather than thrust directly at his heart. And he had based his fiat on instinct and a political calculation that the time was ripe.

In choosing Operation TORCH, as the North Africa invasion was now called, Roosevelt made several miscalculations. Despite Marshall's warnings, he refused to believe that a diversion to North Africa in 1942 precluded a cross-Channel invasion in 1943. He failed to see that the Mediterranean strategy of encirclement precluded other strategies, or that more than a million American soldiers, and millions of tons of matériel, would be sucked into the Mediterranean in the next three years, utterly eviscerating the buildup in Britain. He continued to argue that "defeat of Germany means defeat of Japan, probably without firing a shot or losing a life."

Yet the president's decision was plausible, if not precisely wise. As Brooke had observed of the proposed cross-Channel attack: "The prospects of success are small and dependent on a mass of unknowns, whilst the chances of disaster are great." American planners considered the British argument for TORCH "persuasive rather than rational," but the American argument for SLEDGEHAMMER and ROUNDUP had been neither. Direct attack was premature; its adherents exemplified an amateurish quality in American strategic thinking that would ripen only as the war ripened.

The American military had been animated mostly by can-do zeal and a desire to win expeditiously; these traits eventually would help carry the day, but only when tempered with battle experience and strategic sensibility. One general later claimed that Army logisticians kept insisting they could support ten Allied divisions in Cherbourg although they were not certain where the French port was, much less what the condition of the docks might be or whence those divisions would come. Moving a single armored division required forty-five troopships and cargo ships, plus warship escorts, and moving the fifty divisions needed to sustain an invasion required far more ships than the Allies now possessed. Similarly, the critical issue of landing craft had been blithely ignored. "Who is responsible for building landing craft?" Eisenhower had asked in a May 1942 memo. With some planners estimating that an invasion of France required at least 7,000 landing craft, and others believing the number was really triple that, the hard truth was that by the fall of 1942 all the landing craft in Britain could carry only 20,000 men. Yet a U.S. War Department study had concluded that to draw significant numbers of German troops from the Russian front required at least 600,000 Allied soldiers in France. "One might think we were going across the Channel to play baccarat at Le Touquet, or to bathe at the Paris Plage!" Brooke fumed.

Roosevelt had saved his countrymen from their own ardor. His decision provoked dismay, even disgust, and would remain controversial for decades. "We failed to see," Marshall later said of his fellow generals, "that the leader in a democracy has to keep the people entertained." Eisenhower believed the cancellation of SLEDGEHAMMER might be remembered as the "blackest day in history"—a silly hyperbole, given the blackness of other days. The alienation many senior American officers felt from their British cousins could be seen in a War Department message of late August, proposing that "the Middle East should be held if possible, but its loss might prove to be a blessing in disguise" by giving the British their comeuppance and bringing them to their senses.

But the decision was made. The “thrashing around in the dark,” as Eisenhower called it, was over; the dangerous impasse had been breached.

Much, much remained to be done. Problems ranging from the size and composition of the invasion force to the timing and location of the landings required solutions. In early August, TORCH planners moved into offices at Norfolk House on St. James’s Square in London under the supervision of Eisenhower, who had recently been sent from Washington to Britain as commanding general of the European Theater of Operations. As a gesture of reconciliation, and in anticipation of the eventual American preponderance, the British proposed that the Allied expedition be commanded by an American. Churchill nominated Marshall, but Roosevelt was reluctant to give up his indispensable Army chief. Eisenhower, already overseas, had demonstrated impressive diligence and energy, and on August 13 he was named commander-in-chief of TORCH.

As the days grew shorter and the summer of 1942 came to an end, few could feel buoyed by news from the front:

Wehrmacht troops had reached the Volga, and the first shots were exchanged in the battle for Stalingrad. German U-boats, traveling in predatory “wolfpacks,” were sinking ships faster than Allied yards could build them; a supply convoy to northern Russia lost thirteen of forty vessels, despite an escort of seventy-seven ships. The Chinese war effort against the Japanese had disintegrated. The fighting over the Solomon Islands had made Guadalcanal a shambles. The fall of Suez seemed imminent. Four of the seven aircraft carriers in the American fleet when the United States entered the war had been sunk. And antipathy between British and American confederates threatened to weaken the alliance even before the fight against their common enemy was joined.

Only seers or purblind optimists could guess that these portents foreshadowed victory. The Allies were not yet winning, but they were about to begin winning. Night would end, the tide would turn, and on that turning tide an army would wash ashore in Africa, ready to right a world gone wrong.

Part One

1. PASSAGE

A Meeting with the Dutchman

A FEW minutes past 10 A.M. on Wednesday, October 21, 1942, a twin-engine Navy passenger plane broke through the low overcast blanketing Washington, D.C., then banked over the Potomac River for the final approach to Anacostia Field. As the white dome of the Capitol loomed into view, Rear Admiral Henry Kent Hewitt allowed himself a small sigh of relief. Before dawn, Hewitt had decided to fly to Washington from his headquarters near Norfolk rather than endure the five-hour drive across Virginia. But thick weather abruptly closed in, and for an anxious hour the aircraft had circled the capital, probing for a break in the clouds. Usually a man of genial forbearance, Hewitt chafed with impatience at the delay. President Roosevelt himself had summoned him to the White House for this secret meeting, and although the session was likely to be little more than a courtesy call, it would never do for the man chosen to strike the first American blow in the liberation of Europe to keep his commander-in-chief waiting.

Kent Hewitt seemed an unlikely warrior. Now fifty-five, he had a high, bookish forehead and graying hair. Double chins formed a fleshy creel at his throat, and on a ship's bridge, in his everyday uniform, he appeared "a fat, bedraggled figure in khaki," as a British admiral once observed with more accuracy than kindness. Even the fine uniform he wore this morning fit like blue rummage, notwithstanding the flag officer's gold braid that trimmed his cuffs. A native of Hackensack, New Jersey, Hewitt was the son of a mechanical engineer and the grandson of a former president of the Trenton Iron Works. One uncle had been mayor of New York, another the superintendent of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Kent chose the Navy, but as a midshipman in the Annapolis sail loft he was said to have been so frightened of heights that he "squeezed the tar out of the rigging." As a young swain he had enjoyed dancing the turkey trot; in recent decades, though, he was more likely to be fiddling with his slide rule or attending a meeting of his Masonic lodge.

Yet Hewitt had become a formidable sea dog. Aboard the battleship U.S.S. *Missouri*, he circled the globe for fifteen months with Theodore Roosevelt's Great White Fleet, displaying such a knack for navigation that the stars seemed to eat from his hand. As a destroyer captain in World War I, he had won the Navy Cross for heroism. Later he chaired the Naval Academy's mathematics department, and for two years after the invasion of Poland he ran convoy escorts between Newfoundland and Iceland, ferrying war matériel across the North Atlantic.

In April 1942, Hewitt had been ordered to Hampton Roads to command the Atlantic Fleet's new Amphibious Force; late that summer came Roosevelt's decision to seize North Africa in Operation TORCH. Two great armadas would carry more than 100,000 troops to the invasion beaches. One fleet would sail 2,800 miles from Britain to Algeria, with mostly British ships ferrying mostly American soldiers. The other fleet, designated Task Force 34, was Hewitt's. He was to sail 4,500 miles to Morocco from Hampton Roads and other U.S. ports with more than 100 American ships bearing 33,843 American soldiers. In a message on October 13, General Eisenhower, the TORCH commander, had reduced the mission to twenty-six words: "The object of the operations as a whole is to occupy French Morocco and Algeria with a view to the earliest possible subsequent occupation of Tunisia." The Allies' larger ambition in TORCH had been spelled out by Roosevelt and Churchill: "complete control of North Africa from the Atlantic to the Red Sea."

Through a tiny window over the plane's wing, Hewitt could see the full glory of Indian summer in the nation's capital. Great smears of color—crimson and orange, amber and dying green—extended from the elms around the Lincoln Memorial to the oaks and maples beyond the National Cathedral. Across the Potomac, the new Pentagon building filled Hell's Bottom between Arlington Cemetery and the river. Jokes had already begun circulating about the immense five-sided maze, including the story of a Western Union boy who entered the Pentagon on a Friday and emerged on Monday as a lieutenant colonel. Though it now owned the world's largest building, the Army was still leasing thirty-five other office complexes around the city, and cynics quipped that if the military were to seize enemy territory as quickly as it had conquered Washington, the war could end in a week.

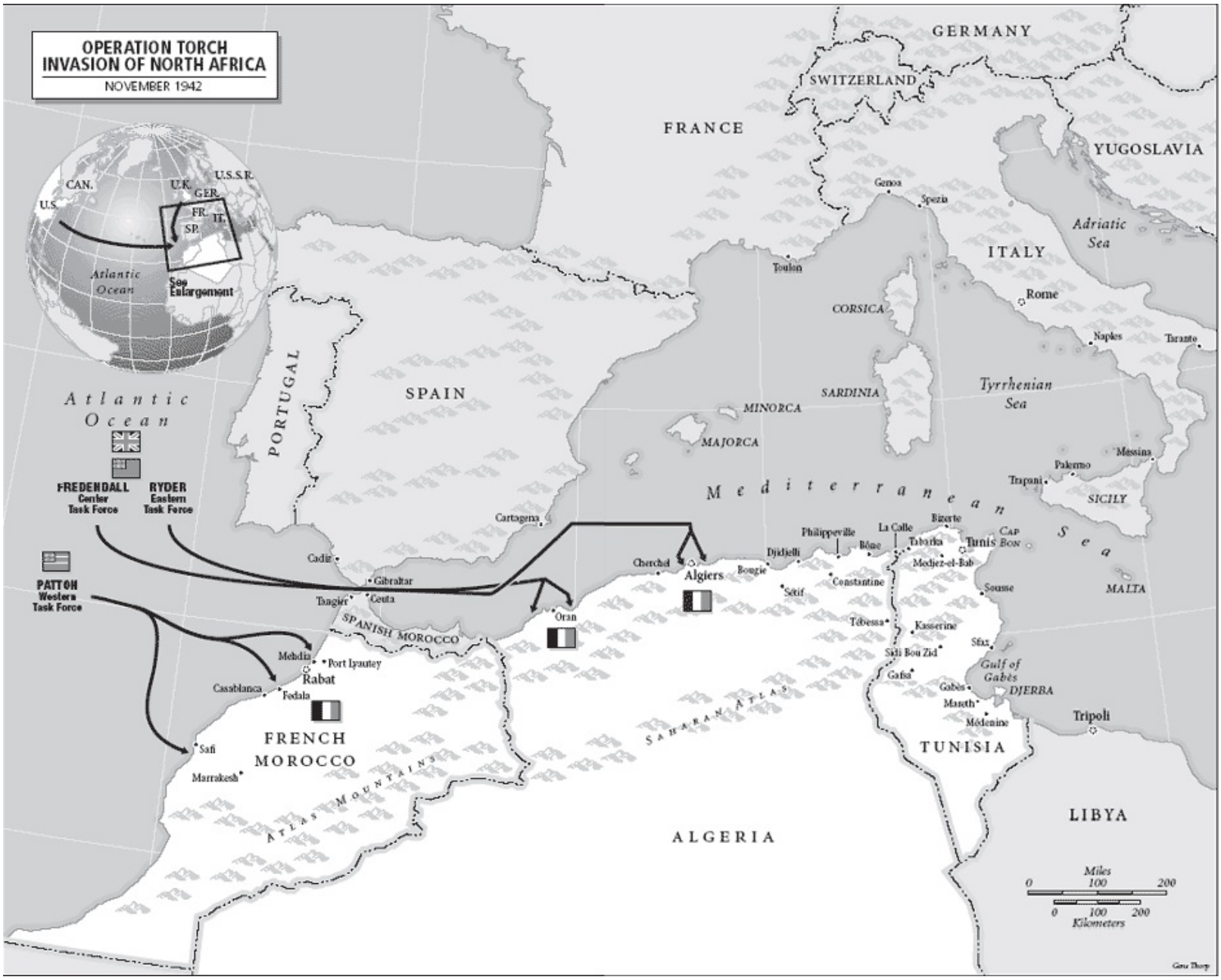
The plane settled onto the runway and taxied to a hangar. Hewitt buttoned his jacket and hurried down the steps to the Navy staff car waiting on the tarmac. The car sped through the airfield gate and across the Anacostia River to Pennsylvania Avenue. Hewitt had enough time to swing by the Navy Department building downtown and check there for messages before heading to the White House.

"You do everything you can," he liked to say, "then you hope for the best." Since receiving the first top-secret orders for Task Force 34, he had done everything he could, to the verge of exhaustion. Every day brought new problems to solve, mistakes to fix, anxieties to quell. Rehearsals for the TORCH landings had been hurried and slipshod. With Axis predators sinking nearly 200 Allied vessels a month, including many along the American coast, all amphibious training had been moved inside the Chesapeake Bay, whose modest tides and gentle waves resembled not at all the ferocious surf typical of the Moroccan coast. During one exercise, only a single boat arrived on the designated beach, even though a lighthouse had provided a beacon on a clear night with a calm sea; the rest of the craft were scattered for miles along the Maryland shore. In another exercise, at Cove Point, ninety miles north of Norfolk, security broke down and the men stormed the beach to be greeted by an enterprising ice cream vendor. In Scotland, the training by troops bound for Algeria was going no better; sometimes it was conducted without the encumbrance of actual ships, because none were available. Troops moved on foot across an imaginary ocean toward an imaginary coast.

Would the eight Vichy French divisions in North Africa fight? No one knew. Allied intelligence estimated that if those troops resisted stoutly, it could take Eisenhower's forces three months just to begin the advance toward Tunisia. If U-boats torpedoed a transport during the Atlantic passage, how many destroyers should be left behind to pick up survivors? Hewitt was not certain he could spare *any* without jeopardizing the task force, and the prospect of abandoning men in the water gnawed at him. Had word of the expedition leaked? Every day he received reports that someone, somewhere had been talking too much. For the first months after its creation, the Amphibious Force was so secret that it used a New York City post office box as its mailing address. Only a select few now knew Hewitt's destination, but the existence of a large American fleet designed to seize a hostile shore could hardly be kept secret anymore. A few weeks earlier, Hewitt had received a letter from Walt Disney—written on stationery with the embossed letterhead "Bambi: A Great Love Story"—who offered to design a logo for the Amphibious Force. Ever the gentleman, Hewitt wrote back on October 7 with polite, noncommittal thanks.

The staff car crawled past Capitol Hill to Independence Avenue. Nationwide gasoline rationing would begin soon, but Washington's population had nearly doubled in the last three years, and for now the streets were jammed. Coffee rationing would begin even sooner—one cup per person per day—and diners had started hoarding for special customers, like speakeasies stocking up on liquor just before Prohibition. Bawling newsboys on street corners shouted the day's headlines from the various war fronts: fighting on Guadalcanal ebbs; Red Army at Stalingrad stops Nazi tank attacks; another American merchantman sunk in the Atlantic, the 500th U.S. ship lost to U-boats since Pearl Harbor. The domestic news was also war-related, if less febrile: the first meatless Tuesday had gone well in

New York; penitentiary inmates with only one felony conviction were urged to apply for parole so they could serve in the Army; and a survey of department stores in Washington revealed that “there aren’t any nylon stockings to be had for love or money.”



The car pulled up to the Navy Department’s blocky gray building, just south of the Mall. Hewitt climbed from the rear seat and hurried up the steps. *He* knew where all those stockings had gone. Flying from Norfolk that morning, he could see stevedores on the docks still trying to wedge 50,000 tons of food, gasoline, and munitions into the holds of ships moored across Hampton Roads. Among the secret cargoes in sealed crates were six tons of women’s stockings and lingerie, to be used for barter with Moroccan natives. Clandestine military buyers had swept clean the store shelves all along the Eastern Seaboard.

For Hewitt, it was just another secret to keep.

Since Roosevelt’s final decision on July 30, TORCH had grown so complex that planning documents now filled a pair of mail sacks, each weighing fifty pounds. Two issues in particular had

occupied Anglo-American strategists, and in both instances the president—who referred to himself as "a pig-headed Dutchman"—had pressed his views relentlessly.

First, he insisted that almost no British troops participate in the initial landings. A seething Anglophobia had spread through Vichy France in the past two years as a consequence of several unhappy incidents: Royal Air Force bombers had accidentally killed 500 French civilians while attacking a Renault plant outside Paris. British forces had intervened in the French overseas dependencies of Syria and Madagascar. Britain had also sponsored a failed attack on the French port at Dakar, Senegal, by the Free French forces of Charles de Gaulle, whom Marshal Pétain and many French officers considered an impertinent renegade. And worst of all, in July 1940 British warships had issued an ultimatum to the Vichy fleet at Mers el-Kébir, near Oran, Algeria: lest the French ships fall into German hands, the captains were told to sail for Britain or a neutral port. When the ultimatum was rejected, the British opened fire. In five minutes, they slaughtered 1,200 French sailors.

"I am reasonably sure a simultaneous landing by British and Americans would result in full resistance by all French in Africa, whereas an initial landing without British ground forces offers a real chance that there would be no French resistance or only a token resistance," Roosevelt cabled Churchill on August 30. To test this theory, the president commissioned a Princeton, New Jersey, firm to discreetly survey public opinion in North Africa. The poll results—drawn from a scientifically dubious sample of fewer than 150 respondents—reinforced Roosevelt's conviction.

There was skepticism in London. One British diplomat believed that Roosevelt's "spirit of Lafayette" merely reflected a sentimental Yankee affection for Paris, "where all good Americans hoped to go in the afterlife." But, having won on the larger issue of whether to invade Africa or France, Churchill chose to concur with the president. "I consider myself your lieutenant," he cabled Roosevelt. "This is an American enterprise in which we are your help mates." The president's further suggestion that British forces wait a full month after the invasion before coming to North Africa was gently rebuffed; the plan now called for Tommies to follow hard on the heels of their Yank cousins in Algeria.

The second vital issue involved where to land. Most British strategists, supported by Eisenhower, had stressed the importance of controlling Tunisia within two weeks of the invasion, before Axis troops from nearby Sicily and the Italian mainland could establish a bridgehead. "The whole conception of TORCH may stand or fall on this question of early Allied occupation of Tunisia," a British message advised. Once Tunisia was held, Allied control of Mediterranean shipping was all but assured. Rommel's Afrika Korps would be trapped in Libya, and the Allies would possess a southern springboard for further operations, against Sicily or the European continent.

These considerations argued for putting invasion forces from both armadas onto Mediterranean beaches in Algeria, and perhaps even as far east as the principal Tunisian port of Bizerte. "We should take great risks" to reach Tunis first, the British military chiefs of staff urged. Landings too far west should be avoided "like the plague" because of the hazard that the subsequent advance "eastward will be so slow as to allow Germans to reach Tunisia in force." In late August, Eisenhower's preliminary TORCH plan called for landings entirely within the Mediterranean, at the Algerian ports of Oran, Algiers, and Bône.

But General Marshall and War Department planners had other ideas. Tunisia and eastern Algeria lay within range of Axis warplanes on Sicily and beyond range of Allied fighters at Gibraltar. Landings at sites vulnerable to Luftwaffe attack would be extraordinarily perilous. Furthermore, the Americans feared that Hitler might lunge through neutral Spain and close the Straits of Gibraltar, trapping them in the Mediterranean as if cinching the drawstring of a sack. That argued for at least one landing on Morocco's Atlantic coast to guarantee an open supply line across the Atlantic.

For weeks, cables had fluttered back and forth in what Eisenhower called "a transatlantic essay

contest." The Royal Navy believed that although the Strait of Gibraltar at its narrowest was just eight miles wide, it could not be controlled by enemy forces any more than the English Channel had been controlled. British planners also calculated that even with Madrid's consent to cross Spain—consent that, London insisted, was unlikely to be given—the Germans would need at least six divisions and more than two months to overpower Gibraltar.

In the American view, however, the risks were too great. The TORCH landings must succeed, Marshall argued, because failure in the first big American offensive of the war would "only bring ridicule and loss of confidence."

Roosevelt agreed, and again he intervened. "I want to emphasize," he cabled Churchill on August 30, "that under any circumstances one of our landings must be on the Atlantic." The president blithely dismissed the notion that Axis forces might build a Tunisian redoubt before the Allies arrived. In another message to the prime minister, he reiterated "our belief that German air and parachute troops cannot get to Algiers or Tunis any large force for at least two weeks after [the] initial attack."

Again Churchill acquiesced, not least because General Brooke, chief of the Imperial General Staff, shared the American disquiet and believed that diverting Hewitt's armada to Morocco "is a much wiser plan."

If not wiser, it was safer in the short run. But rarely are wars won in the short run. The Americans had been audacious to the point of folly in advocating SLEDGEHAMMER, the sacrificial landing of a mostly British force on the French coast. Now, with American soldiers predominant in TORCH, caution prevailed and audacity stole away. Hewitt's Task Force 34 would deposit one-third of the invasion force more than a thousand miles from Tunis. The invaders would bifurcate themselves by facing east *and* west, violating the hallowed principle of concentration and weakening their Sunday punch. In London, Eisenhower changed the odds of quickly capturing Tunis from "the realm of the probable to the remotely possible."

On September 5, the final decision was made to attempt landings at three sites in Morocco and at half a dozen beaches around Algiers and Oran. "Please make it before election day," Roosevelt asked Marshall. In this, the president would be disappointed. Various delays intruded, and on September 21, Eisenhower fixed the invasion date for Sunday morning, November 8, five days after the U.S. congressional elections.

TORCH remained breathtakingly bold, an enterprise of imagination and power. But at a critical moment, the Allies had taken counsel of their fears.

His business done at the Navy Department, Hewitt emerged at 1 P.M. to find that the day had turned warm and humid, with temperatures edging into the low seventies. The staff car picked him up and headed east on Independence Avenue before angling north across the Mall on 15th Street.

At the White House, a Secret Service agent directed his driver through the southeast gate, then led Hewitt on a circuitous route to avoid nosy reporters. Walking through the narrow corridors, the admiral saw that the mansion was battened down for combat. Blackout curtains draped the windows, and skylights had been painted black. Every room in the old tinderbox was equipped with a bucket of sand and a shovel, along with folded gas masks. The cluttered Fish Room, where Roosevelt kept trophies from his angling expeditions, was a reminder of the admiral's last encounter with the president. In December 1936, as skipper of the U.S.S. *Indianapolis*, Hewitt had taken Roosevelt on a monthlong trip to South America. He fondly remembered his passenger casting from the boat deck, then chortling with glee as he hauled in two fish. Roosevelt named them "Maine" and "Vermont," for the two states he had failed to carry in his recent reelection.

Waiting, as planned, in a small, vaulted antechamber of the Oval Office was the battle captain who would command the American troops in Morocco once Hewitt put them ashore: Major General George S. Patton, Jr. He, too, had been escorted by a roundabout route to avoid the press, but Patton was incapable of looking inconspicuous. Tall and immaculate in his starched pinks-and-greens, the crease in his trousers bayonet sharp, gloves folded just so in his left hand, Patton seemed every inch the warrior looking for a war.

Even as he shook Patton's hand and returned his broad smile, Hewitt remained uncertain what to make of this strange man. That he was a gifted and charismatic officer bound for glory seemed obvious. But, thoughtful and utterly charming one moment, he could be profane and truculent the next. Later in the war, military planners were to recommend at least six months' preparation from the day an invasion order was issued to the day the fleet sailed; the belated decision to invade Morocco had given Task Force 34 only seven weeks to ready one of the most complex military operations in American history. George Patton seemed determined to make every hour as difficult as possible.

Rather than move his headquarters to Hampton Roads, Patton had remained in his capacious office loft in the Munitions Building on the Mall, even as he railed against the "goddam fools in Washington." "By all means, as I have already written you, come see us as soon as you can," Hewitt wrote in exasperation. Without consulting the Navy, Army planners proposed Moroccan landing sites, one of which had no beach and another of which was boobytrapped with shoals. In recent days Patton had finally traded Washington for Norfolk, yet he still seemed deeply suspicious of naval officers in general—"that bunch of rattlesnakes," he called them—and of Hewitt in particular. Hewitt had been puzzled, then annoyed, then alarmed, and his mild complaints of August had escalated by mid-September to a formal protest at "the Army's failure to cooperate." Only Eisenhower's personal warrant to the War Department of his old friend's virtues had prevented Patton from being sacked and ending a luminous career before it began. Marshall added his own admonition in a private meeting with Patton: "Don't scare the Navy."

Another tense moment came when Hewitt proposed delaying TORCH a week to give the invaders a rising tide rather than risk having their boats stranded on the beaches by the ebb tide forecast for dawn on November 8. Patton objected with arm-flapping vigor, and even Hewitt's Navy superiors agreed that a postponement was impossible. Oddly, Patton seemed to take personally neither Hewitt's complaints about him nor their professional disagreements. Odder still, Hewitt found himself liking the man, and he suspected that Patton liked him, too. Hewitt could only chuckle at the shotgun marriages made by war.

At precisely two, the wide door to the Oval Office opened and Roosevelt spoke: "Come in, skipper and old cavalryman, and give me the good news." The president sat in his armless wheelchair, beaming and gesturing to a pair of empty chairs. Patton, unaware that Hewitt and Roosevelt had been shipmates six years earlier, looked nonplussed to find himself introduced to the president by the admiral.

"Well, gentlemen," Roosevelt asked with a wave of his cigarette, "what have you got on your minds?"

Hewitt had a great deal on his mind, but he tried to summarize the TORCH plan as succinctly as possible. Three hundred warships and nearly 400 transports and cargo vessels would land more than 100,000 troops—three-quarters of them American, the rest British—in North Africa. Task Force 34 would sail for Morocco on Saturday morning. The other armada would leave Britain shortly thereafter for Algeria. With luck, the Vichy French controlling North Africa would not oppose the landings. Regardless, the Allies were to pivot east for a dash into Tunisia before the enemy arrived.

The gray-green walls of the Oval Office gave the room a nautical air. Patton waited for a lull, then in his shrill, nasal voice said, "Sir, all I want to tell you is this—I will leave the beaches either a

conqueror or a corpse."

Roosevelt smiled and deflected the remark with that jaunty toss of the head that George Marshall privately called the "cigarette-holder gesture." Did the general plan to mount his old cavalry saddle on a tank turret? the president asked Patton. Would he charge into action with his saber drawn?

The conversation rambled on, with much more left unsaid than said. Hewitt chose not to dwell on TORCH's risks. Unlike most senior officers, he had felt only relief upon learning that there would be no frontal assault against the French coast; even zealous advocates of SLEDGEHAMMER had been chastened in mid-August, when a raid by 6,000 Canadian and British troops on the German-occupied French port of Dieppe ended in catastrophe. Hewitt had watched a rehearsal for Dieppe during a visit to England, and he still found it hard to accept that half of those eager young men were now dead or in German prison camps.

But TORCH had its own hazards. Except for the Guadalcanal landings in August, it was the first large amphibious operation by the United States in forty-five years, and the most audacious ever. Some believed it to be the greatest amphibious gamble since Xerxes crossed the Hellespont in the fifth century B.C. The only modern precedent for landing on a hostile shore after a long sea voyage through perilous waters was the British disaster at Gallipoli in 1915, which cost a quarter of a million Allied casualties. The initial mission of seizing three port cities—Casablanca, Algiers, and Oran—was complicated by the need to land at nine coastal sites scattered across 900 miles. And not only U-boats menaced Task Force 34: so would the sea, for the long fetch across the Atlantic often brought mountainous waves to the Moroccan coast.

For his part, Roosevelt chose not to mention the War Department's lingering resentment of TORCH—even his secretary of war, Henry L. Stimson, had accused him of the "wildest kind of dispersion debauch," and called North Africa "the president's great secret baby." Nor did the president complain about delays in the invasion date, although he must have suspected how badly his party would fare in the elections, less than two weeks away. (The Democrats were to lose almost sixty congressional seats to a disgruntled electorate unaware that their nation was about to strike back.)

After half an hour, the conversation drifted into trivialities. Roosevelt offered Hewitt detailed advice on how to moor a ship with a stern anchor to keep her head into the wind, a tactic he had once employed with a yacht. Patton made a final effort to pull the discussion back to TORCH. "The admiral and I feel that we must get ashore regardless of cost, as the fate of the war hinges on our success," he told the president. But the meeting was over. "Of course you must," Roosevelt replied with a final cigarette-holder gesture. He ushered them out the door with handshakes and a hearty "Godspeed."

Patton returned to the Munitions Building. Hewitt drove directly to Anacostia Field and flew to Hampton Roads. By late afternoon he was back in his office, a tiny converted bedroom in the Hotel Nansemond at Ocean View. He had been gone only ten hours, but a thick stack of papers awaited him, including weather reports for Africa and the Atlantic, and the latest intelligence on German U-boats.

You do everything you can, then you hope for the best. Night had fallen by the time he stepped into his admiral's barge at the Willoughby Spit boat landing. The coxswain steered across Hampton Roads toward the Hotel Chamberlin at Fortress Monroe, where Hewitt had a suite with his wife, Floride. He studied the silhouettes of the ships moored in the great bay. Their superstructures loomed against the skyline, inky black but for the occasional orange glow of cigarettes on the weather decks. In two days, this fleet would carry 33,843 soldiers, every last one of them his responsibility.

Hewitt ate a quick supper at the Chamberlin, then moved to an armchair in the sitting room and unfolded the afternoon newspaper. A few minutes later, Floride Hewitt looked in on her husband and screamed: he lay crumpled on the floor. Hewitt sat up slowly, more bemused than shaken. "I guess I just dropped off," he said. The barge was dispatched for a medical officer, who examined Hewitt and pronounced him healthy but exhausted. The admiral, he admonished, really should get more rest.

Gathering the Ships

AN unholy din rolled across Hampton Roads at dawn on October 22. Aboard a dozen ships at five sets of piers, sailors in dungarees and white pillbox caps ripped out linoleum decks, wood paneling, and cork insulation. Hundreds of other swabs with hammers and chisels scraped the painted bulkheads to bare metal. Raging ship fires in the Solomon Islands earlier that fall had convinced the Navy to strip Task Force 34 of all combustible furnishings, giving the fleet the fighting trim of an unfinished garage.

From Norfolk and Portsmouth on the southern rim of the Roads, to Newport News and Hampton in the north, tugboats bullied another clutch of cargo ships into the wharves. Stevedore battalions swarmed onto each vessel, stacking hatch covers on an aft deck and swinging a boom over the exposed hold. Gangwaymen clipped the cargo sling to a pallet on the dock, and chuffing steam winches hoisted another load onto the ship. Above the cacophony of welders and riveters and that infernal scraping, the strains of "Over There" drifted from a warehouse where the port band practiced its war repertoire. *The Yanks are coming, the Yanks are coming.…*

Into the holds went tanks and cannons, rubber boats and outboard motors, ammunition and machine guns, magnifying glasses and step-ladders, alarm clocks and bicycles. Into the holds went: tractors, cement, asphalt, and more than a million gallons of gasoline, mostly in five-gallon tins. Into the holds went: thousands of miles of wire, well-digging machinery, railroad cars, 750,000 bottles of insect repellent, and 7,000 tons of coal in burlap bags. Into the holds went: black basketball shoes, 3,000 vehicles, loudspeakers, 16,000 feet of cotton rope, and $100,000 in gold coins, entrusted to George Patton personally. And into the holds went: a platoon of carrier pigeons, six flyswatters and sixty rolls of fly-paper for each 1,000 soldiers, plus five pounds of rat poison per company.

A special crate, requisitioned in a frantic message to the War Department on October 18, held a thousand Purple Hearts.

In theory, only 800 people in the world knew the destination of the TORCH armadas; many boxes had been sealed and placed under guard to avoid leaking any hint of French North Africa. Phrase books with pronunciation keys, to be distributed at sea, perfectly captured Allied ambivalence, giving the French for both "I am your friend" and "I will shoot you if you resist." A propaganda radio station, cobbled together with a transmitter salvaged in Jersey City and a generator from a South Carolina cotton mill, was secretly installed in the U.S.S. *Texas,* along with a script to be broadcast to Berber tribes: "Behold, we the American holy warriors have arrived…. We have come to set you free."

Quartermasters had rounded up not only all that lingerie but also 70,000 pairs of goggles and a comparable number of havelocks—neck cloths—sewn at a secret plant in Philadelphia, as well as 10 million salt tablets and 67,000 American-flag armbands, with 138,000 safety pins to secure them to uniform sleeves. Black-lettered labels on the boxes warned: "Do not open until destination is reached." A thirty-day supply of poison gas bombs, shells, and mines had been tentatively consigned to a follow-up convoy, then canceled in late September after Allied commanders deemed it "most unlikely" that an enemy would use chemical weapons early in the North Africa campaign.

Using a Michelin commercial road guide to Morocco, a government printing plant outside Washington had spent weeks reproducing sixty tons of maps, which were manhandled into the holds along with sealed bundles of Baedekers, old issues of *National Geograpic,* French tourist guidebooks, and volume "M" of various encyclopedias. Armed couriers brought aboard plaster-of-Paris relief maps of Moroccan ports and coasts; the War Department had found that men drafted from the confectioners' and bakers' union became the best model makers. Other secret crates contained peculiar fifty-four-inch open tubes and three-pound darts—along with instruction sheets, because almost no one in the task force had ever heard of a "launcher, rocket, antitank, 2.36-inch, M9," soon to

be known as a bazooka.

All cargo was supposed to be combat loaded, a key principle of assault in which equipment is stowed in reverse order of the sequence needed upon landing under fire. Instead, the only principle in effect was chaos. Matériel had been cascading into port since late September, in rail cars so poorly marked that at one point all loading stopped while soldiers pawed through 700 mysterious boxcars that had been diverted to a Richmond siding.

Different railroads served different piers, so that misdirected freight had to be lightered across the bay. Docks grew cluttered with dunnage; cargo holds were packed so haphazardly that soldiers climbing over vehicles in search of their kit broke nearly a third of the windshields. Ammunition needed for ballast arrived late, forcing some ships to warp back to the docks for reloading. Artillery shells, loose grenades, and TNT were simply dumped on the decks, or in passageways, staterooms, and troop holds. The captain of U.S.S. *Lakehurst* confided that a torpedo would sink his ship in five minutes—unless the stocks of gasoline and ammo were hit, in which case it would be quicker.

An officer with a twisted mind and a classical education had borrowed the motto for Hampton Roads Port of Embarkation from the *Aeneid: "Forsan et haec olim meminissee iuvabit."* "Someday, perhaps, the memory of even these things will be pleasant." Someday, perhaps, but not soon.

On this disorderly Thursday, Patton flew to Norfolk from Washington in a C-47 transport plane with his tin suitcase and an entourage of eight staff officers. In his slashing, runic handwriting he had written his will and a long treatise to his wife, Bea, on how to care for their horses in his absence. He also wrote several farewell letters. To his brother-in-law: "My proverbial luck will have to be working all out. All my life I have wanted to lead a lot of men in a desperate battle; I am going to do it." To a family friend, he noted that by the time she read his letter, "I will either be dead or not. If I am, please put on a good Irish wake." Now, striding from ship to ship along the wharves, Patton inspected the cargo with the possessive eye of a man who intended to use every last bullet, bomb, and basketball shoe. When he asked a young quartermaster captain how the loading was proceeding, the officer replied, "I don't know, but my trucks are getting on all right." Patton took a moment to scribble in his diary: "That is the answer. If everyone does his part, these seemingly impossible tasks get done. When I think of the greatness of my job and realize that I am what I am, I am amazed, but on reflection, who is as good as I am? I know of no one."

It was a fair self-assessment by a man who had spent the past four decades preparing for this moment, since the day he had arrived as a plebe at West Point. More than a quarter-century had gone by since his first intoxicating taste of battle and fame, during the Punitive Expedition to Mexico in 1916, when he had briefly become a national hero for killing three banditos and strapping their bodies to his automobile running boards like game trophies. He had been a temporary colonel at age thirty-two in the Great War, and a founding father of armored warfare. Then, his career had seemed all but over, mired in the lethargy of the interwar Army. At the age of fifty, upon reading J.F.C. Fuller's classic *Generalship: Its Diseases and Their Cures*, Patton had wept bitterly because eighty-nine of the one hundred great commanders profiled were younger than he. Now, when he was fifty-six, his hour had come round.

He was a paradox and would always remain one, a great tangle of calculated mannerisms and raw, uncalculated emotion. Well-read, fluent in French, and the wealthy child of privilege, he could be crude, rude, and plain foolish. He had reduced his extensive study of history and military art to a five-word manifesto of war: "violent attacks everywhere with everything." In less than three years he would be the most celebrated American battle captain of the twentieth century, a man whose name—

like those of Jeb Stuart and Phil Sheridan—evoked the dash and brio of a cavalry charge. In less than four years he would be dead, and the *New York Times* obituary would offer the perfect epitaph: "He was not a man of peace."

"Give me generals who are lucky," Roosevelt had recently told a British officer. In their encounter in the Oval Office the previous afternoon, the president had shrewdly sized up Patton as a man who was lucky and who also believed in his luck. "Patton is a joy," Roosevelt had written after the meeting. For his part, typically, Patton dwelt on his disappointment at the president's failure to deliver a more stirring victory-or-death speech to Admiral Hewitt, whose resolve Patton still doubted. "A great politician," Patton told his diary after leaving the White House, "is not of necessity a great military leader."

Nor was a great military leader of necessity a great politician, as Patton had repeatedly demonstrated during the preparations for TORCH. While Hewitt readied his ships, Patton readied his men, and he had approached the task by imposing his will on everything and everyone in his path.

His command for TORCH consisted of three divisions pieced together from other units—the 9th Infantry, the 3rd Infantry, and the 2nd Armored; eight other divisions had been so ransacked of troops and equipment to fill out the departing force that six months would pass before they recovered. In the past two weeks, Patton had traveled to staging areas across Virginia and North Carolina to inspect the troops and "put iron in their souls." One commander later recalled that he always knew when Patton had visited because the units so honored invariably called to report that assorted officers "had been ordered into arrest after incurring his wrath." On October 14, Patton sent identical letters to all his senior commanders: "If you don't succeed, I don't want to see you alive," he advised. "I see no point in surviving defeat, and I am sure that if all of you enter into battle with equal resolution, we shall conquer, and live long, and gain more glory."

In a dinner toast at one base, Patton declared, "Here's to the wives. My, what pretty widows you're going to make." His advice to the 9th Division for defeating the Germans was: "Grab those pusillanimous sons-a-bitches by the nose and kick 'em in the balls." To others, he spoke of slaughtering "lousy Hun bastards by the bushel." At Fort Bragg, while he was addressing troops he had once commanded in the 2nd Armored Division, tears coursed down his cheeks and he stalked from the stage without a word. The men roared their approval. In his diary, Patton had once rebuked himself for being "inclined to show emotion, a most unmilitary trait."

On Friday morning, October 23, more than 150 troop commanders, ship captains, and senior staff officers filed into a tightly guarded Army warehouse in Norfolk. Hewitt spoke briefly, revealing to most for the first time that they were bound for Africa. For more than four hours, the TORCH planners reviewed the operation in intricate detail. They finished with the proper procedures for burying the dead and registering their graves.

Then Patton took the stage in breeches and riding boots, ivory-handled pistols on either hip. He roused the men from their torpor by announcing that he would shoot any American soldier molesting a Moroccan woman.

"If you have any doubts as to what you're to do, I can put it very simply," he said in his jarring falsetto. "The idea is to move ahead, and you usually know where the front is by the sound of gunfire. To make it perfectly clear to you: suppose you lose a hand or an ear is shot off, or perhaps a piece of your nose, and you think you should go back to get first aid. If I see you, it will be the last goddamn walk you'll ever take. As an officer, you're expected to move ahead."

Then he challenged the Navy to emulate Admiral David Farragut, who had damned the torpedoes at Mobile Bay in 1864. But, Patton continued, "I'm under no illusion that the goddamn Navy will get us within a hundred miles of the beach or within a week of the date set for landing. It doesn't matter. Put us on Africa. We'll walk."

He finished with a flourish: “We shall attack for sixty days and then, if we have to, for sixty more. If we go forward with desperation, if we go forward with utmost speed and fight, these people cannot stand against us.”

The men came to attention as Patton strode from the room. Most of the Navy officers, and even some of their Army counterparts, had never heard of George S. Patton before. Now they knew who he was.

As the hour of departure drew near, anarchy ruled the docks. Sometimes Patton contributed to the disorder. On one especially hellish morning his quartermasters changed the loading plan six times between eight and nine A.M.

More usually however, Patton, Hewitt, and their lieutenants demonstrated the inventive resolve that would characterize the American way of war for the duration. At the eleventh hour, medical officers abruptly realized that Task Force 34 had stockpiled only a small fraction of the blood plasma required. Recent experience had shown that plasma—the fluid remaining after removing red and white blood cells—was highly effective in keeping wounded soldiers alive, and when dried it could be stored without refrigeration for weeks. With authority from the War Department, the port surgeon by day’s end had requisitioned virtually all the plasma east of the Mississippi River and organized three bombers to deliver it. When bad weather closed in on Norfolk, ground crews lit flares to guide home the pilots. Trucks raced from the airfield to the port with a thousand precious units just before the fleet weighed anchor.

No less dramatic was the saga of the S.S. *Contessa.* The War Department for weeks had sought a shallow-draft ship capable of navigating a dozen miles up a serpentine Moroccan river to the Port Lyautey airfield, one of Patton’s prime objectives. A worldwide search turned up the *Contessa,* a salt-caked, rust-stained scow that drew just over seventeen feet and had spent most of her undistinguished career hauling bananas and coconuts from the Caribbean. She was ordered to Newport News. There the skipper, Captain William H. John, a thick-browed Briton with an untended mustache and a long, saggy face, learned he was to load more than a thousand tons of bombs, depth charges, and high-octane aviation fuel for a destination to be named later. The crew promptly jumped ship.

The *Contessa* was emptied of bananas and winched into dry dock on October 24 for a quick caulking of her leaky seams. Captain John and a Navy reserve lieutenant named A. V. Leslie then headed for the Norfolk jail, which state corrections officials recently had identified as the most squalid lockup in all Virginia. John and Leslie interviewed fifty inmates. Many were bibulous seamen, said to be “bleary-eyed and unsteady on their pins,” but game for a voyage described only as high-paying, dangerous, and far from any Norfolk cellblock. Fifteen men were chosen and their sentences commuted. Navy guards with riot guns escorted them to the *Contessa.* Pumped dry and heavily patched, the fruiter slid from the dry dock with a clean bottom and made for Pier X, the ammunition wharf, to begin loading her cargo.

All the confusion that characterized the cargo loading now attended the convergence of 34,000 soldiers on Hampton Roads. Troop trains with blinds drawn rolled through Norfolk and Portsmouth, sometimes finding the proper pier and sometimes not. Many men were exhausted, having traveled all night or even all week. One artillery commander, suspecting they were bound for a tropical battlefield, had decided to acclimate his troops by sealing the windows on their train, transforming it into what one surviving officer described as “a sweltering inferno.”

Military policemen patrolled the tracks and bus stations to watch for deserters. The Army in the past six months had charged more than 2,600 soldiers with desertion and convicted 90 percent of

them. Indiscipline also plagued units that had been staging in southeast Virginia for weeks. So many men were sentenced to the crowded brig at Solomon's Island in Chesapeake Bay during amphibious training that there was a waiting list to serve time; on October 3 alone, thirty men had been court-martialed for various infractions. Sensing they were going to war, many troops drank until they were "knee-walkin' tight." Commanders distributed pamphlets warning, "The truth is that using the sex glands too much exhausts them and weakens a man." Many a weak man dragged himself to the pier.

Naughty Norfolk catered to those looking for sin before shipping out, notwithstanding the occasional sign that read "No dogs or sailors allowed." The town's iniquity grew with the arrival of each new regiment. Every night, thousands of men swarmed down East Main Street, described as "the largest, most solid block of beer joints in the world." Taxis became rolling brothels, and fleets of "girlie trailers" served the concupiscent. On October 18, vice officers arrested 115 people in the "largest morals raid in local history." His jail cells bulging, Norfolk's police chief asked the federal government to "give me a concentration camp…a camp large enough to handle two or three thousand women." The strains of war—including many U-boat attacks along the Virginia coast—pushed the town toward hysteria. Widespread rumor had it that local Negroes planned to massacre white citizens during a blackout; the plotters were even said to have purchased 300 icepicks at a downtown hardware store.

Sober and otherwise, the troops found their way to the twenty-eight transport ships. All public telephones at the wharves were disconnected, and port engineers erected a high fence around each dock area. "If you tell where you are going, you may never get there," security posters warned—pointlessly, because few men had any inkling of their destination. Some soldiers inflated condoms with natural gas from tent heaters and floated them toward town, with notes attached inviting any girl willing to comfort a departing warrior to infiltrate the security area. In a final, senseless act of confusion, the Army insisted the men board alphabetically rather than by tactical unit. Thousands struggled up the ramps with heavy barracks bags and wandered the companionways for hours in search of their comrades. Others disembarked at night, to re-form on the dock by platoon and then reboard.

Eight to twelve officers shared each stateroom. The ranks wedged into holds with bunks stacked four high and hammocks slung in every open space. "God must love enlisted men," they told one another; "he made so many of them." Poker and dice games raged in the stairwells. Sailors scraped and scraped. Boys barely old enough to shave lay in their bunks and stared vacantly at the bulkheads, or struggled to articulate in letters home what every one of them felt: *I'm scared. I miss you. I love you.*

A distant clatter of winches signaled the lifting of the last cargo slings. And a new sound joined the racket: the harsh grind of a thousand whet-stones as soldiers put an edge on their bayonets and trench knives.

Dawn on October 24 revealed a forest of masts and fighting tops across Hampton Roads, where the greatest war fleet ever to sail from American waters made ready. Brief squalls blew in from the Atlantic, shrouding the ships in gray mist. Launches with hooded lanterns carried a few officers from a final night with their wives in the Chamberlin Hotel. Wrapped in a boat cloak, Hewitt boarded his flagship, the U.S.S. *Augusta.* The rising trill of a bosun's whistle announced the admiral's arrival.

From this very anchorage, dispatched with patriotic huzzahs and guided from the Roads by Theodore Roosevelt aboard his yacht, *Mayflower,* Hewitt had sailed the world with sixteen battleships in the Great White Fleet in 1907. To make the current departure less conspicuous, Hewitt arranged for a mid-ocean rendezvous with several of his biggest warships, including the new dreadnought

Massachusetts, which had sortied from Maine. An even larger contingent awaited the task force near Bermuda. This group included the *Ranger,* his only true aircraft carrier, and four "escort" carriers—oil tankers overlaid with flight decks. None of the carriers had more than half a dozen experienced aviators; the Navy also reported that some crews included "a bare handful of officers and men who had previously seen salt water." But of the 102 ships in the fleet, only *Contessa* was seriously delayed. Still loading fuel and bombs at Pier X, she would follow the convoy in two days, alone.

Patton settled into the comfortable captain's cabin aboard *Augusta.* A stack of mystery novels lay on the table by his bunk, along with the Koran, which he planned to read during the passage. He had often practiced a fierce martial scowl in the mirror, but there was no need for dramatics now. He was alone, as only a battle commander could be, bound for the sharp corners of the world.

"This is my last night in America," he had written in his diary the previous evening. "It may be years and it may be forever. God grant that I do my full duty to my men and myself." He thought of his Wednesday morning in Washington three days earlier. Before going to the White House, he had driven up 16th Street to Walter Reed Army Hospital to call on his ancient hero, General John J. Pershing. A feeble eighty-two, Pershing had reminisced about their adventures in Mexico, where Patton had served as an unofficial aide-de-camp. "I can always pick a fighting man," Pershing said. "I like generals so bold they are dangerous." Patton kissed Pershing's hand, as desiccated as a fallen leaf, and asked for his blessing. "Good-bye, George," the old general replied. "God bless you and keep you and give you victory."

Generals so bold they are dangerous. He would take that challenge. To his old friend Eisenhower in London he had written, "We should plan either to conquer or to be destroyed at Casablanca." He also scribbled two notes to Bea. "It will probably be some time before you get a letter from me but I will be thinking of you and loving you," he wrote in one. In the other, to be opened only "when and if I am definitely reported dead," he confessed how difficult it was to convey his feelings for a woman he had known since they were both sixteen years old. He addressed her as if from beyond the grave: "Your confidence in me was the only sure thing in a world of dreadful uncertainty."

Shortly before seven A.M., the *Joseph T. Dickman* slipped her lines and moved into the stream, joined by the *Thomas Jefferson,* the *Leonard Wood,* and a stately procession of other transports. Destroyers darted ahead into the seaward mists—the lead ship in the position known as Dead Man's Corner—as the transports threaded the antisubmarine nets protecting Hampton Roads. With radio silence imposed, course adjustments swept across the fleet in an ecstasy of signal lamps and semaphore flags. Patrol planes and two silver blimps scouted the swept channel that angled eastward between Cape Henry and Cape Charles. Building to fourteen knots, the transports steamed out the drowned mouth of the James River, across Thimble Shoals and Tail of the Horseshoe. Soldiers cinched their life jackets and lined the weather-deck rails, staring in silence at Old Point Comfort.

The dawn was bright and blowing. Angels perched unseen on the shrouds and crosstrees. Young men, fated to survive and become old men dying abed half a century hence, would forever remember this hour, when an army at dawn made for the open sea in a cause none could yet comprehend. Ashore, as the great fleet glided past, dreams of them stepped, like men alive, into the rooms where their loved ones lay sleeping.

Rendezvous at Cherchel

EVEN before the fleet weighed anchor in Virginia, a small invasion vanguard had arrived off the African coast. This party comprised fewer than a dozen men; their mission—both courageous and daft—would become one of the most celebrated clandestine operations of the war.

It began with a single light. Major General Mark W. Clark stood on the bridge of the submarine H.M.S. *Seraph* at ten P.M. on October 21, peering through his binoculars at a bright beacon on the Algerian coast. Braced to absorb the submarine's roll, he raked the lenses across the white line of surf two miles away. After several days of creeping submerged across the Mediterranean from Gibraltar at four knots, Clark was desperate to get ashore. Though *Seraph* surfaced every night to recharge her batteries, the fetid air inside grew so stale each day that a struck match would not light. Clark and the four other American officers had passed the time playing countless rubbers of bridge or, after lessons from the British commandos aboard, hands of cribbage. Small bruises covered Clark's head; at six foot three inches tall, he found it impossible to dodge the sub's innumerable pipes and knobs.

"There's the sugar-loaf hill to the left. I can see its outline against the sky," Clark told *Seraph*'s commander, Lieutenant Norman L. A. Jewell. A pale glow to the east marked the fishing port of Cherchel, said to have been founded by Selene, daughter of Mark Antony and Cleopatra. Algiers lay another sixty miles up the coast. Clark focused again on the light burning in the seaward gable of an isolated farmhouse. "There's a beach below the house. A black splotch behind the beach—that's the grove of trees," Clark said. "Yessir, this is the place we're looking for."

Jewell ordered the diesel engines started. *Seraph* edged forward to within 400 yards of the breakers and hove to. A rising moon silvered the deck and dark sea. The commandos deftly assembled the folbots—two-man kayaks made with hickory frames and canvas skins. Clark and the other Americans rechecked their inventory, including money belts stuffed with greenbacks and $1,000 in Canadian gold pieces, which had been obtained with difficulty from the Bank of England vault in central London on Sunday afternoon. Every man wore his military uniform; six German saboteurs, captured in civilian clothes after being put ashore by U-boat in New York and Florida, had died in the District of Columbia electric chair two months earlier. No one on this mission wanted to be executed as a spy.

The first three pairs of men successfully grabbed the folbot rails and eased themselves into the waist holes. But as Clark was about to step from the submarine, the heavy lop flipped his boat and the commando already in it, Captain Godfrey B. Courtney. "I've got to get off!" Clark shouted. "I've got to go *now*." Another folbot was recalled and one of the Americans surrendered his seat to Clark. The submarine crew righted the capsized craft and fished Courtney from the sea. Ready at last, the men feathered away from *Seraph* with their double-scoop paddles, then turned in a V formation toward the beckoning light above the beach.

Mark Clark—Wayne, to his friends—was an odd choice to lead a clandestine mission behind enemy lines. As Eisenhower's deputy and chief planner, he knew more about Operation TORCH than any man alive. He also was among the few Americans privy to Ultra, the intelligence gathered through British decipherment of coded German radio messages—a secret so profound it was jokingly known as BBR, "burn before reading." Should Vichy forces capture Clark and surrender him to the Gestapo, the consequences would be incalculable, for both TORCH and the Allied cause.

That Eisenhower had entrusted this mission to Clark despite the hazards was a sign of both his naïveté as the new Allied commander-in-chief and his faith in Clark, who had become his indispensable alter ego. Clark's parents were an Army officer and the daughter of an immigrant Romanian Jew; as a West Point cadet, he had had himself baptized an Episcopalian, the creed considered most expedient for aspiring generals. At the academy he was known as Contraband for his guile in smuggling forbidden sweets into the barracks. More important, he fashioned a friendship with the company sergeant, an older cadet named Ike Eisenhower. Seriously wounded by shrapnel in 1918,

Clark as a young captain between the world wars had been detailed to a Chautauqua tour, spreading the gospel of Army life with an ensemble of ventriloquists, road-company Macbeths, and Swiss bell ringers.

More recently, while serving as a War Department staff officer, he had been credited with designing the Army's assembly-line techniques for mass-producing divisions. In June 1941, his superior officer described him as "a rare combination of a most attractive personality with a stout heart and fine tact and intelligence." George Marshall had asked him, after Pearl Harbor, for a list of ten able brigadier generals from among whom to select a new war plans chief. "I'll give you one name and nine dittos," Clark replied. "Dwight D. Eisenhower." Years later Eisenhower would tell Clark, "You are more responsible than anybody in this country for giving me my opportunity."

The debt was repaid in August 1942, when Eisenhower made Clark his chief planner in London and the deputy TORCH commander. Soon the two Americans were favorites of Churchill, frequently summoned to No. 10 Downing Street or the prime minister's country home at Chequers for midnight skull sessions. Clark vividly described Churchill, dressed in his baggy smock and carpet slippers, expounding on strategy while drinking brandy or devouring a late supper:

> When the soup was put before him, he tackled it vigorously, his mouth about two inches from the liquid and his shoulders hunched over. He ate with a purring and slurping and the spoon went from mouth to plate so rapidly you could hardly see it until he was scraping the bottom of the bowl and bawling lustily, "More soup!" Turning to his guests, he'd say, "Fine soup, ain't it?"

Like Eisenhower, Clark had vaulted over hundreds of more senior officers in the past two years, during his ascent from major to major general. Meticulous and shrewd, he was also given to a relentless self-promotion that vexed his friends and outraged his rivals. Among the latter was Patton, who confided to his diary in late September: "He seems to me more preoccupied with bettering his own future than in winning the war." Another general called Clark the "evil genius" of the Allied force, but that epithet both diminished and caricatured his role. In truth, he was a gifted organizer—his daily memos to Eisenhower are tiny masterpieces of precision and efficiency—bedeviled by insecurities. "The more stars you have, the higher you climb the flagpole, the more of your ass is exposed," he once asserted. "People are always watching for opportunities to misconstrue your actions."

The voyage to Cherchel had been hastily organized at the secret request of General Charles Emmanuel Mast, a senior Vichy commander in Algiers. Mast had sent word that he wanted to confer with a high-ranking American about how the Allies might "gain entry practically without firing a shot." Clark insisted on leading the mission, "happy as a boy with a new knife" at both the prospective adventure and the chance to consummate the greatest American diplomatic coup of the war.

In addition to collecting intelligence through Ultra, the Allies had managed—by seduction and burglary—to purloin various Italian, Vichy French, and Spanish diplomatic codes. Washington also had an espionage network in North Africa: a dozen American vice consuls, known as the Twelve Apostles, who technically served as "food control officers" under a trade agreement still in effect between Vichy and Washington. But the Apostles were hardly professional spies. One had been a Coca-Cola salesman in Mississippi, and another was described as "an ornament of Harry's Bar in Paris." A third later confessed, "I didn't even know how to pry open a desk drawer." The Apostle Kenneth Pendar, a former Harvard archaeologist, acknowledged, "We flew over…to drop like so many

Alices into the African Wonderland." A dismissive German agent reported to Berlin: "All their thoughts are centered on their social, sexual, and culinary interests." Although the Apostles in fact collected useful information about ports, beaches, and coastal defenses, they could not answer the most fundamental question: Would the French fight? Clark intended to find out.

Only a howling dog and the murmuring surf broke the stillness as Clark and Captain Courtney waited 200 yards offshore. It was now shortly after midnight on October 22. Moonlight and that naked bulb dangling in the dormer revealed that the farmhouse on the bluff had a red tile mansard roof and stucco walls draped with vines. From the beach came the all-clear signal: the dash-dot-dash of a Morse "k." Leaning into their paddles, the two men skimmed neatly across the breakers and joined the others, who were already dragging their boats across the sand.

From an olive grove at the edge of the bluff stepped a tall, stooped man wearing a turtleneck sweater, sneakers, and a baseball cap. Robert Murphy was the top American diplomat in Algiers, as well as the Apostles' spymaster. "Welcome to North Africa," he said, with the insouciance of an experienced host greeting dinner guests. Clark abandoned the grand speech he had prepared in French and replied simply, "I'm damned glad we made it." The men shouldered the folbots and followed Murphy up the hill and through a large green gate. Entering a courtyard lined with palm trees, they passed the villa's owner, a French patriot named Henri Teissier, who stood watching nervously from the shadows. Eyeing Clark with his carbine, another Frenchman muttered, "A general with a rifle! What sort of army is this?" After hiding the boats in a kitchen storeroom, they settled into a small, untidy room in the farmhouse, toasting their good fortune with glasses of whiskey before stretching out for a nap.

Murphy was too excited to sleep. This rendezvous was his doing, and he believed that if it succeeded he could deliver North Africa into the Allied camp without bloodshed. Now forty-seven, with pale Irish skin and "a gaiety that brought out gaiety in others," he had grown up in Milwaukee. A foot crushed in an elevator accident had kept him out of the military in World War I; instead, he studied law before joining the diplomatic corps. Fluent in German and French, genial and cultured, he spent a decade in Paris; when the Germans marched in, he followed the rump government to Vichy on orders from Washington. He had helped arrange the secret shipment of nearly 2,000 tons of gold from the Bank of France to Dakar on an American cruiser, and Roosevelt, who always appreciated a charming operator, appointed Murphy his personal representative to French Africa with the admonition "Don't bother going through State Department channels." For months Murphy had shuttled between Washington and London, occasionally disguised as a lieutenant colonel because, as General Marshall noted, "nobody ever pays any attention to a lieutenant colonel." On frequent trips to North Africa, he smuggled radio transmitters in his diplomatic pouches.

By nature drawn to the conservative status quo, Murphy was distrusted by the Free French of Charles de Gaulle, who dismissed him as "inclined to believe that France consisted of the people he dined with in town." The British diplomat Harold Macmillan concluded that Murphy "has an incurable habit of seeing every kind of person and agreeing with them all in turn." Bob Murphy shrugged off such derision with an impish smile, secure in the conviction that he was doing Roosevelt's bidding.

At six A.M., General Mast arrived by car from Algiers with five staff officers. Murphy roused Clark and the others for introductions, followed by a breakfast of coffee and sardines in the living room. Short, burly, and fluent in English, Mast had been captured by the Germans in 1940 and repatriated after months in Saxony's notorious Königstein prison. His post as deputy commander of the Vichy army's XIX Corps notwithstanding, he had the heart of an insurrectionist. If the Americans were to invade North Africa, Mast told Clark, they should consider doing it in the spring, when rebel officers would be fully ready to help. Clark had strict orders not to disclose that TORCH was actually under way; he replied vaguely that it was "best to do something soon. We have the army and the

means."

For more than four hours, the two generals exchanged mendacities. Mast urged the Americans to align themselves with his patron, Henri Giraud, a senior general whose bold recent escape from Königstein had galvanized French resistance. If you bring Giraud to Algiers from his hiding place in southern France, Mast promised, all North Africa will "flame into revolt" and rally around him as a symbol of French resurgence. With sufficient weapons—Mast nearly wept, describing the bedraggled Vichy troops—North Africa could field an army of 300,000 in common cause with the Allies, all under Giraud's inspiring generalship. He also urged a simultaneous invasion of southern France to prevent the Germans from seizing the fragment of the country controlled by Vichy.

Clark carefully sifted through Mast's proposals. He pledged immediate delivery of 2,000 automatic weapons to North Africa, a promise that would not be kept. In a rare show of candor, he admitted that simultaneous invasions of North Africa and metropolitan France exceeded Allied means. But he assured Mast that any assault would be more than a hit-and-run raid like that at Dieppe in August. An African invasion force would involve half a million men with 2,000 aircraft. This was a fivefold exaggeration.

"Where are these five hundred thousand men to come from?" Mast asked. "Where are they?"

"In the U.S. and U.K.," Clark replied.

"Rather far, isn't it?"

"No."

Perhaps lies and misunderstandings were inevitable: Clark could hardly disclose the imminence of TORCH, even if Mast's good faith seemed genuine. But by mid-morning tiny seeds of confusion and distrust had been sown over the timing of the invasion, the political realities of Vichy North Africa, the extent to which each side could aid the other, and, most important, who would command whom. At eleven, Mast stood and announced that he must return to Algiers before his absence aroused suspicions. Before walking to his car, he warned Clark, "The French navy is not with us. The army and the air force are."

Mast also repeated his earlier assertion that General Giraud intended to command all forces in North Africa, including any Allied troops. Clark was noncommittal, and Mast left in a flurry of salutes. He drove slowly past the café card players and old men bowling on the public square in Cherchel, taking with him the pleasant delusion that he had weeks or even months to properly prepare for an Allied invasion.

After twelve hours of hosting this cabal, M. Teissier had become visibly anxious. Nevertheless, he served the conspirators a fortifying lunch of peppery chicken with red wine and oranges. Several of General Mast's staff officers had remained at the farmhouse for further talks. They handed over maps and charts pinpointing gasoline and ammunition caches, airfields, troop strengths, and other military secrets. Clark swapped uniform blouses with one of the Frenchmen and took a stroll in the courtyard for some fresh air.

The happy colloquy ended abruptly with the jangling of the telephone early that evening. Teissier answered, then slammed down the receiver with a shriek. "The police will be here in five minutes!" This news, Clark later observed, had the effect of "fifty dead skunks thrown on the table." One French officer bolted out the door with his satchel. Others leaped through the windows and vanished into the brush. Gold pieces clattered across the floor as the Americans flung francs, Canadian dollars, and greenbacks at Murphy to use for possible bribes. Clark rousted the British commandos and sent one packing toward the beach with a walkie-talkie to alert the *Seraph.* With six others, he then scrambled into a dank wine cellar beneath the patio. "I don't want you to lock me up," he called. Teissier slammed the trapdoor anyway. The men crouched in darkness, clutching their rifles and musette bags full of documents.

Murphy and Teissier agreed to feign an inebriated revel, with much slurred singing and clinking of wine bottles. At 9:30 P.M., a coast guard cadet loyal to Teissier arrived at the green gate to explain his earlier telephone warning: an off-duty servant had reported odd activity at the farmhouse, and the police, suspecting smugglers, were organizing a raid. Murphy urged the cadet to stall the authorities as long as possible. "We had a little party down here. We had some girls, a little liquor, and food," Murphy said. "Everybody's left now, but I can assure you that no harm was done."

Clark and the others soon emerged from the cellar. "Get the hell down to the beach as fast as you can," Murphy urged. Collecting the folbots, the men clattered down the bluff. The brisk clacking of a nearby windmill signaled a freshening sea breeze, and to Clark's dismay waves five to seven feet high now crashed onto the shore. He stripped to his undershorts, tucking the money belt and his rolled-up trousers in the boat's waisthole. After a short sprint into the surf, he and one of the commandos leaped aboard, paddling furiously. An immense comber lifted the nose of the kayak until the craft was nearly vertical, then pitched it backward into the foaming sea. "To hell with the pants," someone yelled from shore, "save the paddles."

Cold, drenched, and trouserless, Clark requisitioned an underling's pants and hiked to the villa, where he was confronted by a horrified Teissier. "Please, for God's sake," the Frenchman begged, "get out of the house." Clark snapped, "I don't like to be hurried." Wrapped in a silk tablecloth, he hobbled barefoot back to the beach with a loaf of bread, two borrowed sweaters, and several bottles of wine. To keep warm, Clark bobbed up and down in a frenzy of deep-knee bends; meanwhile, the men reviewed their options. Should they storm Cherchel to steal a fishing boat? Perhaps they could buy one instead; Murphy suggested offering 200,000 francs. A French officer pointed out that either gambit would likely bring the police if not the army. The Americans agreed that if any Arab blundered onto the beach, they would lasso and strangle him.

At four A.M., someone noticed a sheltered spot where the surf seemed a bit calmer. Clark and a comrade mounted their kayak. Four others carried the boat to shoulder depth and shoved it seaward. Again the craft nosed up nearly perpendicular to the shore, but this time it crested the wave. Aboard *Seraph*, Lieutenant Jewell eased the submarine so close to shore that her keel shivered from proximity to the sea floor. The other boats, after capsizing at least once each, finally cleared the surf and made for the silhouetted conning tower. Murphy capered along the beach, kissing the French officers in glee as they collected the commandos' abandoned tommy guns and raked all footprints from the sand.

Clark's men spread their sopping documents in the engine room to dry. Fortified with a double tot of Nelson's blood from *Seraph*'s rum cask, Clark composed a message for London:

> Eisenhower eyes only…All questions were settled satisfactorily except for the time the French would assume supreme command…. Anticipate that the bulk of the French army and air forces will offer little resistance…. Initial resistance by French navy and coastal defenses indicated by naval information which also indicates that this resistance will fall off rapidly as our forces land.

Jewell swung the submarine due west, toward Gibraltar, and sounded the dive klaxon.

On the Knees of the Gods

As Hewitt's Task Force 34 zigged and zagged toward Morocco with Patton's legions aboard, more than 300 other ships bound for Algeria steamed from anchorages on the Clyde and along England's

west coast. For all these vessels to shoot the Strait of Gibraltar in sequence and arrive punctually at various Barbary coast beaches, the two-week voyage must, in Churchill's phrase, "fit together like a jewelled bracelet." The challenge had roused the Royal Navy to its keenest pitch of seamanship, and the convoys held such perfect alignment that "only the boiling white foam thrown up by the screws betrayed that the ships were moving."

Eight distinct deception plans had been adopted by the Allies to suggest that this armada was bound for Scandinavia, or France, or the Middle East. The ploys included noisy searches for Norwegian currency; public lectures on frostbite; the conspicuous loading of cold-weather clothing; bulk purchases of French dictionaries; and instruction for army cooks on how to prepare rice dishes. A platoon of reporters was shunted to northern Scotland for ski and snowshoe training. Whatever their effect on Axis intelligence, these clues so confounded American troops that many simply concluded they were sailing for home, especially when the fleet first veered far west to evade U-boat wolfpacks before looping southeast toward the Mediterranean.

Like Hewitt's ships, those loaded in Britain carried tens of thousands of tons of war supplies. The cargo manifests also included $500,000 worth of tea, hand tools for 5,000 North African natives, 390,000 pairs of socks, and $5 million in gold, packed in thirty small safes at a Bank of England vault in Threadneedle Street. Complementing all those French lexicons, a special glossary translated British into American, noting, for example, that an "accumulator" is a battery, that "indent" means requisition, and that a "dixie" is a bucket for brewing tea.

The loading at British ports made even the Hampton Roads ordeal seem a model of logistical simplicity. On September 8, Eisenhower had sent Washington a fifteen-page cable confessing that his quartermasters in Britain were profoundly confused. Roughly 260,000 tons of supplies, ammunition, and weapons—enough to fight for a month and a half—had been misplaced after arriving in the United Kingdom. Would the War Department consider sending a duplicate shipment? The cable explained that the American system for marking and dispatching the cargo was poor—one U.S. Army regiment and its kit arrived in England on fifty-five different ships—and British warehouse procedures worse. Pilferage topped 20 percent, and many crates were buried beyond retrieval in a thousand dockside sheds. Eisenhower, not as embarrassed as perhaps he should have been, also asked that, as long as Army logisticians were rummaging about, would they please send various additional items, including barber chairs and a "bullet-proof, seven-passenger automobile of normal appearance."

The cable stirred grave doubts about Eisenhower's management acumen among the few senior officers permitted to see it. Both he and Patton seemed to be improvising to an alarming extent. A tart message from the War Department to London in October noted, "It appears that we have shipped all items at least twice and most items three times." But with TORCH on the tightest of schedules, logisticians had little recourse. By October 16, another 186,000 tons had been shipped across the Atlantic—and 11 million rounds of ammunition were borrowed from the British. Much of this cargo was now Africa-bound.

Few of the 72,000 troops embarked in Britain knew or cared about these travails. Outnumbering their British comrades two to one, the Americans were mostly drawn from three divisions staging in England, Scotland, and Northern Ireland: the 1st Infantry, the 1st Armored, and the 34th Infantry. After a few days at sea, convoy life took on a monotony only partly relieved by topside boxing matches in makeshift rings, where pugilists in sleeveless shirts pummeled one another into insensibility. An Army booklet, "What to Do Aboard a Transport," contained sections on "seasickness, cold, and balance" and "malaria and other plagues." An equally dispiriting essay, on "mental matters," warned, "One of the deep-down urges that must be controlled is that of sex"—advice that failed to curb the troops' endless reliving of amorous conquests, real and imagined. (Belfast's Belgravia Hotel,

dubbed the Belgravia Riding Academy, was a favorite fantasy site of the 34th Division.) The mandatory "short-arm inspections" for venereal disease gave many a Lothario his comeuppance.

Regimental bands organized afternoon concerts of college fight songs and Sousa marches, always ending with "The Star-Spangled Banner," "God Save the King," and the "Marseillaise," in rotating order. The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders marched fore and aft aboard the *Cathay*, loudly accompanied by bagpipers; although all soldiers had been ordered to remove their unit insignia, it was widely agreed that any potential enemy should know that Highland troops were afoot. Yanks with guitars or harmonicas played "Marching Through Georgia" or a ribald ballad about the medically exempt called "4-F Charley." For their part, Tommies sang, "There'll be no promotion this side of the ocean / Fuck them all, fuck them all, fuck them all." More refined entertainment was provided 34th Division troops on *Otranto* by a soldier-thespian who delivered soliloquies from *Hamlet* over the ship's public address system.

For the officers, the voyage was weirdly languorous, as if they were going to war on a Cunard cruise. Stewards awakened them with cups of tea each morning. Waiters posted printed menus in the dining rooms before every meal. An American officer on the *Durban Castle* later recalled, "Blouses were worn for dinner, [with] coffee in the lounge afterwards." Slender Indian cabin boys in black-and-white livery filled the tubs with hot seawater each evening and asked, "Bath, sahib?" On the *Monarch of Bermuda*, Brigadier General Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., assistant commander of the 1st Infantry Division, entertained his staff officers by reciting long passages of Kipling from memory after they challenged him with a succession of first lines. He further cheered the men by observing that the division's headquarters ship, several hundred yards abaft, appeared to be rolling twice as much as the *Monarch.* "Cleared for strange ports—that's what we are," Roosevelt wrote to his wife on October 26. "Here I am off again on the great adventure."

Below the waterline, in the troop holds known as Torpedo Heaven, the adventure seemed less thrilling. The stench of sweat, oil, and wool blankets filled the nostrils, while the ear heard an incessant clicking of dice and snoring so loud it was likened to the ripping of branches from a tree. Bunks on some tubs were stacked six high; a soldier in one top berth passed the time by penciling poetry on the steel overhead—a few inches above his nose—and sketching tourist maps of his native Philadelphia. To preserve the blackout, hatches had to be closed at night; the air grew so foul that some Coldstream Guards rigged a canvas airshaft, to little avail. Amid heavy seas mid-voyage, the large drums for the use of seasick soldiers slid across the deck with unpleasant splashings. Mess kits, washed in seawater, produced mass dysentery. Long queues formed at the sick bays and heads, and abject soldiers lined the rails.

Troops caught nibbling their emergency D-ration chocolate bars were dubbed Chocolate Soldiers and punished by forfeiting two meals. This was a happy penance. The galleys served so much fatty mutton that derisive bleating could be heard throughout the convoy and the 13th Armored Regiment proposed a new battle cry: "Baaa!" Crunchy raisins in the bread proved to be weevils; soldiers learned to hold up slices to the light, as if candling eggs. The 1st Infantry Division on *Reine de Pacifico* organized troop details to sift flour through mesh screens in a search for insects. Wormy meat aboard the *Keren* so provoked 34th Division soldiers that officers were dispatched to keep order in the mess hall. When soldiers aboard *Letitia* challenged the culinary honor of one French cook, he "became quite wild and threatened to jump overboard."

Morale suffered as much as stomachs. Relations between the cousins grew testy. Yanks resented the British food, if not the war itself. Tommies, who had long been entitled to rum rations, were shocked to get nothing stronger than ginger ale aboard ship. To monitor morale, American censors collected excerpts from more than eight thousand letters home: "The British are nothing but sorry sons of bitches, feed us stuff a hog wouldn't eat," one disgruntled soldier wrote. Another confided:

“Don’t mind my continual bitching. It’s only that I hate myself & hate this life & I’m sick of it all.”

“To make a good army out of the best men will take three years,” Sylvanus Thayer, father of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, concluded in the early nineteenth century. Most American soldiers bound for Africa in October 1942 had been in the Army for less than three years, some for less than three months. They were fine men, but not yet a good army. Indeed, they were not an army at all, but a hodgepodge of units cobbled together after the decision to launch TORCH. Mighty hosts are rarely made from expedients.

The 1st Armored Division—formed in 1940 and known as Old Ironsides—was a case in point. More than half its strength had been left behind in Britain for a later convoy. Most of the division’s medium tanks had also remained behind, after they proved a couple of inches too big for the bow openings on the only landing ships available. Instead, the crews manned light tanks, with a puny 37mm gun, and some units still carried equipment from horse cavalry days. Even before crossing the Atlantic to Northern Ireland earlier in the year, Old Ironsides had been dislocated by frequent moves. Mackerel fishing in the Bay of Dundrum and fresh lobsters at fifty cents apiece were pleasant enough, but training on Britain’s narrow lanes and stone-fence fields was limited. (British officers trailed the American tanks and paid local farmers a shilling for each sixteen feet of fence destroyed.) Many of the division’s best soldiers volunteered for new Ranger, paratrooper, and commando units, to be sometimes replaced by men of lesser mettle with no armor training. Some crews had fired as few as three tank rounds. The War Department had long assumed that the division was destined for combat in northern Europe, and little thought was given to other possible battlefields. Old Ironsides, the only American tank division to see desert combat in World War II, was the only one to get no desert training. Hamilton H. Howze, the 1st Armored operations officer and a future four-star general, later asserted, “None of the division was worth a damn.”

This harsh secret, suspected by few and believed by fewer, was equally true of other units. The 34th Infantry merits particular scrutiny because it had been the first American division dispatched to the European theater and because the division’s saga, in North Africa and beyond, would embody the tribulations and triumphs of the U.S. Army as fully as any of the eighty-nine divisions ultimately mustered in World War II.

Twenty months earlier, the 34th had existed only in principle, as regiments of the Iowa National Guard and sister Guard units from Minnesota. Guardsmen in peacetime met once a week, usually on Monday evenings. For two hours of close-order drill they earned a dollar. Training in the art of war was limited to bayonet assaults against a football goalpost and skirmishes across the town square, where platoons practiced out-flanking the local Civil War monument. Training in more sophisticated martial skills was limited to a couple weeks of summer camp. Troops were pressed into civil service for floods, or harvests, or strike-breaking at the Swift meatpacking plant in Sioux City, where Guardsmen in 1938 had pierced the workers’ cordon with a flying wedge before setting up their machine guns on a loading dock. That was the closest to combat most had ever come.

On February 10, 1941, after nine false alarms, the War Department federalized the Iowa and Minnesota regiments to form the 34th Division. It was among the last of eighteen Guard divisions swept into the Army under the congressional act that limited Guardsmen to a year of service in defense of the western hemisphere. Regiments staged hasty recruiting drives to fill out their ranks before heading to Louisiana for further training. The 151st Field Artillery, headquartered in Minneapolis, offered new recruits $21 a month and a chance to “go south with the Gopher Gunners.” Those who signed up gathered on the balcony of the state armory, where a Guard major general told

them, “I hope you return with Hitler and Mussolini on your shield”—disconcerting words to troops who had enlisted for twelve months of homeland defense. Many preferred to heed President Roosevelt, who had promised a crowd in Boston, “I have said this before but I shall say it again and again and again: Your boys are not going to be sent into foreign wars.” Newspaper editorials across the Midwest caught the same spirit of denial. “World War II is a battle of airplanes and naval units,” the *Daily Freeman Journal* of Webster City, Iowa, intoned on February 27, 1941. “No one expects the United States Infantry to leave the borders of the United States, even if this country should get into war.”

Ten months later, war came, and not the pleasant war that required no infantrymen. The 34th Division was rushed to Britain in January 1942 as a symbol of American commitment to the Allied cause. In Britain, the troops unloaded supplies and guarded various headquarters, with little opportunity for garrison soldiers to become combat killers. The division missed large-scale maneuvers in Louisiana and the Carolinas that benefited many other U.S. units. As with the 1st Armored, hundreds of the division’s best men left to form other units; the new 1st Ranger Battalion had been carved mostly from the 34th Division. With the decision to undertake TORCH, the 34th—already in Britain and thus deemed available even if ill-prepared—was consigned to Algeria. The lower ranks were still flush with boys from Iowa and Minnesota, but not the division’s officer cadre: thanks to a general purge of National Guard officers from the Army, the 34th retained few of the leaders who had led them out of the Midwest. Once begun, the turmoil snowballed. In the past year alone, for example, the officers in the division’s 168th Infantry Regiment had been cashiered almost wholesale three times.

Among those who survived the purges was an engaging citizen-soldier named Robert R. Moore. Now aboard the *Keren*, Moore had spent the days since sailing from Britain quelling mutiny in the mess hall and keeping his men occupied with calisthenics and busywork. Of average height, with a broad Irish face and a toothy grin, Moore had gray eyes and a forelock that hung from his crown like a pelt. He hailed from the southwest Iowa town of Villisca, population 2,011, where he owned the local drugstore, a homey place with a striped retractable awning and Meadow Gold ice cream signs in the window. Moore had joined the Iowa Guard in 1922 at the age of seventeen, and six years later took command of Company F of the 168th Infantry’s 2nd Battalion. Known as Cap’n Bob or the Boy Captain, Moore was obstinate, charming, and unsparing, purging the company of those he deemed “no-accounts” and working hard to prepare his Guardsmen for the war no one expected to fight.

Fourteen years later, Bob Moore was thirty-seven. No longer a boy, he was also no longer a captain, having been promoted to major and appointed executive officer—second in command—of the 2nd Battalion. At night on the *Keren,* in his crowded cabin or by moonlight on the weather deck, Moore scribbled letters home and thought often of the last days in Iowa, in February 1941, as the regiment had prepared to leave for what everyone believed was a year’s training. Those days were the benchmark against which all subsequent progress could be measured in the transmutation of ordinary American boys into troops capable of crushing the Third Reich. Moore remembered how the men had plucked the brass “Iowa” insignia from their uniforms and replaced it with a brass “U.S.” He still had the letter he had sent to the 114 men in Company F, ordering them to report to the Villisca armory with “3 suits of underwear (either long or short, whichever you wear); 6 handkerchefs; 6 pair of socks (*no silk*); 1 white shirt (if you have one. It is not necessary, however).” For three weeks they had practiced the manual of arms in the same soup-bowl helmets their fathers had worn at the Meuse-Argonne, with the same Springfield bolt-action rifles. They pitched tents on the town square, grousing about their four-buckle shoes, which they swore the Army had deliberately designed to be an inch shorter than the average depth of mud; then they ate chicken-fried steak in the Presbyterian church basement. The Methodists organized a town banquet honoring the departing warriors with roast turkey

served by home economics students in red, white, and blue uniforms. The after-supper program included a solo, “If I’m Not at the Roll Call,” and a reading of “Old Glory” by Miss Eva Arbuckle. A local booster supplied a tune with these encouraging lyrics: “The boys are okay, you need have no fears / For they’ve drilled each week for the last three years.” The splendid evening ended with the townfolk on their feet singing “God Bless America,” followed by the mournful notes of “Taps” from the company bugler.

Then the time had come to leave, and in thirty-two Iowa towns during the first week of March 1941 the troops gathered at their armories while citizens lined the streets leading to the train depots. Aging veterans of the Great War, their shadows stretching long and blue across the snow, stamped their frozen feet and reminisced about their own call to the colors nearly a quarter century before. In Des Moines, a live radio broadcast covered the progress of 600 men of the 168th Infantry from East First Street across the Grand Avenue Bridge to Union Station. When the band launched into Sousa’s “Field Artillery March,” a haunting anthem of World War I, a mother marching with her son had shrieked, “Those bastards! They promised they’d never play that again!” At Clarinda, the high school band played “God Be with You Until We Meet Again” as the antitank company boarded the Burlington special. At Red Oak, where officers from Company M had urged mothers to stay home and “avoid any emotional display as the men leave for their year’s training,” scores of tearful mothers thronged the platform, clinging to their sons in a last embrace.

And in Villisca, on March 2, cars lined the village square and 1,500 people spilled from the little depot into the adjacent streets. “Most cars I ever saw in Villisca on Sunday morning,” said the graybeards, before launching into another account of the departure of ’17. Shortly before eight A.M., someone spotted the flash of the drum majorette’s baton on Third Avenue. “Here they come!” the crowd murmured. Behind the Company F guidon, Bob Moore led his men across the viaduct in perfect march step. At the station, he commanded them to halt and fall out for final hugs and handshakes and murmured words of reassurance no one quite believed. An airplane circled overhead. “There’s a German bomber!” a prankster shouted. A nervous titter rippled through the crowd. Then the fatal order was given, and the men disentangled themselves to heave their packs into the coaches, blowing kisses through the windows. With a shudder, the train lurched forward, and a great cry formed in the lungs of those standing on the platform, a roar of pride and hope and dread of all that was yet to come.

The boys are okay, you need have no fears. Eighty-seven weeks had passed since that moment, far short of the three years Sylvanus Thayer deemed necessary to make a good army from the best men. Bob Moore knew he was a better officer now, and that his men were better soldiers. But whether the division was worth a damn remained to be seen.

* * *

As the convoy neared the Mediterranean in early November, the men finally learned their destination: Algeria. Grumbling subsided. A new sense of mission obtained as the troops realized they were soon to attempt the most daring amphibious operation in the history of warfare.

“Everyone was excited and trying to be calm,” one private wrote. Someone from the 1st Ranger Battalion on H.M.S. *Ulster Monarch* mistook two frolicking porpoises for torpedoes and a brief, if intense panic ensued. Francophone officers in the 1st Infantry Division offered French lessons, only to emerge from their wardroom classes shrouded in chalk dust, with expressions of despair. American soldiers in yellow Mae Wests did jumping jacks on deck while chanting, *“Nous sommes soldats américains, nous sommes vos amis.”* To obscure the British role in TORCH, each Tommy sewed an American flag on his sleeve. “Long as it saves lives we don’t care if we wear the bloody Chinese flag,” a British officer said. A newly uncrated fifteen-page pamphlet advised, “Never smoke or spit in front of a mosque” and “When you see grown men walking hand in hand, ignore it. They are not

queer." Repeated lectures stressed such respect for Arab dignity that many GIs were said to think of the North Africans as the "First Families of Virginia, in bathrobes."

Shortly after sunset on November 5, the convoy began to swing east, past the Pillars of Hercules. Soon the fleet would split apart, with 33,000 soldiers bound for Algiers and 39,000 for Oran. Wisps of mist drifted across the forecastles. Anti-aircraft gunners flipped up the collars on their peacoats, scanning a sky teeming with stars but still empty of enemy planes. Gibraltar loomed off the port bow. The lights of Algeciras, on the Spanish coast to the north, and Ceuta, in Spanish Morocco to the south, brought thousands of men on deck. Most had not seen a city illuminated at night in months or even years; the vision made them yearn for home and peace.

"The die is cast," Ted Roosevelt wrote his wife, "and the result is on the knees of the gods."

A Man Must Believe in His Luck

KNOWN as TUXFORD in British codebooks and as DURBAR in the American, Gibraltar by any name was formidable. Guns bristled like needles from the great slab of Jurassic limestone, three miles long and a mile wide. British sentries patrolled the perimeter against all enemies of empire, keeping an especially keen eye on the surveillance teams—known to the Tommies as Der Führer's Snoopers—that watched the Rock from La Línea on the Spanish side of the border. Canadian miners bored relentlessly with gelignite explosives and special drill bits, designed for the obdurate Rockies and edged with nine carats of industrial diamonds. Thirty miles of tunnel now wormed through Gibraltar. Compressed-air shovels removed the spoil, which engineers tamped into the sea to extend the airfield's runway another 250 yards. Oilers, freighters, and refueling men-of-war filled the harbor, "as thick as logs behind a mill dam." Tars on liberty wandered the narrow cobblestoned streets of Gibraltar town, delighted to learn that liquor was still just ten shillings a bottle.

The Snoopers had much to observe. Fourteen squadrons of fighter planes that had arrived by sea in crates over the past few weeks now stood assembled, wing to wing, around the colonial cemetery. The Gibraltar racecourse starter's box had been converted into one of the world's busiest control towers. Several hundred pilots took turns flying patrols in their Spitfires and Hurricanes to master local conditions; winds shearing off the cliffs could be so treacherous that windsocks at either end of the runway often pointed at each other.

Late in the afternoon of November 5, 1942, as the convoys bound for Algeria first nosed into the Mediterranean, five B-17 Flying Fortresses touched down on the airfield after a harrowing flight from England. Their departure from Bournemouth had twice been postponed by heavy fog on the Channel coast; as one pilot reported, "even the birds were walking." Having flown only a hundred feet above the Atlantic, to evade enemy fighters, the planes then circled Gibraltar for an hour until the crowded runway could be cleared.

Staff cars pulled up to the stairs beneath each bomber to shield the arriving passengers from prying eyes. Their leader, disembarking from a plane named *Red Gremlin,* traveled under the nom de guerre of "General Howe." But the baggage carted through town to the former convent now known as Government House was stenciled "Lieutenant General Dwight D. Eisenhower." At eight P.M. Greenwich time, he cabled London, "Command post opens Gibraltar, 2000 Zulu, 5 November. Notify all concerned."

Eisenhower left the guest suite on the second floor, ignoring the fat cask of sherry in the governor-general's drawing room, and immediately headed for the tunnel angling into Mount Misery above the harbor. A guard in the sentry box snapped a salute as the TORCH commander and his staff marched past on their way to the command center. In the future Eisenhower would jog the half mile,

but this evening the ten-minute walk allowed his British hosts to describe the underground lair that would be his headquarters for the next three weeks.

It was a subterranean village, with sewers, heating pipes, and water mains threading the tunnels. Signposts pointed down oblique shafts to a laundry and Monkey's Cave Convalescent Hospital. A naked bulb burned every twenty-five feet, casting eerie shadows on the weeping limestone walls. Duckboards bridged the puddles, and clattering ventilation fans discouraged conversation. Rats were a nuisance; they even ate uncovered bars of soap. Galleries had been cut for three dozen offices built with corrugated sheeting. Jerry cans caught the dripping water.

Eisenhower's brisk stroll also let the British take his measure. There was that incandescent grin, of course, said to be "worth an army corps in any campaign." His eyes were wide-set and unwavering, his head broad-browed and perfectly centered over squared shoulders. Both his face and his hands moved perpetually, and he exuded a magnetic amiability that made most men want to please him. Perhaps that was because, as one admirer asserted, they intuited he was "good and right in the moral sense," or perhaps it was because, as a British air marshal concluded, "Ike has the qualities of a little boy which make you love him."

In his rapid rise, talent, opportunity, and fortune converged improbably—to many, it seemed, providentially. Patton—who earlier in the year had told Eisenhower, "You are my oldest friend"—privately claimed the initials "D.D." stood for "Divine Destiny." Thirty months earlier, Eisenhower had been a lieutenant colonel who had never commanded even a platoon in combat. Young Ike, the third son of a failed Midwestern merchant turned creamery worker, had chosen a military career because West Point provided a free education. After an indifferent cadetship he embarked on an ordinary career as a staff officer, stalled at the middling rank of major for sixteen years. Even his first venture into the rarefied circles he would inhabit for two decades was inauspicious: the White House usher's log for February 9, 1942, recorded the initial visit to the Oval Office of one "P. D. Eisenhauer."

His worldview seemed conventional, his gifts commensurate with the modesty he exuded. He was a true believer in Allied righteousness: "If [the Axis] should win we would really learn something about slavery, forced labor, and loss of individual freedom." Congenitally willing to make decisions and shoulder responsibilities, he had limited opportunties for either in the interwar Army. "There's a lot of big talk and desk hammering around this place—but very few *doers*!" he wrote in frustration. He took pride in being apolitical, as required of American Army officers, and he impressed others—as one British admiral later noted—as "completely sincere, straightforward, and very modest," but "not very sure of himself."

Yet he possessed depths enough to resist easy plumbing. "I have the feeling," the war correspondent Don Whitehead later wrote, "that he was a far more complicated man than he seemed to be—a man who shaped events with such subtlety that he left others thinking they were the architects of those events. And he was satisfied to leave it that way." Eisenhower's sincerity and native fairness were so transparent that they obscured an incisive intellect. He had read much and thought much, concluding soon after the first world war that a second was inevitable—friends called him Alarmist Ike—and that the winning side must fight as a coalition under a unified command. He graduated first in his class at the Army's staff college and served six years—in Washington and the Philippines—on the staff of that American Machiavelli, Douglas A. MacArthur, learning courtier's arts best displayed in a palace or a headquarters.

His capacity for hard work was heroic; in the past eleven months, he had taken just one day off, which he spent practicing pistol marksmanship outside London. He wrote well and spoke very well; the infamous "wandering syntax" of his White House years, one historian concluded, was "contrived for presidential purposes." His frequent "Dear General" letters to Marshall were dictated with clarity,

precision, and occasional obsequiousness, as in this of October 20, 1942:

> Whenever I'm tempted to droop a bit over the burdens cast upon us here, I think of the infinitely greater ones you have to bear and express to myself a fervent wish that the Army may be fortunate enough to keep you at its head until the final victory is chalked up.

To Mark Clark and other intimates, Eisenhower claimed he would rather be leading a division into combat, but the bravado rang hollow. So, too, did his posture of steely ruthlessness, a quality he had yet to develop. "I find," he wrote in October, "that all my senior commanders are still inclined to regard inexcusable failures and errors with too tolerant an eye." As if fearing his own exposure, he had written a friend, "Fake reputations, habits of glib and clever speech, and glittering surface performance are going to be discovered and kicked overboard."

As D-Day for TORCH drew near he affected a hearty confidence. "Never felt better in my life," he wrote on October 12, two days before his fifty-second birthday, "and, as the big day approaches, feel that I could lick Tarzan." In fact he had been irritable and often depressed, smoking up to four packs of Camel cigarettes a day. To Marshall he would concede only that "it has been a trifle difficult to keep up, in front of everybody, a proper attitude of confidence and optimism." Not until years later did he acknowledge "the sober, even fearful, atmosphere of those days." For now, the concealment of his anxieties was part of the art of generalship.

Inside Gibraltar, just off Green Lane and Great North Road, several Nissen huts housed the operations center. The armada from Britain inched eastward on the charts of the Mediterranean that covered the wall. A map of the eastern Atlantic charted the estimated position of Hewitt's fleet. A chagrined British officer showed Eisenhower the dank office he would share with Clark. It was an eight-foot-square cell, with a wall clock, maps of Europe and North Africa, and several straight-backed chairs. The plain desk held a water carafe, a pen set, and an ancient telephone of the sort surmounted with dual bells. Eisenhower was so amazed to find himself in command of Fortress Gibraltar that he hardly noticed the drab setting.

For forty-eight hours he paced and smoked. Communications with London and Washington, via ocean cable, were good, but he had nothing to report. The convoys from Britain kept radio silence, and of Hewitt's task force virtually nothing was known—except that meteorologists forecast bad conditions in Morocco, with fifteen-foot swells. "Dear Kent," Eisenhower radioed Hewitt, "here is wishing you all the glory there is and greatest success to you and Gen. Patton…. I'll be around close if you need me…. As always, Ike."

On November 6, Eisenhower had time to ask London about the health of his black Scottie dog, Telek. Privately, to Clark, he again grumbled about the decision to invade Africa rather than France. Whether the French in North Africa would resist was still unclear. Although General Mast had guaranteed that there would be no resistance at airfields near Oran and other key sites, on November 4 Robert Murphy in Algiers had relayed a warning from a top French commander, who revealed "orders to defend French Africa at all costs, so that we should not make the mistake of attacking." Murphy sent another panicky cable insisting that TORCH be delayed at least two weeks to sort out Vichy politics, and was brusquely dismissed; the proposal was "inconceivable," said Eisenhower. He and Clark agreed that Murphy had "the big and little jitters."

On November 7, Eisenhower drove in a Ford to view the Barbary apes. An "officer-in-charge of Rock apes" was responsible for their survival—a heavy burden, given the British conviction that without its apes, the Rock would be lost to the empire. Eisenhower petted one for good luck. As the

afternoon shadows lengthened, blue searchlights played over the airfield and the Spanish frontier. Fourteen hundred feet below, tiny ships milled about the harbor. Fifteen miles beyond Point Europa lay Africa, a tawny smudge on the southern horizon.

"We are standing of course on the brink and must take the jump," he had cabled Marshall that morning. "We have worked our best to assure a successful landing, no matter what we encounter."

His head cleared, Eisenhower returned to the tunnel and jogged down the Great North Road. The first substantive news from the TORCH transports had arrived. It was bad.

Not until reconnaissance planes finally detected the armada in the western Mediterranean had the Axis high command begun to suspect an invasion. Speculation about landing sites ranged from southern France to Egypt; the German navy considered French North Africa the least likely destination. Hitler believed the Allied ships were bound for Tripoli or Benghazi in an attempt to trap Rommel's Afrika Korps, which had begun retreating from El Alamein after a thrashing from Montgomery's Eighth Army. Hoping to annihilate the Allied fleet in the Sicilian Straits, Hitler ordered his available forces—thirty-five submarines and seventy-six aircraft—to concentrate at the narrows. "I await a ruthless, victorious attack," he proclaimed. Too late, the Führer would realize that nearly all of his ambush force had been positioned too far east.

But not all. At daybreak on Saturday, November 7, U.S.S. *Thomas Stone* was making eleven knots in the left column of ships, thirty-three miles off the Spanish coast. *Stone* was among the few American transports in the armada. She carried 1,400 soldiers from the 2nd Battalion of the 39th Infantry, 9th Division regiment; Eisenhower had added them late to the Algiers assault, although they had little amphibious training. An alert officer on the bridge spotted the white runnel of a torpedo wake several hundred yards off the port side. "Hard right rudder!" he ordered the helmsman, then rang up flank speed. The ship tacked ninety degrees and was nearly parallel to the torpedo's path when the blast ripped through her stern, so hard that sailors on *Samuel Chase,* 600 yards ahead, thought *they* had been struck.

Men already about their morning duties were flung to the deck. Captain B. Frank Cochran, the chaplain of the 39th Infantry, had risen early to read his Bible; now he heard the screams of dying sailors and shouts from a fire brigade heaving ammunition crates over the side. The blast demolished the fantail, snapped *Stone*'s propeller shaft, and killed nine men. Her rudder jammed at hard right, the ship drifted in a languid arc before stopping dead in the water, 160 miles from Algiers. Two white rockets burst above the superstructure, the signal for "I have been torpedoed." As ordered, other ships in the formation steamed past without slowing; swabs watched wide-eyed from the rails.

The 2nd Battalion commander was an obstinate thirty-seven-year-old major named Walter M. Oakes. With *Stone* in no danger of sinking and help summoned from Gibraltar, Oakes assembled his men on deck and announced to lusty hurrahs that they would continue on to Algiers—in twenty-four landing craft. Chaplain Cochran, who was to remain aboard the *Stone,* offered the departing mariners his benediction, and at three P.M. the troops clambered down the boarding nets into the flimsy boats. Among them was a galley cook who stowed away in a landing craft rather than be left behind. "The men in this battalion," he told his new comrades, "are lousy with courage."

Soon enough, they were also desperately seasick. After wallowing about until dark, the matchwood fleet motored south in three columns at eight knots. At eight P.M., the first boat broke down. Ninety minutes later, the flotilla made way again, only to have two more boats stall. Overheated engines and ruptured oil lines now spread like the pox, with all boats forced to stop during each repair. An east wind rose, and with it the sea, forcing the men to bail with their helmets. At eleven P.M., the

corvette H.M.S. *Spey*, assigned to guide the craft to Algiers Bay, darted off to investigate a mysterious radar contact four miles to the east. As the puttering boats waited, a white flare and the roar of 20mm cannon fire tore open the night. When the corvette returned, her chastened captain explained that his men had mistaken landing boat No. 28—lost and headed the wrong way—for an enemy submarine. Fortunately, the shots missed.

Shortly after midnight, boat No. 9 reported she was sinking after colliding with another craft. The men scrambled off and the seacocks were opened. By this time, the flotilla was making less than four knots, with a hundred miles still to cover. Tow ropes broke, engines seized up, retching soldiers by the hundreds hung their heads over the gunwales and prayed for land. Major Oakes agreed to cram the men into seven sea-worthy boats and scuttle the rest, a task *Spey*'s gunners undertook with uncommon zeal.

Even then the cause was lost—the sea too great, the craft too frail. Sodden and miserable, the battalion and its stowaway cook gingerly boarded the *Spey*. With all deliberation, to avoid shipping seas that would wash men overboard, the corvette steamed south, nearly foundered by the burden of an extra 700 men, but determined to invade Algiers, however belatedly.

* * *

Some hours passed before Eisenhower learned that the first dire reports about the *Stone*, like most first dire reports, were exaggerated. She was not sinking; her troops had not perished. By the time an accurate account reached Gibraltar, however, he was occupied with a challenge to his generalship more distressing than a mere torpedo strike. The French had arrived.

General Henri Honoré Giraud had been plucked from the Côte d'Azur two days earlier by the ubiquitous H.M.S. *Seraph*. He wore a gray fedora and a wrinkled herringbone suit, with field glasses around his neck; stubble filled the hollows of his cheeks. Nor had his appearance been improved by a partial ducking during the perilous transfer from a fishing smack to the submarine. But his bearing was imperious and his handlebar mustache magnificent. Tall and lean, he marched down the Great North Road tunnel as though it were the Champs Élysées. It was then five P.M. on November 7.

In a briefcase, Giraud carried his own plans for the invasion of North Africa, the liberation of France, and final victory over Germany. He stepped into the tiny office where Eisenhower and Clark waited, and as the red do-not-disturb light flashed on outside the closed door, he proclaimed, "General Giraud has arrived." Then: "As I understand it, when I land in North Africa, I am to assume command of all Allied forces and become the supreme Allied commander in North Africa." Clark gasped, and Eisenhower managed only a feeble "There must be some misunderstanding."

Indeed there was. Eisenhower had tried to avoid this meeting in part because the issue of command remained unresolved, and he had even written Giraud an apology for not seeing him, postdated with a phony London letterhead. But when the general showed up at Gibraltar demanding answers, Eisenhower relented.

Giraud was without doubt intrepid. U.S. intelligence reported that his last message before being captured in 1940 was this: "Surrounded by a hundred enemy tanks. I am destroying them in detail." One officer described him flinging men into battle with a rousing *"Allez, mes enfants!"* Thrusting one hand into his tunic like Napoleon, he used the other to point heavenward whenever he spoke of the noble French army. In German captivity, he signed his letters "Resolution, Patience, Decision."

But valor has its limits. Giraud, one of his countrymen observed, had the uncomprehending eyes of a porcelain cat. "So stately and stupid," Harold Macmillan wrote, adding that the general was ever willing to "swallow down any amount of flattery and Bénédictine." Privately, the Americans called Giraud "Papa Snooks."

The general's greatest genius appeared to be a knack for getting captured and then escaping. He

had been taken prisoner in 1914, too, but soon made his way to Holland and then England, disguised as a butcher, a stableboy, a coal merchant, and a magician in a traveling circus. His April 1942 flight from Königstein, after two years' imprisonment with ninety other French generals, was even more flamboyant. Saving string used to wrap gift packages, he plaited a rope reinforced with strips of wire smuggled in lard tins; after shaving his mustache and darkening his hair with brick dust, he tossed the rope over a parapet and—at age sixty-three—climbed down 150 feet to the Elbe River. Posing as an Alsatian engineer, he traveled by train to Prague, Munich, and Strasbourg with a 100,000-mark reward on his head, before slipping across the Swiss border and then into Vichy France.

Now he was in Eisenhower's office, demanding Eisenhower's job. Giraud spoke no English, and Clark, hardly fluent in French, labored with help from an American colonel to translate the words of a man who habitually referred to himself in the third person. "General Giraud cannot accept a subordinate position in this command. His countrymen would not understand and his honor as a soldier would be tarnished." Eisenhower explained that the Allies, under the murky agreement negotiated at Cherchel and approved by Roosevelt, expected Giraud to command only French forces; acceding to his demand to command all Allied troops was impossible. To ease Giraud's burden, the U.S. military attaché in Switzerland had made available 10 million francs in a numbered account. A staff officer with a map was summoned to describe the landings about to begin in Algeria and Morocco.

Giraud would not be deflected. The plan impressed him, but what about the bridgehead in southern France? He believed twenty armored divisions there should suffice. Were they ready? And was Eisenhower aware that Giraud outranked him, four stars to three? But the heart of the matter was supreme command of any landing on French soil. "Giraud," he said, "cannot accept less."

After four hours of this, Eisenhower emerged from what he now called "my dungeon," his face as crimson as the light over the door. He had agreed to dine in the British admiralty mess while Giraud enjoyed the governor-general's hospitality at Government House. Several days earlier, Eisenhower had warned Marshall: "The question of overall command is going to be a delicate one…. I will have to ride a rather slippery rail on this matter, but believe that I can manage it without giving serious offense." Unfortunately, Clark had ended this first meeting by telling Giraud, "Old gentleman, I hope you know that from now on your ass is out in the snow." Eisenhower dashed off a quick message to Marshall, closing with the simple confession: "I'm weary."

Dinner at Government House, where the sherry cask was always full and the larder well provisioned, softened Giraud not a whit. Back in Eisenhower's office at 10:30 P.M., with the red light again burning, he again refused all appeals. After two hours of circular argument, Giraud retired from the field. The impasse remained: Giraud wanted supreme command, not the limited command of French troops offered by the Americans. His favorite joke was that generals rose early to do nothing all day, while diplomats rose late for the same purpose; tomorrow's dawn would bring another opportunity for inaction, and he announced plans to shop for underwear and shoes in the town bazaar. Clark threatened him again, although less crudely this time. "We would like the honorable general to know that the time of his usefulness to the Americans for the restoration of the glory that was France is *now*," he said through the interpreter. "We do not need you after tonight."

Giraud took his leave with a shrug and a final third-person declaration: "Giraud will be a spectator in this affair." Eisenhower muttered a sour joke about arranging "a little airplane accident" for their guest, then headed outside for a few moments of meditation.

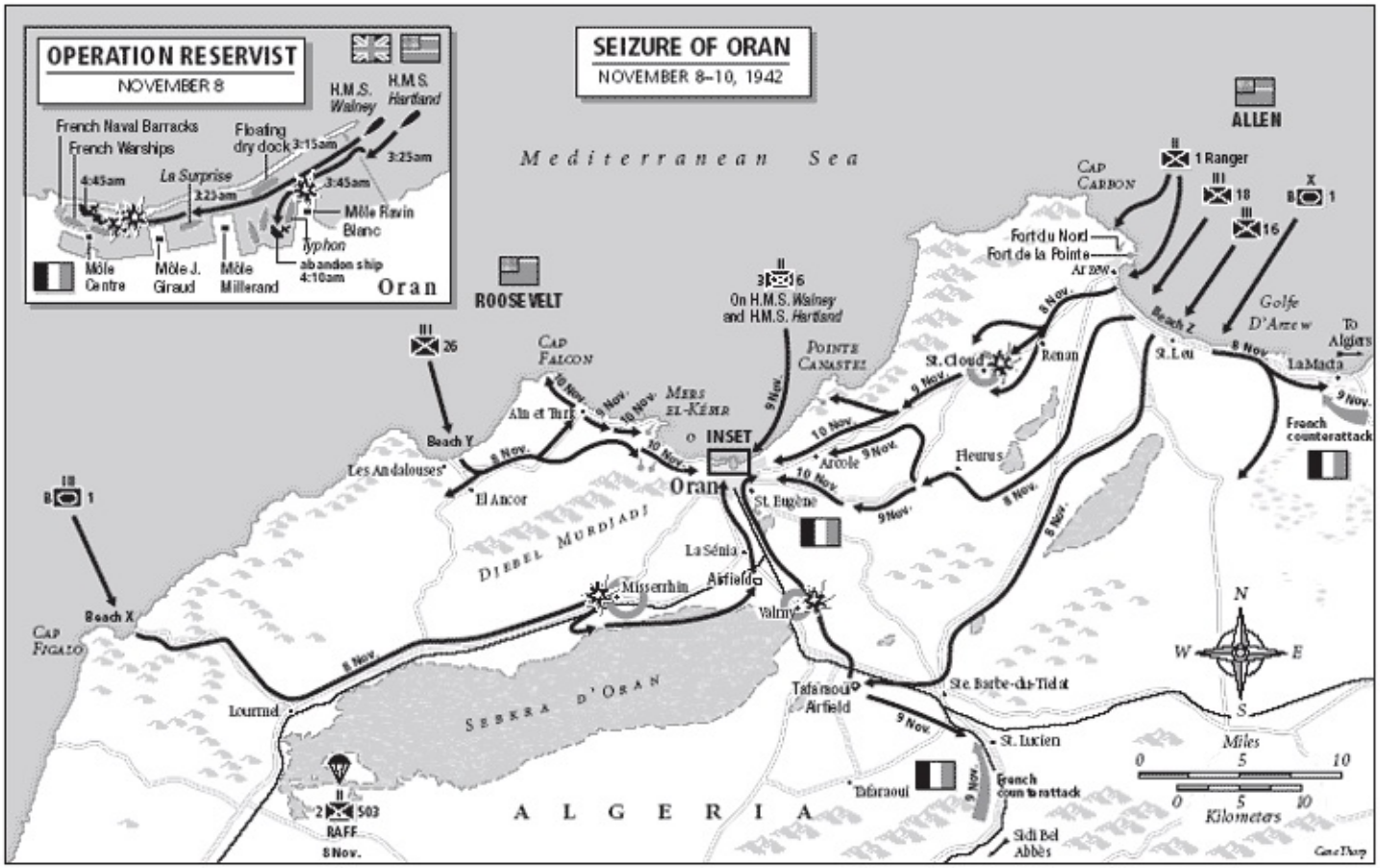
From the face of the Rock the Mediterranean stretched away to merge with the night sky in a thousand shades of indigo. Eisenhower was a gifted cardplayer and he sensed a bluff. Perhaps Giraud was playing for time, waiting to see how successful the invasion was. Eisenhower suspected he would come around once events had played out a bit.

Otherwise, the news was heartening. After more than two weeks of battle at El Alamein, Rommel was in full retreat from Egypt; the British Eighth Army could either destroy the Afrika Korps piecemeal, or drive Rommel into the TORCH forces that would soon occupy Tunisia. And not only had the Axis ambush in the Mediterranean been laid too far east, but a German wolfpack in the Atlantic had been lured away from Morocco by a British merchant convoy sailing from Sierra Leone. More than a dozen cargo ships were sunk, but Hewitt's transports in Task Force 34 remained unscathed. Was it possible that the great secret would hold until morning? There had been some horrifying security breaches—secret papers, for instance, consigned to a blazing fire at Allied headquarters in London, had been sucked up the chimney, unsinged. Staff officers had scampered across St. James's Square for an hour, spearing every scrap of white in sight. Still, the Axis forces appeared to have been caught unawares by TORCH.

To Marshall, Eisenhower had written: "I do not need to tell you that the past weeks have been a period of strain and anxiety. I think we've taken this in our stride…. If a man permitted himself to do so, he could get absolutely frantic about questions of weather, politics, personalities in France and Morocco and so on."

Eisenhower headed back to his catacomb, dragging on another Camel. He spread his bedroll, determined not to stray from the operations center as he awaited reports from the front. "I fear nothing except bad weather and possibly large losses to submarines," he had asserted with the bravado of a man obliged by his job to fear everything. Years later, after he was crowned with laurels by the civilized world he had helped save, Eisenhower would remember these hours as the most excruciating of the entire war. In the message to Marshall he had added a poignant postscript.

"To a certain extent," he wrote, "a man must merely believe in his luck."


OPERATION RESERVIST
NOVEMBER 8
H.M.S. Walney
H.M.S. Hartland
French Naval Barracks
French Warships
Floating dry dock
3:15am
3:25am
4:45am
La Surprise
3:23am
3:45am
Môle Ravin Blanc
Typhon
abandon ship 4:10am
Môle Centre
Môle J. Giraud
Môle Millerand
Oran
SEIZURE OF ORAN
NOVEMBER 8–10, 1942
Mediterranean Sea
ALLEN
ROOSEVELT
On H.M.S. Walney and H.M.S. Hartland
1 Ranger
18
16
1
Cap Carbon
Fort du Nord
Fort de la Pointe
Golfe D'Arzew
Beach Z
St. Leu
To Algiers
La Macta
French counterattack
St. Cloud
Renan
Arcole
Heurus
Cap Falcon
Pointe Canastel
Mers el-Kébir
Aïn el Turk
Beach Y
Les Andalouses
El Ancor
INSET
Oran
St. Eugène
Djebel Murdjadjo
La Sénia
Airfield
Misserghin
Valmy
Cap Figalo
Beach X
Lourmel
Sebkra d'Oran
Tafaraoui Airfield
Ste. Barbe-du-Tlélat
St. Lucien
Tafaraoui
French counterattack
Sidi Bel Abbès
2 503 RAFF
8 Nov.
ALGERIA
N
W
E
S
Miles
0 5 10
0 5 10
Kilometers
Gene Thorp

2. LANDING

"In the Night, All Cats Are Grey"

TWO hundred and thirty nautical miles southeast of Gibraltar, Oran perched above the sea, a splinter of Europe cast onto the African shore. Of the 200,000 residents, three-quarters were European, and the town was believed to have been founded in the tenth century by Moorish merchants from southern Spain. Sacked, rebuilt, and sacked again, Oran eventually found enduring prosperity in piracy; ransom paid for Christian slaves had built the Grand Mosque. Even with its corsairs long gone, the seaport remained, after Algiers, the greatest on the old Pirate Coast. Immense barrels of red wine and tangerine crates by the thousands awaited export on the docks, where white letters painted on a jetty proclaimed Marshal Pétain's inane slogan: *"Travail, Famille, Patrie."* A greasy, swashbuckling ambience pervaded the port's many grogshops. Quays and breakwaters shaped the busy harbor into a narrow rectangle 1½ miles long, overwatched by forts and shore batteries that swept the sea to the horizon and made Oran among the most ferociously defended ports in the Mediterranean.

Here the Allies had chosen to begin their invasion of North Africa, with a frontal assault by two flimsy Coast Guard cutters and half an American battalion. While Kent Hewitt's Task Force 34 approached the Moroccan coast, the fleet from Britain had split. Half had turned toward three invasion beaches around Algiers, while the other half steamed for three beaches around Oran. Since the reaction of French defenders in Africa remained uncertain, in both Morocco and Algeria quick success for the Allies required that the ports be seized to expedite the landing of men and supplies. Oran was considered so vital that Eisenhower personally had approved a proposal to take the docks in a bold coup de main before dawn on November 8, 1942.

The plan was British. Concocted in August and code-named RESERVIST, the attack—similar to a successful British operation six months earlier against Vichy forces in Madagascar—was designed to forestall the sabotage of Oran's port. British intelligence estimated that French sailors would need only three hours to scuttle all merchant ships at their quays, and another twelve to sink the huge floating dock across from the harbor entrance. To encourage a friendly reception from Anglophobic defenders, the British also proposed using mostly American troops aboard two Great Lakes cutters. Once used to chase rum-runners, the boats had been deeded to the Royal Navy under Lend-Lease and renamed H.M.S. *Walney* and H.M.S. *Hartland*. How French gunners would recognize the American complexion of the assault in utter darkness was never clarified, notwithstanding Churchill's warning that "in the night, all cats are grey." Each cutter—250 feet long and built to withstand North Atlantic storms but not shell fire—was fitted with iron plating around the wheelhouse and lower bridge. Code words drawn from an exotic palette were assigned to various docks, barracks, and other objectives to be seized: Magenta, Lemon, Claret, Fawn, Heliotrope, and Scarlet.

To command RESERVIST, the British chose a voluble fifty-three-year-old salt named Frederick Thornton Peters. Thin lipped, with arching half-moon eyebrows, Captain Peters had returned to the Royal Navy in 1939 following a twenty-year hiatus. After commanding a destroyer flotilla on convoy duty, he headed a training school for intelligence agents in Hertford; his students included Kim Philby and Guy Burgess, who would be notorious soon enough as British traitors. Peters razored his jowls so vigorously that they had a blood sheen. He favored slender black cheroots, preferably lit by a toady with a ready match. "Rain, darkness, and secrecy followed him," one acquaintance wrote. Now glory

was his goal. Peters meant not only to prevent sabotage of the port but also to capture the fortifications and accept Oran's surrender. "This," he confided, "is the opportunity I have been waiting for."

Peters worried the Americans, and so did his plan. Even Churchill acknowledged that the catastrophe at Dieppe in August had "showed how a frontal assault on a defended port was doomed to failure." Naval wisdom since Admiral Horatio Nelson's day held that "a ship's a fool to fight a fort." At a minimum, one British theorist argued, "defenders must be drenched with fire and reduced to a state of gibbering." No drenching bombardment would precede RESERVIST, and no defenders would gibber. An intelligence report warned, "The number of naval vessels in the Oran harbor varies daily, and [they] are capable of delivering heavy, long range fire." The timing of the attack caused particular consternation. Originally, RESERVIST was to coincide with the first beach landings east and west of Oran. But now the cutters were to enter the harbor two hours after the landings had started, allowing time to cancel the mission if the French appeared either particularly inflamed or conveniently supine. The Royal Navy insisted RESERVIST was "more a Trojan horse operation than an assault."

Convinced that Peters planned to attack regardless of conditions ashore, the senior U.S. Navy officer in the Oran task force, Rear Admiral Andrew C. Bennett, protested to Eisenhower. "If determined resistance is met from the French navy, which seems to be the general opinion, it is believed that this small force will be wiped out," Bennett wrote on October 17. "If resistance is determined, then I am convinced that five times the number of troops would be insufficient." RESERVIST was "suicidal and absolutely unsound."

Another American admiral working in London, Bernhard H. Bieri, also protested. But Eisenhower felt obliged in the interests of Allied harmony to heed the British, particularly the four-star admiral Bertram H. Ramsay. "I can't take your advice on this thing," Eisenhower told Bieri. "I have to get my advice from Ramsay." Bieri then approached Ramsay, who replied, "If it doesn't do anything else, it's good for the spirit of the people to carry out one of these operations. If successful, it's a wonderful boost for morale." Further objection from Major General Orlando Ward, whose 1st Armored Division was to provide the troops for RESERVIST, brought only a rebuke from Mark Clark, who had become an enthusiast. "If these craft are fired on by coast defenses, they are to retire," Clark assured Eisenhower on October 13. Ward's misgivings persisted, but, he wrote a subordinate, "My conscience is clear in this matter."

The honor of storming Oran port went to Ward's 3rd Battalion of the 6th Armored Infantry Regiment. First organized in 1789, the 6th Infantry carried battle streamers from Chapultepec and Chancellorsville, San Juan Hill and Saint-Mihiel. The regimental rolls had included Jefferson Davis, Zachary Taylor, and a particularly gallant commander mortally wounded while fighting the Seminoles in a Florida swamp on Christmas Day 1837. "Keep steady, men," he advised before expiring. "Charge the hummock." The current 3rd Battalion commander was a thirty-one-year-old Floridian named George F. Marshall. A West Pointer whose domed forehead crowned a long face and a strong jaw, Marshall had served in the Philippine Scouts and married the daughter of an Army doctor. He had jumped from captain to lieutenant colonel in recent months. If he had doubts about RESERVIST, he kept them private: the mission, he told a division staff officer, was "the finest assignment" possible. He would charge the hummock.

After a few days' training in Britain with grappling hooks and boarding ladders, Marshall and 392 of his men—all that the cutters could carry—sailed to Gibraltar on a Royal Navy cruiser. Arriving on November 5, in time to witness the landing of Eisenhower and his staff aboard the B-17s, the men were ferried to the *Walney* and *Hartland*, which had sailed separately from Northern Ireland. They joined antisabotage specialists, including twenty-six U.S. Navy officers and seamen, six U.S. Marines, fifty-two Royal Navy officers and ratings, and the cutters' British crews. At noon on November 7, the

enlisted men and junior officers learned their destination.

The overloaded cutters wallowed so badly during the short trip across the Mediterranean that soup sloshed from the mess bowls. Neither Peters nor Marshall knew that in Oran a coup organized by Robert Murphy's Twelve Apostles and the Office of Strategic Services (OSS)—the American spy agency—was collapsing. Although a plucky cabal of royalists, Jews, Freemasons, and Communists remained eager to seize the port and other installations, a key conspirator in the army high command had lost his nerve. A coded alert sent to Gibraltar from a secret radio transmitter in Oran—"Expect resistance everywhere"—was not relayed to the Allied task force.

Each cutter flew an American flag the size of a tablecloth. Both boats also hoisted the White Ensign, emblem of the Royal Navy. The British crews had insisted on sailing under their own flag, deception be damned. Peters met his fellow officers for a final briefing in the *Walney* wardroom. "I think," he said, "we've got a good chance of carrying out our mission without firing a shot."

At one minute past midnight on November 8, the cutters' crews took battle stations. Tars stacked extra ammunition in the quarterdeck lockers and the laundry, close to the guns. Scrambling nets were draped over the bows. On *Walney*'s darkened upper bridge, Lieutenant Paul E. A. Duncan of the Royal Navy stood in American battle dress with two pistols strapped low on his hips and a tommy gun clutched across his chest. He was Captain Peters's linguist, and he practiced speaking French with an American accent, murmuring words he would soon bellow over the boat's public address system.

With *Hartland* trailing 600 yards behind, *Walney* stalked the Algerian coast at six knots, carving a brilliant green furrow in the phosphorescent sea. Colonel Marshall's men waited on the mess deck below, sipping coffee and listening to the water hiss along the hull. Physician's assistants spread white sheets over makeshift operating tables. Among them was Marvin P. Clemons, a former coal mine brakeman from Eccles, West Virginia. The battalion surgeon, Captain Robert Fuller, had recently busted his rambunctious assistant from sergeant to private, and Clemons planned to desert after the first payday in Oran. He helped Fuller lay out the surgical instruments, while privately plotting his flight.

Peters, Duncan, and fifteen other men crowded the bridge. Their faces were so blackened with camouflage that close friends could not recognize one another. The amber lights of Oran spilled down the dark hills, then abruptly, at 2:45 A.M., began to wink out. The distant moan of air raid sirens carried across the water. *Walney*'s skipper, Lieutenant Commander P. C. Meyrick, read aloud an equivocal radio message from the task force command ship, H.M.S. *Largs*: "No shooting thus far. Landings unopposed. Don't start a fight unless you have to." The men on the bridge laughed. Their disembodied cackling died away as a flare soared lazily above the docks off the starboard bow. For the first time, Peters saw that a double boom stretched 200 yards across the harbor mouth.

Meyrick ordered the helmsman to swing beneath the shadow of the cliffs east of the port. Two small motor launches that had accompanied the cutters from Gibraltar prepared to lay down a smoke screen. *Walney*'s propellers wrenched at the water as Meyrick came about at fifteen knots for a run at the booms. At a nod from Peters—it was precisely three A.M.—Duncan gripped the microphone and in his faux American accent bawled into the dark: *"Ne tirez pas. Nous sommes vos amis. Ne tirez pas."*

Red tracers arced across the water and the stutter of a machine gun echoed from the Môle Ravin Blanc. Tongues of flame erupted from shore batteries at Fort Laumone above the harbor entrance. Violent splashes sounded from out on the dark water. "Lie flat for crash," Meyrick ordered. "We are approaching boom." With hardly a shudder, *Walney* sliced the first cable and then, "like a wire through cheese," parted the string of coal barges that formed the second boom. She was in the harbor.

A splintering crash cut short all congratulatory banter. One of the motor launches, swerving to escape its own asphyxiating smoke, had collided with *Walney*. No one was injured, but the launch—her bow crushed—fled into the night. Smoke lay across the docks like the densest fog, billowing white beneath the many flares now burning over the length of the port. A searchlight beam swung wildly across the water. Small-arms fire crackled from the docks and jetties, muffled by the deeper roar of the Batterie de Gambetta. An explosion ripped through *Walney*'s bridge, and Lieutenant Duncan fell dead at the microphone, his plea for a cease-fire strangled in mid-sentence, his pistols unfired in their holsters.

Then, silence descended for a long minute as *Walney* crept past the Môle Ravin Blanc and the Môle Millerand toward her objectives at the harbor's west end. French gunners swiveled their attention to *Hartland*, now five minutes behind and caught in the searchlight. On *Walney*'s mess deck, 200 American soldiers had listened to the battle strains above, first with enthusiasm, then with alarm as machine-gun bullets stippled the hull. Several men writhed in pain on the deck. Medics crouched over them and fumbled for morphine. Colonel Marshall darted among his troops, rallying them with stout words, then headed toward the forecastle. As planned, British tars lowered three canoes over the side. One had been holed; it sank immediately, spilling soldiers into the water. Antisabotage teams in the other two paddled furiously toward the docks in Basin Maroc.

As suddenly as it had descended, the lull lifted. Peering through the shattered windows of the bridge, Peters saw the French sloop *La Surprise* gathering speed dead ahead. He ordered Meyrick to swerve and ram the ship, but the French captain was quicker. The first salvo, at 300 yards, smashed the iron plate girdling *Walney*'s bridge, killing the helmsman and others around him. Blinded in the left eye, Peters shouted another rudder command, but he was issuing orders to dead men. *Walney* drifted past at four knots and French gunners raked her decks with another broadside from twenty-five yards, the terrible muzzles almost close enough to stroke.

Worse was to come. As the cutter passed Môle Jules Giraud, a shell detonated in the engine room, causing heavy casualties and wrecking the lubricating-oil tanks. The automatic stop valve closed, the engines seized, and *Walney* was adrift. More shells destroyed both boilers, scalding the crewmen. Two berthed submarines, a coastal battery above the harbor, and French snipers peppered the *Walney* fore and aft. Shells slammed into the wardroom flat, the captain's cabin, the steering compartment. Topside, the dead were piled three deep. Below, the mess deck resembled a charnel house, scarlet with the blood of butchered infantrymen.

Drifting to the Môle Centre at the western end of the harbor, *Walney* came abeam of the moored destroyer *Epervier*. Survivors in a boarding party managed to fling a grappling hook between the destroyer's funnels, but with no steam to turn the capstans the men could not winch the cutter close enough for boarding. Instead, *Epervier* swept *Walney* with her deck guns, killing Meyrick on the bridge, killing the surgeon Fuller in his sickbay, and killing Colonel Marshall, last seen on the forecastle with a dozen of his doomed men, flinging grenades at the French destroyer. Fire now licked the deck. Of the seventeen men who had stood on the bridge an hour earlier, a solitary survivor stepped among the dead in the red glare of the spreading flames. It was Peters.

Hartland fared no better. Trailing too far behind the motor launches to be screened with their smoke, *Hartland* attracted the initial fury of French fire from Fort Laumone. Tracers danced along her deck, killing most of the cutter's gunners even before she reached the harbor. Shrapnel severed a steam pipe, and a banshee shriek pierced the battle din. Shrapnel also temporarily blinded *Hartland*'s captain at the most inopportune moment, causing the cutter to veer to port and strike the jetty six feet from the harbor entrance. Pinned by the searchlight beam and momentarily aground, *Hartland* was holed and burning by the time she heaved herself from the rocks and made port on the second try. The captain, Lieutenant Commander Godfrey Philip Billot, ordered his gun crews to return fire, but he too

was commanding the dead at their breeches. *Hartland* managed only three rounds from her three-inch battery before the guns fell silent for good.

Rounding the Môle Ravin Blanc and approaching the Quai de Dunkerque, the cutter now passed beneath the destroyer *Typhon*. A broadside from 100 feet ripped through *Hartland*'s unarmored hull; she staggered sideways. Shrapnel scythed the bridge, the forward messing compartments, and the dressing station in the wardroom, where medicos and patients alike fell dead. In the engine room, cordite fumes churned with steam from the fractured pipes. Teenage stokers died clutching their shovels. On deck, machine-gun fire swept back and forth monotonously, like a garden sprinkler; the dead were piled so high that survivors could not reach the fire hoses. Sailors helped wounded infantrymen into the unfamiliar life jackets, then heaved them over the side. *Typhon* cased her guns only when the four-inch shells—blowing through *Hartland* like blue flame—threatened other French vessels behind her. At four A.M., Commander Billot dropped anchor and stepped from the bridge; he was immediately wounded in the shoulder and both legs. With ammunition detonating, with flames now funnel high, and with decks glowing red from the inferno below, Billot ordered all survivors to abandon ship.

A mile to the west, *Walney* too was dying. Life trickled across the deck and spilled into the water. Sergeant Ralph Gower clawed his way topside, lost consciousness near the rail, and awoke to find himself pinned beneath a stack of corpses. "Them dead men wouldn't move much," he later said. Marvin Clemons, the demoted physician's assistant, would not have to desert after all: Captain Fuller was dead, and Clemons took four bullets in the right leg before struggling through the water to refuge on a dock. Leo S. Disher, Jr., a journalist aboard *Walney*, struggled to safety despite twenty-five wounds and a life preserver shredded by shell fire. An American soldier yanked Disher from the water with one hand: the other had been shot away.

Men paddled through the oily scum, clinging to flotsam and shielding their heads from hot shrapnel hissing into the water all around. Some French sailors on the docks and aboard the *Epervier* helped rescue survivors. Others murdered the men as they swam, picking them off with rifle and machine-gun fire.

At 4:15 A.M., an explosion tore through *Walney*. Already holed by more than fifty shells, she heeled gracefully and sank. Both the Stars and Stripes and the White Ensign were still flying. Peters, who had been helping with the aft mooring lines, managed to reach shore on a raft with ten other men. French sailors took him prisoner.

Hartland burned into the morning, flames licking at her flags. A final, thunderous explosion blew her to flinders and damaged warehouses around the Môle Ravin Blanc. Of the 200 soldiers aboard, only two had reached shore with their weapons. They were promptly captured.

Dawn brought a strange tranquility. The hollow *pock pock pock* of rifle fire ebbed, then died completely. Clumps of floating debris burned like campfires. Far above, at the shrine of Notre Dame de Santa Cruz, a weathered stone madonna extended her hand toward the harbor, as if to offer absolution for all that she had witnessed.

French marines rounded up the survivors. The badly wounded, groaning and bloody, were hoisted into trucks and ambulances. Others had to walk. Barefoot or in tattered plimsolls, clad only in their underwear and coated with oil, they shuffled in a gray drizzle through the streets of Oran for two miles to a military prison. Weeping Frenchmen lined the sidewalks; jeering Arabs spat and threw stones. Casualties in the RESERVIST force topped 90 percent, about half of whom were killed. Of Marshall's 393 men, 189 were dead and 157 wounded. The toll also included 113 Royal Navy dead and 86

wounded, plus 5 U.S. Navy dead and 7 wounded.

The British would claim that the gallantry of RESERVIST so impressed the French navy that it "contributed to the half-hearted manner" with which the port was sabotaged. But there was nothing half-hearted about it. Even as the bedraggled survivors trudged off to jail, the port commandant ordered the seacocks opened. Within hours, twenty-seven French hulks joined *Walney* and *Hartland* on the harbor floor. Masts and funnels broke the surface at cockeyed angles. Three floating dry docks were scuttled, including the 25,000-ton Grand Dock, which blocked the harbor entrance and later required two months to raise. The Royal Navy took small revenge by sinking or driving aground five French warships that had sortied from Oran; among them, *La Surprise* went down with her captain and fifty crewmen at dawn, while *Epervier*—engulfed in flame—beached herself, and *Typhon* was scuttled in the harbor fairway.

Corpses bobbed to the surface for weeks. They were hauled ashore and wrapped in blankets by men in rowboats with grappling hooks. More than 300 Allied dead confounded the living; the task force had included no mortuary team in the initial landing. Unseemly dickering over who would bury the fallen, and where, would persist for days after Oran had fallen. Finally, Army engineers selected a hilltop outside town and dug long trenches from the chalky hardpan with jackhammers and air compressors. Twenty-nine of those buried remained unidentified. Many men were never found, including George Marshall, who left a widow and two young sons.

Ostensibly to avoid antagonizing the French, Eisenhower's senior British naval commander, Admiral Andrew Browne Cunningham, would insist that "silence is the best policy" regarding RESERVIST. The top British planners overseeing the Oran assault each won commendations. Peters, described by one witness as a dejected, hatless buccaneer wearing a black eye patch, won the Victoria Cross—Britain's highest valor award—and the Distinguished Service Cross, the Americans' second-highest award. Five days after RESERVIST, the fickle winds at Gibraltar brought down his plane and Peters, who was en route to see Churchill, was killed. The French with breathtaking cheek billed the Allies for pilotage fees for *Walney* and *Hartland*, citing a local law requiring payment from every vessel entering Oran harbor.

Eisenhower eventually accepted blame for the debacle during a private meeting with the combined British and American Chiefs of Staff. No consequence attended the gesture. But Andrew Bennett, the American admiral most strident in opposing the operation, persisted in his criticism; he infuriated both the British and Eisenhower, who declared he was "going to get that fellow out of there immediately." Unrepentant, Bennett soon found himself in Iceland.

As for Major General Orlando Ward, still in England with the bulk of his 1st Armored Division, news of the battalion's destruction moved him to scrawl in his diary a fragment from *The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám*:

For some we loved, the loveliest and the best
That from his Vintage rolling Time hath prest,
Have drunk their Cup a Round or two before,
And one by one, crept silently to rest.

In Barbary

FAINT odors of Barbary—charcoal smoke, damp earth, decay—drifted seaward to the nearly 40,000 assault troops preparing to envelop Oran from east and west on the early morning of November 8.

Ignorant of the disaster unfolding at the port, the soldiers emptied their pockets of any scraps that could identify their units. The sad detritus of men leaving the world of peace formed little piles in the transport lounges: love letters, dance cards, railroad ticket stubs, lodge pins, driver's licenses. The much maligned cooks roused themselves for a final meal "sumptuous as a condemned man's, and as little appreciated." An enterprising shortwave radio operator managed to pick up the Army–Notre Dame football game and broadcast it to the 16th Infantry Regiment over the ship's public address system. Colonel Alexander N. Stark, Jr., commander of the 26th Infantry Regiment, told his men in a final address, "Let's give them every chance to surrender peacefully with honor, instead of forcing them to fight. This could be a terrific mess if bungled, so let's think clearly." A voice heard in the gloom on one boat deck spoke for many: "Sure I'm scared, you dope. Don't tell me you're not." Soldiers from the 1st Battalion of the 6th Armored Infantry—a sister unit of Colonel Marshall's battalion—stared at the dark coast six miles away. The shoreline was tranquil except for some curious flashes near the harbor. "Looks as if they're not going to fight," the men assured one another.

Under the plan approved by Eisenhower and Clark, Oran was to be captured by a double envelopment of American troops landing on three beachheads—designated X, Y, and Z—spread across fifty miles of coastline and under the overall command of Major General Lloyd R. Fredendall. Tanks beached at X and Z were to race inland before dawn in a pincer movement to help capture two airfields south of Oran while Operation RESERVIST supposedly secured the port. Infantrymen would also encircle the city, preventing any reinforcements from reaching Oran if the French chose to fight. Allied intelligence reported that four thousand French sailors crewed the thirteen batteries of coastal guns protecting the city, and 10,000 soldiers formed the Oran Division.

The largest contingent of invaders—drawn from the U.S. 1st Infantry and 1st Armored divisions aboard thirty-four transport ships—would storm ashore at Beach Z near Arzew, a fishing town sixteen miles east of Oran. Two forts protected Arzew's shingle; the task of capturing them before the main landing fell to the 1st Ranger Battalion. Trained for the past six months by British commandos, the Rangers sported wax-tip mustaches and Vandyke beards in emulation of their tutors. Their lineage dated to French and Indian War irregulars long celebrated for their stealth, their vigor, and their fratricidal brawls. The ranks now included former steelworkers, farmers, a bullfighter, a lion tamer, a stockbroker, and the treasurer of a burlesque theater. Their tough-as-a-boot commander was William O. Darby, a charismatic thirty-one-year-old artilleryman from Arkansas.

From the *Ulster Monarch, Royal Ulsterman,* and *Royal Scotsman,* 500 Rangers packed into landing boats like spoons in a drawer, pale faces peering from beneath their helmet brims. Rather than climb down nets, most men on these particular transports were loaded in their landing craft, which were then lowered from the boat decks by davits and squealing winches. Coxswains cranked the muffled V-8 engines and made for shore, the hulls slapping every ripple. The forward davit cable on one boat snapped as it was being lowered, dumping Rangers, rifles, and Darby's radio into the sea. Amused tars rescued the sputtering men, whose roaring curses filled the night until a louder Cockney voice boomed, "Be bloody thankful our lads dipped you out of the deep."

Two companies, led by Major W. H. Dammer, made straight for Arzew port. They found the French garrison slumbering like a children's nursery. Barrels of sardines curing in brine lined the docks. Eight landing craft lowered their bow ramps, but the sloping seawall was higher than expected and the Rangers slipped back down the slimy stones again and again before finally gaining purchase atop the Grand Quay. Fifteen minutes later they crouched outside Fort de la Pointe, an ancient, moated battery above the harbor. Spotting a French sailor carrying laundry on his head, the lead squad trailed him through the front gate. A few shots rang out, followed by the splat of lead on paving stones and the convulsive jerks of a dying soldier. Rangers took the commandant and his wife into custody, along with sixty sleepy troops. From the landing craft below, a jubilant British sailor bellowed, "For King

and country!" Fort de la Pointe had fallen.

Darby meanwhile led his other four companies across a stony beach a mile north of the harbor. Breathing hard, with the land seeming to rise and fall around them after weeks at sea, the Rangers scrambled up a steep ravine to outflank Fort du Nord. Three companies abreast cut their way through a thick belt of barbed wire, rousting a trio of French soldiers from the dugout they were sharing with an Algerian strumpet. A sudden burst of gunfire forced Darby to pull back his men and dump eighty mortar rounds on the fort. Howling Rangers then rushed the sunken emplacements and shoved bangalore torpedoes—steel pipes packed with explosives—into the muzzles of the four big shore guns. Others dumped grenades down ventilator shafts, flushing out gunners who had barricaded themselves in a powder magazine.

Soon the battery commander emerged, a peacoat over his pajamas and carpet slippers. Another sixty sailors trailed behind, carrying a white flag. At Darby's insistence, the commander phoned a nearby garrison used as a Foreign Legion convalescent home and urged surrender; the Legionnaires obliged by flinging their rifles down a well and getting drunk. The mayor of Arzew, his teeth clacking in terror as he clutched the phone receiver with two trembling hands, also agreed to surrender his town.

Darby hurried to a rocky knob overlooking the sea. The Royal Navy would not move the troop transports closer than five miles from shore until assured that the Arzew guns had been spiked. The prearranged success signal was four green flares followed by four sets of double white star clusters. But Darby's white flares had all gone to the bottom with his radio. Frantically, he fired one green rocket after another. Admiring murmurs ran through the troops packing the ships' decks on the horizon. After confused debate, the task force commanders decided the signal meant what indeed it did mean: that in the land of Hannibal and Scipio Africanus, the Allies had captured their first town.

On the weather deck of S.S. *Reina del Pacifico*, a leathery, lantern-jawed major general paced the rail with the bowed stride of a horseman saddle-hardened as a child. Hair the color of gunmetal bristled from his crown. His thick neck and sloping shoulders implied his uncommon strength, fortified with Indian clubs and a medicine ball during the long passage from Britain. He often jogged three miles after breakfast, then spent the rest of the day cadging cigarettes from subordinates by elaborately patting his empty pockets. Two symmetrical scars dimpled his cheeks: a bullet through the face in the Argonne had removed his molars along with an annoying adolescent stutter. When he was intense—and he was intense now—the old wound caused an odd hissing, like a leaky tire. Pacing the rail, wheezing, he paused long enough to study the lime-green threads of phosphorescence trailing the landing craft below. As the first wave of troops beat toward the horizon, he murmured, "The shore."

Terry de la Mesa Allen: even his name swaggered, an admirer once wrote. Commander of the 1st Infantry Division, Terry Allen embodied the unofficial motto of the Big Red One: "Work hard and drink much, for somewhere they're dreamin' up a battle for the First." His exotic middle name came from his mother, daughter of a Spaniard who fought as a Union colonel in the Civil War. From his father, an artillery officer posted mostly in Texas, Allen derived extraordinary equestrian abilities as well as a proclivity for chewing, drinking, and shooting dice. After flunking ordnance and gunnery his final year at West Point, Allen left the academy, graduated from Catholic University, and took a commission in 1912. Wounded at Saint-Mihiel in 1918 and carried from the field on a stretcher, he regained consciousness, ripped off the first-aid tag, and dashed back to rally his men. The next bullet drilled him through the jaw, right to left, but not before he had broken his fist on a German machine-gunner's head.

The drowsy interwar years were hard on an officer later described by an aide as "the fightingest man I ever met." One triumph occurred in January 1922, when the Texas Cattlemen's Association proposed a marathon horse race to determine whether a doughboy could compete with a real cowboy. Major Allen was chosen to represent the Army against Key Dunne, a world champion bronco buster and wagon boss of a 4-million-acre ranch in Chihuahua. Both men were to ride 300 miles to the finish line at the Alamo in San Antonio, Allen from Dallas and Dunne from Fort Worth.

Averaging sixty miles a day, they clattered across the state, Dunne in chaps and sombrero on a blaze-faced mustang named AWOL, and Allen in his snug Army riding uniform on a big black named Coronado. Crowds and banner headlines greeted each rider as he galloped across Texas. "Enough money was bet on the contest to build a battleship," one commentator noted. Upon hearing mid-race that Dunne was short of fodder for his horse, Allen sent him a carload of hay and oats. After 101 hours and 56 minutes in the saddle, the young officer cantered across the finish line, more than seven hours ahead of his rival. Allen accepted the crowd's huzzahs, then trotted off to play polo.

Less successful was Allen's tenure at the Army staff college at Fort Leavenworth: he finished near the bottom of the class in which Major Eisenhower graduated first, and was denounced by the commandant as "the most indifferent student ever enrolled." But as an instructor at the Fort Benning Infantry School, he impressed the assistant commandant, Lieutenant Colonel George C. Marshall, who rated Allen superior or excellent in nine of ten categories on his 1932 efficiency report (he was only satisfactory in "dignity of demeanor"). His gorgeous young wife, Mary Frances, concluded that horses were Terry's second love, after fighting. When Allen's photograph appeared in a Missouri newspaper article about promising young officers, the caption identified him as a "champion rioter and rebel."

With war, the rioters came into their own. In contemplating who should command the Army's multiplying regiments and divisions, Marshall and his training chief, Lesley J. McNair, kept a list in a safe of more than 400 colonels with perfect efficiency reports. Allen, neither a full colonel nor perfect, was not on it. Rather, he was facing court-martial for insubordination in 1940 when word arrived of his double promotion, from lieutenant colonel to brigadier general. He was the first man in his former West Point class to wear a general's stars. No man better exemplified the American military leadership's ability to identify, promote, and in some cases forgive those officers best capable of commanding men in battle. Among the encomiums that followed Allen's promotion was a penciled note: "Us guys in the guardhouse want to congratulate you, too."

After receiving his second star, Allen announced his arrival at the 1st Division by marching down the street crooning "Deep in the Heart of Texas." The oldest division in the Army, the Big Red One had remained largely intact between the wars; it also retained a high proportion of West Pointers and other Regular Army officers. Its "work hard and drink much" philosophy blossomed under Allen, who received a private warning from Marshall about "drinking in the daytime…. Be on your guard." Before leaving London, Eisenhower issued a tart memorandum noting that of all American soldiers arrested the previous month in Britain for being drunk and disorderly, two-thirds came from the Fighting First.

Proud, self-absorbed, and ornery, the division was as much a warring tribe as a military unit. "Men of the 18th," Colonel Frank U. Greer proclaimed to his infantry regiment, "we're goin' a-fightin'!" When his superiors sent Allen a warning on the eve of TORCH that the French should not be considered hostile, he had it burned. "You should forget you ever saw this message," he told his intelligence officer. "It would be very dangerous for us at this late hour to begin telling our troops that the French are going to be with us." The fervent loyalty the division felt toward its unorthodox commander was fully reciprocated. "Have never had quite so many perplexing problems to overcome," Allen had recently written Mary Fran and their young son. But, he added, the men were trained and ready to fight. "I now have a really intensive faith in the First Division. They are 1,000

percent better than they were…. They are young but are hard and fit. Please remember that I am thinking of you and Sonny all the time."

He swung a leg over the side of the *Reina del Pacifico* and with a gymnast's grace scrambled down the net to the waiting boat below.

Chaos awaited him on the beaches near Arzew. An unanticipated westerly set had pushed the transports and landing craft off course. Dozens of confused coxswains tacked up and down the coast in the dark, looking for the right beaches. Most of the soldiers carried more than 100 pounds of equipment; one likened himself to a medieval knight in armor who had to be winched into the saddle. Once ashore, feeling the effect of weeks aboard ship with a poor diet and little exercise, they staggered into the dunes, shedding gas capes, goggles, wool undershirts, and grenades. Landing craft stranded by an ebb tide so jammed the beaches that bulldozers had to push them off, ruining their propellers and rudders.

The flat-bottomed oil tankers that were supposed to haul light tanks onto the beach instead ran aground 300 feet from shore; engineers spent hours building a causeway through the surf. As British sailors sounded the depths with a leadline, an American officer barked, "Men, this is what we've been waiting for. Let's have at it!" Stepping over the side of the landing craft with his boots tied around his neck, he promptly sank from sight; his troops hauled him back into the boat as the coxswain edged toward firmer ground.

Linguists holding bullhorns hollered, *"A bas les Boches! A bas les Marcon!* Down with the Boches! Down with the Macaronis! *Vive la France!"* A mortar crew with the 18th Infantry fired a special shell the size of an ostrich egg. It soared 200 feet into the night, detonated with dazzling pyrotechnic sparkle, and unfurled an American flag, which floated to earth; given a clear target at last, French gunners replied with eager fire. "Okay, boys, it's open season," one battalion commander ordered. "Fire at will."

Some fired, others balked. Decanted onto a strange, dark shore, many men feared shooting their own. The hillsides hissed with the night's challenge and countersign: "Hi yo, Silver!" and "Awaaay!" General Allen's pugnacity notwithstanding, many officers had been so indoctrinated not to fire first that French resistance simply baffled them. "They're not shooting at us, they're not shooting at us," one infantry commander insisted, even as French artillery plastered his battalion. Others fired indiscriminately, as one soldier near Arzew later confessed, shooting up "half the grapevines in North Africa." Hunting snipers outside Arzew, soldiers from Company K of the 18th Infantry killed an Arab civilian, who tumbled down a hillside with his robes flying about him. Soldiers from the 2nd Battalion of the 16th Infantry shuffled inland with their equipment piled onto a few commandeered mules and oxcarts until mortar fire forced them into a ditch. When some men moved back to reorganize as ordered, panic took hold, and troops fled down the road in disarray.

Confusion and error, valor and misdeed marked this first night of green troops in combat. Hearing an ominous clanking and a motor roar outside Arzew, 1st Infantry troops whispered hoarsely, "Tank coming!" Someone ordered, "Hold your fire." But a volley from twenty riflemen ripped the night, followed by gurgling: the troops had riddled a wine delivery truck, killing the driver in his cab. "The image of that first casualty, an old truck driver caught in the dark, would be with us always," one soldier later wrote. When a captured French colonial soldier reached into his jacket for his identity papers during interrogation, a skittish American guard ran him through with a bayonet. For some, the war would just last a few hours. A soldier from the 18th Infantry, who had been machine-gunned in the legs, arrived at the field hospital in St. Leu murmuring, "Everything's all right." A chaplain lay

next to him until he died. “They’re French and always will be French,” a wounded correspondent observed of those who had shot him. “The French die hard.”

Terry Allen had seen worse. As a battalion commander in France, it was said, he had once pulled a pistol on a hesitant junior officer and shot him in the buttocks. “There,” Allen said. “You’re out. You’re wounded.” Such gestures would be unnecessary here. Allen’s flamboyance made him easy to caricature—he detested the nickname “Terrible Terry” because it made “me appear like a mountebank”—but during thirty years in the Army he had reduced his philosophy of war to a few commonsense precepts. In attacking, he urged his troops to “ride around ’em, over ’em, and through ’em.” And he instructed his officers: “A soldier doesn’t fight to save suffering humanity or any other nonsense. He fights to prove that his unit is the best in the Army and that he has as much guts as anybody else in the unit.”

Using a flashlight with red tissue over the lens, Allen studied the map and saw that his 18th Infantry Regiment was moving toward St. Cloud, steadily if not quickly. The 16th Infantry was angling farther south to outflank Oran. Initial reports regarding Operation RESERVIST sounded grim, but if the landings west of Oran succeeded, the entire task force could expect to have 18,000 men ashore within twenty-four hours, almost as many as the planners in London had hoped.

His “intensive faith in the First Division” remained as unshaken as his faith in God. “I believe if your cause is just,” he often said, “you get divine help.” So far the Lord appeared to be behind the Fighting First, just as Allen had requested in his prayers before leaving the *Reina del Pacifico.* Spotting an empty, bloodstained litter near his command post, he lay down and took a nap.

On the other side of Oran, the landings unfolded with the same mix of anarchy and success. At Beach X, nearly thirty miles west of the city, a flying column of light tanks managed to cross the strand and clank inland by mid-morning despite lost boats, unexpected sandbars, and an engine fire that caused one landing craft to burn through the dawn.

At Beach Y, a European seaside resort midway between Beach X and Oran, more than 5,000 infantrymen began staggering ashore along the broad bay at Les Andalouses. Behind the empty cabanas, a short, wrinkled figure clutching a riding crop stood in a jeep with “Rough Rider” stenciled on the fender, shouting “Get on your feet! Keep moving!” Brigadier General Ted Roosevelt had a voice like a foghorn. Prone men on Beach Y blinked hard, picked themselves up, and staggered inland. When Roosevelt spotted a French cavalry patrol working around the flank, he ordered his driver forward in hot pursuit. Bracing a carbine against his shoulder, he dropped one horseman and scattered the others.

Bookmakers in the 1st Division had fixed the odds at 10 to 1 against their assistant division commander surviving more than two weeks in combat. When he learned of the wager months later, Roosevelt bought one losing bettor a $10 meal and lectured him on the evils of gambling. Despite his antique disregard for personal safety, Ted Roosevelt was hard to kill. Like Allen, he was a force of nature. “T.R. and you are very much of the same type as to enthusiasm,” George C. Marshall had written Allen. “I am a little fearful.” Spotting some old sergeant, Roosevelt would bellow, “Goddam it, but you’re ugly! You’re uglier every day!” The sergeant, beaming at the recognition, would bark back, “The general isn’t a handsome man himself!” Roaring his approval and whacking his leg with the riding crop, Roosevelt then motored down the road in search of another comrade to charm.

Handsome he was not, with his gamecock walk, fibrillating heart, weak and vaguely crossed eyes, and arthritis so severe he needed a cane. In tattered fatigues and a wool cap worn like a cheap wig, he could have been taken for a battalion cook. “He was,” an aide allowed, “the most disreputable-looking

general I ever met." He was also, in Marshall's estimation, "an A–No. 1 fighting man with rare courage, and what is rarer, unlimited fortitude." Along with Allen and Patton, Ted Roosevelt was said to be the chief of staff's "favorite swashbuckler."

His father, the twenty-sixth president, had warned he would "never amount to more than a $25-a-week clerk," and indeed he took a job out of Harvard working in a carpet factory for a dollar a day. But young T.R. became a rich investment banker by 1914, when he was twenty-seven. As a battalion commander in the 26th Infantry, he was gassed and shot; he finished the Great War as a lieutenant colonel with a permanent limp. He had believed war's "unity of purpose" would "sweat the softness off our bones," but came to disavow that fatuous notion, just as he eventually repudiated his ties to the isolationist group America First. After the war he helped found the American Legion; became a successful writer; and served as assistant secretary of the Navy, governor general of Puerto Rico, colonial governor of the Philippines, chairman of American Express, and vice president of the Doubleday publishing house, where he sponsored wholesome books "as American as Indian corn." In 1941, at the age of fifty-four, he returned to active duty. He and Allen, who was seven months younger, were still working out their command relationship; as Marshall sensed, the two men were far too similar to be entirely comfortable with each other.

Now Roosevelt was ashore with his former regiment, the 26th Infantry, a copy of *The Pilgrim's Progress* crammed in one pocket and a history of medieval England in his kit bag. He had landed in darkness with the first assault wave—"little, scarcely seen black shapes" scuttling out of the sea—and immediately began urging the fainthearted to "march to the sound of the guns." Sometimes, writing home to Oyster Bay, he yearned for "the piping days of peace." But not today. His crowded hour had come, and this spectacle was too magnificent to wish away. Glowing shells whirred overhead, and tracers skipped among the hills until their burning magnesium winked out. Artillerymen—including his son Quentin, a battery commander—hauled pack howitzers across the beach. "With their tow ropes over their shoulders they look like the illustrations in the children's Bibles of building the pyramids," Roosevelt wrote.

The French counterattacked with fourteen ancient Renault tanks, five of them so broken down they had to be towed into battle. All were destroyed in minutes, and their return fire barely smudged the American armor. The first colonial prisoners, Senegalese riflemen with rolling eyes and tribal scars notched in their cheeks, marched past to a freighter converted into a prison ship. A forward patrol reported capturing a French headquarters near La Sénia, five miles south of Oran, but the office safe yielded only two brassieres and a volume of risqué tales.

"Soldier, what in the hell are you doing there?" Roosevelt bellowed to a private cowering behind a hillock. "Come on, follow me." The soldier followed, machine-gun bullets pinging about. Breathing hard, Roosevelt stopped his jeep just long enough to announce that he was heading to the front line in search of a French commander ready to surrender. "If I'm not back in two hours, give it all you've got," he said, then jounced down the road.

"Would God I might die with my sword in hand," he had once written in a poem submitted to *Harper's*, "ringed by dead foes all around." But not today.

VILLAIN

THE American soldiers investing Oran from east and west on this Sunday morning knew no more than their five senses told them, minus the half-truths, untruths, and honest errors spread by rumor on every battlefield. The French had obviously chosen to fight, but how hard and for how long no one could guess. Exhaustion, dislocation, and sudden death seemed as much a part of the Algerian landscape as

the sand dunes and *djebel*s—rocky hills—that now echoed with cries of "Hi, yo, Silver!" and "Away!" Even the commanders had only the sketchiest notion of how the overall battle for Oran was unfolding: troops ashore at X, Y, and Z; modest progress toward double envelopment of the city; apparent catastrophe at the harbor. Of the simultaneous landings at Algiers and in Morocco, they knew nothing.

One final element in the Oran invasion remained to play out: the first American airborne operation of the war. It was also among the most daring before or since. On the previous afternoon—Saturday, November 7—556 U.S. paratroopers had gathered at two airfields in Cornwall, on England's southwest coast. Faces darkened with camouflage paint, the men had received printed orders specifying where in their jump suits to carry everything from two pencils (left chest pocket) and toilet paper (right hip pocket), to a razor with four blades (right thigh pocket) and four grenades (field jacket pockets). Slips of rice paper—edible, in case the men were captured—contained secret radio code words, including BLACKBIRD ("paratroops have been dropped") and DUCK ("paratroops have been dropped, cannot find airport"). The soldiers taped their bulging pants pockets to keep them from snagging and prepared to board thirty-nine C-47 transport planes.

The objective of Operation VILLAIN was simple enough: to seize two airfields, Tafaraoui and La Sénia, south of Oran, and hold on until reinforcements arrived from the beach landing forces. Simplicity stopped there. The flight from Cornwall covered 1,100 miles—nearly three times as far as any previous combat jump—at night, across neutral Spain with inexperienced pilots and navigators flying for nine hours at 10,000 feet. Beguiled by German parachute operations in Holland and Crete, Allied planners failed to appreciate the high casualties. British commanders opposed the operation, and had told Churchill they preferred to husband the planes and troops for a quick strike into Tunisia. Even the U.S. Army planners responsible for capturing Oran concluded that VILLAIN would make "no material difference." Eisenhower had shared their skepticism. "That's a long ways," he said dryly, but ultimately yielded to Clark, who urged audacity. "The British just want to take our airplanes and use them for something else," Clark had told Eisenhower.

The 2nd Battalion of the 509th Parachute Regiment, commanded by a short, bullet-headed West Pointer named Edson D. Raff, trained hard. But their practice jumps had occurred in daylight and good weather, using large drop zones. Only four sets of navigation instruments could be found for the 60th Troop Carrier Group. Another thirty-five sets, sent from the United States after urgent pleas, had reportedly "miscarried" in transit. At the last minute, navigators received British instruments, with which they were unfamiliar and which would not work in American planes anyway. Maps and charts were so scarce that only flight leaders received them. Some planes had arrived in Cornwall just a few hours before the scheduled takeoff, and crew briefings were limited to a "few minutes of distracted conversation." The frenetic activity left many pilots so tired they could barely keep their eyes open.

Clark had approved one last complication before leaving London for Gibraltar. Because of uncertainty over the French reaction in Algeria, parallel plans were drafted. If resistance appeared likely, Plan A called for the paratroopers to take off from England at five P.M., jump before dawn, and overpower the two airfields. If the French appeared passive, Plan B called for the battalion to leave four hours later, land at La Sénia in daylight, and prepare for another mission toward Tunisia. Lieutenant Colonel Raff and his men were to listen for a broadcast from Gibraltar on November 7, relayed by the Royal Air Force, indicating which plan to use. The phrase "Advance Alexis" meant: carry out Plan A and expect to fight. "Advance Napoleon" meant: carry out Plan B and expect a docile reception.

In the quiet asylum of a London headquarters, this arrangement perhaps made perfect sense. But in the event it miscarried. Distracted by their negotiations with General Giraud at Gibraltar, Eisenhower and Clark paid insufficient heed to the conflicting reports from Algeria regarding French intentions. Notwithstanding Murphy's warnings and other omens, optimism had prevailed at Gibraltar.

At 4:15 P.M. on November 7, Eisenhower's signal arrived at the Cornish airfields near St. Eval and Predannack: "Advance Napoleon." Peace was at hand. Pilots who had been warming their engines now cut the ignition and strolled to the control tower for another cup of coffee. Four hours later, the paratroopers settled into the bucket seats and tugged the blackout curtains over the windows, chattering about the warm weather that surely awaited them in Algeria. Seventy-eight engines coughed once, twice, and caught. The lead aircraft lifted into the thin fog at 9:05 P.M. Captain Carlos C. Alden, a thirty-one-year-old battalion surgeon flying in a plane named *Shark Bait,* scribbled in his pocket diary, "Dear God, in Thy wisdom help me to come back."

After takeoff, almost nothing went right. Fair weather yielded to squalls over the Bay of Biscay. In dodging thunderheads, the pilots lost sight of one another. Soon, of the thirty-nine aircraft flying over Spain, the largest formation still intact was a mere three airplanes. Few of the navigators were proficient in celestial navigation, which thick clouds made difficult anyway, so the planes flew by dead reckoning. A strong east wind, which meteorologists in Britain had failed to detect, steadily shoved the C-47s westward; within a few hours, the unwitting crews were at least fifty miles off course. Colonel Raff's paratroopers—still expecting a docile reception—huddled beneath wool blankets in the frigid cabins, nibbling British army biscuits and chewing wads of gum to ward off air-sickness.

Two navigation aids dispatched to help the aircraft find Oran also failed. The British ship *Alynbank,* thirty-five miles off the coast, was supposed to provide a homing beacon by transmitting a radio signal at 440 kilocycles. For reasons never adequately explained, she instead broadcast, unheard, at 460 kilocycles. The second aid was more elaborate. An electronic signaling device code-named REBECCA had been smuggled from Gibraltar to Tangiers to Oran in two heavy suitcases. Before midnight on November 7, an American OSS agent named Gordon H. Browne rode in the back of a French ambulance to a deserted pasture near Tafaraoui airfield. After struggling in the dark to erect a nine-foot mast antenna and guy wires, Browne switched on the apparatus and waited all night in the brush among the cooing plovers, unaware that the paratroopers had delayed their departure on the false expectation of peace. At five A.M., with dawn approaching and the gunfire near Oran now audible, Browne abandoned his vigil. He disassembled the antenna and dragged REBECCA into a cactus patch, where he blew her to pieces.

The sun rose on November 8 at precisely 6:30 A.M. to reveal a scatter of paratroopers across the western Mediterranean. One plane landed at Gibraltar and two at Fez in French Morocco. Four others touched down in Spanish Morocco, where the men—banging their fists against a wall in frustration and shouting, "Fuck! Fuck!"—would be interned for three months. Three more planes miraculously found La Sénia airfield, only to be greeted with a barrage of anti-aircraft fire. This awkward welcome, strongly suggestive of peace gone bad, provoked panicky radio chatter among the pilots, who were down to a very few gallons of fuel. On *Shark Bait,* soldiers began pumping up their life rafts. Colonel William C. Bentley, Jr., the senior airman on the mission and pilot of Raff's plane, landed in a grain field to confirm—through the Socratic quizzing of some bemused Arabs—that he was on the right continent. They had at least found Africa.

Airborne once again, Bentley at eight A.M. spotted more than a dozen C-47s clustered on the western fringe of the Sebkra d'Oran, a dry lake bed stretching for twenty miles south of the coast. An armored column nearby appeared to be preparing to attack the grounded paratroopers. Raff ordered troops in the nine planes now straggling after Bentley to parachute behind the tanks. First out the door, Raff landed hard, cracked a rib, and was spitting blood when he learned that the tanks belonged to the U.S. 1st Armored Division. After landing at Beach X, they were heading for the airfields the paratroopers had failed to seize. Several hundred of Raff's men spent the balance of the morning dodging sniper fire. Bentley meanwhile flew on with his gaggle and landed at the east end of the

sebkra, where he was immediately captured. French guards marched him to a cellblock at Fort St. Philippe, where he was locked up with several hundred other Allied prisoners, including oil-coated survivors of RESERVIST.

The final act of VILLAIN was no more glorious. With permission from Raff, a resolute band under Major William P. Yarborough decided to capture Tafaraoui airfield on foot. They had hardly walked a furlong before realizing that mud beneath the *sebkra*'s dry crust made crossing the pan like marching through molasses. Shedding ammunition and wool underwear in a conspicuous trail, the men made for the southern rim of the lake bed. Exhausted, they dug shallow trenches with their helmets and collapsed beneath a blanket of weeds. Yarborough radioed for three C-47s to siphon the remaining fuel from the other stranded aircraft and then come fetch him and his men. No sooner had the planes taken off with Yarborough's group aboard for the short hop to Tafaraoui than cannon fire from six French Dewoitine fighters riddled the fuselages. The American pilots spun around, lowered their wheels, and crash-landed onto the *sebkra* at 130 miles per hour. The Dewoitines made three more strafing passes, killing five soldiers and wounding fifteen. When the marauders finally flew away, a dead platoon leader dangled head down from the doorway of Yarborough's plane, the copilot was slumped dead in his cockpit, and even the most audacious paratrooper was discouraged.

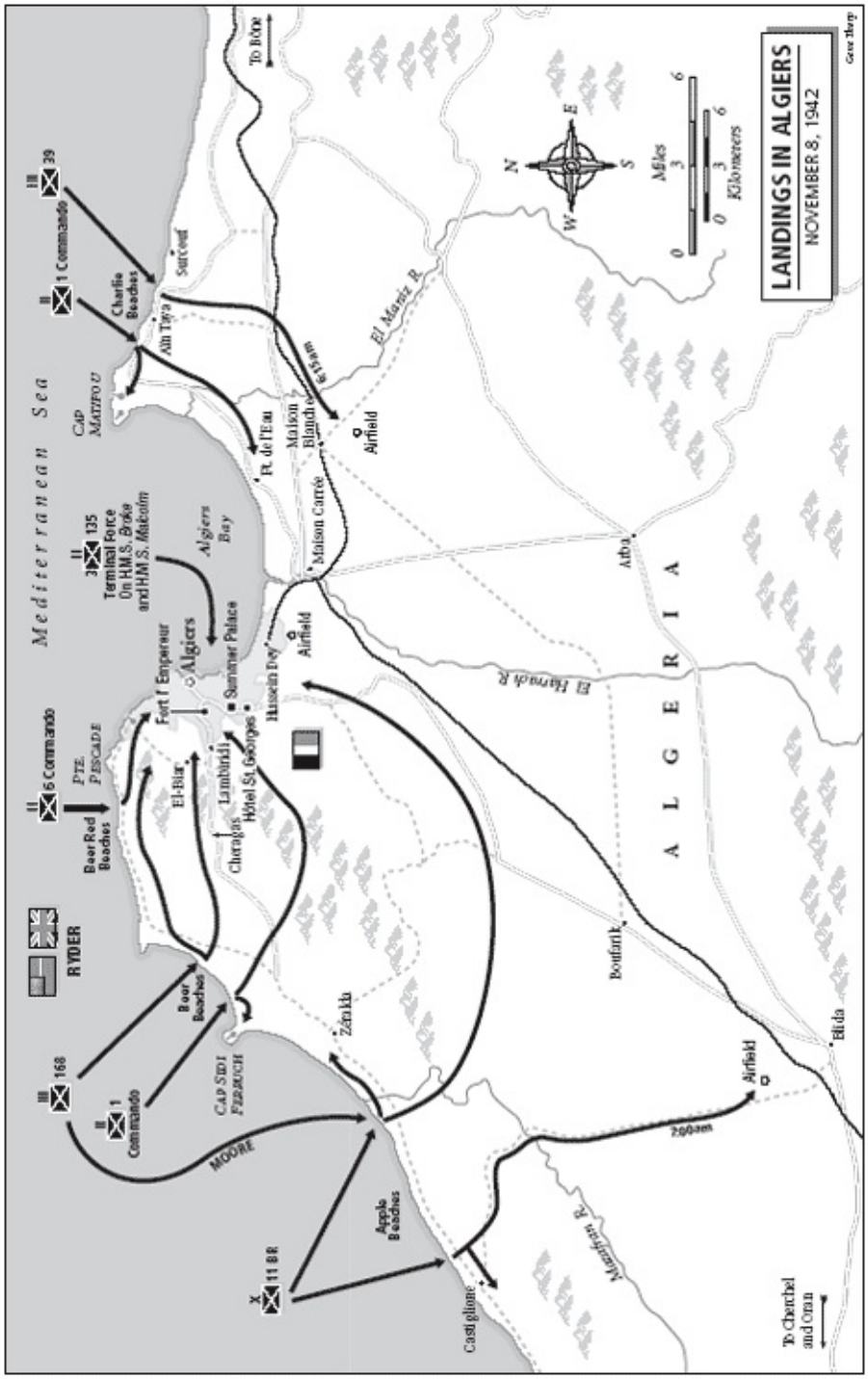
Most of Raff's surviving men arrived at Tafaraoui by truck on November 9. The surgeon Carlos Alden, who had petitioned God's protection in Cornwall, was the sole man in the battalion to reach the field by air on the morning of November 8. He had remained on *Shark Bait* after the other paratroopers got out to walk across the *sebkra*.

British skepticism of VILLAIN had been well founded. The operation contributed nothing to the invasion while expending half of all Allied parachute forces. Just fourteen of the thirty-nine planes could fly again immediately. At a time when every infantry squad was precious to the Allied cause, only fifteen paratroopers were judged fit for another mission within three days.

On the first day of their invasion, the Allies had nearly surrounded Oran. They had put thousands of soldiers ashore with only light casualties. The Royal Navy controlled the sea if not the port. But VILLAIN had demonstrated, like RESERVIST before it, that temerity untempered by judgment would exact a heavy price in this war.

To the Last Man

VIEWED from the great half-moon bay that cradled the city, Algiers spread up the verdant hills like an alabaster vision. Distance lent an enchantment not wholly dispelled by the stench of the Arab quarter or the vaguer odor of French colonial rule. Cinemas, emporiums, and chic cafés lined shady avenues enlivened each evening by promenading boulevardiers. Algiers had been an inconsequential hamlet until Moors expelled from Spain in 1492 took sanctuary there. Like Oran, the city soon thrived on piracy, and for more than three centuries sheltered corsair fleets that terrorized the Mediterranean basin. Barbarossa's sixteenth-century palace still crowned the skyline 400 feet above the harbor; a Western traveler in the 1920s fancied that the old heap "resounded to the groans of Christian slaves."



For more than a century, Algiers had been the epicenter of France's North African empire, a "white-walled city of flies and beggars and the best Parisian scent." To one Frenchman, the old pirate haven now resembled "a reclining woman, white and naked, leaning on her elbow." To Eisenhower and his planners, Algiers was the key to Algeria if not the entire African littoral. As the easternmost landing site in TORCH, the city was to provide a springboard for the subsequent drive into Tunisia. The Anglo-American invaders—thinly disguised as an all-American force—would be followed immediately by British troops who were to pivot ninety degrees to the east and make for Tunis.

So it was that Robert Murphy in the earliest minutes of November 8 pelted through the city's affluent suburbs in his big Buick on the most important diplomatic mission of his life. The American envoy had remained in his office until early Saturday evening, affecting a placidity he did not feel. "Two years of hopeful soundings and schemings," as he put it, were about to be tested. Murphy had been stung by the sharp rebuff from Eisenhower and the White House to his proposed delay of the TORCH landings. "I am convinced," he had cabled Roosevelt, "that the invasion of North Africa

without favorable French high command will be a catastrophe." The reply from Washington had been unequivocal: "The decision of the president is that the operation will be carried out as now planned." Murphy was instructed "to secure the understanding and cooperation of the French officials with whom you are now in contact."

He had done his best. Trusted French rebels, including General Mast, had been given several days' advance warning of the invasion. Upon hearing a prearranged radio message from London on Saturday night—*"Allo, Robert. Franklin arrivé"*—Murphy alerted the rebels that the landings were about to begin. The coup in Oran had evidently miscarried, but in Algiers several hundred French partisans began to seize key installations despite the failure of Clark to deliver the modern weapons he had promised at Cherchel; the intent, a French historian later wrote, was "to chloroform the city." By ruse and by force, the insurgents soon controlled police and power stations, Radio Algiers, telephone switchboards, and army headquarters, where the French corps commander was held incommunicado. Some Vichy officers happily acquiesced in their arrests—"it saved them," one observer noted, "any painful search of their conscience." As for Murphy's repeated radio query to Gibraltar—"Where is Giraud?"—there had been no satisfactory answer.

At 12:45 A.M. on Sunday he arrived at the Villa des Oliviers, a blocky, mustard-hued Arab palace in the well-heeled enclave of el-Biar; brushing past the tall Senegalese sentries, Murphy rapped on the door. A swarthy, mustachioed man in a foul mood came to the foyer. General Alphonse Pierre Juin, commander of all Vichy ground troops in North Africa, usually favored a Basque beret and a mud-spattered cape; at this moment he wore pink-striped pajamas. Maimed in 1915, Juin had been authorized to salute with his left hand, but he offered Murphy neither salute nor handshake.

"I am happy to say that I have been instructed by my government to inform you that American and British armies of liberation are about to land," Murphy said.

"What! You mean the convoy we have seen in the Mediterranean is going to land here?"

Murphy nodded, unable to suppress a nervous grin.

"But you told me only a week ago that the United States would not attack us."

"We are coming by invitation," Murphy said.

"By whose invitation?"

"By the invitation of General Giraud."

"Is he here?"

Preferring not to disclose that Giraud was sulking in a Gibraltar cave, Murphy waved aside the question. "He will be here soon."

Murphy described the invasion forces lurking off the African coast, multiplying their size severalfold. "Our talks over the years have convinced me," he told Juin, "that you desire above all else to see the liberation of France, which can come about only through cooperation with the United States."

Now the opéra bouffe began in earnest. General Juin voiced sympathy with the Allied cause but was hindered by the unexpected presence in Algiers of his superior officer. "He can immediately countermand any orders I issue," Juin said. "If he does, the commands will respect his orders, not mine." Twenty minutes later, after a quick phone call and the hurried dispatch of a driver with the Buick, one of the war's most reviled figures strolled into the Villa des Oliviers.

In a truncated nation of small men, Admiral Jean Louis Xavier François Darlan stood among the smallest. Stumpy and pigeon-breasted, given to jocose vulgarity and monologues on the efficiency of the German army, he was the sixty-one-year-old scion of French sailors. The death of his great-grandfather at Trafalgar supposedly fed Darlan's pathological hatred of the British, although it was the Americans who called him Popeye. The French fleet was his fiefdom, but he also served as Marshal Pétain's dauphin and commander of all Vichy armed forces. His favors to the Nazis had included the

use of Vichy airports in Syria and resupply aid to Rommel through Tunisia. Churchill called him "a bad man with a narrow outlook and a shifty eye."

By a coincidence that would forever seem either contrived or divine, Darlan was in Algiers to attend his son, Alain, who lay in the Hôpital Maillot so reduced by polio that his coffin had been ordered. Several times in the past two years, the admiral had privately hinted at supporting the Allies if circumstances warranted. Just before Eisenhower left London for Gibraltar, Churchill had told him, "If I could meet Darlan, much as I hate him, I would cheerfully crawl on my hands and knees for a mile if by doing so I could get him to bring that fleet of his into the circle of Allied forces." Roosevelt on October 17 had sent Murphy similar if less histrionic instructions, authorizing any arrangement with the Vichy admiral that might help TORCH.

But Darlan seemed disinclined to parley. Upon learning of the imminent invasion, he flushed and replied, "I have known for a long time that the British are stupid, but I have always believed Americans were more intelligent. Apparently you have the same genius as the British for making massive blunders."

For fifteen minutes, Darlan paced the room and sucked on his pipe. Murphy shortened his stride and paced beside him, insisting, "The moment has now arrived!" The admiral waved off the entreaties. "I have given my oath to Pétain," he insisted. "I cannot revoke that now." But he agreed to radio Vichy for guidance. Upon stepping outside, however, the men found that the Senegalese guards had been replaced by forty rebels wearing white armbands and armed with long-barreled rifles dating to the Franco-Prussian War. Juin was incredulous. "Does this mean we are prisoners?" he asked.

It did. Murphy's colleague, the Apostle Kenneth Pendar, was dispatched to the Admiralty office downtown with Darlan's sealed message for Vichy, which Pendar promptly opened, read, and discarded as insufficiently zealous for the Allied cause. Returning to the villa, Pendar told Darlan cryptically, "The necessary has been done."

As the impasse dragged on with no word from Vichy and no sign of the Allied invaders, Murphy dimly wondered whether he had confused the date and launched his putsch a day early. The hours ticked past. Dawn approached. Darlan stopped pacing and puffing long enough to offer some thoughtful political advice. "Giraud is not your man," he said. "Politically he is a child. He is just a good division commander, nothing more."

The insurrection, in fact, was collapsing. Loyalist forces gathered their composure—"This isn't just a civil defense drill?" one perplexed Vichy officer asked—and recaptured the strong points one by one. At army headquarters, insurgents and loyalists sang the "Marseillaise" together before the rebels stacked their arms and filed from the building. Upon learning of the events in Algiers and Oran, Pétain in Vichy sent President Roosevelt a curt message: "France and her honor are at stake. We have been attacked. We will defend ourselves."

A loyalist patrol with three tanks arrived at the gates of the Villa des Oliviers, dispersing the rebels and locking Murphy and Pendar in the porter's lodge. Juin's aide rushed about waving an enormous revolver at the Americans, crying, "What have you done? What have you done?" Pendar wondered if he had blundered into a production of *Pirates of Penzance.* A Senegalese sentry offered each American a Gitane cigarette, the customary courtesy to those about to face a firing squad.

Regrettably, the Allies had planned a frontal assault on Algiers harbor that was identical to RESERVIST in folly. Again the mission was concocted and commanded by the British, with a predominately American supporting cast. Code-named TERMINAL and designed to capture the port intact, the attack featured two antiquated destroyers, H.M.S. *Broke* and H.M.S. *Malcolm,* under

Captain H. L. St. J. Fancourt of the Royal Navy. Engineers welded quarter-inch iron sheeting, three feet high, around the upper deck of each ship as a thin shield against sniper fire. Forward compartments in the bow were filled with concrete, and heavy armor plates covered the prow. About the time Murphy began wondering whether he had confused the invasion date, these floating rams reached the eleven-fathom line in the Bay of Algiers and swung west toward the boom blocking the harbor entrance.

The 686 soldiers aboard *Broke* and *Malcolm* came from the 3rd Battalion of the 135th Infantry, which had left Minnesota almost two years earlier to join her sister regiments from Iowa in the 34th Division. The regiment's motto—"To the last man"—had been hard won at Gettysburg. The 3rd Battalion called itself "the Singing 3rd," and had mastered an impressive repertoire of barracks ballads, including one bawdy British ditty called "There's a Troopship Now Leaving Bombay." The unit retained its Minnesota accent, and the ranks were full of Ericksens, Carlsons, and Andersens. The battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel Edwin T. Swenson, was a former assistant warden of the Minnesota State Penitentiary at Stillwater.

Witty and bighearted, with the craggy face of a prizefighter, Colonel Swenson was reputedly capable of swearing fluently for hours without ever repeating an expletive; he had told the British that his battalion's top sergeant was whoever could whip him in a fistfight. Captain Fancourt in turn told Swenson that Allied commandos would capture French batteries overlooking the port; that several of the French guns could not be tilted low enough to hit targets below anyway; and that initial landings east and west of Algiers, which would start before the TERMINAL attack, would likely draw defenders away from the harbor. None of this proved true.

The lights of Algiers twinkled as the destroyers made for the boom extending from the crescent seawall. American flags flapped from the masts. Then the city lights went out and searchlight beams scissored across the water. Swenson briefly believed they were meant to direct the intruders toward the harbor entrance. But the beams found and fixed both ships, blinding those on the bridge. Sporadic gunfire opened as *Broke*, with *Malcolm* a mile astern, sheered to starboard to avoid a breakwater and then came about under a thick screen of smoke. A second try to find and sever the boom also failed, as did efforts to shoot out the searchlights and to illuminate the harbor mouth with flares, which were swallowed by the destroyers' own smoke.

By this time, French gunners had ranged *Malcolm*. Beginning at 4:06 A.M., shells smacked through the hull, perforating the boilers and reducing the destroyer to four knots. Swathed in white steam, she made an easy target. Other shells hit the funnels. Fragments sprayed across the deck, where 300 infantrymen had flattened out behind the useless sniper shields. Fire broke out amidships among the pasteboard crates of mortar ammunition stacked on the center hatch. With the ship listing so badly to starboard that her weather deck was only six inches from the water, soldiers hurled flaming mortar crates over the deck rail. *Malcolm* managed to get under way again and limped seaward, where the crew spent the next several hours hosing blood and brains from the deck and heaving the dead overboard in weighted shrouds fashioned from mattress covers.

Then, on his fourth try for the port, *Broke*'s skipper, Lieutenant Commander A.F.C. Layard, spotted a pair of dim green buoy lights marking the harbor entrance. He increased speed to twenty knots and easily sliced through the boom of chained timber baulks. Layard berthed at the Môle Louis Billiard while the destroyer's guns silenced sniper fire from the docks.

Badly shaken, Colonel Swenson and the Singing 3rd were slow to rise from the deck, but eventually scurried across the extended brows to the quay. Swenson instructed his men to "light out like stripey-assed baboons up the wharf until you can get some cover, then fight like hell." But little fighting was necessary. As dawn broke over Algiers, the Americans controlled the electric power station, Morey's Oil Depot, and several warehouses on the southern wharves near the seaplane base.

Round objects that had resembled coastal defense guns in aerial photos proved to be latrines. Church bells across the city pealed out the Angelus call to Sunday mass. A preternatural peace settled over the quays and the handsome white houses stretching up to the Rue Michelet. Soldiers joked about how Algiers smelled like a saloon, the consequence of gasoline shortages that forced most vehicles to burn alcohol. Swenson strained to hear the tramp of boots from the 168th Infantry—the sister regiment from southwest Iowa—marching downhill to relieve their comrades on the docks after landing west of the city.

Instead, he heard the abrupt rush of artillery shells from a battery at Jetée du Nord a mile to the north. French sailors had dismantled an old wall to give the casemate guns a clear field of fire along the waterfront. The third round clipped *Broke*'s forepeak and burst against the quay wall in a great splash of smoke and masonry. With permission from Captain Fancourt, Layard parted all lines and moved the destroyer to a new berth in the lee of a French freighter along the Quai de Dunkerque. Calm returned until 9:20 A.M., when French gunners again opened fire with a howitzer battery above the port. The first six shots missed the destroyer; the next five hit. Shells burst in the chart house and the wardroom. Another blew through the sick bay, killing one physician and tearing the right arm from another, who kept himself conscious with morphine long enough to advise an American medic on how to perform several urgent amputations.

Fancourt sounded the recall siren. But with Swenson's troops scattered across the docks under sniper fire, only sixty men had scrambled back to *Broke* before she again parted lines and zigzagged from the harbor, smoke trailing her like a veil. Private First Class Harold Cullum, shot in the arm and abdomen earlier in the morning, crawled to the end of the pier too late to board; he lay in the sun munching sulfa tablets and sipping from his canteen, watching *Broke* steam from sight. "The morale effect of a destroyer sunk in the port in full view of the town might have an adverse effect on the situation," Fancourt explained three days later. The morale effect of stranding 250 soldiers ashore was not addressed. Holed twenty-two times, *Broke* soon sank anyway, after all hands had leaped to the deck of a rescue ship.

Even with the ship gone, Swenson kept heart. He estimated that four French infantry companies surrounded Môle Louis Billiard—imposing numbers, but not overwhelming. He hesitated to use his mortars and machine guns for fear of killing the civilians who could be seen peering from doorways and intersections. But Royal Navy bombers pummeled the noisome battery on the Jetée du Nord, and Swenson continued to hope that the 168th Infantry would soon arrive as planned. Fashioning breastworks from hay bales and shipping crates, he organized an outer perimeter to keep French troops beyond hand grenade range and an inner defense to shield his wounded and his heavy weapons.

Then the unmistakable creak of armored tracks echoed through the quays. Several Renault light tanks peppered the breastworks with machine-gun and 37mm cannon fire. Swenson gathered the few anti-armor grenades available and positioned his gunners to ambush the approaching tanks; every grenade missed. Hay bales ignited, and fire spread to the warehouses. Two more Renaults arrived to set up a crossfire, backing the Americans to the water's edge. Mortar rounds detonated as flames reached stacks of ammunition cases. With his riflemen low on cartridges, Swenson instructed the men to fix bayonets, then thought better of the order. Already, TERMINAL had cost twenty-four Allied dead and fifty-five wounded. Complete annihilation of the men on the dock would serve no cause. At 12:30 P.M., Swenson raised a white flag and surrendered.

Stretcher bearers quickly trundled away the wounded; encroaching flames threatened to ignite their bandages. Lining up Swenson and his men, Senegalese troops were stripping them of watches, rings, and bill-folds when a French officer stepped in, ordered the booty returned, and threatened to shoot the looters. A diehard sniper fired a final shot as the Americans marched uphill to prison. The bullet killed Corporal Alvin Ronning, a tall blond farm boy from Milan, Minnesota. So jubilant were

the French defenders at repelling the assault that they neglected to scuttle the port, unlike the wrecked harbor at Oran. For the Americans in TERMINAL, this accidental victory nearly redeemed their ordeal.

Thirty-three thousand Allied troops stumbled onto the beaches east and west of Algiers on November 8 without grace, finesse, or agility. Overloaded landing craft shipped water and sank. Others foundered when their bow ramps opened prematurely, or broached from an inexperienced hand on the tiller. Some scrambling nets proved too short, requiring soldiers to leap six feet into the waiting boats. Despite orders to preserve utter silence, the pandemonium was such that "I should have thought the Germans in Berlin could have heard us," one officer later wrote. The East Surreys and Royal West Kents finally got their rum ration, with the result that at least two officers ostensibly "testing for salt" staggered semiconscious to their bunks while the merry troops embarked for the Barbary shore in full throat.

Finding the right beach at night in Algiers proved even harder than at Oran. Boats puttered for hours, pursuing one signal light after another like children chasing fireflies. Seasickness so immobilized strong men that they envisioned being court-martialed for cowardice. Shouted queries across the water—"Who are you? Where are you going?"—brought incoherent moans or the rudest invective. A British beachmaster, wearing white cuffs to be better seen in the dark, greeted boat after boat with a cheerful demurral: "I'm sorry to tell you, but you're on the wrong beach!" Six landing craft drifted two miles off course to fall within range of a French battery at Ilot de la Marine; four were sunk. So many other boats were mishandled that only six of 104 in the Algiers flotilla survived the initial trip to shore. The half-dozen survivors put to sea again to pick up a second wave, only to find their mother ships gone; an unexpected 2½-knot westward set had pushed the convoy eleven miles to leeward in four hours.

Outnumbered five to one, the French defenders offered little coherent resistance. Near Cap Matifou on the eastern lip of the Bay of Algiers, soldiers unloaded by error on a sandbar clung to a toggle rope and bounced into the beach like kangaroos, springing off the sandy bottom through water over their heads. British and American commandos at Matifou found the coastal battery they were seeking, then threw grenades down an ammunition elevator. The dull detonations were followed by screams and a sharp, accented reproach: "Why don't you go fight the Germans?" British naval gunfire fell short, hitting civilians and Allied troops alike; a French farmer trudged past on the coastal road, carrying the body of his dead twelve-year-old son. Other French families walked to early mass in their fine clothes, gazes averted from the Allied soldiers tramping past. In the town square at Aïn Taya, troops who had been dumped into the surf warmed themselves at a huge bonfire while an enterprising wine merchant unshuttered his shop, and villagers still in their nightclothes gathered to gawk at what the sea had heaved up on this strangest of Sunday mornings.

On the far western fringe of the Allied landings, the British 11th Brigade landed 7,000 men at Castiglione to find that a sympathetic French officer had declined to issue ammunition to his troops. At Sidi Ferruch, where in 1830 a French army had claimed Algeria for Napoleon II, the garrison capitulated in minutes. A French artillery major stepped from the shadows near the beach and declared, "You gentlemen are late."

The 168th Infantry of the U.S. 34th Division, which was supposed to hurry east to reinforce Swenson's beleaguered TERMINAL force at Algiers harbor, was both late and lost. Four thousand Americans in the regiment were scattered along fifteen miles of coastline. Officers raced up and down narrow country lanes in confiscated autos, searching for their commands. Among the displaced was Major Robert Moore, the former Boy Captain from Villisca, Iowa, now second-in-command of the

regiment's 2nd Battalion. Launched before midnight from the *Keren,* Moore led two companies in nine landing craft to an assembly area several hundred yards from the ship. After futilely waiting almost an hour for the rest of the battalion flotilla to arrive, Moore ordered the coxswain to turn toward land.

A naval officer motoring through the swell a mile offshore assured Moore that he was on course. But after beaching the boats and dragging their equipment across the sand, the men were chagrined to see British 11th Brigade troops. Moore quickly deduced that instead of landing at the beach code-named Beer White, the boat crews had veered eight miles down the coast to *Apple* White. Moore sent a scouting party inland; when it failed to return, he rousted the remaining 200 men from their bivouac and set out to find the rest of his battalion.

The deficiencies of the past two years in preparing the 34th Division for war now began to tell. The amateurish football field maneuvers and town-square drilling by the Iowa National Guard seemed irrelevant in the scrub pines of coastal Algeria. The hurried dispatch of the 34th to Britain ten months earlier, the dispersal of regiments across Northern Ireland, the poor training facilities, the rapid turnover in commanders, and the diversion of troops for use as laborers and headquarters guards meant that most of the infantry units arriving in Africa "were not prepared for combat service," as a division history acknowledged. Like other regiments in the division, the 168th had a proud history, including five battle ribbons won in the Great War. But old ribbons would not take Algiers, nor infuse the men with combat experience, nor tell Bob Moore where he was.

Moore marched his two companies for more than a mile through vineyards and pine copses along the coastal hills before concluding that he was on the wrong road. He halted the men and ordered a countermarch, but the lieutenant at the head of the column failed to get word and instead continued unawares with a small vanguard. At mid-morning, 200 French colonial troops in a dozen trucks drove past Moore and his men, who stared wide-eyed and silent until the convoy disappeared from sight without a shot.

Hours after landing, footsore and thirsty, Moore heard gunfire in Lambiridi, just west of Algiers. A French machine gun on a knoll overlooking the road had killed two soldiers from Company G and wounded two others. Moore ordered three platoons to outflank the position; after a flurry of shots, seven enemy soldiers surrendered. French sniper bullets chewed into masonry walls and gouged divots from the pavement while children with outstretched palms begged cigarettes from American soldiers huddled in the doorways. Arabs in grimy robes and blackened sandals ambled across the square, acknowledging neither the snipers nor their American targets.

Moore hurried across an exposed intersection by mingling with the pedestrians, then tried to organize another flanking assault. He now commanded fragments from all three of the regiment's battalions, including scores of stragglers. A second machine gun, firing from an upper floor, killed a lieutenant and wounded a captain. Moore worked his way along a hill overlooking the house. Squirming forward on his belly, he carefully rose up for a better look.

Suddenly he was on his back, stunned and confused. A private next to him was bleeding from a gunshot wound. Moore unsnapped his own chin strap and removed his helmet. A deep groove from a sniper's bullet ran across the crest like a black scar. An inch lower and the first round ever fired at the Boy Captain would have killed him.

For the first time, Moore realized how frightened he was. Even nameless skirmishes could be lethal. "I thought the fight with the snipers was quite a battle," he would say months later, after receiving the Silver Star for his valor at Lambiridi. "Now I know it was just a comic-opera war." Still, good men lay as dead as if at Antietam or the Meuse-Argonne. When he had time to scribble a letter home, Moore wrote, "I got my helmet creased and set back on my butt before I realized that I was being shot at. Outside of that and being scared, I came out okay."

In these first hours of the war, Moore had learned several vital lessons that thousands of other American soldiers were also learning around the rim of Africa. Some lessons were fundamental: stay low; take a few extra moments to study the map before setting off. But others involved the nature of combat and leadership: a realization that battlefields were inherently chaotic; that improvisation was a necessary virtue; that speed and stealth and firepower won small skirmishes as well as big battles; that every moment held risk and every man was mortal.

Moore shoved the helmet back onto his head and summoned a medic to attend the wounded private. The living awaited orders, and the white roofs of Algiers gleamed in the distance. Bob Moore, unhurt but now blooded, pressed on.

"Glory Enough for Us All"

THE stars had once again eaten from Kent Hewitt's hand. Four thousand miles from Hampton Roads, Task Force 34 approached the Moroccan coast on the night of November 7 with celestial precision, eight minutes ahead of schedule.

More than 100 ships in nine columns had steamed across the Atlantic in a box measuring twenty miles by thirty, zigzagging so vigorously that each wake was said to resemble the path "of a reeling drunk in the snow." Following a sharp rebuke from Admiral Hewitt for radio chatter that sounded "more like a Chinese laundry at New Year's than a fleet going to war," the convoy had fallen silent for two weeks; expertly tossed semaphore signals now flew from one side of the armada to the other in ten minutes. Sailors still scraped the painted bulkheads to bare metal. Hundreds of new soldiers had been virtually press-ganged for the invasion; sergeants taught them how to load, aim, and fire a rifle from the fantail. Other troops broke out the newfangled bazookas. After pondering the stovepipe design, a volunteer clad in an asbestos firefighter's suit squeezed the trigger and launched a round into a wave. The roaring back blast flung hot debris to the rear, and the wounded whitecap swept on. But troops at the rail cheered as though a dragon had been slain.

A gale born south of Iceland had struck the fleet on November 4 near Madeira, with seas so foul that even heavy cruisers rolled thirty degrees. Battalion surgeons treating the seasick exhausted their stocks of belladonna and phenobarbital. The captain of the transport *Charles Carroll* studied his clinometer and, with a dispassion that terrified every landlubber in earshot, mused, "I can't believe a ship can roll so far without turning over." The four top-heavy escort carriers, known collectively as the Old Indispensables, wallowed so grievously that during each perilous yaw sailors took bets on whether the ships would recover.

For Hewitt, the storm posed the greatest challenge of his naval career. Surf higher than five feet was considered lethal to amphibious landings; seas up to eighteen feet now pounded the Moroccan coast. For weeks, meteorologists had repeatedly flown from Gibraltar to the Azores, taking measurements and jotting cabalistic symbols in their notebooks in an effort to better understand weather patterns in the eastern Atlantic. Reconnaissance pilots had photographed the Moroccan surf so often they could now report that waves averaged ten feet in height, even without a northeaster blowing, and broke in thirty-second sets of seven. A radio transmission from the War Department included a forecast of landing conditions on November 8: "Very poor."

Hewitt paced *Augusta*'s heaving bridge, studying the forecast and similarly disheartening messages from the Navy Department and the British Admiralty. The lives of 34,000 soldiers weighed heavily in his musings; history had often punished invaders who disregarded the weather. But a decision was required by dawn on November 7, to allow time for the fleet to split and take station off the three landing sites along the Moroccan coast. American troops were to seize an all-weather airfield

at Port Lyautey in the north and, through landings above and below Casablanca, envelop the city and capture her port. Hewitt reduced his problem thus: he could wait for surer seas, but with fuel supplies dwindling, U-boats threatening, and the French surely alert at their guns; he could divert into the Mediterranean in search of a shoreline that was more benign yet far from the crucial port at Casablanca; or he could launch the landing craft as planned and hope for the best. Lord Louis Mountbatten, commander of British amphibious forces, had been reading the same grim weather forecasts in London. "I hope to God," Mountbatten said, "Admiral Hewitt will have the guts to go through with it."

The choice was Hewitt's, but Patton, who would assume command of the expedition once the troops were ashore, urged him forward. Patton had spent the long passage reading the Koran, exercising in his cabin by holding the dresser and running in place—480 steps, he calculated, made a quarter-mile—and issuing proclamations.

"We are to be congratulated because we have been chosen," he told his troops. "You must succeed, for to retreat is as cowardly as it is fatal. Americans do not surrender." Soldiers should prepare for battle with "daily calisthentics of as violent a nature as the facilities of the ship permit." He briefly terrorized his staff upon discovering that propaganda leaflets prepared by the War Department were written in bad French. The *accent grave* in *fidèle,* for example, was missing. "Some goddam fool in the States forgot to put the accents in this thing," Patton told his intelligence officer. "Get a bunch of your men and put them to work. Let them put the accents where they belong, or none of these goddam leaflets will be dropped. Or do you expect me to land on French soil introduced by such illiterate calling cards?" Thousands of leaflets had been restored to literacy by a platoon of soldiers with pencils.

Despite their early antipathy, Patton and Hewitt had grown closer during the voyage, and their partnership now verged on real friendship. Yet Patton still suspected the Navy would avoid a fight if possible. "War is the only place where a man really lives," he liked to say; the thought of flinching from combat was excruciating. Before leaving Norfolk, Patton had asked Eisenhower for secret authority to force Hewitt to bombard Casablanca if the admiral showed weakness in the knees. Eisenhower promptly replied that "no, repeat no, bombardment will be executed without prior authority from me…. In the unlikely event of a complete failure in signal communications, you will use your own discretion as to the action to be taken." Thus shackled, Patton blithely dismissed the danger that landing craft would capsize in high surf: "You know what happens when things get overturned. They get washed ashore. If that happens, the men will get washed ashore, and then they'll be there ready to fight."

In the smallest hours of November 7, Hewitt was dozing on a cot in his command post on *Augusta*'s flag bridge when his aerologist woke him. Lieutenant Commander R. C. Steere carried a smudged weather map and a flashlight. Steere had concluded that the War Department and Navy forecasts were wrong. The storm would abate. He handed Hewitt a typed sheet of paper with his own prediction: "Swell and surf will be much reduced by offshore winds. Saturday night waves will be of the order of two to four feet."

Hewitt studied Steere's report and barometric charts. High seas would likely return on Monday, November 9, giving the invaders a day to gain a beachhead. One of Kent Hewitt's favorite concepts was that of "velvet," a sufficient margin of safety to allow for unexpected reverses. Divine Providence, he now believed, had given him some velvet. Without betraying the turmoil churning within him, Hewitt issued his orders: "Gentlemen, we will execute Plan One, as scheduled. Be prepared to make that signal to the task force at first daylight." In London, Mountbatten judged this "one of the most important decisions of the war…a brave decision, the decision of a commander."

At dawn on November 7, twenty-six ships carrying 6,000 assault troops peeled away from the

convoy and headed toward Safi, in southern Morocco. Eight hours later, twenty-seven other ships with 9,000 soldiers veered north toward Mehdia, a coastal village near Port Lyautey. Hewitt's main force, with almost 20,000 troops under Patton's oversight, continued on toward Fedala, just north of Casablanca. A solitary banana boat spotted on the western horizon proved to be the intrepid *Contessa*; rolling deep in the water from her cargo of bombs and high-octane aviation fuel, she had crossed alone. Wary of being gunned down by trigger-happy American sailors, the jailhouse crew hoisted the Honduran flag and a vivid assortment of signals, including "I am a straggler." Hewitt dispatched a destroyer to escort *Contessa* to Mehdia, and bluntly warned the explosive scow to keep her distance from the rest of the fleet.

With new urgency, soldiers studied the coastline recognition silhouettes painted on wardroom bulkheads. Medical officers believed that clean soldiers had a better chance of surviving wounds and infections, and they ordered every man going ashore to shower. The troop holds "resembled a fraternity house before a big dance," one sailor reported. "All hands were scrubbing down." No one told the men that the Army had secretly projected first-day battle casualties in Morocco of 1,700 killed or drowned, and 4,000 wounded. Sailors tested their winches, regreased the blocks and running gear, and shifted deck cargo off the hatch covers. Others wetted down wooden decks and manila lines to make them less combustible. Many soldiers were puzzled at the notion of combat against the French. "Come on, boys," a gunner's mate suggested, "let's pretend they're Japs."

Commanders with an impulse to declaim offered the men the solace of their rhetoric. The skipper of *Massachusetts* uttered the Latin motto of the state for which his battleship was named: *"Ense petit placidam sub libertate quietem,"* which every swab no doubt could translate as "With the sword she seeks peace under liberty." Rear Admiral Robert C. Giffen, who commanded the warship escorts under Hewitt, declared, "Hit hard and break clean. There is glory enough for us all." *Brooklyn*'s captain summoned the ship's chaplain and confided, "I'm not a praying man myself, but here's the sentiment I want to put into language appropriate for the Almighty: 'O, Lord, gangway for a fighting ship.'"

Patton napped briefly before appearing on *Augusta*'s bridge in the early hours of November 8. His own final words had included sound advice for the infantry: "Get off that damned beach as fast as you can." He was still leery of orders, passed from Marshall to Eisenhower to Allied commanders, to "avoid firing the first shot." Patton had told his commanders, "Do not risk the lives of thirty thousand men trying to decide who wants to surrender and who doesn't…. If they show white flags, don't attack. But I doubt if you can see the white flags." American soldiers "must have a superiority complex," he insisted, and letting the French shoot first did not contribute to that elevated mentality.

On the darkened bridge Patton's temper flared anew at the sound of Roosevelt's voice over the ship's public address system. The president's appeal to the Vichy government, secretly recorded at the White House in English and French, was being broadcast every half hour by the BBC. "We come among you solely to destroy your enemies and not to harm you," Roosevelt proclaimed. "Do not obstruct, I beg of you, this great purpose." Patton had pleaded in vain with Eisenhower to forestall this broadcast, since the Moroccan invasion would begin several hours after those in Algeria. (The delay was intended to prevent Moroccan defenders from spotting Hewitt's ships before nightfall on November 7.) *"Vive la France eternelle!"* Roosevelt concluded. Men listening on *Augusta* and other ships were aghast. Not a single landing craft had yet been launched. Patton paced the bridge, mimicking Roosevelt's stringy French: *"Mes amis…Mes amis."*

He paused in his fuming to study the sea. The wind had died and the swell was flattening. Aerologist Steere had been right. By dawn the Atlantic would be calm as a millpond. "I guess," Patton said, "I must be God's most favorite person."

Down the length of Morocco, the French slept unawares. Fuel shortages had long grounded Vichy coastal air patrols, and no one monitored the BBC, which was disdained as mere propaganda. Roosevelt's appeal went unheard, Hewitt's ships undetected, Patton's pique unsuspected.

Only rebels were afoot. For more than two years, British and American agents had tried to organize a fifth column in Morocco. The results had been mixed. A scheme by Moroccan Jews to blow up 5,000 tons of rubber on the Casablanca docks came to naught; but the insertion of an eavesdropping microphone at the German armistice commission succeeded admirably. The Apostles had formed several cells of secret agents with exotic noms de guerre (Mr. Fish, Sea Slug, Leroy the Badger) and imaginative covers (a onetime Foreign Legionnaire known as Pinkeye ostensibly worked as a black-market macaroni salesman). Leading the insurrectionists was "Black Beast," Major General Émile Béthouart. The commander of the Casablanca division and a hero of the Franco-Polish expeditionary force that fought in Norway in 1940, Béthouart had been enlisted as a conspirator by Robert Murphy and General Mast. At eight P.M. on November 7, he informed ten trusted officers of the imminent Allied landing and dispatched them to secure various garrisons and landing fields. They rushed off, Béthouart later recalled, "with almost a juvenile enthusiasm." Six hours later he awoke the sleeping resident-general of Morocco, General Auguste Paul Noguès, in Rabat, and informed him that the country was being delivered to the Allies. He also arrested the chief of Vichy air forces in Morocco, urging him, "Have a seat in a good arm chair."

After that, nothing went right. Noguès was a slippery equivocator known to the Allies as "No-Yes" he barricaded himself in his palace and declined to believe that a hundred American ships could sneak up on his country undiscovered. On a secret phone line that he had just installed between the palace and the Admiralty in Casablanca, Noguès called his naval chief and told him of the putsch. Vice Admiral François Michelier peered seaward, then assured the resident-general that no Allied fleet lurked offshore and that such an expedition was "not technically possible." Michelier phoned back to confirm this assessment at three A.M., four A.M., and five A.M. Gathering the fortitude needed to assure his own preservation, Noguès accused Béthouart of being duped by a "group of idiots" and ordered a general alert. Béthouart lost heart and surrendered; he was promptly jailed, consoled only by the two bottles of champagne smuggled into his cell by a prison doctor.

In Casablanca, squads of Senegalese soldiers set up their machine guns with languid gestures. Platoons of spahi cavalrymen in heavy capes cantered from their barracks. Sleepy naval officers hurried toward the port and coastal batteries by Citroën, motor scooter, and bicycle. Allied agents kindled their codebooks. Apart from kidnapping the commander of the Fez garrison out of his mistress's bed, the insurrectionists had achieved nothing but to give Vichy authorities several hours' advance warning of possible trouble.

"The sky is dark," a young Army lieutenant scribbled in a hasty letter before heading to the boat deck, "and everything looks perfect."

The lieutenant was deceived. Not only was trouble brewing ashore but Hewitt's ships had thoroughly deranged themselves. Two weeks of flawless navigation collapsed almost within sight of land. Even before half the force peeled off for Safi to the south and Mehdia to the north, disagreement erupted among the captains over the convoy's precise position. One plot showed that the fleet had actually sailed into the Moroccan hills. The dispute persisted through the early evening of November 7, even though the sky was clear enough to shoot the stars and even after the great lighthouse beacon at El Hank was spotted. The lights of Casablanca burned so brilliantly that one submarine captain likened surfacing seven miles from the city to coming up "in the center of Times Square."

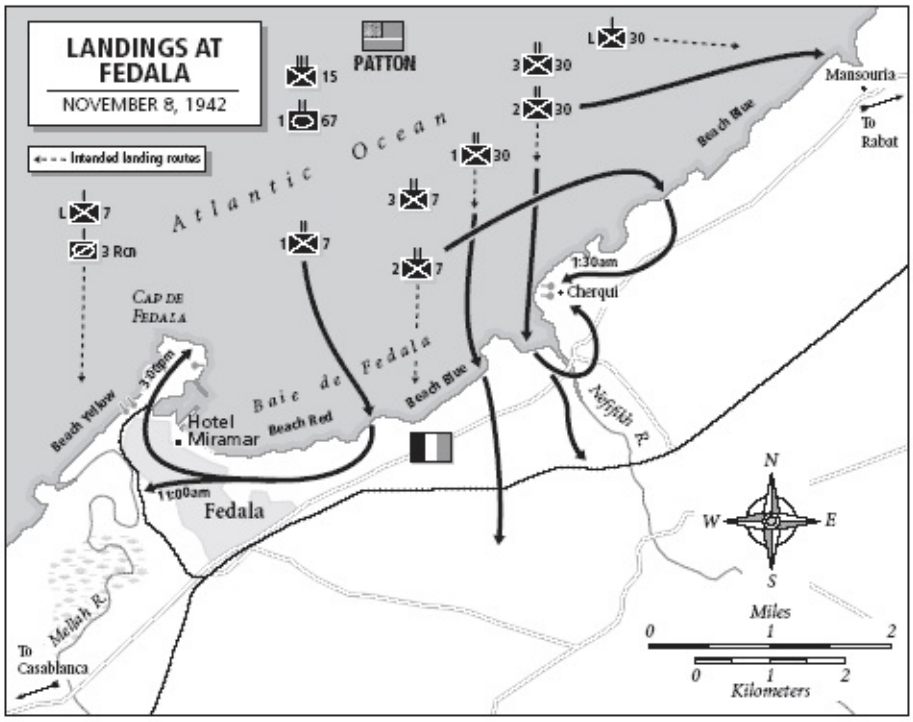
Despite this irrefutable evidence that land was near, commanders in the main convoy bound for Fedala failed to make the course corrections needed to prevent straggling and align the transports. Just before 11:30 P.M., the fleet tried to set itself right with a 45-degree turn to starboard, followed by another sharp turn fifteen minutes later. On this moonless night, many of the red and green lights used to order these maneuvers went unseen. Whistle signals were unheard or miscounted. El Hank and other shore lights abruptly winked out "as though one switch had been pulled." By the time the drop-anchor whistle sounded, not a single transport could be found in the right location, and some were 10,000 yards—six miles—out of position. "To be perfectly honest," one naval officer confessed, "I am not right sure exactly where we are."

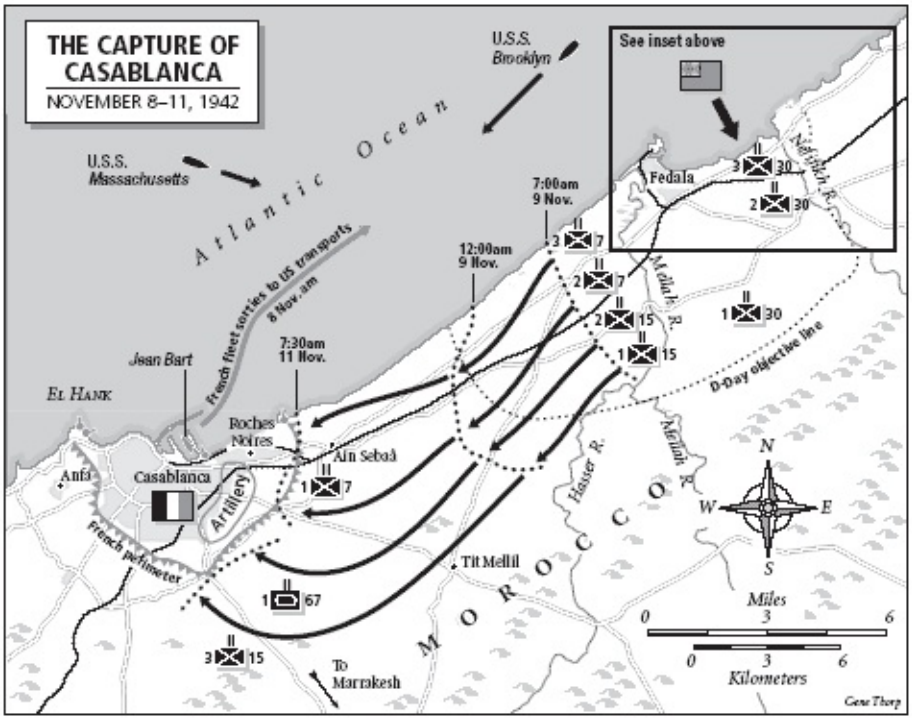
Destroyers tacked back and forth to seaward, sniffing for enemy submarines. A light offshore wind carried the loamy scent of land. Above the patchy clouds, Cassiopeia set and the Great Bear rose on his tail. The relentless throb of ships' engines died away, bringing a silence not heard since Norfolk. Then the metallic rattle of anchor chains broke the spell. Crewmen peeled back the hatch covers, and wheezing donkey engines began to winch cargo from the holds. Bells clanged and clanged again to no purpose discernible to landsmen. In the packed troop compartments, blue cigarette smoke curled around the dim battle lights. Soldiers in green herringbone twill shifted their creaky rucksacks and awaited orders.

Orders came. Men shuffled onto the boat decks. Color-coded cargo nets now draped the sides like spiderwebs. A loadmaster with a bullhorn called to a landing craft sputtering below, "Personnel boat come alongside Red!" Coxswains in yellow oilskin coats and capacious pantaloons eased close, squinting to distinguish red from blue and trying not to foul their propellers in the nets. Officers climbed over the sides, their tommy guns and map cases banging against them all the way down. On some transports, after countless rehearsed departures from the starboard rail, the men were inexplicably ordered over the port side. Chaos attended. Others were told to fix bayonets—until the first man on the net impaled his thigh and was hoisted back on deck as a casualty. The feeble, obscene strains of "4-F Charley" sounded from troops waiting their turn. A veteran of the Great War revived a line often uttered before going over the top: "Don't harass the shock troops."

Then the loadmasters bellowed, "Shove off!" Coxswains gunned their engines and sheered away in a green blaze of phosphorescence, studying the heavens with a faint hope that Polaris or Sirius would tell them where to find land.

At Fedala, the first wave of twenty-six landing craft headed vaguely east just after five A.M. Misguided boats missed the beach and struck a reef with, as an official account later lamented, "indescribable confusion." Men from the 30th Infantry Regiment struggled toward shore in water chin deep, their hands and legs a fretwork of coral cuts. Dead-weighted with entrenching tools, rifles, grenades, wire cutters, gas masks, ammo magazines, and K rations, those knocked from their feet by the modest waves rarely rose again. The coxswain of a fifty-foot lighter strayed too far in front of a breaker; the bow caught the seafloor 200 yards from the beach and the boat cartwheeled, flinging men, guns, and a jeep into the surf. Only six soldiers emerged alive. Troops flopped onto the sand, shooting wildly at searchlights from the coastal battery at Cherqui while Arabs on spavined donkeys trotted along the water's edge, scavenging life jackets and canteens. The task force challenge and countersign soon echoed through the dune grass like a taunt: "George!" and "Patton!"





Eighty miles north, at Mehdia, troops from eight transports were to push six miles inland to capture the Port Lyautey airfield. Brigadier General Lucian K. Truscott, Jr., climbed down a cargo net on the *Henry T. Allen* and motored from transport to transport, trying to convince suspicious sailors that he was indeed commander of the Mehdia force. A ragged flotilla of landing craft eventually made for shore with American flags snapping from each stern “like a yacht race.” The crack of gunfire carried across the water, once, twice, then twice more: four soldiers were wounded accidentally by comrades loading their rifles in the boats. Several landing craft snagged on sandbars or capsized as soldiers rolled over the gunwales in their haste to reach land. Sodden bodies washed ashore, facedown in a tangle of rifle slings and uninflated lifebelts. But at 5:40 A.M., 100 minutes late, the first troops from the 60th Infantry Regiment scrambled unopposed across Green Beach, eyeing the sixteenth-century Portuguese fort that blocked their path to the airfield.

The third and final frontal assault against a defended port in Operation TORCH was planned for Safi, 140 miles south of Casablanca. A Portuguese trading post in the age of Columbus, Safi had once earned fame for horse breeding and then as the world's largest sardine fishery. Now it was an unlovely phosphate-exporting town of 25,000, famous for nothing. Much of the American battle planning was based on a yellowed 1906 French nautical chart, as well as on picture postcards from the Navy's hoard of tourist snapshots and other memorabilia showing various ocean frontages. Jew's Cliff, a sheltered beach outside Safi, had been identified through just such a faded postcard; renamed Yellow Beach, it was designated as a prime landing site.

To seize Safi port itself, the Navy chose a pair of ancient destroyers, the U.S.S. *Cole,* which in 1921 had been the world's fastest ship, capable of forty-two knots, and the U.S.S. *Bernadou.* A secret refitting in Bermuda intended to lighten the vessels and lower their profiles by amputating all masts and funnels had left them "sawed-off and hammered-down." Each destroyer would carry 200 assault troops from the 47th Infantry Regiment, who received American flag armbands and two cartons of cigarettes apiece with which to buy French amity. Capturing the little harbor would allow Patton to land a battalion of fifty-four Sherman tanks, which could then outflank Casablanca from the south without exposure to the city's formidable coastal guns.

The Safi assault, known as BLACKSTONE, differed in key details from the port attacks at Oran and Algiers. Safi's defenses were less sturdy than those in the Algerian cities, and American warships stood ready to pulverize any resistance. Also, to avoid alerting the defenders, the attack would slightly precede the beach landings. Commanding the 47th Infantry was Colonel Edwin H. Randle, an Indiana native with slicked hair and a wolfish mustache. "Violent, rapid, ruthless combat is the only way to win," Randle told his men. "Fire low—richochets may kill the enemy and they certainly will scare him…. Make it tough and make it violent."

The usual muddle obtained during disembarkation, delaying the attack for half an hour. Loadmasters finally stretched a huge net at an angle from the transport *Lyon* to the destroyers' decks and rolled the troops down into their comrades' waiting arms. Only one soldier tumbled into the Atlantic, never to be seen again. At 3:50 A.M., *Bernadou* headed for shore, with *Cole* trailing. As the lead destroyer glided toward the granite breakwater, a sharp-eyed French sentry challenged her by flashing two Morse letters: "VH." *Bernadou*'s captain answered by semaphore with precisely the same signal. The ruse befuddled the defenders for eighteen minutes until *Bernadou* rounded the bell buoy and announced her presence in the harbor at 4:28 A.M. by firing a pyrotechnic gadget designed to unfurl an illuminated American flag. The stubborn flag stayed furled, and the French opened fire.

Machine-gun rounds cracked overhead and 75mm shells whistled into the water with a smoky hiss. *Bernadou* answered, sweeping the jetties with cannon and mortar fire, then ran aground so hard that her bow lurched thirty feet onto the fish wharf. The assault troops in Company K were flung to the deck.

At sea, two radio messages ran through the American fleet. "Batter up" announced French resistance. "Play ball," at 4:38 A.M., authorized retaliatory fire. With a tremendous roar, the battleship *New York* and cruiser *Philadelphia* complied, aiming at muzzle flashes nine miles away. Mesmerized soldiers and sailors watched the glowing crimson shells arc across the sky before smashing into the shore batteries north of Safi. One of *New York*'s fourteen-inch shells caught the lip of the three hundred-foot cliff at Pointe de la Tour, dug a furrow twenty feet long, then richocheted up through the fire control tower at Batterie la Railleuse, killing everyone inside. Scraps of scalp and the battery commander's shredded uniform painted the shattered walls.

Unsettled, the troops on *Bernadou* were slow to leave her. They flopped back to the deck with

each new shell burst until roused by their officers and shoved toward the single scrambling net now draped over the bow. Canteens and cigarette cartons snagged in the webbing, leaving soldiers caught like seined fish. The men finally found their valor on solid ground. French troops clattered down a jetty with a small field gun pulled by a donkey; sheets of American bullets sent them fleeing. The *Cole* managed to berth at the phosphate quay at five A.M. Company L swarmed ashore, chasing Foreign Legionnaires from the docks and seizing the railroad station, post office, and Shell Oil depot.

Three more waves of infantrymen landed, remarkably, where they were supposed to land. White-robed Arabs crowded balconies above the harbor to watch. An American major later reported to the War Department:

> A soldier would snake his way painfully through rocks and rubble to set up a light machine gun, raise his head cautiously to aim, and find a dozen natives clustered solemnly around him. Street intersections were crowded with head-turning natives, like a tennis gallery, following the whining flight of bullets over their heads.

By early afternoon, the invaders held a beachhead five miles wide and half a mile deep. American sharpshooters knocked out three Renault tanks with rifle grenades, then turned the tank guns on a French barracks. Three hundred colonial troops surrendered. A solitary Vichy bomber made a feeble pass at the port; American anti-aircraft gunners, with zeal far eclipsing their marksmanship, shot up warehouse roofs and their own deck booms so vigorously that richocheting .50-caliber tracers resembled "someone trying to cut the cranes with a welder's torch."

It was all too much for the French garrison commander. American troops stormed his headquarters at Front de Mer, capturing him and seven staff officers without a struggle. Their combined arsenal consisted of two revolvers. Except for a few snipers, Safi had fallen. U.S. casualties totaled four dead and twenty-five wounded.

Eisenhower had trusted in his luck, and so far his luck had held. Only by the clock on his office wall in the Gibraltar tunnel did the commander-in-chief know that dawn had come on November 8. He neither heard the church bells in Gibraltar town on this balmy Sunday morning nor saw the Spitfires lift from the runway to patrol the approaches from Spain and Italy. Eisenhower rose from his cot and padded down to the lavatory for a cold-water shave. To Marshall, he reported:

> Everything appears to be going ahead about as anticipated…. Information directly from task forces is meager, but I do not care to worry commanders at this stage by demanding reports. But I'd give a month's pay for an accurate report this minute from each sector. We do know that we are fairly solidly ashore at eastern and central points, and that western attack began as scheduled.

Besides that, he knew very little. The message center at Gibraltar had fallen hours behind in decoding the dispatches pouring in from Algeria and Morocco, as well as from Washington and London. Sketchy reports from Algiers and Oran indicated troops were ashore at all six Algerian landing sites. As for Task Force 34, almost nothing was known beyond a brief message from Hewitt

reporting that he was proceeding apace. Eavesdroppers had picked up radio broadcasts of "The Star-Spangled Banner" and the "Marseillaise" from Patton's propaganda station aboard the *Texas,* but not a word had been heard from Patton himself.

"When you get to high places in the Army," Eisenhower had recently written to his son, John, a cadet at West Point, "this business of warfare is no longer just a question of getting out and teaching the soldiers how to shoot or how to crawl up a ravine or dig a foxhole—it is partly politics, partly public-speaking, partly essay-writing, partly social contact…. A fellow wishes he could just get into a hammock under a nice shade tree and read a few wild west magazines!"

"This business of warfare" was also partly about waiting. As the hours ticked by, a few more dispatches dribbled in, including vague accounts of "trouble in Algiers harbor" and resistance at the Oran port. By nine A.M., one airfield outside Algiers was supposedly in Allied hands, but except for reports that three transport aircraft from Operation VILLAIN had been forced down, nothing was heard regarding the airborne operation. Eisenhower's naval aide and confidant, a former CBS executive named Harry C. Butcher, wrote in his diary, "What becomes of thirty-six paratroop planes?" Another garbled dispatch indicated that at one Moroccan beach, Patton was re-embarking the landing craft under a truce flag. "That I do *not* believe," Eisenhower wrote to his chief of staff, Major General Walter B. Smith, who was still in London. "Unless my opinion of Georgie is 100 percent wrong, he wouldn't re-embark anything, including himself."

Lighting another Camel, Eisenhower retreated into his tiny office. He had agreed to another negotiating session with Giraud in an hour. That unpleasant prospect now was complicated by perplexing reports that Admiral Darlan was in Algiers talking to Robert Murphy. Eisenhower remembered Churchill's advice: "Kiss Darlan's stern if you have to, but get the French navy." But what about Giraud?

He uncapped a fountain pen and in his tight cursive wrote at the top of a sheet of notepaper: "Worries of a Commander." Beginning with "Spain is so ominously quiet," he listed ten anxieties. Number three: "Defensive fighting, which seemed halfhearted and spiritless this morning, has blazed up, and in many places resistance is stubborn." Number six: "Giraud is difficult to deal with—wants much in power, equipment, etc., but seems little disposed to do his part to stop fighting." Number nine: "We don't know whereabouts or conditions of airborne force." And number ten: "We cannot find out anything."

Having unburdened himself, he capped the pen and reviewed the message traffic once again. Casualties seemed modest, pending further word on RESERVIST, TERMINAL, and VILLAIN. It was tragic that France felt compelled to fight, but the defenders had displayed remarkable lassitude in failing to lay mines, conduct reconnaissance, or to sortie Vichy submarine and air fleets.

Yet if politically ambivalent and militarily inert, the French had *not* capitulated. Vichy resistance near Casablanca and Mehdia appeared to be stiffening. Darlan's intentions remained opaque. Giraud was brooding somewhere in this Gibraltar grotto. Murphy apparently was under arrest. Many French rebels were in irons. German and Italian forces would not likely remain quiescent for long. And Tunisia—the reason for launching the most ambitious seaborne invasion in history—remained far, far away.

Sometimes a fellow just wished he could crawl in a hammock and read a few wild west magazines.

3. BEACHHEAD

A Sword in Algiers

EISENHOWER'S uncertainty over the progress of Operation TORCH was shared by every soldier in the Algerian and Moroccan beachheads. No man knew anything irrefutably except what he had witnessed. Sailors at sea could see nothing except gun flashes ashore. Soldiers ashore remained ignorant of what was beyond the next *djebel*. Commanders received fragmentary reports that proved to be incomplete, or contradictory, or wrong. This was war, "our condition and our history, the place we had to live in," as one correspondent wrote, but to many it seemed like a street brawl with artillery. For neophyte troops, this first combat experience was revealing: war *was* fought by ignorant armies on a darkling plain.

The fighting between Anglo-American invaders and Vichy French defenders would last just over three days; sometimes it was a matter of halfhearted potshots, but there were pitched firefights on a dozen battlefields across two countries. This little war between ancient friends—many Americans still could not believe they were fighting the French—was complicated by concomitant diplomatic maneuvers and the first attacks from Axis forces. All this happened more or less simultaneously, from Sunday morning through Tuesday night—November 8 to 10, 1942—but for narrative simplicity the action can unfold counterclockwise around the northwest rim of Africa, beginning in Algiers and ending in Morocco.

East of the Algerian capital, a battalion from the U.S. 39th Infantry had appeared at the gates of the Maison Blanche airfield just after dawn on November 8. French soldiers fired a few wild shots for honor's sake and then surrendered. At ten A.M. the first Hurricane fighters, launched hours earlier from Gibraltar with no guarantee of a place to land in Africa, touched down on the runway.

From Castiglione on the western edge of the beachhead, where industrious Algerians were stripping abandoned landing craft of their compasses and propellers, British troops captured another airfield at Blida and looped into Algiers from the south. One impatient commander seized half a dozen hostages—whom he described as "all very friendly and matey"—then drove to the docks, put a pistol to the head of the concierge, and hoisted a British ensign above a French command post. "Cheers rent the welkin," he reported.

Lieutenant Colonel Edward J. Doyle, commander of the 1st Battalion of the 168th Infantry, also grew impatient with his unit's dawdling progress against French snipers in the western suburb of Lambiridi—the same gunmen who had clipped Robert Moore's helmet earlier that morning. Ignoring orders to hold in place, Doyle flanked the skirmishers with two dozen men and sprinted through Algiers. Soon he was rattling the gates of the governor-general's Summer Palace. A watchman refused to admit him. "The governor," the Frenchman advised, "is at the beach." American troops responded by shooting out the tires of a well-heeled gentleman leaving the German consulate across the street. The driver's rage—good tires were particularly dear—was interrupted by the crack of a sniper's rifle. Doyle pitched to the pavement, mortally wounded by a bullet below his left shoulder blade. After Colonel Marshall in Operation RESERVIST, he was the second American battalion commander to die that morning.

Luftwaffe pilots flying from Italy on Sunday afternoon made their first appearance off Cap Matifou, where a covey of transport ships lay at anchor. An enemy Ju-88 dodged Allied flak and launched two torpedoes from an altitude of fifty feet. One missed. The second caught U.S.S. *Leedstown* on the starboard flank, carrying away her rudder. Dead in the water and listing with 500 men still aboard, the ship was easy prey. Near misses by dive-bombers opened her seams; then two more torpedoes amidships caused her to quickly settle by the head. Men leaped overboard, only to be sucked back into the ship through the torpedo holes; they scrambled topside and leaped again. Castaways on rafts paddled toward shore, singing with lusty abandon until they saw the heavy surf at Aïn Taya. The locals stopped their looting long enough to cut tall reeds, with which they pulled capsized survivors from the foaming water. Led to an abandoned theater, the shivering men were bedded in straw and revived with brandy. *Leedstown* sank in twenty fathoms.

Pleasing as such retaliatory Axis raids may have been, Admiral Darlan recognized with the discernment of a professional survivor that the jig was nearly up. The Vichy commander-in-chief had only 7,000 badly armed troops in Algiers; both major airfields had been captured, his fleet was bottled up by British men-of-war, and the city was surrounded by 30,000 soldiers. At three P.M. on Sunday, Darlan reappeared at the Villa des Oliviers, where Robert Murphy and Kenneth Pendar had been spared execution through the timely clemency of General Juin. The admiral found the American diplomats at lunch, watching the port warehouses burn and dive-bombers pirouette over Algiers Bay. Darlan announced that he was ready to parley. Would M. Murphy find the American commander, who was said to be on the beach ten miles west of Algiers?

In Juin's limousine with a white flag and the French tricolor flapping from the fender, the diplomats threaded their way through straggling columns of American soldiers west of Algiers. At Beach Beer White, they discovered Major General Charles W. Ryder, commander of the 34th Infantry Division, sitting on a large rock. A fellow Kansan and West Point classmate of Eisenhower's, Ryder—Doc, to his friends—was a tall, angular infantryman, highly decorated in the Great War. Asked if he would discuss terms with the French, he replied evenly, "I will go anywhere to talk to anyone who wishes to surrender Algiers to me." He then went nowhere. Sitting his rock, fussing about the need for a fresh uniform, he composed a one-paragraph report to Gibraltar with the speed of a man dictating to a stonecutter. "You will have to forgive me," he told Murphy. "I haven't slept in a week." Murphy stopped pacing, took the general by the arm, and bundled him into the limousine.

A bugler perched on the running board blew "Cease Fire" as they careered through Lambiridi to the Avenue Maréchal Joffre. Outside Fort l'Empereur, headquarters of the Vichy military, Juin's chief of staff stood at rigid attention in the street. Behind him were spaced six soldiers in a V formation. "I don't like blood," Murphy confided to Ryder as they climbed from the limousine. With the precise gestures of a man practiced in capitulation, the French chief of staff extended his sword to Ryder, hilt first, "like a historical painting in some museum," Pendar observed. Murmuring a few words of abdication, he wheeled smartly and marched into the fort.

Ryder and Murphy followed. They entered a cavernous hall where stuffed hunting trophies and booty from ancient battlefields hung from the wainscoting. Fifty French officers stood along the walls, glancing between the Americans and General Juin, who stood at the head of a long table swathed in green baize. Juin had exchanged his pink-striped pajamas from the previous night for the bemedaled splendor of his finest uniform. The distant mutter of small-arms fire was swallowed by the roar of bombs from Royal Navy planes attacking French targets barely a hundred yards distant. "How wonderful!" Ryder exclaimed. "This is the first time since World War One that I have been under fire." Icy silence greeted this remark.

"Are you the senior commander?" Juin finally asked, tossing his left-handed salute.

"I am."

"Will you assume responsibility for keeping law and order in Algiers if it is surrendered to your force?"

"Yes," Ryder answered, "provided I may have the services of the French gendarmes acting under my orders."

"When will you be ready to do this?"

"Immediately."

"Would you permit French troops to retain their arms?"

Ryder hesitated for an instant. "Yes, provided the troops are assembled in their barracks."

The deed was done. Allied units would enter the city at eight P.M. Prisoners were to be freed immediately, including survivors from Operation TERMINAL. French officers dispatched cars through every precinct of Algiers to herald the city's surrender with a fugato of bugles.

Algiers had fallen, but not the rest of French North Africa, and there was the rub. The Americans soon learned that Darlan had formally divested himself of all power outside the city. He professed, with an infuriating shrug, to have no negotiating authority for the rest of the Vichy empire. Another meeting at Fort l'Empereur, this time with Darlan present, yielded only an agreement to move Allied ships into Algiers harbor.

At dawn on Monday, the task force flagship, H.M.S. *Bulolo,* steamed with imperial dignity toward the Railway Jetty, unaware that an earlier near-miss from a Luftwaffe bomb had damaged her engine room telegraphs. A routine docking order from the bridge for full steam astern went unheard. The French welcoming committee on the jetty watched with mounting alarm as the ship loomed nearer at twelve knots. Officers on the bridge debated whether *Bulolo*'s masts would more likely shear off forward or backward upon impact. Shrieking bystanders scattered; the captain yelled "Everyone lie down!" to his crew; and the great bow heaved up onto a fortuitous mudbank, demolishing the seawall and nicking a waterfront house before settling back into the harbor, intact. Applauding spectators recovered their wits and agreed that the Royal Navy knew how to make an entrance.

So, too, did General Giraud. On Monday morning, November 9, he left Gibraltar for Algiers in a French plane with intentions of elbowing Darlan aside and establishing himself as the new Allied satrap in North Africa. As Eisenhower had shrewdly anticipated, Giraud had come around after sensing TORCH's early success; with histrionic sighs he agreed to serve as commander of the French military in North Africa and chief civil administrator there. Eisenhower packed him off, then publicly proclaimed that "his presence there will bring about a cessation of scattered resistance." (To Marshall he privately confessed, "I find myself getting absolutely furious with these stupid Frogs.")

The authorities in Vichy greeted Eisenhower's proclamation by denouncing the French general as "a rebel chief and a felon." Giraud landed at Blida airfield to be met not by the honor guard and whooping throng he had envisioned, but by a few furtive supporters who warned of assassins. Worse yet, his luggage and uniform had gone missing. Giraud could hardly stage a proper coup in rumpled gabardine. Despondent and out of costume, he climbed into a borrowed car and headed for the serpentine alleys of Algiers's Ruisseau quarter, where a sympathetic family had offered sanctuary.

Three hours later, Mark Clark arrived by B-17 at Maison Blanche airfield with orders from Eisenhower to help Giraud take command of French forces and secure a general armistice. Instead, he found his putative viceroy in hiding, Admiral Darlan in firm command of Vichy loyalties, and fighting continuing everywhere except Algiers proper. "This," Clark told Murphy, "really messes things up!"

In his retinue, Clark had included a former *Rin Tin Tin* screen writer and 20th Century–Fox executive named Darryl F. Zanuck; now a Signal Corps colonel, Zanuck emerged from the plane with

a 16mm movie camera and ten rolls of film with which to document Clark's triumphant entry into Algiers. The cinematic moment was disrupted, however, by the appearance of a dozen Luftwaffe raiders. As Spitfires and Junkerses tangled overhead, gabbling civilians thronged the streets to watch the dogfights. Clark and his men crammed into two British half-tracks and clanked through the city. Every wall, they noticed, seemed plastered with large posters of Marshal Pétain. The invasion of North Africa was barely twenty-four hours old but already it had descended into French farce.

The Hôtel St. Georges was a rambling, bone-white hostel on Rue Michelet, the most fashionable avenue in Algiers's most fashionable neighborhood. Long favored for its gorgeous sea vistas by wealthy spinsters touring the Mediterranean, the St. Georges now served as headquarters for the French navy. Marines had tracked the lobby's intricate mosaic floor with mud. It was here that the Americans agreed to meet Darlan and his lieutenants early Tuesday morning, November 10.

Clark found General Ryder exhausted from hours of fruitless dickering. "I've stalled them about as long as I can," Ryder said. A rifle company had been posted among the palm trees outside with orders to "shoot their butts off" if the French made trouble. Murphy led Clark through the hotel foyer to a small, stuffy room with blue Moorish tile and a view of the sun-dappled Mediterranean. Five French admirals and four generals awaited them. Darlan wore elevated heels and a black, double-breasted admiral's tunic that accentuated his pasty complexion. He greeted the Americans cordially, but the French refused to shake hands with the solitary British officer in Clark's delegation. Clark folded himself into a chair at the head of the table with Darlan on his left, Juin on his right, and Murphy translating.

"We have work to do to meet the common enemy," Clark said.

"All my associates and I feel hostilities are fruitless," Darlan replied. But beyond surrendering Algiers, he had no authority to sign an armistice. "I can simply obey the orders of Pétain."

"The problem is bigger than that," Clark insisted. He gestured vaguely toward Tunisia. "Will the French troops east of Algiers resist as we pass through to meet the common enemy?"

Darlan's watery blue eyes avoided Clark's stare. "I have asked Vichy to give me an answer to your terms as soon as possible."

Clark thumped the table with his fist. "It will be necessary to retain you in protective custody. I hope you understand. We must move east. I will go to General Giraud. He will sign the terms and issue the necessary orders."

Darlan mopped his pate, and the faintest trace of a smile crossed his lips. "I am not certain the troops will obey."

"If you think Pétain will agree with you that hostilies must cease, why can't you issue that order now?"

"It would result," Darlan said slowly, "in the immediate occupation of southern France by the Germans."

Clark's fist again crashed onto the table. "What you are doing now means the killing of more French and Americans. This is the time when we must lean on our inclinations and not on our orders. Here is an opportunity for all Frenchmen to rally and win the war. Here is your last chance."

"That is your decision," Darlan said.

"Tell him," Clark said to Murphy, "that Pétain is nothing in our young lives." He pushed back his chair to leave, but Juin held up his hand. "Give us five minutes."

As the Allied delegates filed from the room, Darlan murmured to Murphy, "Would you mind suggesting to Major General Clark that I am a five-star admiral? He should stop talking to me like a

lieutenant junior grade."

The Americans retreated to a remote corridor across the foyer. The sound of raised French voices drifted from the closed door. Clark paced, muttering about "YBSOBs," the private acronym he and Eisenhower had invented for "yellow-bellied sons of bitches." Clark's tacit threat to declare martial law in North Africa horrified Murphy. He could hardly imagine administering railroads, mail, water supply, and other civil functions across a million square miles with nearly 20 million people, few of whom shared a language with any American. If the Allies were to lunge toward Tunisia without fear of a stab in the back, they needed French help.

The door swung open. Darlan's pudgy confidant and his host in Algiers, Vice Admiral Raymond Fenard, smiled and gestured. As Clark and the others took their seats, Darlan turned to Murphy and said, *"J'accepte."*

He laid a draft order before Clark announcing to all French troops that further battle was futile. A proposed message to Pétain suggested that continued fighting would likely cost France its African possessions. Darlan took up a pen and scratched an order "in the name of the Marshal" ordering all land, sea, and air forces in North Africa to cease fire, return to their bases, and observe a strict neutrality. Darlan again mopped his head. "This will stand," Clark declared.

He immediately cabled word of the agreement to Gibraltar. "I deemed it of the utmost importance," he told Eisenhower, "to do anything to secure an order which would be obeyed to cease hostilities." Giraud resurfaced in his kepi, jodhpurs, gold braid, and gleaming cavalry boots. "He appeared to have emerged directly from the barber's shop," journalist Alan Moorehead later wrote. "His small, bird-like head was beautifully groomed." With his misplaced uniform restored and his pride swallowed, Giraud announced that for the greater glory of France he would serve under Darlan in fighting the Germans.

Yet no sooner was the deal made than it collapsed. Within hours, news came from Vichy that Marshal Pétain had sacked Darlan as his military commander and repudiated any agreement with the Americans rather than risk the German occupation of Vichy France and seizure of the large Vichy fleet anchored at Toulon. "I issued the order to defend North Africa," Pétain decreed. More diminished than ever, Darlan moped around Admiral Fenard's villa like a disinherited heir. "I am lost," he said. "I can only give myself up."

At three P.M. on Tuesday afternoon Clark and Murphy arrived at the villa, alarmed by reports that their new protégé intended to renege on the armistice he had signed six hours earlier.

"Pétain is the mouthpiece of Hitler," Clark insisted.

Darlan shrugged. "There is nothing I can do but revoke the order which I signed this morning."

"Damned if you do!" Clark drew himself to his full, imposing height. "You are now a prisoner."

"Then I must be taken prisoner."

Furious, Clark ordered two infantry platoons to throw a cordon around Fenard's compound. An American colonel, Benjamin A. Dickson, shoved past Darlan's aides to confront him directly. "Mon Admiral, by order of the supreme commander you are hereby under arrest in these quarters. Guards have been posted with orders to shoot if you attempt to escape."

Dickson returned to the front gate. "Our prisoner in that house is Admiral Darlan," he told the captain of the guard. "He is a short, bald-headed, pink-faced, needle-nosed, sharp-chinned little weasel. If he tries to get away in uniform or civilian clothes, he is to be shot."

At Gibraltar, Eisenhower thumbed through the dispatches from Africa and tried to make sense of the front. "War brings about strange, sometimes ridiculous situations," he had written in another

longhand memo to himself on Monday afternoon. With each passing hour this war seemed to get stranger and more ridiculous. In a scribbled note he titled "Inconsequential thoughts of a commander during one of the interminable waiting periods," Eisenhower added, "I'm anxiously waiting word of: west coast operations. Oran operations. Giraud's movements and intentions. Darlan's proposals. Movements of Italian air. Intentions of Spain."

Darlan appeared to have capitulated twice and reneged twice under countervailing pressure from Vichy and Clark. Giraud's influence in North Africa seemed to be nil. Eisenhower had greeted one of Clark's cables by wailing, "Jeee-sus Ch-e-rist! What I need around here is a damned good assassin." He wondered whether bribery would help. Should the Allies, he asked Clark, consider depositing a large sum "in a neutral country such as Switzerland?"

As the seat of French authority in North Africa, Algiers was crucial to the Allied cause and the staging ground for the push toward Tunisia. British troops still waited offshore to begin that eastward drive once Clark was certain of French neutrality if not collaboration. Morocco also was vital as the conduit for supplies and reinforcements from the United States. Yet Eisenhower still had heard virtually nothing from Hewitt and Patton.

But it was Oran that had preoccupied the commander-in-chief in a message to Marshall late on Monday. The airfields in western Algeria were critical to building up Allied power, and so were the port at Oran and the nearby naval base at Mers el-Kébir. "My biggest operational difficulty at the moment is the slowness in straightening out the Oran region," Eisenhower wrote. "I must get it soon."

A Blue Flag over Oran

EISENHOWER was about to get his wish.

American soldiers had converged on Oran all day Sunday, November 8, driving 9,000 French defenders into a bowl twenty miles in diameter. From the west, Ted Roosevelt and the 26th Infantry marched through Algerian villages given code names drawn from soldiers' hometowns—Brooklyn, Brockton, Syracuse—along roads named for pastimes from a former life: Baseball, Golf, Lacrosse.

Terry Allen and a larger portion of his 1st Division descended on Oran from the sandstone hills above St. Cloud, a key crossroads east of the city, and the salt lakes farther south. Children in dirty kaftans shouted "Hi yo, Silver!" or flung stiff-arm Fascist salutes to liberators they presumed to be German. Veiled Berber women with indigo tattoos peered through casement shutters, and in cafés men wearing fezzes looked up from their tea glasses long enough to applaud the passing troops, African-style: arms extended, clapping hands hinged at the wrists, no pretense of sincerity. A war correspondent seeking adjectives to describe the locals settled on "scrofulous, unpicturesque, ophthalmic, lamentable."

Exhausted soldiers who could elude their officers skulked into the underbrush; soon the thorn bushes themselves seemed to be snoring. The raspy trundle of artillery shells sometimes woke the men, and often did not. Other troops threw their shoulders behind farm carts used as caissons. Sweating like horses beneath the molten sun, they plodded toward the unseen city beyond the horizon. Abandoned cartridge belts and field jackets blazed a broad, sad trail all the way back to Arzew. Occasionally a wood-burning bus rattled past, carrying unshaven French prisoners to cages on the beach. A cook from the 18th Infantry commandeered a brown mule and a two-wheeled cart to haul his field kitchen. When the mule bolted past a column of hooting GIs toward French lines, the cook threw aside the useless reins, dropped the animal with a single rifle shot, and forced the men, hooting no longer, to haul the kitchen themselves.

A wounded soldier lay in the tall grass, waiting for an ambulance and pleading with passersby,

“Don’t kick my legs, please don’t kick my legs.” During a mortar barrage, four soldiers from Company E of the 16th Infantry took cover in an irrigation ditch. When the shelling lifted, a lieutenant across the road noticed a luminous blue glow and found that a shell fragment had severed the power line overhead. The fallen wire had electrocuted all four men.

So this is war, soldiers told one another: misfortune at every bend in the road. Misery and murdered mules and sudden death in a ditch.

St. Cloud was a buff-tinted farm town of 3,500, surrounded by vineyards, with sturdy stone houses and—because by November grapevines had been trimmed to mere nubs—fields of fire extending half a mile in all directions. Straddling the main road to Oran from the east, St. Cloud had been reinforced with the 16th Tunisian Infantry Regiment, the 1st Battalion of the Foreign Legion, an artillery battalion, and paramilitary troops of the Service d’Ordre Légionnaire, French Fascists who modeled themselves on the German SS. American intelligence rated the defenders “second- or third-class fighting troops.” But before noon on November 8, Company C of Terry Allen’s 18th Infantry had been ambushed, driven off, then driven off again when it returned to St. Cloud with the bulk of the 1st Battalion.

At 3:30 P.M., the battalion attacked once more down the road from Renan, joined by the 2nd Battalion trying to outflank the defenders on the south. Long, smoky ribbons of French machine-gun fire lashed the grapevines, killing the Company A first sergeant with a bullet in the forehead and mortally wounding the commander in the throat. A clock in the stone steeple looming above St. Cloud tolled four o’clock. From the belfry a sniper’s orange muzzle flashes winked insolently. American .50-caliber bullets gnawed at the steeple and clanged off the bells. Discordant pealing carried across the tile rooftops.

Men from both U.S. battalions crawled on their bellies through the vineyards toward the whitewashed stone wall encircling the St. Cloud cemetery 200 yards south of town. French and American riflemen flitted among the tombs and obelisks like shades in the fading gray light. Bullets pinged off gravestones and chipped the wings of marble cherubim. Gunfire roared in the crypts.

Lieutenant Edward McGregor formed a skirmish line from Company B, blew three blasts on his whistle, then leaped the cemetery wall to lead a platoon rush on the town. Three men leaped with him; forty others cowered behind the wall. McGregor spun around and rallied the troops with a wild-eyed vow to shoot every shirker in the back. This time the platoon followed until a bullet ripped the face from the B Company commander. “Keep going, Mac,” the officer urged, and fell dead. McGregor and eight others were captured. St. Cloud was not.

Now French artillerymen opened with their field pieces. The barrage sent American soldiers by the score into full flight. Officers pursued them bellowing, “Stop! Stop!” A wounded lieutenant beside the road pleaded, “Please, please, don’t leave me.” He was left. Medics would find him at dawn, dead white and still alive, his shattered arm too far gone to save. French guns also sniffed out a battery from the 32nd Field Artillery, which had set up behind a ridge north of town. Shells screamed down as a terrified herd of goats stampeded through the howitzer positions twice, each time knocking American gunners to the ground.

Night slipped down on St. Cloud, transforming the farm town into a dark, sinister redoubt. Bodies lay like bloody rugs among the stubby vines. Gunfire rippled from nervous sentries, and it was worth a man’s life to move about before dawn.

At seven A.M., on November 9, the 18th Infantry attacked again, with nearly 7,000 troops. By noon the attack had failed, with heavy casualties. For Colonel Frank Greer, the regimental

commander, St. Cloud had become a grudge fight. The entire Allied drive on Oran was stalled because of this town's resistance. Greer stood on the concrete loading ramp of the winery that served as his command post, studying St. Cloud through field glasses. Half the church steeple was gone now, and with it the clock chimes. Palm trees had been sheared off mid-trunk, and yawning holes could be seen in several house roofs. A riderless black mount, wearing a French cavalry saddle and dragging its bridle, grazed at the edge of town. A dozen other horses lay dead, their legs in the air, like upended tables.

"I'm going to put a creeping artillery barrage through that town, starting at this end and working right over it," Greer said. Two hundred shells had been fuzed and stacked at each battery; the barrage of 1,500 rounds would begin at one P.M., followed thirty minutes later by a three-battalion assault. Scouts reported that hundreds of women and children were in the town, huddling in shuttered rooms as the world detonated around them. Some had already been killed, and many more no doubt would die in the bombardment.

At that moment a hatless, weathered figure in shirtsleeves pulled up to the winery in a jeep. Terry Allen had spent the night in a Tourville schoolhouse, wedged into a child's desk with a gasoline lantern illuminating photos of Pétain and colorful wall maps of France's colonial empire. Battle reports indicated that Roosevelt's men were on Djebel Murdjadjo, the high ground west of Oran; T.R. himself was said to be chasing French hussars with a carbine. Tafaraoui airfield had fallen quickly, and 5,000 troops from the 1st Armored Division, having skirted a French strong point at Misserrhin, had just captured La Sénia airfield. Little was known of the VILLAIN paratroopers or the RESERVIST raiders, but a Foreign Legion counterattack from Sidi Bel Abbès in the southern desert was collapsing. "Boys," Allen said, "I've just sent a signal to the French to put in their first team." To an exhausted rifle company huddled in a ditch, he urged, "There are a lot of good-looking girls in that town ready to welcome the liberating Americans." Others he simply warned, "Take Oran or you don't eat."

Standing beneath a fig tree, a cigarette dangling from his lips, Allen swiveled his head from side to side to keep the smoke from his eyes. Greer explained his intentions; a soft hiss leaked from Allen's cheeks as he studied St. Cloud in the middle distance. The division staff opposed Greer's plan. It took little imagination to picture terrified civilians mumbling their Hail Marys and fingering their rosaries in preparation for the next world. Terry Allen himself had prayed this morning, as he did before every battle.

He studied the map and took a long, final gaze at St. Cloud. Allen had been in a dozen provincial French towns like it during the Great War. Among his idiosyncrasies was a disdain for all foreign names more complicated than "Paris," and he routinely substituted "Whatever-the-Hell-They-Call-It" for any polysyllabic place. But in St. Cloud he could picture the greengrocer, the dressmaker's shop, the scruffy taverns with their Dubonnet signs and bored waiters in cummerbunds.

He turned to Greer. "There will not be any general artillery concentration," he said. "If we bombard the town and then fail to take it by attack, it would be disastrous."

Obliterating a French town "would make a bad political impression," he added. And it would use too much ammunition. "We don't need the damned place anyway. We can bypass St. Cloud and take Oran by night maneuver." Leave one battalion as a holding force, Allen said, then swing the rest of your men wide of the town and get them moving toward Oran. Greer saluted, disappointment etched on his face.

If the order to sidestep St. Cloud seems obvious in retrospect, at the time it was not. By leaving a large armed force in his rear, and suppressing the impulse of his men to avenge their losses and win the town at any cost, Allen had taken a calculated risk. He had calibrated political and battlefield variables to make the first singular tactical decision by an American general in the liberation of Europe.

“I just couldn’t do it,” Allen later mused. “Just couldn’t. There were civilians in that goddam place. I couldn’t blast hell outta all of them.”

The circumvention of St. Cloud and the capture of La Sénia unhinged French defenses. Oran was encircled. For the final assault on the city, Allen at 7:15 A.M. on November 10 dictated “field order No. 3,” which ended: “Nothing in hell must delay or stop this attack.”

The French in fact delayed them, at Arcole and then at St. Eugène, but not for long. When a young major complained that his tired, hungry men needed rest, the 16th Infantry commander rounded on him and snapped, “You will not talk that way. You will attack.” By dawn on November 10, following a night of sleet and wild wind, the converging U.S. forces faced little more than sniper fire. Lieutenant Colonel John Todd, known in the 1st Armored Division as Daddy Rabbit, was told, “Take your tanks in and mill around.” Shoving the road barricades aside, Todd’s tanks rolled down the Boulevard de Mascarad and reached the blue bight of Oran bay; they were too late to prevent the harbor sabotage that followed RESERVIST, but they thwarted a French scheme to flood the port with fuel oil and set it ablaze. Lieutenant Colonel John K. Waters, commander of another armored battalion (and Patton’s son-in-law), put on an intimidating show of force along Boulevard Paul Doumer—although the tanks seemed less fearsome after some ran out of gas near the cathedral.

Festive crowds filled the sidewalks, flashing Vs with their fingers and flinching at occasional sniper fire. The pretty girls Allen had promised blew kisses from balconies on Boulevard Joffre and dropped hibiscus garlands onto the tank turrets. A potbellied burgher with a black felt hat and a white flag rapped on a tank hull, introduced himself as Oran’s mayor, and offered to surrender his town. The 1st Battalion of the 6th Armored Infantry—sister unit of the battalion destroyed in RESERVIST—stormed the gates of Fort St. Philippe to free more than 500 Allied prisoners: paratroopers, pilots, British tars, and American infantrymen from *Walney* and *Hartland*. Liberators and liberated wept alike. French camp guards formed up, stacked arms, and marched smartly to confinement in their own barracks.

For more than five hours, St. Cloud resisted a final attack—sans artillery barrage—by the 1st Battalion of the 18th Infantry and Darby’s Ranger battalion. The town finally capitulated after house-to-house combat, yielding 400 French prisoners, fourteen artillery tubes, and twenty-three machine guns. No one counted the bodies. At Château-Neuf, where golden carp swam in a tinkling fountain amid syringa and pepper trees, General Robert Boisseau surrendered his Oran division at noon on Tuesday, November 10. A large blue pennant was hoisted above the city, the prearranged American signal of Oran’s fall.

Beyond the killed and wounded of RESERVIST, the Big Red One alone suffered more than 300 casualties at Oran. Allen and Roosevelt also relieved two of their division’s nine infantry battalion commanders for various inadequacies. The tally of French dead in defending the city was put at 165.

The liberators immediately set to work converting Oran into a vast supply depot. Quartermasters requisitioned the local bullring for a food warehouse, then realized that it reeked, indelibly, of bulls. The provost marshal built a fenced compound in which to quarantine 150 soldiers who had developed venereal disease during the passage from Britain. Troops named the camp Casanova Park; the barbed wire, one commander explained, was “to make them feel like heels.” Lieutenant Colonel Waters, showing the initiative that would one day lead him to four-star rank, liberated ten barrels of red wine from the Oran docks and filled the helmet of every soldier in his battalion. A tank destroyer unit threw a jolly party for Allen and Roosevelt, who upheld Fighting First tradition by getting pie-eyed drunk.

Almost 37,000 men now occupied a beachhead seventy miles wide and fifteen miles deep. With

the surrender of Algiers, the capture of Oran gave the Allies virtual possession of Algeria, although Morocco was still contested and North African politics remained more tangled than ever. Still, the dispatch sent from Oran to Eisenhower at dusk on November 10 summed up the prevailing sentiment, however ephemeral: "Everything is rosy." After three days of fretful confusion this news proved bracing. "Now we must get ports in shape and rush eastward without delay," Eisenhower cabled London that same Tuesday.

"This business of battle is just rush and rush," he added. "But I like it."

"An Orgy of Disorder"

CASABLANCA provided Vichy with its best anchorage south of Toulon, and the French navy had chosen to defend the Moroccan port with valor worthy of a better cause. Not one French sailor in a thousand knew the identity of the hostile fleet that appeared in the morning haze at dawn on November 8. But just after seven A.M., the great coastal battery at El Hank had opened fire, followed moments later by the four fifteen-inch guns on the front turret of the berthed battleship *Jean Bart*. Searing plumes of orange flame and cylindrical smoke rings blossomed from the muzzles. At eighteen thousand yards—ten miles—El Hank's first salvo straddled the battleship *Massachusetts*, whose skipper the previous evening had uttered those fine Latin words about seeking peace with a sword. *Jean Bart*'s shells then lifted immense gouts of seawater 600 yards off the starboard bow. *Massachusetts* and her sisters soon answered, and what the U.S. Navy cheerfully called "an old-fashioned fire-away Flannagan" had begun.

Kent Hewitt was on *Augusta*'s flag bridge when excited calls of "Batter up!" and "Play ball!" began spilling from the radios, signaling, respectively, hostile fire and the authorization to reply in kind. After two weeks of relative indolence during the passage from Hampton Roads, during which he had eaten too much, exercised too little, and put on weight, Hewitt had been relentlessly busy since deciding to trust his aerologist's weather eye and proceed with the three Moroccan landings. He knew that the assault on Safi in the south was going well, although only the sketchiest reports had come from General Truscott's force at Mehdia in the north. The cloak-and-dagger efforts by the OSS to stage a coup through the rebel general Émile Béthouart had evidently failed; Hewitt could only guess that the resident-general, Auguste Noguès, had chosen to resist the invasion. At Fedala, just above Casablanca, where 20,000 of the Army's 33,000 assault troops aimed at Morocco were to land, the first craft had reached shore two hours earlier. Despite calm seas and mild surf, many boats had broached or capsized, but at least some soldiers were on the beach and preparing to advance on Casablanca. Hewitt had dutifully reported these developments in coded dispatches every couple of hours, unaware that, because Navy signalmen had neglected to classify the messages as urgent, Eisenhower had received hardly a syllable.

Hewitt considered that Divine Providence was still with him, but he had begun to fret about his "velvet." The aerologist, Steere, warned that the weather was likely to begin deteriorating within a day. Enemy submarines would hardly remain at bay forever, despite the destroyers patrolling the fleet's flanks and the eight minelayers scattering sea mines around the troop transports. Another large convoy from Hampton Roads was scheduled to arrive on Friday, November 13, despite Hewitt's efforts to persuade the Army to delay the follow-on force until he could guarantee enough secure berths in Casablanca harbor.

Now it appeared the French intended not just to fight but to fight with passion. At first the defensive fire on the beaches had seemed sporadic, more symbolic than lethal. The captain of the cruiser U.S.S. *Brooklyn* had signaled Hewitt at 5:39 A.M.: "Have noticed gunfire and am moving into

position to take care of eventualities." But the shells from El Hank and the *Jean Bart* were ship-killers; they opened what became one of the most intense naval battles of the Atlantic war.

Within ten minutes of the first salvos, the sky seemed to leak steel across Casablanca's moles and harbor basins. American shells gouged great divots from the docks, spraying concrete shrapnel against hulls and across decks. Ten merchantmen lay defenseless at their moorings, and there they would sink, along with three French submarines. The last of 2,000 civilian refugees who had arrived from Dakar on three passenger ships the previous evening fled down piers soon pounded to rubble. Dozens of sailors, including several captains, died on the docks short of their gangplanks and the dignity of a seagoing death.

The *Jean Bart*—France's newest dreadnought, with turrets heavy as a frigate—was still unfinished: she could not leave her slip. A sixteen-inch shell from *Massachusetts* burrowed through the battleship's forward turret. Another hit the turret's armored apron, immobilizing the guns. After firing just seven rounds, *Jean Bart* fell silent. Three other shells from *Massachusetts* punched through the armored decks, the side, and the keel, and *Jean Bart* settled on the bottom along the Môle du Commerce. Oddly, not one of the shells exploded; they, along with more than fifty other American duds—the consequence in part of fuzes dating to 1918—spared Casablanca worse destruction.

The commander of the French 2nd Light Squadron, Rear Admiral Gervais de Lafond, was as ignorant as his seamen of the enemy's identity. Haze prevented him from making out the battle pennants on the enemy ships, and he had received no authoritative reports from his superiors or from the beaches. But Lafond clearly saw a disaster in the making. Only by putting to sea and slipping along the coastline under the blinding glare of the rising sun could his squadron escape obliteration.

Lafond failed to realize that his foes had radar. The admiral issued his orders, boarded the destroyer *Milan*, and headed for the harbor entrance at 8:15 A.M. Attacking dive-bombers struck the commercial basin even as French submarine crews muscled a few final torpedoes aboard before casting off. A brave figure in a black cassock, the fleet chaplain, sprinted through the bombardment to the end of the pier, where he waved the sign of the cross at each warship as it sortied past. Along the corniche the wives and children of French sailors gathered on rooftops to cheer the sixteen ships into battle. They would have an unobstructed view as American fire whittled away the familiar silhouettes of the Casablanca fleet.

French shells were dye-loaded to help gunners see the fall of shot. Majestic geysers of green, purple, magenta, and yellow erupted around the American ships. On the presumption that no two enemy rounds would land in the same spot, helmsmen were ordered to "chase the splashes"—an especially difficult maneuver when gunfire straddled a ship. Cruisers, destroyers, and the *Massachusetts* swerved to and fro, battle ensigns snapping. The battleship was hit once, suffering little damage; another shell tore her colors to tatters. The concussion of their own big guns knocked out the radar range finders on *Tuscaloosa* and *Massachusetts*, so the gun teams had to aim crudely, by sight, wasting quantities of shells. Shock waves from *Augusta*'s number three turret jarred a radio receiver from its mountings. It smashed to the deck, thus producing one among many communications problems that by noon led to the sacking of several signal operators for incompetence.

Concussion from the flagship's aft turret claimed another victim: the landing craft Patton intended to ride to the beach had its bottom blown out while hanging from davits over the port rail. His kit—except for the ivory-handled Colt Peacemaker and Smith & Wesson .357, which he had just strapped on—plunged into the Atlantic. In Norfolk Patton had vowed to land with the first wave and die at the head of his troops; now, immaculately dressed in his shiny two-star helmet and cavalry boots, he was trapped on *Augusta*. "Goddammit," he barked at an aide. "I hope you have a spare toothbruth with you I can use to clean my foul mouth. I don't have a thing left in the world, thanks to the United States Navy."

He stopped fuming long enough to scribble a letter to Bea—"It is flat calm. God was with us"—and record the morning events in his diary:

> I was on the main deck just back of number two turret, leaning on the rail, when one [French shell] hit so close that it splashed water all over me. When I was on the bridge later, one hit closer but I was too high to get wet. It was hazy and the enemy used smoke well. I could just see them and make out our splashes. We had the [*Massachusetts*], the *Brooklyn*, the *Augusta* and some others all firing and going like hell in big zig-zags…. You have to put cotton in your ears. Some of the people got white but it did not seem very dangerous to me —sort of impersonal.

Hewitt was too busy to fret over Patton's impatience or his snippy assessment of naval combat. This sea battle would certainly dispel any doubts Patton still held about the Navy's desire to fight. So engrossed was the Navy in the duel with *Jean Bart* and the shore batteries that the warships soon found themselves nearly thirty miles south of Fedala—with Admiral Lafond's squadron angling straight for the vulnerable American transports. A report from a spotter plane alerted Hewitt to the French sortie from the harbor, and shortly before 8:30 A.M. he ordered *Augusta, Brooklyn,* and two destroyers to intercept the French at flank speed. The historian Samuel Eliot Morison, aboard *Brooklyn* as a naval reserve officer, reported that "the four ships went tearing into action like a pack of dogs unleashed."

It was a near-run thing. The rising sun, the glare, and the sporadically malfunctioning Navy radar reduced the French ships to black dots dancing on the horizon. Visibility was further cut by the pall from oil tanks blazing ashore and by the French squadron's smoke generators. Shooting at the agile Vichy destroyers was likened to "trying to hit a grasshopper with a rock." Shells from a shore battery holed the destroyer U.S.S. *Palmer*—one blew through a galley trash can without scratching the two sailors carrying it—and severed the mainmast; she fled west at twenty-seven knots. The destroyer U.S.S. *Ludlow,* firing so furiously that her deck guns appeared to be squirting a solid stream of tracers, hit Lafond's flagship, *Milan,* and set her ablaze, only to be answered with a six-inch shell that wrecked the wardrooms and ventilated the port bow. Every swatch of unchipped paint seemed to burn like tar paper. *Ludlow* also fled. Those French submarines that escaped the carnage of the harbor nearly took their revenge: *Massachusetts* threaded a four-torpedo spread, with number four missing the starboard paravane by fifteen feet. Several minutes later *Tuscaloosa* avoided another four torpedoes, from *Méduse,* and *Brooklyn* dodged five others, fired by the *Amazone*.

Four miles from the transports, French luck ran out for good at eleven A.M. The carrier *Ranger* and the escort carrier *Suwannee* had been plagued by light winds that complicated takeoffs and landings. Both ships tacked aggressively, searching for the riffled water that signaled stiffer breezes needed for sufficient lift. A squadron of Grumman Wildcats finally launched from the *Ranger* and tangled with Vichy fighters in a dogfight that cost four American and eight French aircraft. Fuselage and aileron fragments rained down on Casablanca's minarets. Planes damaged beyond saving flipped belly-up so the pilots could more easily parachute out. The repair crews on *Ranger* mended so many bullet holes in the Wildcats that they ran short of adhesive tape and broadcast an appeal throughout the carrier for personal supplies of Scotch tape.

Patched and vengeful, the American planes swarmed out of the sun from 8,000 feet. Fighters do not fight, the French writer Antoine de St.-Exupéry once observed: they murder. Each Wildcat carried six .50-caliber guns, and each barrel fired 800 rounds per minute—some armor-piercing, some

incendiary, and some tracer rounds. Working from fantail to forecastle, pilots strafed Lafond's flotilla so savagely that the French ships glittered from all the bullets richocheting off their superstructures. "The first pass was, I believe, devastating," one flier reported. Flying bridges disintegrated, and the men on them were sliced to ribbons. A single strafing run against one destroyer killed every sailor on deck, except for the gunners crouched in the armored turrets. Their gun ports smudged with carbon, the planes returned to the carrier decks to reload and launch again.

The air attacks and weight of American gunfire soon told, although none of the forty-one bombs dropped on El Hank scored a direct hit. Green- and red-dyed Navy shells rained down by the score, then by the hundreds. *Brooklyn* alone fired 2,600 rounds; *Massachusetts* used more than half her supply of sixteen-inch shells. One shattered French destroyer "heeled over as if she had been pushed by the smokestacks," a pilot noted. The *Fougueux* sank by the bow even as her stern guns continued to fire. *Frondeur,* her engine room flooded, limped back to port and capsized; *Brestois,* too, returned to a jetty only to roll over and sink. The destroyer *Boulonnais,* hit eight times as she maneuvered to launch torpedoes, went down so quickly that a final green shell from *Massachusetts* simply marked the grave. With her bow crushed and all hands on the bridge wounded, including Lafond, *Milan* beached herself. *Albatros* was hit twice, then shelled and strafed while under tow back to Casablanca; she, too, was beached, with more than a hundred casualties. One by one, the green flecks vanished from American radar screens.

The most operatic death was left to the largest ship in the 2nd Light Squadron, the *Primauguet.* When the American attack began, all four of the cruiser's gun turrets had been in various states of undress. By nine A.M., three of the four had been reassembled, a crew of 553 men was aboard, and with help from two tugs *Primauguet* had sortied to join the mêlée. Building to twenty-one knots, she was soon in a running gunfight with *Massachusetts* and both American cruisers. Three shells hit *Primauguet* without exploding before a strong shock, then another, staggered the ship. Holed five times below the waterline, her boilers winking out, she hemorrhaged smoke and wallowed back toward Casablanca at four knots. Wildcats caught her off the beach at Roches Noires, killing the captain and twenty-eight other men on the bridge. A laconic distress call reported that fire had become "conspicuous." Men plunged overboard to escape the flames. Terrified pigs broke loose from a pen in the hold and savaged the helpless wounded lying on deck. With more than half her crew dead or injured, *Primauguet* burned for more than a day.

Of the French ships that had sortied, only *Alcyon* returned to port unscathed, and it was left to her to search for survivors. She found little more than whiffs of cordite and brine. Sixteen other vessels—including eight submarines—had been sunk or crippled, with 490 men dead and 969 wounded. Four American ships had taken a single shell each, and *Ludlow* took two. Navy casualties totaled three killed in action and twenty-five wounded. Among the dead was a gunner on a dive-bomber who had rejected more than $200 from a comrade eager to buy a seat in the first wave; with his leg severed at the knee by anti-aircraft fire, the gunner died trying to knot his silk muffler into a tourniquet. He was buried at sea from *Ranger*'s hangar deck as the carrier made a sweeping, ceremonial turn to starboard. A few downed American pilots were captured. From their prison window in Casablanca, they cheered each successive bombing wave, then bathed in champagne purchased from their jailors in a desperate effort to rid themselves of the fleas infesting the cell.

Diehard French officers tried to form another battle fleet, but with only two sloops intact, the rally quickly petered out. Sailors hauled a sixteen-inch American dud from the port to Admiralty headquarters, where it was displayed near the entrance with a placard, in French: "We Come As Friends!" Surviving crewmen were rounded up, issued a rifle and five cartridges, and formed into infantry companies for the defense of Casablanca. Leaning on a cane, the wounded Admiral Lafond took the salutes of his sailors as they passed in review before heading to the front.

Patton finally reached Fedala's Beach Red 1 by crash boat at 1:20 P.M. Sunday afternoon. In better times, the fishing port of 16,000 residents catered to swells from nearby Casablanca who came to enjoy the racetrack and seafront casino. Now the town was almost deserted. Soaked to the waist and escorted by bodyguards cradling submachine guns, Patton scuffed across the sand to a cabana at the seawall. His leather jacket was stained with yellow dye from the French shell that had splashed him on *Augusta* that morning. At last, after so many years of preparing himself for war, he was in the fight. Large and unhasty, he took stock.

"I cannot stomach fighting the French if there is a way to avoid it," Patton had confessed to another officer on *Augusta*. That deep Francophilia would now have to be put aside. As ignorant as virtually every other commander in TORCH, Patton knew little of what was happening beyond this beach at this hour. Unlike many, he was comfortable with ambiguity: that trait would inform his generalship for the next two and a half days and then the next two and a half years. A message received on the *Augusta* at noon reported that the French garrison in Safi had surrendered almost seven hours earlier, but it would take at least a day or two for the Sherman tanks unloaded there to travel the 140 miles north to Casablanca. At Mehdia, fifty miles north of Fedala, Truscott had signalled "Play ball!" at 7:15 A.M., but nothing had been heard since, in part because the Army's tactical radios on *Augusta* had also been knocked out by concussion from the ship's guns. The immediate challenge was to organize the three regiments from the 3rd Infantry Division landing at Fedala to capture the town's little harbor, then swing into position for the assault on Casablanca ten miles to the north.

That would be no easy task. Patton had once described combat as "an orgy of disorder," and Fedala confirmed that view. Instead of being concentrated on a four-mile beachhead, troops were sprinkled up and down the coast for forty-two miles. Of seventy-seven light tanks in the convoy, only five had reached shore. Of nine fire control parties landed, just two could communicate with the Navy ships whose guns they were supposed to direct. Inexperienced radio operators tried to extend their range by increasing transmitter power, but succeeded only in jamming other channels. Pilfering natives worked the strand like beachcombers, shouting the passwords "George!" and "Patton!" and wondering why—as they surmised on seeing the big white stars on the invaders' vehicles—a Jewish army had come to Morocco. Soldiers flung away their cumbersome bazookas, and when confronted by Senegalese infantry some just pointed to the American flags pinned to their sleeves, as if that should explain everything. "Had the landings been opposed by Germans," Patton later conceded, "we would never have gotten ashore."

While trapped on Hewitt's bridge during the naval battle, Patton had lamented, "I wish I were a second lieutenant again." Now he acted like one. Flailing and cursing, he scattered Moroccans and timid soldiers alike. He sprinted past the cabanas, rousting slackers from the dunes. "If I see another American soldier lying down on this beach," he roared, "I'll court-martial him!" Patton believed in "words of fire which [would] electrify his chessmen into frenzied heroes," one of his colonels later said. Electrified if not yet heroic, the troops shambled inland. A useful rumor that Berber tribesmen were castrating prisoners tended to curb straggling.

Five French infantry battalions with 2,500 men and forty-six artillery pieces faced nearly 20,000 Americans. Confused and disorganized though they were, the landings at Fedala effectively bisected the French forces defending the coast above Casablanca. The Army's first success came against a four-gun coastal battery at Pont Blondin, three miles northeast of Fedala. Soldiers from the 30th Infantry Regiment dumped mortar shells onto the fort, while a platoon leader shouted, "Rendezvous!" over and over, in the conviction that it meant "Surrender." Several Navy ships contributed a brutal

bombardment, which killed four French defenders and drove others into the shelter of a sturdy stone toilet. The shells also killed six Americans in a glade along the Nefifikh River. “When our own naval barrage is falling into our position it is most demoralizing,” a major reported. After yellow smoke grenades—the signal to cease firing—failed to halt the Navy’s cannonade, an Army officer radioed, “For God’s sake stop shelling Fedala! You’re killing our own men…. The shells are falling all over town. If you stop, they will surrender.”

The shelling stopped. A white handkerchief fluttered from a window on the point of a bayonet, and seventy-one dazed French defenders emerged from the fort. An American captain offered water and a cigarette to a French sailor who lay in a stairwell, both legs severed. A Catholic chaplain gave last rites to the dead and dying from each side.

Patrols pushing into Fedala captured ten members of the German Armistice Commission—some still in pajamas—as they trotted across the municipal golf course toward a waiting airplane. Their rooms at the Miramar Hotel yielded stacks of secret documents and an ornate Prussian military helmet. The helmet’s owner, General Erich von Wulisch, the head of the commission, had escaped to Spanish Morocco, although not before a weepy farewell phone call to General Noguès: “This is the greatest setback to German arms since 1918. The Americans will take Rommel in the rear, and we shall be expelled from Africa.”

Rommel was still 2,000 miles away and the Americans had yet to take even Casablanca. To offer the French “the choice of peace or getting hell knocked out of them,” Patton dispatched a francophone colonel, William Hale Wilbur, in a jeep with a white flag. Wilbur, whose negotiating credentials included captaincy of the West Point fencing team thirty years earlier, set off in search of General Béthouart, unaware that he was immured in a Meknès prison and had been charged with treason. Wilbur motored through French defenses, greeting Senegalese machine-gunners with a chipper, “Good day, my friends! You’re well this morning?” At the Admiralty building, where wounded French marines sprawled across the bloody courtyard cobblestones, Wilbur was sent packing. Dodging his own navy’s gunfire, he drove back to American lines, joined a tank attack on a coastal battery, and later was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. A second emissary also made it to the Admiralty building just as El Hank loosed another salvo at two P.M. *“Voilà votre réponse,”* a disdainful French officer said, and shut the gate. “The French navy,” a staff officer told Patton, “is determined to slug it out with us.”

The fight would be to the finish. Patton was sad, but not very. While still trapped on *Augusta,* he had felt the singular loneliness of command, compounded by his frustrating inability to reach the battlefield. Now he was in his element. “My theory is that an army commander does what is necessary to accomplish his mission and that nearly 80 percent of his mission is to arouse morale in his men,” he once wrote. On Sunday night, as his aide barked “At-*ten*-tion!” to staff officers in the candlelit Miramar Hotel dining room, Patton strolled to the table wearing his pistols, polished cavalry boots, and von Wulisch’s shiny white casque emblazoned with a Prussian double eagle. To gales of laughter he announced over champagne, “I shall wear it for our entrance into Berlin.”

That night, before falling asleep, he scribbled in his diary, “God was very good to me today.”

God withdrew his beneficence on Monday. Following what one Fedala resident described as “the calmest day in sixty-eight years,” the Atlantic turned nasty with six-foot waves before dawn on November 9. Unloading slowed, then nearly stopped. Although 40 percent of the invasion force was ashore, barely one percent of the 15,000 tons of cargo had left Hewitt’s ships. Of 378 landing craft and tank lighters, more than half were breached, sunk, or stranded. Navy cooks lowered lard pails full of

coffee to exhausted boat crews. Sloppy loading in Norfolk, and Patton's chronic neglect of logistics—"Let's do it and think about it afterwards," in his chief engineer's tart phrase—now cost him dearly.

Shore parties lacked forklifts, pallets, rope, and acetylene torches. Soaked cardboard boxes disintegrated. Guns arrived on the beach with no gun sights; guns arrived with no ammunition; guns arrived with no gunners. Critical radio equipment had been stowed as ballast in the most inaccessible depths of the holds simply because it was heavy. Medical supplies remained shipbound for thirty-six hours. Boat and vehicle shortages left dozens of wounded soldiers stranded on the beaches, along with the trussed-up dead. Ammo was so desperately scarce that it was towed to shore on life rafts. Patton had imprudently relegated his chief logistician to the follow-on convoy, which was still days from Morocco. Press-ganging Moroccans to work as stevedores—at a wage of one cigarette per hour—simply gave many locals a better chance to steal.

A company of 113 military policemen was dispatched in four boats from the *Leonard Wood* with instructions to "bring order out of chaos on the beaches." In the predawn gloom on Monday, the lead coxswain mistook the burning *Primauguet* for his intended navigation beacon, an oil fire near Beach Yellow in Fedala. The boats puttered fifteen miles down the coast and into the fairway of Casablanca harbor, where an M.P. hailed what he thought was a U.S. Navy destroyer. "We are Americans!"

At a range of fifty yards, the French vessel opened with machine-gun fire, killing the company commander. The astonished soldiers in the lead boat stood with raised hands, some ripping off their undershirts to wave in frantic surrender. The French bore down, answering with 20mm cannon fire and a three-inch shell that shattered the motor and sank the boat in less than a minute. The second craft, only twenty yards behind, swerved to escape, but a shell blew off the coxswain's leg and machine-gun fire crippled a lieutenant who jumped up to take the wheel. "The air," one survivor recalled, "was full of metal." Burning gasoline spread from the stern in a crackling blue sheet. Those still alive leaped over the side as the two trailing boats fled through swarms of tracer fire. Twenty-eight Americans were killed or wounded; French sailors fished forty-five prisoners from the sea. A few men swam to shore, vomiting oily seawater. French civilians dragged them to the seawall and wrapped them in overcoats.

Two hours later, Patton reappeared on the Fedala beach with a determination "to flay the idle, rebuke the incompetent, and drive the timid." After wading through the surf to help reel in corpses from another overturned boat—"they were a nasty blue color," he later reported—Patton halted further unloading except in Fedala's tiny harbor. "The beach was a mess and the officers were doing nothing," he told his diary. Upon spotting a soldier gibbering on the beach, "I kicked him in arse with all my might…. Some way to boost morale. As a whole the men were poor, the officers worse. No drive. It is very sad."

One officer quoted Patton in waist-deep water summoning soldiers to help him shoulder a stranded landing craft from a sandbar: "Come back here! Yes, I mean *you!* All of you! Drop that stuff and come back here. Faster than that, goddamit. On the double!…Lift and push. Now! Push, goddamit, *push*!"

Scourging would not calm the sea or replenish empty caissons. The 3rd Infantry Division on November 8 had barely pushed south from Fedala toward Casablanca when troops were halted for lack of supplies. By late morning on November 9, the motor pool of the 15th Infantry Regiment still consisted of only a few camels, a few donkeys, and five jeeps, hardly the makings of a blitzkrieg. A four-battalion attack that began at seven A.M. on Monday stopped several hours later, again for want of wheels and munitions. At day's end Patton gave his customary acknowledgment to the Creator, but this time the diary entry had a perfunctory tone: "Again God has been good."

As dawn broke on November 10, the Americans were still five miles from Casablanca. The 7th Infantry on the right, and the 15th Infantry on the left, tramped forward to the sound of scuffing boots

and howls from mongrel dogs flanking the columns. French sailors, dismasted but dangerous, appeared in skirmish lines with their five cartridges. On a distant ridgeline spahi cavalrymen in brilliant robes could be seen with their long battle pennants and longer rifles. “Enemy cavalry!” an American officer shouted. “Direct front!” Horses pranced in the morning sun, the silver fittings on their bridles flashing; American sharpshooters debated whether to aim at horse or man, only to have the targets vanish in the haze. Then artillery fire fell from at least a dozen French 75s, and a battalion from the 7th Infantry broke for the rear until steadied by their officers 500 yards back.

“Today has been bad,” Patton told his diary late Tuesday. A message from Eisenhower at Gibraltar added to his vexation: “Dear Georgie—Algiers has been ours for two days. Oran defenses crumbling rapidly…. The only tough nut left is in your hands. Crack it open quickly.”

To his diary entry on November 10, Patton added, “God favors the bold, victory is to the audacious.” He now believed that only by flattening Casablanca could he take it. Sherman tanks from Safi had nearly reached the southern suburbs. Hewitt’s ships and carrier planes had sovereignty at sea and in the air. Third Division troops invested the city from north and east. The road to Marrakesh had been cut.

Patton notified his staff and subordinate commanders: at first light on Wednesday they would crack open the city, quickly and terribly.

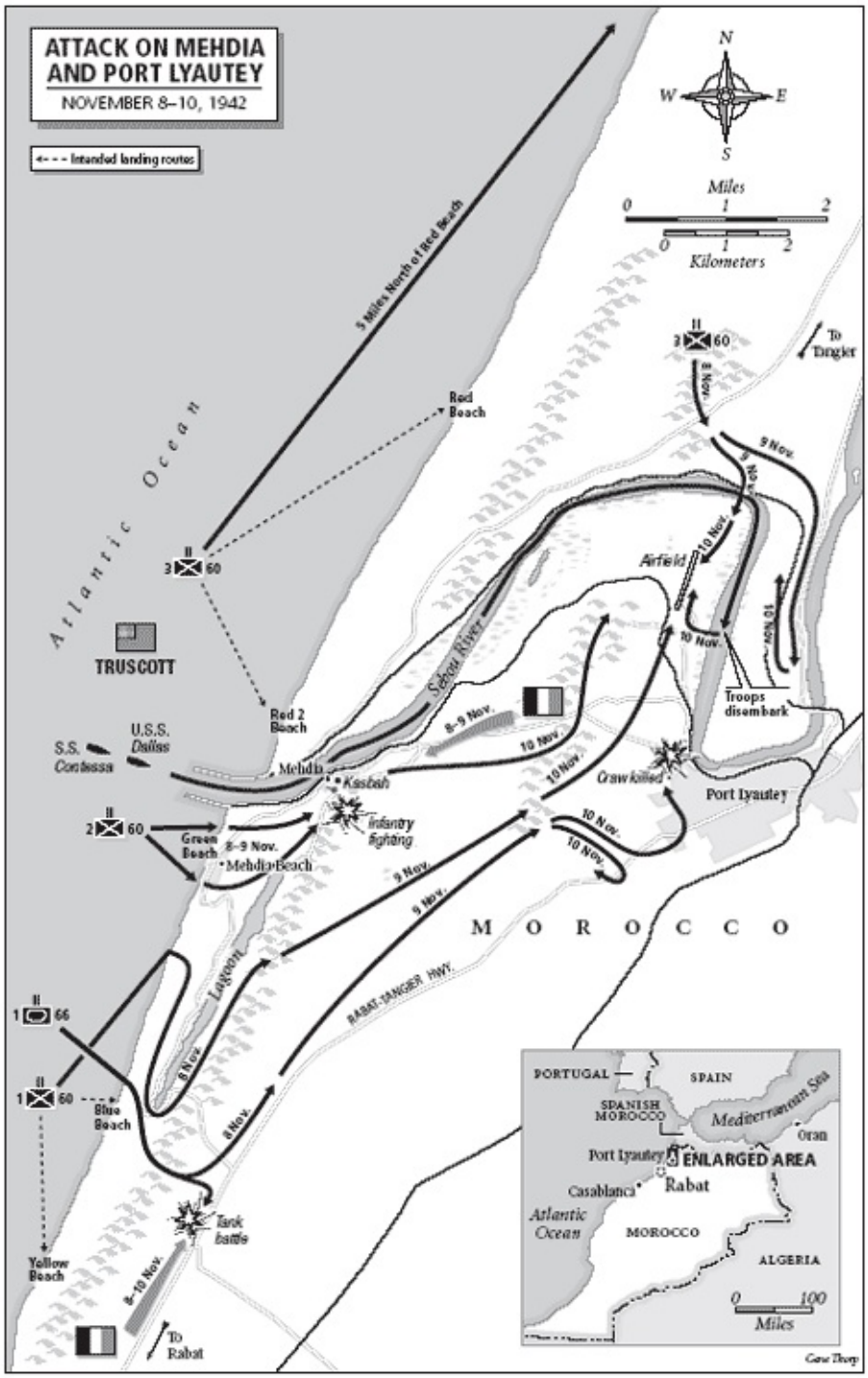
Battle for the Kasbah

OF the nine major landing sites chosen for TORCH in Algeria and Morocco, a beach that American planners had considered among the easiest was proving the most difficult. Eighty miles north of Casablanca, the seaside resort of Mehdia had confounded Brigadier General Lucian Truscott’s best efforts to subdue it. Landed badly but without serious opposition, Truscott’s 9,000 troops were supposed to capture the modern airfield at Port Lyautey, a few miles up the serpentine Sebou River. Once the field had fallen, aircraft from Gibraltar, and seventy-seven Army P-40s now parked on the escort carrier *Chenango*, would give Patton formidable airpower in Morocco—with bombs and fuel provided by the *Contessa.* Facing only 3,000 French defenders, Truscott had assured Mark Clark that the field “should not be too difficult to capture.” American troops believed the French defenders would be so cowed that they would greet the invaders “with brass bands,” as one sergeant put it. George Marshall told Eisenhower that he expected the airfield to fall by “noon Dog Day,” November 8. The assurance proved rash, and the expectations hollow.

“Beloved Wife,” Truscott had written from Norfolk two weeks earlier, “my greatest ambition is to justify your confidence and to deserve your love.” Sentimental and uxorious, he was also brusque, profane, and capable of hocking tobacco with the most unlettered private in the Army. “Polo games and wars aren’t won by gentlemen,” he said. “No sonofabitch, no commander.” Chesty and, at forty-seven, slightly stooped, he had protruding gray eyes, a moon face, and a voice as raspy as a wood file. His hands were huge, with fingers like tent pegs. He made his own polo mallets and trimmed his nails, obsessively, with a pocket knife. In uniform, Truscott was almost foppish: enameled helmet, silk scarf, red leather jacket, riding breeches. Before joining the cavalry in 1917, he had spent six years as a teacher in one-room schoolhouses. Until the disaster at Dieppe, which he attended as an American observer, he had never heard a shot fired in anger; he spent the grim return voyage to England belowdecks rolling cigarettes for the wounded from his plug of Bull Durham and wondering how to avoid a similar catastrophe in TORCH, for which he was a planner. “I am just a little worried about ability of Truscott,” Patton told his diary. “It may be nerves.”

Truscott’s opening gambit at Mehdia was to dispatch a pair of emissaries bearing a parchment

scroll adorned with red ribbon and wax seals. In elegant calligraphy it urged the French commander to give up. Carrying this document were two aviators, Colonel Demas T. Craw, who had captained the West Point polo team for the class of 1924, and Major Pierpont M. Hamilton of Tuxedo, New York, a product of Groton, Harvard, and years of living in Paris as an international banker. In their finest pinks-and-greens the two men had hit the beach Sunday morning, boarded a jeep, and headed inland. Holding a French tricolor and the Stars and Stripes, Craw sat in front next to the driver. Hamilton, seated in back on an ammunition box, carried a white truce flag.



The road from Mehdia angled past a sixteenth-century Portuguese fortress overlooking the turquoise Sebou where it emptied into the blue-black Atlantic. Already misnamed the Kasbah by the Americans, the citadel occupied the site of a Carthaginian trading post of the sixth century B.C. High-prowed fishing smacks bobbed at their moorings along the riverbank, nets draped over the gunwales to

dry. Stork nests, intricately thatched and big as a queen's bed, crowned utility poles along the road. Hamilton waved to Moroccan infantrymen, who waved back. A few artillery rounds burst in front and then behind. "Damn it," Craw radioed, "we're being shelled by both you and the French." Three miles ahead, they spied the airfield's concrete runway tucked into an oxbow bend of the Sebou. Beyond lay Port Lyautey.

The jeep climbed a low hill. Without warning, a machine gun stuttered twenty yards away. Craw slumped against the driver, instantly dead, his chest embroidered with bullets. A French lieutenant rushed forward, disarmed Hamilton and the driver, and then, leaving Craw folded in the jeep, delivered his prisoners to Colonel Jean Petit, commander of the 1st Regiment of Moroccan Tirailleurs. Petit expressed sympathy for the dead man, but less for the cause of French capitulation. "A decision of this kind," he explained after studying the scroll, "is not within my jurisdiction." While awaiting instructions from his superiors in Rabat, Petit offered Major Hamilton a private room and a seat in the officers' mess, where the American spent the next three days thrilling his captors with vivid accounts of the secret bazooka and other new terrors in the invaders' arsenal.

The failed diplomatic mission—for which Craw, posthumously, and Hamilton would win the Medal of Honor—proved Truscott's last, best hope for a quick victory. Troops from the 60th Infantry closed on the Kasbah only to be driven back to the Mehdia lighthouse by wild shellfire from their own navy. With massive gates and masonry walls a yard thick, the fort proved impregnable. Eighty-five French soldiers inside at the time of the American landings were reinforced Sunday evening by 200 others, all peppering the invaders with fire from the battlements and rifle ports. The 60th Infantry commander ordered the Kasbah bypassed, then belatedly realized that nothing could move upriver until the fort's big guns had been spiked. With more élan than sense, Truscott ordered the Kasbah taken "with cold steel" rather than reduced by U.S. warships. A French counterattack with three decrepit Renault tanks routed Truscott's 2nd Battalion and scattered the Americans so effectively that company musters produced as few as thirty men. "Officers as well as men were absolutely dumbfounded at their first taste of battle," one major later told the War Department.

Nightfall made matters worse. After repeatedly yelling "George!" at a suspicious shadow to no effect, a skittish sentry heaved a grenade and killed the lighthouse keeper's donkey. Sepulchral moaning from a lagoon terrorized several tank crewmen until they realized it was the croaking of giant African toads. The French ambushed a patrol near a fish cannery along the river, wounding an officer and shooting six of his men in the head. Skittish troops on the beaches and ships shot down a twin-engine plane in a wild fusillade before realizing that it was a British aircraft dispatched from Gibraltar to monitor the landings. A burst of machine-gun fire from a jumpy American soldier missed Truscott's head by an inch.

On the broad white shingle at Mehdia, Truscott cupped a cigarette in his big hands. He was violating his own blackout order but he desperately needed a smoke. The orange ember illuminated a face fissured with worry. "It came to me that even with hundreds all around me, I was utterly alone," he later wrote of that "grim and lonely" Sunday night.

> As far as I could see along the beach, there was chaos. Landing craft were beaching in the pounding surf, broaching to the waves, and spilling men and equipment into the water. Men wandered about aimlessly, hopelessly lost, calling to each other and for their units, swearing at each other and at nothing.

The troops ducked as one whenever a sniper round cracked overhead. Artillery crumped in the

distance: certainly it was French; the Americans had been unable to get their guns ashore. The rising sea that tormented Patton at Fedala was worse here, with waves now cresting at fifteen feet. Ammunition, water, and half of Truscott's troops remained on the ships. Wary of the Kasbah batteries, the Navy had moved its transports over the horizon—"halfway to Bermuda," Truscott fumed—adding thirty miles to each round-trip for lighters and landing craft.

Like Patton, Truscott concluded that the landing would have been a "disaster against a well-armed enemy intent upon resistance." So few American soldiers seemed to be shooting, and so many were willing to give up. Truscott suspected that peacetime training had taught them how to surrender better than how to fight. "One of the first lessons that battle impresses upon one," he later observed, "is that no matter how large the force engaged, every battle is made up of small actions by individuals and small units."

He drew on his cigarette and picked up a rifle. Every battle also was made up of small actions by generals. Bellowing over the crashing surf, Truscott ordered straggling infantrymen, stranded coxswains, and anyone else within earshot to grab a weapon and move inland. Here, he said, thrusting an abandoned bazooka at a Navy boat crew. The first tint of Monday's dawn glowed in the east behind the Kasbah. There would be no Dieppe in Africa. Lucian Truscott would not permit it. No sonofabitch, no commander.

Yet only luck, valor, and French hesitation prevented the Americans at Mehdia from being thrown back into the Atlantic. Just seven of the fifty-four light tanks in Truscott's armor battalion reached shore, but they were enough—with timely gunfire from the cruiser *Savannah*—to repulse French armored reinforcements heading toward Mehdia from Rabat on November 9. French Renaults and American Stuarts swapped fire at a hundred yards' range, scooting up and back without exposing the thin armor on their flanks. When shell ejectors jammed, tank commanders tore out their fingernails clawing spent brass from the gun breeches. French bullets wedged between the turret and hull on several tanks, jamming the swivel mechanisms; crewmen leaped from their hatches and yanked out the slugs with pliers, as if extracting teeth. Navy pilots dropped fifty depth charges—designed to combat submarines—on French tanks and artillery.

By nightfall on November 9, the beachhead was no longer imperiled, although French snipers continued to kill men careless with their silhouettes. A U.S. infantry battalion that had been marooned on a beach far to the north hacked a trail through dense juniper to appear on the north bank of the Sebou across from the airfield. Stuart tanks approached Port Lyautey from the southwest. The night was "not a cheerful one," Truscott later recalled, "although for me it was less grim and dismal than the night before."

At first light on November 10, the U.S.S. *Dallas* approached the twin rock jetties bracketing the mouth of the Sebou. Seventy-five American commandos were aboard the World War I–era destroyer, whose stacks and superstructure had been whittled down to reduce her draft as she eased upriver to the airfield. At the helm was the former chief pilot of Port Lyautey, René Malvergne. A French patriot who had briefly been jailed for his Gaullist sympathies, Malvergne earlier in the year had been smuggled by the OSS to Tangier in a trailer pulled by a Chevrolet; every few miles the driver had stopped to hear Malvergne's muffled assurances, *"Tout va bien—pas trop de monoxide!"* From Gibraltar, Malvergne had made his way to London—where he introduced himself at Allied headquarters as "Mr. Jones" and asked personally for Eisenhower—before being spirited to an OSS safe house in Washington, where he was known simply as the Shark. George Marshall had been furious upon learning of the escapade, and pointed out that Malvergne's conspicuous absence from

Port Lyautey would "rivet attention on this particular area." Yet here he was, almost home, at the wheel of an American destroyer, wearing U.S. Army herringbone, and straining to recall the seasonal shift of sandbars in a treacherous pilotage he had not negotiated in many months.

Dallas yawed wildly against an ebb tide in violent rain that spattered the deck like gravel. Thirty-foot swells swept between the jetties, curling over the destroyer's stern in great emerald tubes. Spindrift whipped past the bridge as Malvergne felt for the channel, narrowly missing the breakwater rocks. Seamen called the diminishing depths with a hand lead improvised from a steel shackle. The Sebou's mucky bottom sucked at the destroyer's hull, then abruptly held her fast near the cannery. Swells pounded *Dallas* from behind, and great splashes of turquoise blossomed around the ship as gunfire from the Kasbah began smacking into the water.

Malvergne ordered flank speed. *Dallas*'s propellers chopped at the river with such fury that her engine-room dials showed twenty-five knots when in fact she was barely creeping, her keel carving a trench in the silt. A mile upstream, the prow sliced through a cable boom stretched across the Sebou. The destroyer's three-inch guns popped away at the Kasbah and French machine-gunners on the encroaching hills. Malvergne threaded a path between two scuttled steamers and traced the oxbow loop to the eastern flank of the runway. There, at 7:37 A.M., *Dallas* ran aground for good. The commandos launched their rubber boats, and within twenty minutes the airfield had been seized.

Two hours later, Truscott crouched in the shadow of the cannery below the Kasbah. He had captured the airfield, but the Mehdia garrison refused to capitulate. Another infantry assault on the fortress had been repulsed, then another, then two more. Over 200 wounded soldiers lay in aid stations near the beach, and dozens of dead lay in a makeshift morgue. All ship-to-shore movement had been halted by high seas, and water, ammunition, and medical supplies were now desperately short. Truscott was also running out of troops, and a message from Patton warned him that no reinforcements were available. A provisional assault company of cooks, clerks, and drivers met behind a dune for hasty instruction in how to use the Thompson submachine gun, then filtered into trenches north of the Mehdia lighthouse.

In the teeming rain, gunners wheeled a pair of 105mm howitzers up to the Kasbah walls and opened fire at point-blank range. The masonry yielded, but French counterattacks with grenades and machine-gun fire again drove the Americans back 200 yards. At 10:30 A.M., as Truscott scanned the enemy battlements with his field glasses, eight Navy dive-bombers appeared overhead. Howitzer gunners marked the targets with smoke shells, and moments later the Kasbah erupted in flame and dust.

"It was a beautiful sight for a soldier's eyes," Truscott later wrote. Whooping infantrymen boiled through the main gate and broken wall, chasing snipers through the labyrinthine *fondouk* with bayonets fixed, shoving grenades into firing ports at the commandant's headquarters. Combat engineers forced the lower gate along the river, and the Kasbah surrendered. The garrison commander had been killed. More than 200 French troops emerged with their hands raised, and another 150 were captured in nearby trenches and mud huts. "The final assault," an Army account acknowledged, "had touches of *Beau Geste*."

Enemy resistance was broken, but sniping and sporadic shelling—including more than 200 high-explosive rounds from the *Texas*—continued until Tuesday evening. At 10:30 P.M., a French officer drove toward American lines in a staff car with a tricolor lashed to the radiator and a bugler repeatedly tooting "Cease Fire." American sentries mistook the stirring call for "Charge" and opened fire, wounding the automobile grillwork but no passengers. After more hours of delay and confusion, Truscott received word at his command post on the beach that French commanders wanted to parley. A brief conference at the Kasbah, described in one account as "a brightly colored pageant of varied French and colonial uniforms, Arab costumes, and flags," led to a formal cease-fire. French troops

stacked arms and returned to their barracks. “Our parley,” Truscott reported, “ended with another interchange of stiff salutes.”

The three-day fight for Mehdia and Port Lyautey had cost seventy-nine American lives and 250 men wounded. The French, with pardonable imprecision, estimated their dead at 250 to 300. Colonel Craw and other fallen soldiers from both sides were buried together in a new cemetery on the bluff above the Sebou, a few yards from the Kasbah. Late on November 10, René Malvergne was ferried from the *Dallas* out to the *Contessa* for another run up the river. Scraping hard across the bar at the Sebou’s mouth, the scow sheared into the southern jetty with a grinding crash that seemed certain to detonate her 1,000 tons of munitions and fuel. Instead, *Contessa* simply settled in the mud, her bow plates crushed and the forward hold flooded, in under two minutes, with thirteen feet of water.

Both ship and pilot had come too far to give up now. Awaiting a rising tide, Malvergne swung *Contessa*’s bow downriver, rang up full steam astern, and backed up the river ten miles to the airfield. Unloading took three days. Malvergne returned home to his wife and children with a Silver Star on his chest.

In a final twist, of the seventy-seven P-40s launched from *Chenango*, one crashed into the sea, one vanished into the fog, and seventeen were damaged while landing at the hard-won Port Lyautey runway. Many of the mishaps reflected elementary pilot errors, which were attributed to “war hysteria.” None of the surviving planes saw action in TORCH.

“It’s All Over for Now”

GRAY with fatigue, Patton had returned to the *Augusta* in his crash boat to make final plans for the reduction of Casablanca. His struggles in climbing the boarding net so alarmed Hewitt that the admiral fell to his knees on the well deck and hauled Patton over the side. “Doctor, I think the general is very tired,” Hewitt told the ship’s surgeon. “I wish you would prescribe for him. You might prescribe for me, too.” The doctor measured out two bracing shots from a liquor bottle. Patton and Hewitt still addressed each other as “General” and “Admiral”—not until Sicily, nine months later, did they mutually agree to “George” and “Kent”—but this small episode, so charged with the stress and isolation of command, was another important moment in their ripening camraderie. Duly revived, they finished planning their battle, and Patton motored back to his army.

Hewitt resumed his station on the bridge on November 10 just as the mighty *Jean Bart*—considered hors de combat for the past two days—returned to life. French crewmen had secretly repaired her damaged turret but left the guns cockeyed as a ruse. An officer in the battleship’s cramped crow’s nest had been watching *Augusta* for hours, beckoning with a crooked finger and murmuring, “Come a little closer, come a little closer.” At 14,000 yards—eight miles—*Jean Bart* opened with a two-gun salvo. A pair of orange geysers heaved sixty feet out of the sea, splattering those on *Augusta*’s bridge with dyed water.

Nine more salvos followed. The bridge rang up flank speed, hard right rudder, and smoke. *Augusta* fled like a goddess in her own fog bank, chased by shells that straddled the cruiser but failed to strike home. *Ranger*’s aircraft retaliated promptly with a barrage of thousand-pound bombs that gouged a ten-foot hole in *Jean Bart*’s main deck near the bow and blew a twenty-foot length from the stern. The flight leader radioed back to the carrier, “No more *Jean Bart*,” and this time it was true.

For Patton, enough was enough. Eisenhower had explicitly ordered that “no bombardment will be executed without prior authority from me,” but Patton—citing balky communications—intended to raze Casablanca without even notifying Gibraltar, much less awaiting permission. At his headquarters in Fedala, engineers put the final touches on plans to blow up aqueducts and power lines. Pilots

studied aerial photos of their targets. Gunners built pyramids of extra ammunition. Infantrymen honed their bayonets and edged forward for an assault now fixed for 7:30 A.M. on Wednesday, November 11.

At two A.M., about the time that Truscott learned of Port Lyautey's capitulation, a French car approached a 30th Infantry picket with the usual bragging bugle and a truce flag lit with a flashlight. Two French officers and four enlisted men carried a dispatch from General Noguès's headquarters. At the Hotel Miramar, Patton rose, dressed, and marched through the double doors of a smoking room off the lobby. As later recounted by Patton's aide Charles R. Codman, a French major wearing a black leather helmet and a khaki uniform white with dust handed the general a flimsy onionskin. Patton sat on a banquette and by candlelight studied the scribbled message. More negotiating by Darlan and Clark in Algiers, Pétain in Vichy, and Noguès in Rabat appeared to have resulted in a cease-fire across North Africa. At any rate, the French army in Morocco had been ordered to stop fighting.

Patton looked at the major sitting rigid in a straightback chair. "Unless the French navy immediately signifies that it is bound by this ceasefire order," he warned, "the attack on Casablanca jumps off as scheduled." That gave the French three hours. Patton dismissed the officer and his delegation with a safe-conduct through American lines into Casablanca. "Staff wanted me to call off attack but I would not yet," he wrote in his diary. "It was too late, and besides it is bad to change plans."

At dawn, the guns were loaded and elevated, with fingers poised on triggers and firing keys. Navy dive-bombers vaulted from the *Ranger* and circled toward the city with full bomb racks. Hewitt dispatched a truculent if syntactically suspect message to Admiral Michelier, the Vichy naval chief: "Report whether you intend forcing me destroy your ship and shore installations and spill the blood of your people. The decision is your individual responsibility."

At 6:40 A.M. the French reply reached Patton at the command post of the 3rd Infantry Division. He ordered his deputy over a walkie-talkie, "Call it off. The French navy has capitulated." Then to Hewitt: "Urgent to *Augusta*. Cease fire immediately. Acknowledge immediately. Patton." A Wildcat flight leader radioed, "Boys, it's all over for now. Let's go back." The pilots jettisoned their bombs in the sea and returned to the carrier.

Franco-American amity—part of the natural order, in Yankee eyes—was quickly reestablished. The bloodletting of the past three days, if neither forgotten nor quite forgiven, was set aside, just as a marital indiscretion might be glossed over for the sake of the children. An unshaven American colonel toting a tommy gun and assorted pistols arrived at Admiralty headquarters, where a French officer threw up his hands in mock terror and cried, "Chicago, I give up!" The Americans claimed their dead from a French morgue and buried them on the beach in pits powdered with lime. Just past noon on November 11, Patton and Hewitt hosted a luncheon at a Fedala brasserie for their French counterparts, lubricating the pleasantries with Bordeaux and cognac.

At the Miramar later that afternoon, Noguès, Michelier, and other French commanders drove past the coconut palms and banana trees lining the driveway to find that Patton had posted a welcoming honor guard. In the smoking room he complimented his adversaries on their gallantry and proposed a gentlemen's agreement under which French troops could keep their arms. Details of the cease-fire would be left to Eisenhower and Darlan in Algiers. Patton sealed the deal with a toast to "our future victory over a common enemy."

"They drank $40 worth of champagne," he later told Washington, "but it was worth it." Hewitt shook Admiral Michelier's outstretched hand and told him that the U.S. Navy, which had dumped 19,000 shells on Morocco in the past three days, regretted firing on the tricolor. "You had your orders and you carried them out. I had mine and I carried them out," Michelier replied. "Now I am ready to cooperate in every way possible."

The conquest of Morocco cost the United States more than 1,100 casualties: 337 killed, 637

wounded, 122 missing, and 71 captured. The Allies had secured an Atlantic base in Africa, strengthening the sea-lanes, tightening control of the Strait of Gibraltar, and discouraging any Axis expedition through Spain. “We are in Casa[blanca] and have the harbor and airport,” Patton told his diary on November 11. “To God be the praise.” In a letter to Eisenhower he added, “If you adhere to your plan things usually work for you.”

Press dispatches from Morocco, if sketchy and distorted, made Patton a national hero. The seventy-four-hour battle had given him a chance to display his most conspicuous command attributes: energy, will, a capacity to see the enemy’s perspective, and bloodlust. “Of course, as a Christian I was glad to avoid the further [ef]fusion of blood,” he wrote the secretary of war, Henry Stimson, “but as a soldier I would have given a good deal to have the fight go on.”

Yet Patton’s defects also were revealed: a wanton disregard of logistics; a childish propensity to feud with other services; an incapacity to empathize with frightened young soldiers; a willingness to disregard the spirit if not the letter of orders from his superiors; and an archaic tendency to assess his own generalship on the basis of personal courage under fire. He relied on charm and half-truth in explaining to Eisenhower his readiness to bombard Casablanca without authorization: “I cannot control interstellar space, and our radio simply would not work. The only person who lost by it was myself, since the press was probably unable to recount my heroic deeds.” But Patton was too discerning a professional soldier to be wholly satisfied. “Unfortunately I did not get a chance to distinguish myself except not to lay down a couple of times when we got strafed,” he wrote Bea.

Perhaps the shrewdest assessment came in Bea’s return letter, written on November 8: “I realize that there are months and perhaps years of waiting and anxiety ahead of me, yet today all I can think of is your triumph, and the thought that rings through my mind like a peal of bells is that the first jump is taken and you will never have to take it again.”

After leaving the Miramar late Wednesday afternoon, Hewitt returned to *Augusta* in a quandary. Fifteen transports and cargo ships remained in the vulnerable anchorage off Fedala. Although almost all Army troops had disembarked, three-quarters of their supplies—11,000 tons—remained in the holds. The Army was pleading for food, fuel, medical supplies, tentage, everything. An obvious solution was to move the ships into Casablanca harbor for unloading; a staff officer reported to Hewitt with sketches and notes showing five berths available along the Jetée Transversale and room for at least ten more ships in various basins. But when Hewitt had asked Michelier at lunch about the port, the French admiral threw up his hands. *“C’est un cimetière!”* Herding the ships in at night among the submerged wrecks would be hazardous, Hewitt agreed. More to the point, the next convoy from Norfolk—with twenty-four ships and 32,000 soldiers—would arrive in two days, on November 13, with expectations of a safe harbor. The port was far too small to accommodate everyone, and the arriving ships were more precious since they still carried all of their troops and cargo.

And yet. Hewitt studied the secret intelligence message received that afternoon. An estimated fourteen German submarines were heading toward Casablanca, including an eight-boat wolfpack designated *Schlagtot:* “Death Blow.” “Go after them, full attack,” the U-boats had been ordered. “Let nothing hold you back.” All U.S. ships and aircraft had been alerted to the danger. A minefield was laid along the northeast flank of the transport anchorage despite a shortage of sea mines. Eleven destroyers patrolled the other approaches. The Army had been asked repeatedly to extinguish all lights in Casablanca because their glare silhouetted the ships against the coast.

“Good lads,” Hewitt often told his staff officers. “You make it so easy for me. All I have to do is decide.” Yet with all the factors carefully considered, this decision was difficult. Hewitt knew that

detecting even a surfaced submarine was hard—many cloud shadows had been bombed and shelled in recent days. Spotting a "feather," the thin wake made by an extended periscope, was virtually impossible at night. And killing submerged U-boats with depth charges was like trying to hit a fish with a stone. At six P.M. Hewitt gathered his staff again on *Augusta,* then sent another message to Patton once more asking him to turn out the lights. All vessels would remain at anchorage overnight. He would revisit the issue in the morning.

Blackout drapes covered the tall windows of the Miramar's dining room. Outside, the faint scent of bougainvillea sweetened the air. A sea breeze stirred the bamboo thickets that screened a croquet green from the beach casino. Patton and two dozen staff officers dined on duck, very credibly prepared by a French chef who had been informally conscripted into the American Army hours before. Many a glass of wine was raised to toast the coincident occasion of Patton's fifty-seventh birthday, his triumph in Morocco, and the twenty-fourth anniversary of the armistice ending the Great War.

At 7:48 P.M., the festivities were interrupted by a muffled detonation that rattled the seaward windows. As Patton and his men hurried to the veranda or climbed five stories to the hotel roof, two more explosions carried across the water. Three miles off the beach, yellow flames licked from one ship; brilliant orange fireballs floated into the sky as stocks of gasoline and ammunition exploded. Two other vessels also appeared to be in distress. Frantic blinkering flashed from the signal lamps on two dozen ships in an arc stretching to the horizon. With field glasses it was possible to see men flailing in the water, backlit by fire. "That," Patton's chief engineer later recalled, "ended the party."

The German submarine *U-173* had slipped through the destroyer screen and sprayed half a dozen torpedoes at the concentrated American ships. Three vessels had been struck, each in the port side. *Joseph Hewes* sank by the bow in twenty-six minutes, taking her captain and several seamen to the bottom. An officer aboard the tanker *Winooski* had spotted a torpedo wake slide past his prow, then turned his head just in time to see a second torpedo burrow into the hull between the bridge and poopdeck house; the detonation wounded seven men and gashed a twenty-five-foot hole in a fuel tank that was fortunately empty and ballasted with seawater. The destroyer *Hambleton*, waiting to refuel, was struck in the forward engine room, four feet below the waterline. The blast killed twenty men and broke the back of the ship so completely that "you could see her working her bow and stern, which were no longer rigidly attached," a witness reported. Survivors huddled on deck and sang "Don't Give Up the Ship." Another destroyer spotted *U-173* making for the open sea just before 8:30. But, owing to momentary confusion over whether the submarine was in fact an American landing craft, the killer slipped away. (Pressing her luck, the U-boat would be trapped off Casablanca five days later and sunk by depth charges, with all fifty-seven hands lost.)

The "goosing" of three ships, in the Army's impudent phrase, cost Hewitt a sleepless night. Red-eyed and rumpled, he convened his top commanders aboard *Augusta* early on Thursday, November 12, in the cramped cabin of his chief of staff. Two hours after the attack, he had sent a superfluous warning to all ships: "Be especially vigilant against Axis submarines." *Winooski* had been righted with hard pumping, and the swayback *Hambleton* was towed to sanctuary in Casablanca harbor. But for the rest of the fleet the issues remained unchanged: Tens of thousands of additional soldiers were scheduled to arrive tomorrow in the second convoy, and there was no room in the harbor for both Hewitt's original cargo ships and the newcomers.

Hewitt was furious. For months he had warned the Army that this follow-on convoy would arrive almost a week too early, putting itself and the invasion force at risk. But Patton and other generals had worn him down by insisting that more troops and cargo would be needed in Morocco immediately.

Hewitt had finally concurred, “with extreme reluctance and misgivings.”

For more than an hour he reviewed his options. *All I have to do is decide.* He could move the invasion transports into Casablanca immediately and let the arriving convoy wait at sea. For a victorious fleet, the measure seemed defensive, even embarrassing, and it would imperil the newcomers. Hewitt was more tempted by a proposal to continue unloading by lighter and at Fedala’s tiny harbor during the day, repairing to the relative safety of the open sea at night and ceding Casablanca to the new arrivals. But that would add days to the unloading, and blue water was hardly a refuge: this very morning, fifty miles off the coast, *Ranger* had narrowly escaped an attack by U-boats.

Finally, he could continue unloading day and night at Fedala, and hope that last night’s attack had been a fluke. Hewitt’s transport commander, Captain Robert R. M. Emmet, argued loudly for this third option. The Navy’s primary obligation at Casablanca was to support the Army, Emmet insisted. Even with a cease-fire in place, Patton and his commanders howled at the Navy’s delays in unloading.

Hewitt slumped in a chair. Emmet’s arguments had force. Surely the Navy could protect itself. And if a ship was torpedoed close to shore, the chance of salvaging at least some cargo was better than if it was hit far out at sea.

Augusta would move into Casablanca and berth at the stinking phosphate pier. The rest of the fleet would remain off Fedala, unloading as fast as possible. The admiral dismissed his men and headed toward the bridge with a churning sense of unease. If ever he needed a bit more velvet, it was now. But Kent Hewitt had been at sea for too many years and was too fine a sailor to deceive himself. His velvet was gone.

As dusk sifted over Fedala, and Patton’s staff gathered at the Miramar for Thursday’s supper, Captain Ernst Kals eased *U-130* down the Moroccan coast from the northeast in water so shallow the submarine’s hull scraped bottom. Kals knew the Americans well: he had won the Knight’s Cross after sinking nine ships in a two-week spree along the East Coast earlier in the year. *U-130* slipped at dead slow between the beach and the American minefield. The unseen feather purled the sea like a shark’s fin. Shortly before six P.M. the U-boat fired four torpedoes from her bow tubes, then nimbly pirouetted to let fly a fifth from the stern tube.

Each hit home. Three laden transports—*Hugh L. Scott, Edward Rutledge,* and *Tasker H. Bliss*—burst into flame. The 12,000-ton *Scott,* struck twice on the starboard flank, heaved from the sea like a beast harpooned, then promptly settled aft with a 30-degree list. Flimsy wooden partitions exploded into a thousand arrows, impaling sailors in the mess hall and cooks in the galley. Concrete slabs installed to protect the bridge fell through the buckled deck and flattened the compartments below. Lights went dead. Flame loped down the starboard companionway, and oil sloshed along the canted passages so that sailors slipped and fell in a tangle. Boiler number two exploded, sluicing scalding water through the engine room; men who touched the glowing bulkheads drew back a palmful of blisters. Sailors dragged their buddies from the sick bay and freed the lone occupant of the brig. The shout “Abandon ship!” echoed above the tumult. Those still able scrambled over the side before *Scott* sank by the stern with a hiss.

Her two sisters fared no better. *Rutledge,* hit twice, immediately went dark and mute. Captain M. W. Hutchinson, Jr., slipped anchor in the futile hope that wind and tide would nudge the ship ashore. She burned like a furnace and sank stern first, precisely seventy-eight minutes after being torpedoed. *Bliss* lingered for hours, and a weird keening rose from her fiery hull, where nearly three dozen sailors were reduced to carbon ash. An officer on *Augusta*’s bridge watched the *Bliss* and murmured,

ambiguously, “The damned fools, the damned fools.”

Hewitt’s intelligence officer handed him a handwritten message at 8:25 P.M.: “*Rutledge* sunk. *Bliss* burning. *Scott* listing and abandoned…. Search for survivors will continue all night.” Hewitt stared at the dispatch. He ordered a tug to tow *Bliss* into the shallows, but no tug was available. At 2:30 Friday morning the transport slid beneath the waves. A few russet puffs of smoke marked her descent.

Fifteen hundred survivors struggled to reach the beach. A flotilla of landing craft and French fishing smacks hauled in sailors coated with oil but for the whites of their eyes. Five hundred men required medical treatment, overwhelming doctors still busy from the previous night’s attack. A camel barn on the Fedala dock was converted into a triage center. In the drafty wooden casino outside the Miramar, more than 150 litters were wedged between the baccarat tables. Men with strips of skin hanging like bark from a gum tree wandered through the door to ask, politely, for morphine.

Surgeons operated by Signal Corps torches. Corpsmen fumbled by candlelight to set fractures and stanch wounds. Of 400 burn cases, one in four—Patton described them as “pieces of bacon”—required multiple blood plasma transfusions. Most of the precious 1,000 units rushed to the fleet at Norfolk in late October had been saved, and so, in consequence, were at least twenty lives. But critical medical equipment was missing, including vital pieces of anesthesia machines. And so were lives lost.

Friday’s dawn brought the flat African light and full illumination of the catastrophe. Wounded sailors sprawled in the pews of the Catholic church and on classroom floors. Barges ferried the worst cases to shipboard sick bays, where some died and some lived and some loitered in the netherworld. An unidentified sailor taken to the *Leonard Wood,* clothed only in third-degree burns, regained consciousness long enough to spell out, mysteriously, K-E-N-S-T-K, then slid into a coma and died three days later, known only to God.

Soldiers looking seaward were unsettled by the ships’ missing silhouettes, as if teeth had been knocked from a familiar smile. Hewitt soon ordered all surviving vessels away from the coast. A day later, five transports berthed in Casablanca harbor, where they finished unloading and took on a ballast of wounded men for the return trip to America. The approaching convoy was waved away; it steamed aimlessly and without incident here and there in the eastern Atlantic for five days until being summoned into Casablanca on November 18, the precise date Hewitt had proposed months earlier. *U-130,* which had sunk twenty-five Allied ships, escaped for four months. Then she was cornered off the Azores and destroyed with all hands.

On November 17 Hewitt and *Augusta* sailed for Norfolk. He would return in triumph to Hampton Roads, as he had after the Great White Fleet’s circumnavigation thirty-three years earlier, more convinced than ever that the world was round but imperfectly so. Yet a certain melancholy attended, fed by the suspicion that 140 men had forfeited their lives because, among a dozen vital decisions, he made one that was simply wrong. Hewitt would be back—for Sicily, Salerno, Anzio, southern France—a large figure in a large war. But that November night off the coast of Casablanca remained, forever, a small and tender scar on his strong sailor’s heart.

If the shooting between Anglo-Americans and Frenchmen had stopped, the political scuffling had not. The brief final act of Operation TORCH played out in Algiers, where the invasion ended as raggedly as it began.

General Clark’s arrest of Darlan was rescinded on November 11 when the admiral pledged his conversion to the Allied cause—again—after learning that ten German and six Italian divisions had invaded Vichy France. With an Allied army in North Africa, Hitler could not risk an exposed flank on

the French Mediterranean, so Operation ANTON gobbled up Vichy in hours. Darlan telephoned French commanders in Tunisia—while Clark eavesdropped—and ordered them to resist any Axis intrusion. He also cabled the commander of the Vichy fleet at Toulon, Admiral Jean Laborde, and invited him to weigh anchor for French North Africa. Laborde loathed Darlan as only one old salt can detest another, and he replied with scatological concision: *"Merde!"*

However, Clark went to bed and enjoyed the deep slumber of self-approbation until five A.M. on November 12, when he was awakened and told that Darlan had reneged yet again. The order to Tunisian commanders had been suspended pending approval by General Noguès, whom the besieged Pétain had designated as his plenipotentiary in North Africa. A familiar scene followed in the St. Georges conference room: threats, table-thumping, bad French.

"Not once have you shown me that you are working in our interests!" Clark shouted at Darlan. "I'm sick and tired of the way you have been conducting yourself. I think you are weak."

The admiral meticulously creased several strips of scrap paper, then folded them into pleasing shapes.

"I want to fight the Germans," General Juin declared. "I am with you."

"No. You're not."

"I am with you," Juin repeated. "I'm not being treated right. This puts me in a very difficult spot."

Darlan tore the paper into tiny pieces.

"I know it, but I'm in a worse way," Clark said. "I am not sure who my friends are. I can't afford to make mistakes."

At noon on November 13, Eisenhower arrived from Gibraltar in hopes of breaking the impasse. Clark picked him up at Maison Blanche airfield in two commandeered French cars with tires so frayed the drivers were told not to exceed eight miles per hour. Even at that snail's pace, Eisenhower was happy to escape, if only for a few hours, what he described as his "badly ventilated office six hundred feet underground."

"We have had many hours of strain," he had written Walter Bedell (Beetle) Smith two days earlier, "and the events through which we have passed will be classed as quite important." If the assessment seemed dispassionate, nonchalance verging on apathy would be characteristic of Eisenhower after later battlefield victories, too. In part, he was looking ahead, determined "to rush pell mell to the east." He had written Marshall of his "burning ambition" to "make the Allied governments an early present of Tunis and the French fleet" at Toulon. In part, he may have been emotionally distancing himself from the casualties for which he was, as commander-in-chief, inescapably responsible. The losses, he had told Churchill in a letter, were "insignificant compared to the advantages we have so far won." Few commanders in this war could function without arriving at a sensibility in which thousands of dead and wounded men could be waved away as "insignificant."

At the St. Georges, Clark and Robert Murphy recounted the latest developments: General Noguès had arrived from Morocco and promptly called General Giraud a coward and a liar; Noguès had then ceded his powers back to Darlan; orders to resist the Axis in Tunisia had been reinstated, but to uncertain effect; Clark had again threatened reprisals ranging from shackles to the scaffold. Yet, after hours of loud bickering among themselves, the French this morning had agreed to an arrangement that Clark believed might serve: Darlan would become high commissioner in French North Africa, with Giraud as chief of the French armed forces, Juin as army commander, and Noguès remaining as governor-general in Morocco.

Eisenhower sighed. These political machinations perplexed and annoyed him. "Do these men want to become marshals of a greater and more glorious France or do they want to sink into miserable oblivion?" he had asked Clark. In a message to Marshall, he was even blunter: "If these stupid French

would only realize what side their bread is buttered on, what a chance they now have to execute a master stroke. They seem completely inert." Still, the new agreement looked like a path out of this "maze of political and personal intrigue." Eisenhower had intended, he told Clark, to "lay down the law with a bit of table pounding," but now that appeared unnecessary.

In the hotel conference room, Darlan had exchanged his uniform for a three-piece civilian suit. He and the others stood when the Americans entered at two P.M. Eisenhower shook hands and after a few pleasantries uttered only eleven sentences, including: "What you propose is completely acceptable to me. From this day on, Admiral Darlan heads the French North African state. In this attitude I am supported by President Roosevelt…. We all must agree to put together all means to whip the Germans." He shook hands again and marched from the room.

Before boarding the B-17 at Maison Blanche, Eisenhower fished out a five-pointed star from his pocket and pinned it next to the other two on Clark's shoulder, making him a lieutenant general. "When you are away and out of touch," he had told Clark two days before, "I feel like I've lost my right arm."

Feeling expansive, Clark returned to the St. Georges and summoned reporters. "Now we can proceed in a business-like way," he told them. "Things look good."

* * *

Sixty years after TORCH, a precise count of Allied casualties remains elusive. Official U.S. tallies, which clearly undercounted British losses, put the combined Anglo-American figure at 1,469, including 526 American dead. British figures, which include minor actions on November 12 and 13, calculate Allied losses at 2,225, including nearly 1,100 dead.

The number of French killed and wounded probably approached 3,000. In three days, Vichy forces in North Africa also lost more than half their tanks, armored cars, and airplanes—matériel so sorely missed in the weeks ahead that Eisenhower considered eighteen French battalions equivalent in combat power to a single American battalion. Allied commanders initially suppressed news regarding the intensity of the TORCH fighting so the French would not "remain embittered against us for having to fight them into submission."

TORCH had lured more Frenchmen—including many who had been morally deranged by invasion, occupation, and partition—back to the side of the angels. But the naïveté of Eisenhower and his lieutenants was such that none foresaw the consequence of embracing Darlan, whose purported villainy had been relentlessly denounced by Allied leaders for two years. "It's not very pretty," Charles de Gaulle wrote in mid-November. "I think that before long the retching will take place." American military officers who had spent the past two decades perfecting cavalry charges on windswept posts in the middle of nowhere could be pardoned for having limited political acuity. The truth was that a callow, clumsy army had arrived in North Africa with little notion of how to act as a world power. The balance of the campaign—indeed, the balance of the war—would require learning not only how to fight but how to rule. Eisenhower sensed it; he wrote Beetle Smith, "We are just started on a great venture."

The war's momentum was shifting to the Allies, but in mid-November 1942, few men could see how irrevocable, how tectonic that shift was. Churchill, who a month earlier had warned, "If TORCH fails then I'm done for," assessed the moment most elegantly: "Now this is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning."

As for combat, TORCH revealed profound shortcomings in leadership, tactics, equipment, martial élan, and common sense. Certain features of the invasion, such as amphibious assaults and attacks on an enemy's flanks, would be polished by harsh experience and provide a template for Allied offensives throughout the war. But the U.S. Army was simply inept at combined arms—the essence of

modern warfare, which requires skillful choreography of infantry, armor, artillery, airpower, and other combat forces. Most soldiers also remained wedged in the twilight between the "habits of peace and [the] ruthlessness of war."

Worse yet, few realized it. Tens of thousands of American soldiers had heard the bullets sing, and any number believed, in George Washington's fatuous phrase, that there was something charming in the sound. That was only because they had not heard many. Those who had seen American tank shells punch through the French Renaults swaggered through their bivouacs with helmets full of Algerian wine, crowing "Bring on the panzers!" Such confidence was so infectious that the British and American chiefs of staff suggested paring down the TORCH forces in order to undertake other Mediterranean adventures, such as an invasion of Sardinia. "For God's sake," Eisenhower replied, "let's get one job done at a time." But even the cautious commander felt a little cocky: the White House was told to expect the occupation of Tunis and Bizerte in December and the fall of Tripoli in late January.

They believed they had been blooded. They believed that overpowering the feeble French meant something. They believed in the righteousness of their cause, the inevitability of their victory, and the immortality of their young souls. And as they wheeled around to the east and pulled out their Michelin maps of Tunisia, they believed they had actually been to war.

Part Two

4. Pushing East

"We Live in Tragic Hours"

At two A.M. on November 8, the American consul-general in Tunis, Hooker A. Doolittle, had rapped on the front gate of the governor's palace, demanding to see the Vichy resident-general. Vice Admiral Jean-Pierre Estéva soon appeared, immaculate if unorthodox in full naval uniform and bedroom slippers. An elfin bachelor with a square-cut white beard, Estéva was known as the Monk for his ascetic habits, which included rising before dawn each morning to attend mass, and eating nothing before noon except dry toast and an orange. The son of a cork merchant from Reims, Estéva at the age of sixty-two was looking toward retirement so he could devote himself to his greatest passion: the magnificent Cathédrale Notre-Dame in his native town, where twenty-six French kings had been crowned. Doolittle's breathless annunciation of the Allied assault seemed unlikely to smooth Estéva's path to old age.

The admiral listened as Doolittle, whom one acquaintance described as "an *Esquire* fashion plate gone seedy," predicted the imminent arrival in Tunisia of Allied legions so vast they would darken the sky with aircraft. "They had better hurry up, because the others will be here within forty-eight hours," Estéva said dryly, and escorted his guest to the door.

Posing as a French farmer on his way home, Doolittle soon fled Tunis in a borrowed car with his Spanish maids and Pekingese dogs. Upon reaching the Allied lines he told anyone who would listen: "Hurry, hurry, hurry."

There was no need for Admiral Estéva to specify who "the others" were, and he had actually underestimated German agility. Tunisia was only "a panther's leap" from Axis bases in Italy, as the deputy Führer, Hermann Göring, had observed. At 10:55 A.M. on November 9, the first Luftwaffe fighters touched down at the El Aouina airfield northeast of Tunis. Dive-bombers and transport planes soon followed, after making a low, intimidating pass over the city. Hastily mustered German troops—many of them only marginally fit for combat—stumbled down the ramps.

French troops ringed the field, and French armored cars on the runway greeted each landing plane with guns trained at the cockpit. This impasse lasted several hours until a Luftwaffe security force set up machine guns behind a hangar and laid mines around the French vehicles. Choosing to heed directives from Vichy rather than the confused gabble coming out of Algiers, Estéva ordered the cordon removed. By dusk, ninety planes had landed. German troops marched from the tarmac to bivouacs along the narrow Carthage road, singing "Lili Marlene" as they dug their revetments.

The Wehrmacht's entrenchment in Tunis set the stage for a confrontation between German and Anglo-American armies that was to scorch two continents over the next two and a half years and cost several million lives. Here began the struggle for possession of the earth itself, or at least the western earth, an unremitting series of titanic land battles that would sweep across Salerno and Anzio, Normandy and the Bulge, broken only by brief interludes to cart away the dead and revivify the living.

Hitler had learned the full extent of the Allied invasion while stopped at a remote rail siding in Thuringia: he was on his way to Munich for a reunion of the old beer-hall *Kämpfer*. Within hours he recognized that if the Allies seized North Africa they could transform a peripheral expedition into a

platform for the invasion of southern Europe. That would imperil Italy, his closest ally, and Axis possessions from France to Greece. “To give up Africa means to give up the Mediterranean,” he declared. It “would mean not only the ruin of our revolutions, but also the ruin of our peoples’ future,” Hitler subsequently wrote Mussolini. He signed the letter, “Yours in indissoluble unity.”

Already 230 of Germany’s 260 divisions were on the defensive. Some German strategists sensed that their war’s arc had swung from expansion to contraction, but Hitler refused to accept that Germany had lost the strategic initiative. Tunisia was to be the “cornerstone of our conduct of the war on the southern flank of Europe.” If secondary to the eastern crusade against Bolshevism, it was vital nonetheless. At his most grandiose, Hitler conjured new African offensives—to the west, to drive the TORCH invaders from Algeria and Morocco, and to the east, to drive the British Eighth Army across the Suez Canal. By late November, the Führer’s strategic vision would be articulated in a one-sentence order: “North Africa, being the approach to Europe, must be held at all costs.” That sentence condemned a million men from both sides to seven months of torment.

On Tuesday, November 10, Wehrmacht paratroopers arrived in numbers for the first time. A platoon from the 5th Parachute Regiment flew from Naples and immediately fortified the main road leading to Tunis from the west. Guns earmarked for Rommel’s army in Egypt were diverted to Tunisia and dragged forward, still wrapped in shipping paper. Fuel was so scarce that troops eventually used heating pellets made from grass and the residue from olive presses. Commanders hired French taxis as staff cars. Messengers traveled by Tunis street tram—a young *Gefreiter* carrying dispatches reported with delight that no one had made him buy a ticket.

Weak as the German vanguard was, the leaders of Vichy France’s 30,000 troops in North Africa were weaker. Ambivalence racked the French high command. On November 11, Hitler ordered German and Italian troops to occupy Vichy France; that same day, Admiral Louis Derrien, commander of the Vichy naval base at Bizerte, forty miles north of Tunis, told his subordinates, “I count on everyone to keep his calm, his sang-froid, and his dignity.” That night, after receiving new orders from Darlan in Algiers, Derrien decreed, “The enemy is the German and Italian…. Blaze away with all your heart against the foe of 1940. Wehave a revenge to take. *Vive la France*!” French officers drank champagne toasts, and all ranks sang the “Marseillaise” on the Bizerte docks.

This jubilation lasted less than an hour. At midnight, forty minutes after Derrien had issued his battle cry, he annulled it by order of Vichy. “November 8, we fight everybody,” he wrote privately. “November 9, we fight the Germans. November 10, we fight nobody. November 10 (noon), we fight the Germans. November 11 (night), we fight nobody.” Perhaps no passage written during the war better captured the agony of France and the moral gyrations to which her sons were subject.

On November 12, Derrien phoned Admiral Darlan, then still gripped by indecision, but received no clear direction. The increasingly listless Estéva was even more in thrall to Vichy. A German officer concluded that Estéva was capable “of only nodding his head. It seems that he is not quite equal to the tense situation.” Estéva agreed: “After forty years of obedience, I cannot begin to disobey orders now.” The first sea shipments of German troops and equipment—including seventeen tanks and forty tons of ammunition—arrived November 12. Derrien was scheduled to retire in a month, after forty-two years of service. Now, he predicted, “I shall be known as the admiral who delivered Bizerte to the Germans.”

Sadly, yes. By November 14, the Germans had inserted 3,000 men into Bizerte alone. They controlled all the important buildings in Tunis, where troops marched four abreast to occupy the Marshal Foch barracks downtown. The abandoned U.S. consulate became the Axis command post, notwithstanding German grumbling that Tunisian “office personnel cannot read or write.” To make the German contingent appear even larger, paratroopers were driven in circles around the city in armored cars loaned by helpful French commanders. The Tunisian bey—whose family had long ruled

the country beneath the firm hand of French guardians—quickly pledged loyalty to Berlin. In gorgeous uniforms of scarlet, black, and gold, his bodyguard marched from the royal palace, using the newly fashionable goose step.

Soon enough, Derrien would receive a German ultimatum: surrender all French troops and ships in Bizerte within thirty minutes, or see 6,000 French sailors shot. He capitulated after extracting a single concession: the retention of a French company under arms to lower the garrison tricolor with honors. Derrien's request to keep his own sword was denied.

A French court after the war would convict and imprison Estéva for "national unworthiness." Although the admiral once asserted that "it is an honor to suffer for the high ideals of civilization," his own suffering derived from baser stuff. Derrien, too, eventually drew life in prison; he would be freed less than two weeks before his death. After killing hundreds of American and British soldiers during TORCH, the French had failed to so much as scratch a single German invader. Only the French commander of the Tunis Division, General Georges Barré, refused to kowtow. With 9,000 troops and fifteen ancient tanks, Barré sidled westward into Tunisia's wild hills, there to await developments.

The fire that consumed proud Carthage after Romans sacked it in 146 B.C. was said to have burned for seventeen days. French Tunis was a cold ember from the moment the first German shadow loomed. "We live in tragic hours," Pétain observed. "Disorder reigns in our spirits."

Conviviality reigned in the spirit of Field Marshal Albert Kesselring, known as Smiling Albert for his toothy grin and unquenchable optimism. On the morning after the Anglo-American invasion, Hitler had phoned Kesselring to give him "a free hand" in Tunisia. This was the Allies' misfortune.

The son of a Bayreuth schoolmaster, Kesselring belonged to an ancient Bavarian clan whose fortune had been lost in the hyperinflation following World War I. Courtly and fluent in Italian, he had broad hips and a hairline in full retreat. He had been an artilleryman and balloon observer in the Great War, then had learned to fly at the age of forty-eight and soon ranked high in the Luftwaffe. One of the Reich's ablest commanders, he was both daring—shot down five times in his career—and brutal, having orchestrated the terror bombings of Warsaw, Coventry, and many cities in between, as well as the air campaign against Russia. When German anti-aircraft gunners in Tunis fired at his plane by mistake, Kesselring rebuked them—for missing an easy target.

On November 10, Hitler formally seconded Kesselring to Rome as Mussolini's deputy. With authority over Axis air and ground forces in the Mediterranean, the field marshal politely rebuffed Il Duce's proposals to attack the Allies with poison gas and to transport war stocks in hospital ships. Instead, he focused on building a bridgehead around Tunis and Bizerte, dismissing complaints from subordinates that the Axis forces amounted to only "a drop of water on a hot stone" compared to the Allied host.

The Allies had achieved strategic surprise, Kesselring conceded, but could they exploit it? Why had they not also landed in Tunisia, which had nearly 800 miles of coastline? Kesselring approved the conscription of Tunisian civilians to build fortifications and unload Axis ships. But an impenetrable bridgehead was not enough. On November 13, he ordered his lieutenants to plan an offensive to the west. The only way to forestall the loss of Africa was to counterattack across the Tunisian mountains into Algeria. Smiling Albert meant to chase the Anglo-Americans back to their ships.

A Cold Country with a Hot Sun

FIVE hundred and sixty road miles separated Algiers from Tunis, and the first Allied troops cantered

eastward in the rollicking high spirits obligatory at the beginning of all military debacles. Virtually everyone from private to general presumed the expedition would be a promenade. Much chatter was devoted to the likely date of arrival in Tripoli or even Naples. One soldier spoke for many in his bravado toward the Germans: "Those squareheads can't fight. Hell, leave *them* to the Limeys, we'll finish the Japs." A young officer reported that the only anxiety in his tank battalion was "that all of the Germans would escape" before the Americans could prove their mettle.

Town mayors donned their frock coats and top hats to greet the Allied convoys with warm, incomprehensible welcoming speeches. Cheering crowds offered rough Algerian wine and hampers of tangerines. Jeep drivers, in vehicles named *Kidney Buster, Miss Conduct,* and *Miss Demeanor,* twined winter roses around their radio antennas, and pretended to enjoy the proffered local cigarettes, soon dubbed "Dung d'Algerie." *"Vive l'Amérique!"* shouted the Arab children, to mostly British troops. To deal with the inevitable traffic fatalities a sliding scale of reparations was established, paid in the oversize French currency GIs called wallpaper: 25,000 francs ($500) for a dead camel; 15,000 for a dead boy; 10,000 for a dead donkey; 500 for a dead girl.

British troops dominated the initial convoys, camouflage cloths knotted in big bows atop their helmets like "Edwardian motoring veil[s]." The Algerian villages reminded some veterans of Flanders, with their shuttered hotels and their fishmongers in striped sweaters. For those traveling by rail, the narrow-gauge boxcars with neatly lettered signs—*"Hommes 40, chevaux 8"*—brought memories of the Western Front: there, too, the French railcars had fitted forty men or eight horses. So slowly did the Algerian trains chuff uphill that soldiers often hopped off to walk, brewing their tea from hot water in the engines as they ambled alongside.

For the Yanks, it was all new: the skinned goat carcasses dripping blood in roadside stalls; the Algerians hawking grass mats and bolts of blue silk; the cursing muleteers; the peasants leaning into their iron-shod plows; the buses propelled by charcoal engines lashed to the bumper and stirred by each driver with a poker. American units chosen for the vanguard strutted with pride. The 2nd Battalion of the 13th Armored Regiment rolled out of Arzew toward Algiers and beyond, their tanks stuffed with eggs and hidden bottles of Old Grandad. The 5th Field Artillery Battalion swung onto the road with guidons snapping; each battery presented arms to the 1st Division color guard, and "When the Caissons Go Rolling Along" crashed from the division band.

Eastward the caissons rolled, past Algerian villages with adobe walls loopholed for muskets, past groves of mandarin oranges "hanging like red lamps." Past clopping French army columns of hay carts drawn by crow-bait horses, past mounted artillery officers in double-breasted tunics. Past stubbly wheatfields that had once served as Rome's granary, and past aqueducts dismembered during the Vandals' century of anarchic misrule and now bleaching like stone bones in the sun.

At dusk they bivouacked. Soldiers swam in the chill Mediterranean or washed from their helmets in the delicate ritual called a whore's bath. They staged scorpion fights in gasoline flimsies or spooned whiskey into pet lizards to watch them stagger about. The evening mist rose from fields with a scent like fresh-mowed hay, which troops had been taught was the odor of deadly phosgene; at least one unit panicked, with shrieks of "Gas! Gas!" and a mad fumbling for masks before reason returned.

Soldiers sharpened their bartering skills with hand gestures, talking loudly in the distinctively American belief that volume obviates all language barriers; one sharp trader swapped a box of candy, piece by piece, for three bottles of perfume, a dozen eggs, a large portrait of Pétain, and a small burro named Rommel.

Pilfering by the impoverished locals was epidemic. Troops smeared fuel cans with bacon rind in hopes that the Koranic prohibition against contact with pork might deter thieves. *"Allez!"* the soldiers would shout—often their only French except for the hugely popular, *"C'est la guerre"*—after discovering that thieves had slashed the canvas top from a jeep to make shoes. A single parachute

canopy was said to yield more than 500 sets of silk drawers. “If they could have carried it away,” a division history declared, “they’d have stolen the air out of tires.” Disdain for the Arabs grew by the hour. The Army’s chief quartermaster described his native workforce as “useless, worthless, illiterate, dishonest, and diseased.”

At dawn, the promenade resumed. One sergeant, perhaps confounded by the stink of human waste widely used as fertilizer, wrote home, “Every town over here smells like something dead.” The day would come when that was literally true. For now, though, the benign sun and doughboy camaraderie moved some men to lyricism. “The sky is almost unbelievably blue,” wrote an officer in the 1st Division, “and the nights are a poet’s dream.” In the gnarled hills that steadily mounted toward the Tunisian frontier, shepherds watched the columns draw near and heard the chorus of a battle hymn sung with sufficient verve to carry above the harsh grind of truck gears:

She’ll be coming ’round the mountain,
She’ll be coming ’round the mountain,
She’ll be coming ’round the mountain when she comes.

Thanks to Ultra’s decipherment of Axis codes, Eisenhower and his lieutenants knew precisely how many German and Italian troops were flooding into Tunisia. But poor understanding of these deployments’ significance compounded other, earlier miscalculations. Allied intelligence had predicted that up to 10,000 Axis soldiers could reach Tunisia within two weeks, but that these would be troops of “low category and without motor transport.” The Allied forecast as to “the probable scale of Axis intervention turned out to be an underestimate in every respect,” a British intelligence study later concluded, “with results that were to say the least unfortunate.” After a fortnight, the actual number approached 11,000; they included crack paratroopers and panzer grenadiers with heavy equipment and trucks, and they were soon followed by the tanks of the 10th Panzer Division.

There was much talk in Allied councils of speed in countering the Axis intervention, but little speed was applied. Eisenhower and Clark had planned that the seizure of Tunisia would fall primarily to the British. Having carried most of the load in TORCH, the Americans would provide an occupation force and reserves to guard against a German thrust through Spain into Morocco. Scant thought had been given to actions after the initial landings, and only sketchy staff work was available on terrain, logistics, and air support in Tunisia. But given German celerity in occupying Tunis and Bizerte, Allied leaders decided to hasten the move of American troops eastward to bolster the British. Three U.S. armored battalions and other units were to be dispatched disparately and then farmed out—fragmented—to British commanders who possessed scant armored forces of their own. This American muscle would add more than 100 tanks to the Tunisian front.

Proverbially, no military plan survives contact with the enemy. That is never truer than when there is no plan to begin with. No scheme existed for integrating U.S. units into British organizations, or for provisioning them, or for getting them to the front in the first place. Eisenhower would complain that his ad hoc orders to support the British with American troops “were not clearly understood nor vigorously executed.” To his brother Edgar he confided, “I suffer from the usual difficulty that besets the higher commander—things can be ordered and started, but actual execution at the front has to be turned over to someone else.”

“I get so impatient to get ahead that I want to be at a place where there is some chance to push a soldier a little faster or hurry up the unloading of a boat,” Eisenhower cabled Beetle Smith on November 16. Yet he remained in his Gibraltar grotto for nearly two weeks after the French surrender

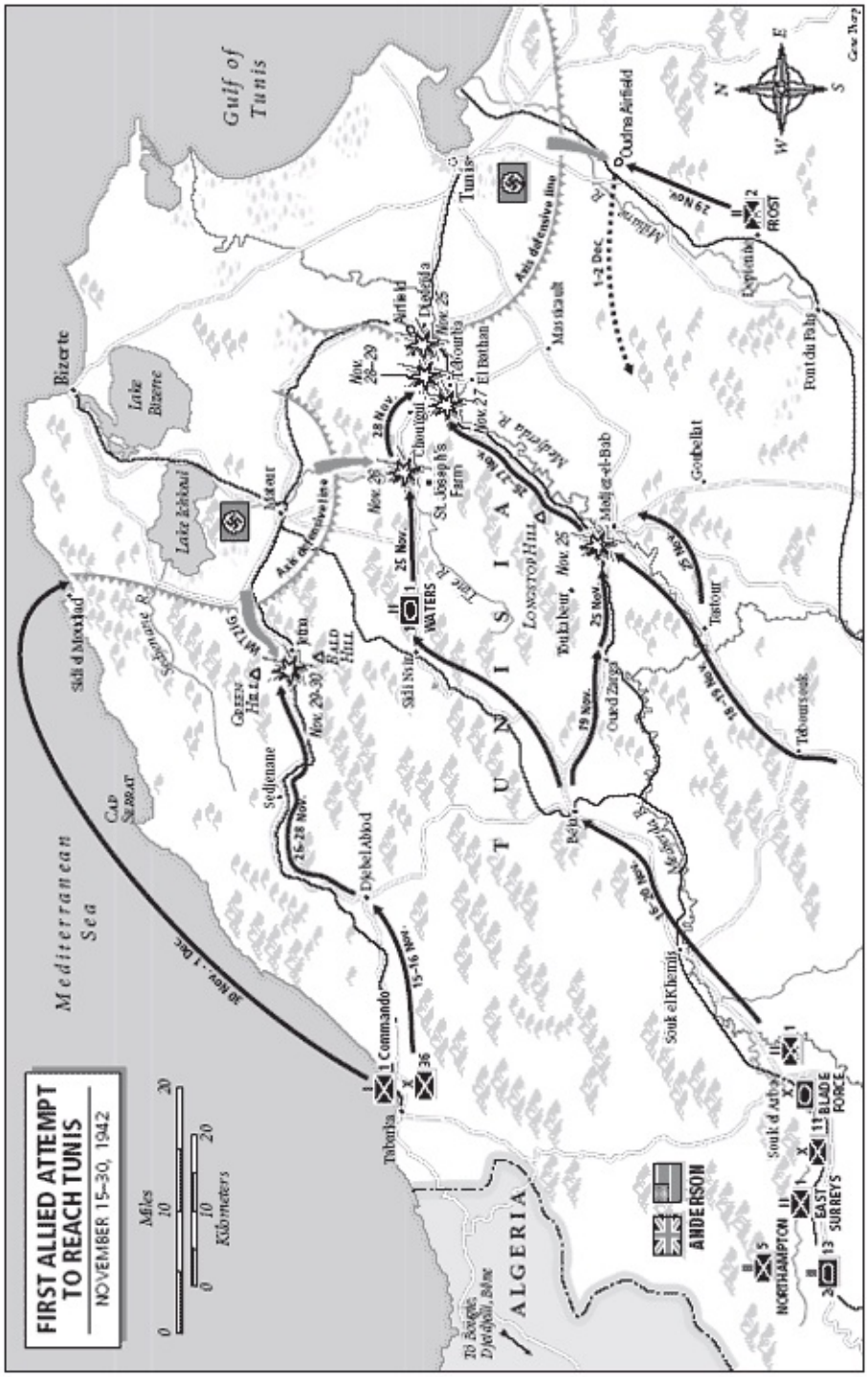
—far from Algiers and far, far from the battlefield. From his office, he railed against Estéva and other French commanders in Tunisia, who "without the slightest trouble could cut the throat of every German and Italian in the area and get away with it." The Allies "could take all sorts of reckless chances," Eisenhower added, but only if Estéva resisted and the French took chances of their own. His denunciations of the enemy were often mild, even prissy. "We will all be together in a fine headquarters one of these days," he told Smith, "and really set out in earnest to whip these blankety-blank Huns!" Rarely did he convey savage determination to overcome all obstacles; to smash, to destroy, to butcher. He professed "a violent hatred of the Axis and all that it stands for," but no hate lodged in his bones. He was not yet ruthless.

Nor was he yet much of a field marshal. Air and naval attacks were poorly planned and indifferently carried out. Few Allied aircraft had been allocated for reconnaissance or for assaults on Axis forces arriving by sea. Strategic bombing was launched only against targets in Italy and elsewhere outside North Africa, with no bombers initially available to batter Axis concentrations in Tunis or Bizerte. No naval attacks were launched against Axis convoys for three weeks. Not a single Axis ship was sunk on the run to Tunis in November.

Perhaps the biggest deficiency was transportation. Ignoring their logisticians, Eisenhower and Clark had chosen to devote the limited TORCH shipping space to tens of thousands of extra troops at the expense of vehicles and arms. For an American force designed as an occupation army, the decision was plausible. But the Oran convoy alone was pared by 10,000 vehicles before leaving Britain. Unloading snarls made matters worse: by November 12, 8,700 vehicles were planned to be ashore in Oran, the actual number was 1,800. Now, with the ostensible occupation army transformed into a strike force, most units were immobile. "Inevitably there was chaos," the correspondent Philip Jordan wrote, "that sort of amateur bungling to which the army is liable when it tries to organize something outside routine."

Ordnance officers wandered through Oran with $5,000 in silver ingots to buy trucks fueled with charcoal, or to hire horse-powered livery for hauling ammunition. The North African rail system proved particularly frail. Half the rolling stock was paralyzed for lack of fuel. Few French railcars were strong enough to carry medium tanks such as the American Sherman. Of the nine small trains that crept eastward from Algiers every day, two were required to haul coal for the railroad itself and one carried provisions to keep the local civilians from starvation; French, British, and American logisticians fought over the remaining six, which usually took nearly a week just to reach the Tunisian border.

Even success in snaring a train was no guarantee of movement. To demonstrate the new fraternity between former adversaries, U.S. Army public relations officers organized a festive departure in Oran for a French battalion heading to Tunisia. As newsreel photographers recorded the scene, American soldiers crowded the rail siding to exchange cigarettes with their French comrades and wave bon voyage—only to hear the stationmaster announce that delays in the east meant the train could not leave for at least another day. The engine and cars rolled a few hundred yards down the tracks, gayly huzzahed for the benefit of the cameras, then backed up after dark to await a better day to go to war.



This muddle greeted Lieutenant General Kenneth A. N. Anderson, who on November 11 took command in Algiers of the newborn British First Army with orders to hie east. “I applaud your dash and energy,” Eisenhower cabled him on the twelfth. “Boldness is now more important than numbers. Good luck.”

For a commander of congenital pessimism—and Anderson’s was bred in the bone—this dismissal of mere “numbers” rang hollow. First Army comprised hardly a division, with four British brigades and a hodgepodge of American units. Even so, Anderson moved from the command ship *Bulolo* into the Hotel Albert and announced plans to “kick Rommel in the pants as soon as possible.” Then, alarmed that the phrase implied an insouciance he did not feel, he circulated a written addendum to correspondents: “The German is a good soldier and I expect hard fighting.”

Anderson had been born in India on Christmas Day, 1891, son of a knighted railroad executive who eventually packed him off to Sandhurst. Badly wounded on the Somme, he also had fought in Palestine, in Syria, on the Indian frontier, and at Dunkirk, where he commanded a division during the

evacuation. He was clean-shaven, thin-lipped, and deeply religious, with untidy gray hair, small eyes, and—one American officer noted—"an air of grinning preoccupation." He was said to lack "the jutting chin that gives force to personality" a British acquaintance wrote that "he looks more like a moderately successful surgeon" than a soldier. In dress he favored old-fashioned breeches and puttees; as his troops moved east, he could occasionally be seen peering under the tarpaulin of a rail flatcar to see what the train had brought him.

One British general damned Anderson with faint praise as a "good plain cook," a bon mot that soon circulated through all the right clubs. Certainly he was the sort of gauche, abrasive Scot invariably described as "dour." A sardonic subordinate nicknamed him Sunshine, while his American code name was GROUCH. Fluent in French and Italian, he could be silent in any language. Even his rare utterances were to remain private: he soon threatened to expel from North Africa any correspondent who quoted him. Eisenhower remarked that "he studies the written word until he practically burns through the paper." Few guessed at Anderson's perpetual struggle against what he called "a queer sort of inhibition, or shyness, which prevents me coming out of my shell…. Often I would like to expand, but find it very difficult. A queer thing, human nature." It was no doubt God's will, and he very much believed in God, just as he also believed "it is good medicine to one's self-esteem to meet with serious setbacks at timely intervals." Such palliatives awaited him on the road to Tunis.

Anderson's most ambitious timetable on the eve of TORCH called for Allied paratroopers to be in Tunis and Bizerte by November 12, with reinforcements following immediately. The exigencies of invasion—including French resistance and the broadcast of American paratroops across half the continent—knocked that schedule askew. Instead, the slow overland movement of troops by road and rail would be paralleled in a series of shallow envelopments by seaborne forces along the Mediterranean coast.

A battalion of the Royal West Kent Regiment landed without opposition early on November 11, 100 miles east of Algiers, at Bougie, where the candle was said to have been invented. But heavy surf caused the Royal Navy to scuttle a similiar landing thirty miles farther east, at Djidjelli. This small setback carried large consequences. The inability to bring fuel to the Djidjelli airfield kept RAF Spitfires there grounded for two days, leaving the exposed force at Bougie virtually without air cover.

At 4:40 P.M. on November 11, thirty Ju-88s attacked Bougie harbor from the cover of low clouds, closely followed by German torpedo planes. Four bombs punctured the transport *Awatea*, followed by a torpedo that lanced her port side; at a 40-degree list she soon burned with greater fury than any Bougie chandler could have imagined. The destroyer *Bicester* picked up twenty-five survivors and played hoses on the transport's glowing plates, pressing so close that flames caressed the destroyer and *Awatea*'s portside davits briefly fouled the bridge. After twenty minutes, even the doughty *Bicester* stood off. Gutted by a colossal final explosion, *Awatea* sank at eleven P.M.

Two bombs hit the monitor *Roberts*, wounding her badly. Worse befell the transport *Cathay*, which had 1,200 British soldiers aboard. Battered by near misses that dimpled her hull, *Cathay* then took a dud in the galley. That was enough to panic the quailing crew; they lowered boats without orders and rowed away from the abandoned and terrified troops. A rescue flotilla of landing craft managed to get nearly everyone off, although one lighter was bombed and a surgeon reported seeing a soldier with both legs blown off "swimming frantically using only his arms." Shortly before midnight, *Cathay* caught fire; she burned all night before sinking.

November 12 was also bad. To better prepare for more air attacks at dawn, the anti-aircraft ship *Tynwald* weighed anchor at 4:45 A.M., only to strike a mine sown by a German plane. She sank in seven fathoms. A dawn attack *did* materialize. Bombs hit the transport *Karanja*, whose decks were packed with survivors from the *Cathay*; they again promptly lowered boats without orders. Sensing that the morning belonged to the enemy, *Karanja*'s captain ordered his vessel abandoned at 8:30 A.M.

She soon sank.

Most soldiers and sailors demonstrated pluck. But no élan could obscure the fact that four British ships had been sunk and a fifth damaged before the strike force was barely beyond Algiers. Several vessels pressed into duty as hospital ships returned to Algiers harbor with the dead sewed up in canvas sacks and the wounded making a shambles of the mess deck tables. The British troops ashore at Bougie pivoted eastward with an occasional wistful look over their shoulders; among other losses, their greatcoats lay at the bottom of Bougie bight—with the wintry Tunisian Atlas looming ahead.

Things went better at Bône, 125 miles east of Bougie, where in the year 393 a council of bishops had first recognized the canon of the New Testament. Two destroyer transports landed an unopposed force of British and American commandos who sang the French anthem as they disembarked. Three hundred paratroopers, commanded by the infelicitously named Major R. G. Pine-Coffin, soon leaped to join them; a hard landing killed one man and injured a dozen others, including a concussed paratroop officer who would lie in a coma for four days, murmuring, "I'll have a little more of the turbot, waiter." As the sun set on November 12, this Allied force was only 185 road miles from Bizerte.

Unfortunately, Bône was also comparably close to Kesselring's airfields in Sicily and Sardinia. Bombs blew up the rail station, the cinema, and the sidewalk bistro with its striped umbrellas. Bombs eviscerated the port elevator—a golden cascade of grain spilled across the wharf—and sent mothers scurrying for shelter across the cobbled streets with their grocery bags and perambulators. Of twenty-two piers in the port, eighteen were soon wrecked. The attacks so terrorized the locals that when six Allied coasters put in later in the week no Tunisian labor could be found to unload them. British soldiers pressed into service as stevedores composed a bit of doggerel for the occasion:

In this force we've just one moan:
Too little meat—and too much Bône.

Having chased Napoleon Bonaparte into exile, the British Army perhaps felt justified in ignoring certain of l'Empereur's precepts. For example: the dictum that the most difficult maneuver involves marching widely separated columns against an enemy who has time to strike at them one by one before they can converge. Such an assault across a broad front was precisely what General Anderson and his lieutenants proposed. Moreover, they intended to do so with few tanks and little artillery in hilly terrain congenial to defense and ambush.

On November 14, Anderson ordered all available Allied troops eastward in hopes of attacking Bizerte and Tunis within a week. The British 36th Brigade—4,500 men from the 78th Division—would hug the coast on the Allied left. An equivalent contingent in the 11th Brigade would follow a parallel route twenty-five miles to the south, on the Allied right. In the Allied center a patchwork group of 2,600 tankers, riflemen, and parachutists, known as Blade Force, was to work the broken high ground between the two brigades.

The British plan would cut the Axis bridgehead in half and isolate Bizerte, which was to be captured after Tunis had fallen. American units would be fed into the attack as they arrived. For now, Anderson's army numbered just over 12,000 men; "all available" troops amounted to barely one-tenth of those landed in TORCH. British armor featured the Valentine tank, an obsolete can with a three-man crew, a cross-country speed of eight miles per hour, and a gun that fired two-pound shells comparable to heaving loaves of hard bread at the enemy.

The plan was made; the plan was fixed; and amending the plan—despite evidence that thousands

of veteran Axis troops were extending their bridgehead westward—"had no appeal to the orderly British mind." Precisely what Anderson could have done otherwise, given his paltry force and stringy logistics, is debatable; but gathering his scattered troops into a compact, clenched fist would have been a start.

And then, they were in Tunisia. Crossing out of Algeria along the ancient border between Numidia and Carthage, the road switchbacked through stands of cork oak and mountain ash rich with the mossy scent of mist and wood smoke. The nights turned bitter, with icy winds and hail that forced men to tip their helmets over their faces like a knight's beaver. Letters home began stressing the "north" in North Africa, which soldiers now described as "a cold country with a hot sun." Slightly larger than the state of Georgia, Tunisia in winter seemed more like Michigan. On the rare occasions when open fires were allowed, the Americans huddled close in their blankets, dusted with snow. The shivering British pined for their lost greatcoats.

As marauding Messerschmitts became increasingly common, campfires vanished. Breakfast was eaten facing east, so every man could scan for fighters on strafing runs out of the sun. Supply was patchy, with absurd surpluses of hair oil and other inessentials, and desperate shortages of artillery rounds, fresh food, and commodities like cutlery. "The most important thing," a British tanker advised, "is *never* to be parted from your spoon."

To protect Anderson's far southern flank, Eisenhower dispatched Edson Raff, whose American paratrooper battalion had regrouped after its dispersion across the Mediterranean in Operation VILLAIN. Raff's Ruffians jumped—successfully this time—from thirty-three planes on the east Algerian town of Tébessa. He then herded them onto green passenger buses fueled by charcoal and placed a machine gun in each rooftop baggage rack. On a perfectly plumb Roman road they drove past pink stucco farms and neo-Palladian French villas to the remote Tunisian oasis of Gafsa, where the force soon grew to 2,500 men. Behind them, American combat engineers heading through the mountain pass called Kasserine found themselves detained at a border post by French customs officials who demanded that duty be paid on all matériel. After realizing that Frenchman and Arab alike were mesmerized by the power of official stamps, the engineers fabricated their own rubber imprimatur and "just stamped the hell out of everything."

But most of the Allied force was farther north, in the two brigades lurching in loose tandem toward Tunis. Lancashire millworkers, Kentish clerks, laborers from Surrey—all came under the British 78th Division commander, Major General Vyvyan Evelegh. Known as Santa Claus for his ruddy face and imposing girth, Evelegh was a saddle-nosed, gap-toothed man in a beret, with the obligatory English officer's mustache worn on his upper lip like a campaign ribbon. He was mercurial, with a loud, braying laugh that could quickly give way to scalding invective untrammeled by his tendency to stutter when enraged. Evelegh was said to be feuding with one of his subordinates, the commander of the elite 1st Guards Brigade, over the b-b-b-bloody foolish issue of seniority. It was also said that he was keen to seize Tunis before others of higher rank could swoop in and claim credit.

With Anderson's approval, Evelegh decided to leapfrog 500 paratroopers ahead of the meandering brigades. The British 1st Battalion boarded planes in Algiers and on November 16 jumped on the border town of Souk el Arba. Five soldiers were wounded when a fumbled Sten gun accidentally discharged, and another was garrotted in midair by his own shroud lines; the entire town turned out for the dead man's funeral and, following local custom, all 3,000 people insisted on shaking hands with the battalion officer designated as chief mourner.

They hurried onward by bus, forty miles to Béja, a hilltop town dotted with ruins from the days when local grain fields provided the bread to complement Rome's circuses. After a miserable night in filthy weather, the battalion moved its command post into the local slaughterhouse on November 17. Five hundred men marched through Béja's narrow streets in their soup-bowl helmets, then discreetly

changed to red berets and marched around some more to simulate “a non-existent preponderance” for the benefit of any Frenchman or Arab of wavering loyalties. Fooled or not, the locals cheered from the balconies of their white houses and the parapets of Béja’s Byzantine towers.

They cheered again on November 18, when a British patrol to the northeast ambushed a small German column, killing six enemy soldiers before returning to Béja with nine scuffling prisoners and a captured German staff car paraded like a centurion’s booty. The ambush had occurred barely ten miles from Mateur, the gateway city to Bizerte. How close they were now! To British and American paratroopers, and to the two brigades slogging behind them, the prize seemed within grasp.

Then Stuka dive-bombers found Béja for the first of many, many raids—the Tommies called the attacks “bouncing”—and the cheers stopped. Bombs gilded the town with fire and peeled back the French mansard roofs along the Avenue de la Gare, exposing charred rafters and scorched wallpaper like something publicly naked and shameful. Bombs plowed the little gardens and reduced mud-wattle Arab houses to dust. Bombs ruined the ruins, Roman and Byzantine, and it became hard to tell antique reliquiae from modern wreckage. Béja was bounced so often that by the end of the week 300 Frenchmen and Arabs had been killed, and there was not enough lime in all Tunisia to unstink the dead.

Local enthusiasm faded for the Allied cause, or *any* cause, and even the shadow of a large bird sufficed to send citizens howling through the streets, in search of a refuge that did not exist. As Bône and Bougie had been and a thousand other towns between here and Berlin would be, Béja was caught in the crossfire between the Allies and their Axis enemies, victimized by the total war that had begun, this week, in this place.

Medjez-el-Bab

“WHOEVER has Medjez-el-Bab has the key to the door, and is the master of all Tunisia,” Hannibal supposedly declared. The quotation has the tin ring of apocrypha, but the sentiment had been true in the centuries before Christ and it was true in 1942. Modern Medjez-el-Bab was a dusty market town smelling of rosemary and juniper and fed by roads from every compass point, a place for flinty merchants to sell French *colons* the tobacco and salt with which they paid their Arab farmworkers. Traces of Rome, Byzantium, and even seventeenth-century Spain could be found in the town, whose name means “Ford by the Gateway.” It was in Medjez that Allied and Axis forces would first collide “with the grappling strength of fighters armed in bronze,” in Homer’s phrase, and it was around Medjez that much of the struggle over the next seven months would revolve.

Medjez-el-Bab’s strategic value derived from its position straddling the Medjerda River, thirty air miles from Tunis. Rising in the Algerian highlands, the Medjerda was a serpentine ditch wandering vaguely northeast for 125 miles before spilling into the Gulf of Tunis between Bizerte and the capital. It provided a rare portal through the Eastern Dorsal, the rugged mountain chain that stretched southward to wall off the coastal plain of eastern Tunisia. The Medjerda valley at Medjez was said to be among the half-dozen most fertile on earth: the fecund fields and irrigation ditches resembled California’s Central Valley. Shallow and mustard-hued, the river was less than a hundred yards wide, with sheer banks twenty feet high and dense rush brakes in the bottoms. An eight-arch bridge, built in the eighteenth century with stones from the original Roman viaduct, crossed the Medjerda at Medjez. It was the grandest of nine bridges spanning the river at intervals of six to ten miles.

At this bucolic place, the commander of the Tunis Division, General Barré, chose to make his stand. After declining to follow the collaborationist path of the Vichy admirals Estéva and Derrien, Barré had temporized, for a week, teasing the Germans with hints of capitulation while trading space

for time. His 9,000 men had eased westward from Tunis into the hills, where they retrieved small caches of fuel and ammunition hidden two years earlier as a precaution after the German invasion of France. Badly armed with a few creaky tanks and a half-dozen artillery pieces pulled by mules, they were pinched between Allied forces approaching from the west and Axis troops pressing from the east—a perfect metaphor for the Vichy commanders collectively.

As British paratroopers on November 18 paraded their spoils through Béja, twenty miles away, the 3rd Battalion of the German 5th Parachute Regiment closed to within sight of Medjez-el-Bab. Troops in field-gray coats and coal-scuttle helmets fanned out along Highway 50, a narrow blacktop that hugged the Medjerda all the way to the stone bridge in Medjez. They drifted through eucalyptus brakes lining the river and skirted the cactus hedges that fenced the little farms east of town. Many had wrapped their rifle muzzles with newspaper to keep out the mud.

Although they were veteran soldiers who two weeks earlier had been training in Normandy for a possible invasion of Malta, the Germans were hardly more mobile or robustly armed than the plodding British or French. Messages to headquarters in Tunis complained at the lack of shovels, radios, hot food, machine guns, and field glasses. The battalion commander was a dark, heavy-browed captain named Wilhelm Knoche, who liked quoting Frederick the Great: “I have no need in my army for officers who lack luck.” Knoche’s luck had held so far in several parleys with French officers; after reviewing a map on which he had charted the positions of entirely fictitious regiments, the French had ceded to German forces the Medjerda valley towns of Djedeïda and Tébourba. But Barré refused to forsake Medjez. Now German patience, never robust, had expired. Field Marshal Kesselring issued new demands to “throw the enemy back to Bône” and to “end an intolerable situation by sending in the Stukas against the French divisions.” Knoche warned in a final parley: “Think what’s at stake. When I go, the apple falls.”

At four A.M. on November 19, a German diplomat carrying a truce flag drove into Medjez to a stucco house perched above the river. This time there was no parley, only an ultimatum. The French were given until seven A.M. to strike their colors. A French colonel replied in a theatrical huff that his honor and that of France had been insulted. Although Barré’s men were scattered across the Eastern Dorsal and only a few hundred troops defended Medjez, they would fight. The French had enough ammunition for a day of combat, provided that they were not required to shoot much.

Barré passed word to a British armored-car squadron near Medjez that an attack was likely in several hours. He also phoned French army headquarters in Algiers, announcing both his return to the Allied fold and the imminent destruction of his command.

A bad British plan promptly got worse. On November 18, Anderson had ordered General Evelegh not to commit his 78th Division until he finished concentrating the force. But in a flurry of frantic, pleading calls, French generals now demanded reinforcement. Shortly before six A.M. on November 19, Anderson’s headquarters told Giraud that “while everything will be done to assist,” fighter aircraft based at Bône were too far away to effectively intercede and no tanks were available.

Santa Claus was in a tight spot. The strategic worth of the Medjerda valley was evident. But German troops with tanks had also appeared on his left flank, a few miles from the Mediterranean coast. The fragmented Allied force was about to fragment further. Evelegh shoved several units toward Medjez, including the 500 paratroopers from Béja and twelve American howitzers of the 175th Field Artillery Battalion.

An apricot dawn spread through the valley, heralding a gorgeous autumn day. Farmers shambled out to feed their livestock, casting anxious glances at the 200 gray-clad Germans who in the night had entrenched along the Medjerda’s east bank, a thousand yards from Medjez. Captain Knoche moved his command post into a cemetery on high ground east of town. Seven A.M. passed, then eight, then nine, and the ultimatum began to resemble a bluff. But at 9:15 rifle fire crackled, followed by the brisk

notes of a machine gun. Bullets swarmed back and forth across the river. Terrified residents ran from the town. “The war,” an American artillerist recalled cheerfully, “was on!”

West of town, several British soldiers waited roadside to guide an American artillery battery into firing positions. At a fair distance, they spied a churning column of dust. Soon the column resolved into four bouncing howitzers and their gun teams hurtling up to and then past the frantically waving Tommies. Over a small rise they boiled, and down the forward slope overlooking Medjez, where they lurched to a stop in full view of the Germans. Shooting that had been brisk now became furious. A British officer reported “guns of all calibers firing.”

British paratroopers and Derbyshire Yeomen hurried forward to extract their cousins. The mêlée subsided only when the truculent Yank gunners were persuaded of the merits of defilade. The British paratrooper commander, Lieutenant Colonel S.J.L. Hill, upon inquiring about the eccentric American approach, learned that the “gun teams had worked it out that one of them would be the first American to fire the first shot against the Germans in this world war. They had all started jockeying for position and racing each other down the road.” Colonel Hill accepted this explanation philosophically, as he did the reply from a young American who, when asked why he was firing at a church steeple in Medjez, said it was because he could “see if he hit it.” The answer, Hill concluded, “seemed fair enough.”

The balance of the day was less risible. At 10:45 A.M., 120 spahis appeared in crimson capes and turbans bound in camel’s hair. With a rumble of hooves and an ululant war cry, the double column broke into a gallop toward the stone bridge just as the first German dive-bombers appeared overhead. “Poor buggers were cut off by Stukas and ruined,” an American gunner noted. The planes heeled over in a nearly vertical dive, sirens screaming and silver bombs tumbling. In a swirl of smoke and flapping capes, fragments of horses and riders blew into the air. What the Stukas failed to destroy, German machine guns and mortars finished. A witness counted the bodies of ninety-six cavalrymen.

By late afternoon the Germans held everything east of the river except the train station. French colonials fought until their ammunition was gone and then the station fell, too. Yet even with Stukas attacking punctually every two hours, the Germans failed to dislodge Barré’s troops from the shops and houses on the west bank. Galling fire from the American 25-pounders curtained the bridge and repulsed each attempt to force it. Knoche, the German battalion commander, ordered a large patrol from his Number 10 Company to ford the river and outflank the defenders from the south. Wading through icy water to their necks, the Germans overran a French machine gun and captured several prisoners.

But the patrol was trapped, exposed to enfilading fire and unable to reach the bridge abutments. Now it was the Germans’ turn to be murdered. Venturing from the shelter of the riverbank, the company commander soon pitched to the pavement with a bullet in his brain. Allied machine guns scythed the rushes until the water ran red and German corpses drifted downstream like a gray flotilla. Only four men returned to the east bank.

Night fell. A German mortar hooted, and a few seconds later yet another detonation struck a town more hideous by the hour. Allied soldiers lay in their slit trenches studying the rectangular roof of sky overhead and the stars in their courses. French commanders tallied the butcher’s bill—nearly a quarter of Barré’s force had fallen—and issued another futile plea for armor, ammunition, and fresh troops.

At one A.M. on November 20, a staccato series of blasts ripped through four sectors of Medjez. Reinforced by two companies of Italian infantry, ten German patrols had swum the river with satchel charges and grenades. German machine pistols fired at every flitting shadow. Allied troops fell back, leaving intact the bridge, which they had prepared for detonation. Flames guttered in the dying town.

Colonel Hill summoned the senior French officer in Medjez and informed him that a general withdrawal would begin immediately. By 4:30 A.M. the town was abandoned. American gunners, along

with British and French infantrymen, scuttled westward to a steep ridge halfway to Béja. Knoche's troops, who had suffered only twenty-two casualties, swept into Medjez as soon as the Allies decamped. By dawn, the key to the door was in a German pocket.

This disagreeable news jarred General Anderson, whose grand assault on Tunis and Bizerte was scheduled to begin November 21. Anderson had resisted sending more Americans into Tunisia for fear that First Army's fragile logistics would buckle beneath the strain, and now he doubted that the Allies could reach Tunis without heavy reinforcement. Given persistent supply problems and the difficulty in massing Allied combat power, he ordered a three-day postponement.

Anderson's native pessimism was reinforced by a quick tour of the front, where he found irrefutable evidence of an Axis buildup that was swifter and stronger than anything anticipated in London or Washington. Neither side, however, could yet launch a sustained offensive. "Bits of war were threaded…like beads on a string," wrote the reporter A. J. Liebling. Tunisia had become "a funny sort of front," an American major said. "It's about fifty feet wide—just across the road and a little on each side of it."

But Axis forces were pressing in the north and infiltrating the southern flank, where the oasis at Gafsa had been recaptured. Kesselring's new commander in Tunisia, Generalleutnant Walther K. Nehring—a veteran of Poland, France, and Russia, as well as Rommel's Afrika Korps—declared, with an urgency rarely detected in Allied actions, "There is no time to lose…. Each man must be saturated with the fact that he must fight for his position to the last man." Nehring now had 16,000 German and 9,000 Italian troops in Tunisia; they had swept in so fast that Allied intelligence, despite Ultra, had temporarily lost count and believed the number to be less than half that. The Allies for their part had forfeited surprise with a plodding, tactically suspect use of the Tunisian terrain; precious tanks, for example, had been diverted to the left flank, where mountains rendered them useless.

A churlish frustration took hold. British troops began referring to American soldiers collectively as "Alice," and it was not a compliment. Anderson cabled Eisenhower at Gibraltar: "Roseate picture of speedy aid by an efficient French army is a figment of imagination." Eisenhower's naval chief, Admiral Andrew B. Cunningham, wrote to a friend, "Tunis is anyone's who cares to walk in. But the Huns are beating us in the race."

Never hesitant to play the field marshal, Churchill impatiently accused his military commanders of timidity and undue deference to logistics. "The Army is like a peacock—nearly all tail," he grumbled. To which the chief of the Imperial General Staff, General Brooke, replied sharply, "The peacock would be a very badly balanced bird without its tail." Unpersuaded, Churchill simply switched metaphors. "I intended North Africa to be a springboard, not a sofa," he complained. While British commanders voiced doubts about the Yanks' fighting qualities, some also harbored secret qualms about their own ranks. Churchill earlier in the year had expressed concern "that our soldiers are not as good fighters as their fathers were," and Brooke worried that "half our corps and divisional commanders are totally unfit" because of "the losses we sustained in the last war of all our best officers."

Eisenhower maintained a brave face, though nagged by a suspicion that the campaign was slipping away. "My biggest worry at this moment is that the Axis reinforcements, pouring into Tunisia from Sicily and Italy, are coming faster than I can kick troops up the line to the eastward," he wrote General Henry H. "Hap" Arnold, commander of the Army Air Forces, on November 21. A day later, in a memo to himself, Eisenhower added, "It would be wrong at present to assume that the Axis forces, now estimated to be 12,000, will be rapidly destroyed." It was wronger than he knew: Nehring's actual

strength by November 25 was 25,000. The consequences of failure were hard to contemplate, but Eisenhower summed them up in a note to Beetle Smith: “If we don’t get Tunisia quickly, we surrender initiative, give the Axis time to do as it pleases in that region, encourage all our enemies in the area, individually and collectively…. This battle is not, repeat *not* won.”

Most disheartening was enemy air superiority. Axis planes in Tunisia already had available seven good airfields, in addition to bases on Sicily, Sardinia, and the Italian boot. Kesselring had assembled twenty squadrons of Stukas and fighters. They attacked relentlessly.

Allied fighters, by contrast, operated from crude dirt fields at such a distance—Bône, for example, lay 135 air miles from Tunis—that they could rarely loiter more than ten minutes over the battlefield. A Luftwaffe raid on November 21 destroyed more than a dozen planes on the ground in Algiers and forced all Flying Fortresses to safer fields near Oran; that meant a 1,200-mile round-trip bombing run to Tunis. Among the planes shot down was Eisenhower’s personal B-17, which he had donated to the bombing campaign.

Field conditions were primitive. Pilots often had to refuel their own fighters from five-gallon tins, using a chamois to filter the badly refined French gasoline. Few radar sets had been shipped to Africa, so the Allied early-warning network consisted of French gendarmes with telephones. By late November, only half the Allied planes in North Africa were still airworthy; American pilots also lost nearly twice as many aircraft to crashes and other mishaps than to combat, a ratio described by one commander as “rather appalling.” The Allied air command was disorganized, poorly coordinated, and split by rivalry and national chauvinism.

Troops learned to their sorrow that North Africa was not only cold but wet: Tunisia’s sixteen yearly inches of rain fell almost exclusively between November and March. Crews wielded sticks and shovels to scrape mud off aircraft wheels so pilots could at least taxi onto the runways. To keep the nose from burrowing into the muck, crew chiefs sat on the horizontal stabilizer, then hopped off as the plane gained speed. Aviation engineers tried laying matting of cork, bamboo, and steel; mud ate them all. “Such a loving type of mud works its way up to your arm pits,” a British soldier wrote.

On November 24, Anderson ordered General Evelegh to resume his advance on Tunis and Bizerte as swiftly as possible. Again the two brigades lurched eastward with Blade Force between them. On the left wing, eight miles from the Mediterranean coast, the 36th Brigade found an enemy reluctant to play its assigned role. Rather than remain fixed on the narrow road and await the British blow, German paratroopers simply backed up, sowing mines as they went. The Allies found themselves striking at thin air. Again the brigade surged forward; again the Germans backed up, as precisely as a minuet partner. So it went for more than two days, at a pachydermal pace of several hundred yards per hour.

Thirty miles to the south, on the Allied right flank, three British battalions in the 11th Brigade again closed on Medjez-el-Bab in a two-pronged assault reinforced by American gunners. Officers wagged their blackthorn sticks to inspirit the troops as they darkened their faces with burnt cork. From the southwest, the 5th Battalion of the Northamptonshire Regiment and the U.S. 175th Field Artillery attacked before dawn on November 25. Three miles from Medjez, they killed a dozen Italians and seized the heights called Djebel Bou Mouss—soon renamed Grenadier Hill. The new name stuck; Allied troops did not. A counterattack by German tanks from Medjez cleared the ridge in several hours. Brits and Yanks again retreated, this time to await reinforcement from an American armored battalion expected to arrive the next day.

The other prong of the Allied attack on Medjez came from the northwest. The 2nd Battalion of

the Lancashire Fusiliers moved forward in trucks, then climbed out close to town. Blued by a hunter's moon, the men marched along the road and rail embankment, silent except for their bootsteps and the creak of their kit. At 4:30 A.M., the Medjerda came into view, a quicksilver runnel beneath the black arches of the bridge. Across the river a first hint of dawn limned the horizon. Lieutenant Colonel L. A. Manly, the British battalion commander, strolled to the point and after an exchange of hand gestures and hoarse whispers pressed ahead to reconnoiter. Five hundred shadows in flawless assault formation followed across an open field.

All this was seen. Captain Knoche's battalion watched from its emplacements, now reinforced with two 88mm guns and tanks from the 190th Panzer Battalion. Fighting in Crete and the Low Countries had made the German paratroopers expert in gauging distance at night. Mortar crewmen eyed the drifting shadows and adjusted their elevation knobs with the delicacy of safecrackers.

The first burst of machine-gun fire killed Colonel Manly. Five hundred British soldiers dropped as one, slithering across the ground in search of cover. Mortar tubes coughed, and German shells exploded behind the field, discouraging retreat. Then the shells walked forward, discouraging men inclined to stay put. Bullets gouged the earth with a plopping sound. Like doughboys going over the top—"jumping the bags," their fathers had called it at the Somme—the Lancashires rose up and charged a German line glittering with muzzle flashes. Crashing through hedges near the bridge, they made for the river, plunging down the muddy slope and into the Medjerda, splashing chest-deep to the far bank with rifles held high.

They found no more sanctuary here than had Knoche's Number 10 Company five days earlier. Bullets and mortar fragments frothed the water, and the ominous whipcrack of German 88mm shells sounded overhead. Wounded men pitched into the river; sometimes their comrades hauled them back to the bank, and sometimes they did not. Though badly disorganized by the fall of Manly and other leaders, two companies managed to scale the east bank and resume their charge across no-man's-land in a din of shouts and tweetering whistles.

They were hacked to pieces. The sun, now fully risen and flush in their faces, so blinded the Tommies that they could no longer pick out even muzzle flashes. Officers bellowed orders that were only partly heard above the roar, as if the tail end of each sentence was shot away. Squinting men faltered and fell back, tumbling down the bank to the bullet-whipped Medjerda. There the Lancashires' third company had fared just as poorly by remaining in the ditch; machine-gun and shell fire exterminated one platoon almost to a man. Bodies again drifted on the current, this time clad in British serge.

The attack was finished. An Allied artillery barrage provided covering fire for those still alive to recross the river and scramble up the west bank. They dragged the wounded by their collars in wide, bloody slicks. From the stucco husks that had once been houses, counterattacking German tanks and infantry hurried the retreating Tommies on their way. Along both sides of the Medjerda they left behind—another image from the Somme—"a landscape of dead buttocks." This time the butcher's bill came to 144 Lancashires, dead and wounded.

Fat Geese on a Pond

WITH both brigades stymied on the flanks, any hope for a breakthrough by the British First Army now fell to the provisional Blade Force in the center. Puny in size, with fewer than 3,000 troops, the unit nevertheless boasted more than a hundred tanks, half of them American. Now Blade Force hurried forward, crying, "Armor for Tunis!" and accompanied by Senegalese *tirailleurs*, "great ebony warriors with enormous teeth and bayonets a yard long." Sensing softness in the Axis line east of the hill town

of Sidi Nsir, Blade Force planned to rip the seam with its two tank battalions, the British 17th/21st Lancers and the U.S. 1st Battalion of the 1st Armored Regiment. Both were directed to create "a tank-infested area" in the Tine River valley, ten miles north of the Medjerda and roughly parallel to it.

This order greatly pleased the Americans, even if no one was quite sure what "tank-infested" meant or how to effect such a teeming condition. The 1st Battalion—part of a regiment created in the 1830s for the Black Hawk War and still heavily drawn from Kentucky, Tennessee, and West Virginia—was commanded by the handsome thirty-five-year-old John Knight Waters. The son of a Baltimore banker, Waters had attended Johns Hopkins University for two years before persuading a Chicago congressman, in whose district he had spent a single day, to appoint him to the West Point class of 1931. Waters's ambition to be a pilot was thwarted by imperfect eyesight; he settled for the cavalry and betrothal to the daughter of a crotchety major named Patton. "Waters, I don't know you. Come back in three years," Patton told the young lieutenant when asked for permission to marry. Waters bided his time, eventually winning both Patton's deep affection and his daughter.

Waters's fifty-four light tanks formed the spearhead of Blade Force because the larger American medium tanks landed in Oran would not fit through the narrow Tunisian rail tunnels and were en route to the front by sea. The "light," fourteen-ton M-3 General Stuart was a fast, agile deathtrap with a 37mm gun known to American tankers as the "squirrel rifle." Oddly top-heavy, like "a hat box about to fall from the top shelf of the hall closet," the Stuart had a manually rotated turret and an engine that required a dozen vigorous turns with a hand crank to start. The four-man crew was cramped and virtually blind, viewing the hostile world through narrow glass-prism peepholes. On the frequent occasions when the intercom radio failed, tank commanders in the turret signaled direction changes to the drivers in the hull below with little kicks to the left or right shoulder; a kick between the shoulders meant "Stop," a sharper kick meant "Advance." A kick to the head meant "Back up."

The battalion rolled northeast through the narrow Tine valley along a rough braid of goat trails. Whenever Stukas appeared overhead, Waters shooed the Stuarts into the nearest stand of cactus, where his driver vaulted from the hatch to hide in a ditch, muttering, "I'm scared to death, I'm scared to death." On the afternoon of November 25, along the right bank of the Tine, scouts spotted enemy soldiers in a French farm compound that had been built to withstand Arab banditry. Gum trees rose above a rectangular courtyard enclosed by a thick stone-and-concrete wall with fighting parapets and musket loopholes. Outside the wall, Italian infantrymen peered from a network of trenches and saps.

Company A's tanks dashed forward, circling the compound in a dusty, shrieking assault. Machine-gun fire chewed through the trenches and killed a few infantrymen, but the squirrel gun hardly blemished the stone wall. Waters ordered his mortar platoon and assault guns into action, and soon the crump and boom of mortar and field tubes joined the rippling tank fire. The cannonade broke a few red terra-cotta roof tiles and fired two haystacks, but otherwise had little effect. The defenders peppered the Stuarts with rifle and machine-gun fire, shattering many of the glass vision ports. Tank commanders furiously toed their drivers—left shoulder, right shoulder, left shoulder—but without infantry and artillery support the attack soon lost momentum. Waters pulled the company back down the valley, where the crews spent the late afternoon manicuring tank hulls that bristled with hundreds of embedded enemy bullets. The effect, one officer wrote, gave the armor plates a manly texture, "like a three-day growth of beard."

Farther north, a British Lancers battalion rounded up 140 Axis prisoners, accepted a bleating sheep from a grateful farmer, then broke for tea. Stuka pilots evidently confused German signal flares with Allied anti-aircraft fire: a Lancer reported that Wehrmacht infantrymen repeatedly "sent up a stream of Very lights, which had the satisfying effect of bringing the bombs down amongst themselves, whilst we watched." Mateur, the linchpin to the defense of Bizerte, lay only ten miles away.

But it was on the southern fringe of a landscape now properly tank-infested that the day's strangest events unfolded. As his attack on the farm compound petered out, Waters ordered the seventeen tanks from his Company C to reconnoiter the bridges over the Medjerda River. Angling east from the Tine valley, a mile-long defile named Chouïgui Pass gave onto the flat, fertile plains, twenty miles from Tunis. The paved road through the pass veered southeast for five miles to the grain fields and orchards of the Medjerda valley. It was this route that Major Rudolph Barlow followed with the three platoons of Company C.

At thirty-five miles an hour, Barlow and his men skirted the town of Tébourba and followed Highway 55 for two miles to the narrow bridge spanning the Medjerda at El Bathan. A few bursts of coaxial machine-gun fire scattered the sentries; the Allies, so roughly handled at Medjez-el-Bab, now owned their own Medjerda bridge, twenty-two miles downstream from Medjez and deep behind the German line.

Suffused with cavalry panache, Barlow pressed ahead. His tanks rumbled northeast for seven miles along the left bank of the Medjerda, sheltered by olive groves, to the village of Djedeïda. Behind a ridge a few hundred yards ahead, a German plane lifted into the air, followed by another. Barlow sent forward a platoon under Lieutenant Wilbor H. Hooker while the rest of the company remained secluded in the olive trees.

Hooker and his tankers soon came galloping back. A new airfield "packed with planes" lay on the other side of the rise, Hooker reported. No sentries had been posted and the Luftwaffe seemed oblivious of the approaching Americans. Barlow ordered the tanks into a forage line, with two platoons abreast and a third trailing slightly behind. He radioed Waters and relayed Hooker's report in a voice pitched to the occasion:

"Right in front of me is an airport full of German airplanes, sitting there, the men all sitting out on the gasoline barrels, shooting the breeze in the sunlight. What should I do?"

Waters had spent much of the day hiding in the cactus from these very aircraft. Now he nearly leaped in the air with incredulity. "For God's sake, attack them! Go after them!"

Seventeen Stuarts surged up and over the crest of the hill, tracks churning the wheat stubble as they barreled down the front slope from the northwest. Tank commanders craned for a better view from the open turret hatches and spurred their drivers forward. Several dozen Messerschmitts, Stukas, and Junkerses crowded around the dirt airstrip, reminding one American officer of "fat geese on a small pond." Some were taking gas at a makeshift fuel dump; others were being rearmed with bombs and belts of machine-gun bullets. Late-afternoon shadows stretched before the charging Stuarts as if racing the tanks to the bottom of the slope. A few Luftwaffe crewmen turned and waved, evidently believing the tanks were Italian.

Then the first bursts of machine-gun fire struck the parked planes and the mêlée began. Fuel drums exploded, spreading sheets of fire across the runway and engulfing German soldiers and planes alike. The boom of seventeen tank guns reverberated in the hills, as Barlow's gunners hit their fire buttons as fast as loaders could shove rounds into the breech. Gunfire from the tanks created its own hot wind, flattening the brush and blowing a dark cloud of debris before the hulls.

The squirrel guns proved lethal to aircraft sheet metal. Planes blew up, planes disintegrated, planes collided with other planes making for the end of the runway. A Messerschmitt gained enough speed to lift off, only to be raked by machine-gun bullets and cartwheel, burning, to earth. Mud slowed the taxiing Junkerses long enough for American gunners to take languid aim and machine-gun the fuselages from propeller to vertical stabilizer. As for those still able to build speed, a tank commander at the far end of the runway raked departing planes with fire until a nearby grainfield was full of burning cruciforms.

Tanks lunged onto the runway. Terrified pilots in their leather headgear fled zigzag across the

field, only to be shot down or crushed beneath the tracks. Several Stuarts rolled behind a row of parked aircraft, methodically shearing off their tails. Desultory German rifle fire, one tank crewman later recalled, hit the turrets and "bounced off like peas." A few defenders tried to turn their 20mm anti-aircraft weapons into tank killers, but the Stuarts were too agile and the gunners died at their guns.

Tanks tacked back and forth across the airfield looking for things to kill. Spent brass rained down on the Stuart drivers and bow gunners, who wrapped towels around their necks and kept their collars buttoned tight to avoid burns from the hot casings. A few fighters had managed to get airborne when the attack began, and now they circled back for low strafing runs that ignited bedrolls and clothing bags lashed to the American hulls. Crewmen climbed from their hatches to beat at the flames, then pressed forward to kill some more.

In half an hour the fight was over. Barlow pulled his whooping tankers back up the hill. The raid had cost him one tank destroyed, several damaged, and two men killed by strafing, including a platoon leader.

He paused for a final look at the carnage below. Wreckage from more than twenty German planes lay scattered in a burning swath longer than a mile. Spikes of flame from detonating fuel and ammunition flared the length of the runway, illuminating scattered propellers, wheels, and fuselages. Bodies lay sprawled across the field. Barlow briefly considered pressing on to Tunis even at the risk of being cut off, but night had closed completely over the countryside and Waters wanted C Company to return. The tanks turned back toward Chouïgui Pass. Behind them, to the east, a pale orange glow reflected off the belly of the clouds above Djedeïda, like a false dawn.

Panicky, exaggerated reports that American tanks were nine kilometers—five miles—from Tunis vexed General Nehring to the point of despair on the night of November 25. Only a few irrigation ditches and two 88mm guns stood between Allied forces and Tunis harbor. From his command post in the erstwhile American consulate, Nehring spoke by phone to Kesselring in Rome and warned that he was forced "to tear open one tactical hole in order to stop another more serious one." A panzer battalion that had been protecting Mateur would have to move south in the face of this latest threat to the capital. That opened the road to Bizerte. German commanders across the bridgehead were rifling through files and preparing to burn their secret papers.

Kesselring voiced sympathy for his field commander's "state of understandable excitement." The raid at Djedeïda, he agreed, "made a beautiful mess of things" and "suggested a certain limpness in German defenses." But Nehring should not overreact. "It was a rather unpleasant incident, to be sure," Kesselring said, yet their predicament was less bleak than Nehring believed. The field marshal now had a sense of his Allied foes: they were cautious and tentative, disinclined to bold tactical gambles. Remain calm, Kesselring urged. He promised to fly to Tunisia in the morning for a closer look.

Smiling Albert's assurances seemed plausible. Recovery from a battlefield victory could sometimes be more difficult than recovery from defeat, and indeed the Djedeïda success found the Allies unprepared to exploit their winnings. Eisenhower, who had just moved his headquarters from Gibraltar to Algiers, showed no inclination to rush to the front to strike the coup de grâce that Kesselring was rushing to prevent. Anderson and Evelegh had locked themselves into a tactical disadvantage by failing to concentrate their forces for a single hammer blow at the brittle Axis defense. Logistical woes, airpower weaknesses, shortages of infantrymen, disintegrating weather—all conspired to bring the Allied advance up short. There was even confusion about whether the primary objective should be Bizerte, now code-named DIZZY, or Tunis, known as INCUR.

Yet Kesselring's certitude failed to persuade Nehring, who concluded that the field marshal did not understand how precarious Tunisia had become. Luftwaffe pilots reported thirty enemy tanks heading north toward Mateur. Nehring had shown impeccable courage and combat skills both as an infantryman in the last world war and as a panzer leader in this one. But as commander of the Afrika Korps under Rommel, he had been badly wounded in an air attack two months earlier; the posting to Tunisia had disrupted his physical and mental convalescence, and his recovery was hardly expedited by the crash of the plane carrying him to Tunis.

Now Nehring's confidence flagged. Shortly after hanging up on Kesselring, he ordered a general contraction of his line, into a tighter, more defensible bridgehead. In the Medjerda valley the line would shift seven miles, from Tébourba to Djedeïda; troops in the north would fall back to Mateur. All along the front, German and Italian soldiers gathered their weapons and ammunition, and silently began trudging east.

At daybreak on Thursday, November 26, Allied sentries in the hills west of Medjez-el-Bab were startled by a deep boom from the center of town. A white cloud corkscrewed above the river. Led by British infantrymen, a newly arrived battalion of American tanks cautiously pushed through the battered outskirts of Medjez. At the Medjerda, a forty-foot section of the humpback masonry bridge lay in the river where Wehrmacht demolitionists had just dropped it. The town was empty except for a few stray cats and a stamping mule. Unspeakable odors seeped from the rubble. American tankers were shocked to see that dead British soldiers from the failed assault earlier in the week had been stripped of every stitch by Arab looters. One soldier explained this behavior in a letter home: "It's because they never had any bringing up."

The key to the door was back in an Allied pocket. Battered though the town was—and it would look only worse in the succeeding months—American and British soldiers gaped in astonishment at their good fortune. Burial details dug graves for the dead. Combat engineers studied the broken span and began moving up a portable Bailey bridge, which would take less than ten hours to erect. Infantry and armored troops followed the river northeast toward Tébourba. The spoor of a retreating enemy—ration tins, empty ammunition clips, and bloody bandages—littered Highway 50. White concrete kilometer markers, two feet high and capped in red paint, counted down the distance to Tunis. Battalion cooks bustled about in their field kitchens, rummaging for something beyond the dreary daily hash and bully beef to mark the occasion: Thanksgiving Day, 1942.

A new confidence took root. For two weeks Eisenhower had bounced between hope and despair, and he seized on the news from Medjez to rekindle his optimism. "At this moment," he wrote Patton, "our situation throughout [the] theater appears better than we had calculated it would." In a message to Beetle Smith, he went even further. "I believe," he predicted, "the enemy will be forced shortly to abandon either DIZZY or INCUR, so as to concentrate on the other."

5. *Primus in Carthago*

"Go for the Swine with a Blithe Heart"

FROM the tall windows of his corner office in the Hôtel St. Georges, Eisenhower stared out at a city going about its business with little regard to war. The shrill whine of electric trolleys muffled the muezzins' call to prayer and the chatter of schoolgirls in blue uniforms pouring from the École Ste. Geneviève. In the *salon de coiffure* outside the hotel's front entrance, Arabs worked their worry beads and sipped coffee with extended pinky fingers; the solitary barber's chair displayed a manufacturer's stamp showing it had been made in St. Louis. Algerian cavalrymen clopped past on their white chargers, followed by an open truck with bandaged soldiers just arrived from Tunisia. In the hotel corridors squads of barefoot, broom-wielding Arab women whisked furiously at muddy bootprints, to small effect. The rich odor of Thanksgiving dinner wafted from the St. Georges dining room: roasted peacock, cabbage, and peas, served with a credible Algerian rosé.

For officers long trapped in Gibraltar's subterranean gloom—such wraiths were marked by their pallor and hacking coughs—sunny Algiers offered a pleasant respite. Purple bougainvillea, pink oleander, and bright blue plumbago lent the city a Tropic of Cancer palette. Eisenhower was happier than most to escape the Rock; the damp lingered in his bones, afflicting him with a catarrh that would linger for months. The commander-in-chief had intended to move his headquarters on November 10 or 11, but loitered until November 23 because the undersea cable from Gibraltar gave him better communications to Britain and the United States than he would have in Algiers. That propinquity now seemed like a mixed blessing. "How weary I am of this long-distance essay contest with London and Washington," he had written Clark on November 20. A day later he added, "I've been pounded all week from the rear. Sometimes it seems that none of us in the field can do anything to the satisfaction of Washington and London."

He was hardly out of reach in Algiers, but the War Department and Downing Street seemed far more distant, if only because communications remained primitive. In the signal offices at the east end of the St. Georges's second floor, cryptographic machines were balanced on a wooden frame over a bathtub. The British code room occupied a cramped Quonset hut in the garden, while American coding and teletype operators worked among the scattered ottomans and brass tables in the hotel lounge.

Eisenhower's own office was spare but functional. Three hotel bedrooms and a sitting room at the end of a long corridor had been converted into a suite. The many windows admitted ample light, but the only heat in the old hotel came from a few small fireplaces, which left him and his staff scented with wood smoke. Nights in the St. Georges could be bitter, especially for soldiers temporarily housed on the hallway floors. The hotel shook violently during the frequent attacks by German bombers against the nearby port and airfields. After a sleepless first night in the office, Eisenhower, who had since moved his sleeping quarters to a more isolated villa, fumed at the limp Allied air defenses and berated his air commanders for their inadequacies.

A few days before leaving Gibraltar, Eisenhower had proposed limiting his headquarters to 150 officers. "Am particularly anxious that we strip down to a working basis and cut down on all of the folderol," he told Clark. Algiers was to be a temporary billet, with Allied Forces Headquarters moving closer to the battlefield in a couple of months. But already AFHQ was expanding wildly. Within a fortnight, the headquarters would occupy nearly 400 offices scattered through eleven buildings. Three

hundred officers now devoured as much meat as rationing allocated to 15,000 French civilians. Eisenhower's signal officer proposed that the formula for staffing a headquarters should be "a reasonable estimate, multiplied by five." AFHQ would remain in Algiers for years, expanding into a "huge, chairborne force" of more than 1,000 officers and 15,000 enlisted troops occupying 2,000 pieces of real estate. A popular aphorism soon circulated among frontline troops: "Never were so few commanded by so many from so far." Asked why the Germans failed to bomb AFHQ headquarters, a cynical American major replied, "Because it's worth fifty divisions to them."

Algiers already showed the strains of occupation. So many electric razors buzzed in the morning that they interfered with radio transmissions. Prostitutes working the Aletti Hotel now charged £10 sterling per trick. A French newspaper began printing English-language lessons, including the sentence: "No, sir, I am married, and I am hurrying home where my husband is awaiting me." In Oran, officers in their pinks-and-greens ate in a mess with green leather chairs while musicians in evening dress played Big Band melodies. A supply major proposed creating a medal inscribed "Valor, Patience, Indigestion," which would be awarded for exemplary "paperwork connected with the social struggle."

Oranges that had been fifteen cents a bushel in Algiers jumped to fifteen cents a dozen. Beer went from two cents a schooner to a dollar. Nightclubs with names like La Belle Rose and Bucket of Blood were always jammed, while battalion sergeant majors inspected various brothels and chose several of the least odious for licensing. Discovering huge wine barrels awaiting export on the wharves, soldiers tapped them with rifle fire and caught the drainage in their canteen cups; a drunken brawl led to a waterfront firefight suppressed by military policemen who then disarmed all dockworkers. Indiscipline overwhelmed the military justice system: in Oran alone, hundreds of American soldiers had been arrested for various infractions in the two weeks after the invasion, but less than 2 percent of them were prosecuted. A summary court was established to restore order; nearly 300 soldiers would be tried in the first part of December, with a total of 9 acquittals. A third of the cases involved drunkenness. Serious offenses drew harsh sentences: four years for a self-inflicted gunshot to the big toe to avoid combat; eight years at hard labor for kicking a superior officer; life in prison for a soldier who shot and killed an Algerian woman with his rifle.

There was folderol aplenty, despite Eisenhower's wishes, and it all rested on the commander-in-chief's squared shoulders. Many of the distractions were fatuous. A rumor in Arab neighborhoods that Eisenhower was a Jew sent by the Jew Roosevelt to establish a Jewish state in North Africa required a leaflet campaign stressing the general's German Protestant ancestry. The War Department tried to inflate his dignity by urging reporters not to refer to him as "Ike," and thus ensured that the nickname would stick forever. Ever eager to see his own name in headlines, Clark gave an interview full of breezy predictions about the imminent fall of Tunis and Bizerte; Eisenhower had killed the story just before leaving Gibraltar. Draconian censorship was soon imposed, with correspondents advised that no dispatches would be allowed that made people at home feel unhappy. Equally rigorous censorship of letters home inspired one soldier to write his parents:

> After leaving where we were before we left for here, not knowing we were coming here from there, we couldn't tell whether we had arrived here or not. Nevertheless, we now are here and not there. The weather here is just as it always is at this season. The people here are just like they look.

On this page a censor scribbled simply, "Amen."

In a message on November 22, Churchill voiced hopes that Eisenhower had "not been too much preoccupied with the political aspect." As for the Germans in Tunisia, the prime minister advised, "Go for the swine with a blithe heart." But blitheness was hard to come by. "It seems difficult for people at home…to understand that we are in a dirty battle, with Germans pouring into Tunisia and with us having need for every man we can get to the front," Eisenhower wrote Clark. To Beetle Smith he added, "My whole interest is Tunisia."

In truth, he spent at least three-quarters of his time worrying about political issues, and that preoccupation poorly served the Allied cause. Had he shunted aside all distractions to focus on seizing Tunis with a battle captain's fixed purpose, the coming months might have been different. But a quarter-century as a staff officer, with a staff officer's meticulous attention to detail and instinctive concern for pleasing his superiors, did not slough away easily. Eisenhower had yet to bend events to his iron will, to impose as well as implore, to become a commander in action as well as in rank.

No distraction tormented him more than the French. While disdainful of "these Frogs" and their "morbid sense of honor," he remained convinced that French cooperation was critical to civil order and equivalent to ten divisions in safeguarding Allied supply lines. General Giraud, who now commanded all French forces in North Africa, still routinely requested control over all Allied troops as well. Eisenhower considered him "volatile rather than stable," a megalomaniac who "knows no more about logistics than a dog about religion."

But the commander-in-chief lacked the confidence or stature to insist that French soldiers—many of whom now wore decorations awarded for resisting the Anglo-American invaders—cooperate fully with General Anderson. As a result, the movement of troops and supplies to the front, as well as the assault on the enemy bridgehead, remained ill coordinated. Particularly suspect were French troops in Tunisia whose families lived in the German occupation zone; a single battalion reported 132 desertions. Many troops were worse equipped than those who had fought seventy years earlier in the Franco-Prussian War. A French soldier claimed his boot soles were so thin he could step on a wad of chewing gum and tell the flavor; some colonial soldiers had no boots at all, although their bare feet were so dirty they looked shod. Yet French supply requests to the Americans included large quantities of table and bed linen, china, and gold braid for officers' uniforms.

More distracting by far was the public outcry at home over the "Darlan deal." The North African political morass was "covered like a Tammany scandal by most of the American press," one correspondent acknowledged, and a scandal it had become. The Allied marriage of convenience with the quisling Darlan was deemed a sordid betrayal of fundamental united nations' principles. "What the hell is this all about? Are we fighting Nazis or sleeping with them?" asked Edward R. Murrow, the most influential broadcaster in America.

British public and parliamentary opinion was even more intense. Eisenhower's aide Harry Butcher wrote in his diary that Darlan was considered "a stinking skunk" in London. The British Foreign Office cabled its embassy in Washington, "We are fighting for international decency and Darlan is the antithesis of this." The outrage was fed by the adroit public relations apparatus of Charles de Gaulle's London-based Free French, which demonized Darlan relentlessly.

Darlan's repressive actions as high commissioner hardly mollified his critics. Thousands were imprisoned in North African camps, including men who had helped the Anglo-American invaders. The anti-Semitic laws of Vichy remained in effect for fear of provoking the Arabs. Four hundred press censors now worked for Darlan, and BBC broadcasts were jammed, so that North Africans failed to hear allegations that 500 pounds of hoarded coffee and 800 pounds of sugar had been confiscated at

the admiral's home in metropolitan France.

Eisenhower averted his gaze. In a Thanksgiving Day note he told Patton, "We did not come here to interfere in someone else's business. We are on a military mission." He became defensive and shrill. "We are making the best of a rather bad bargain," he informed Marshall, and to the combined chiefs he added, "I realize that there may be a feeling at home that we have been sold a bill of goods," but Darlan offered "the only possible workable arrangement for securing advantages and avoiding disadvantages." At times his exasperation boiled over. "The authorities in London and Washington continue to suffer a bit from delusion as to the extent of our military control over this country," he told Smith. "It will be a long time before we can get up on our high horse and tell everybody in the world to go to hell."

Roosevelt had authorized the Darlan deal, but in his public statement supporting it he used the word "temporary" five times. Sensing the impermanence of his utility to the Allies, Darlan wrote Eisenhower on November 21: "Information coming from various parts tends to give credit to the opinion that I am but a lemon which the Americans will drop after it is crushed."

All this was folderol of the most noxious sort, and it both preoccupied Eisenhower and preyed on him. "For Christ's sake, do you think I want to talk politics? Goddam it, I hate 'em," he declared. "I'm sick to death of this goddam political question." Although he had no way of knowing that Roosevelt harbored private doubts about his commanding general's judgment, Eisenhower sensed that he, too, was expendable. Referring to his permanent, pre-war rank—to which he would return if cashiered as a three-star general—he once muttered, "Tell [Roosevelt] I am the best damn lieutenant colonel in the U.S. Army." He was particularly incensed by unfair suggestions in the newspapers that his indifference to civil liberties made him a fascist (as he pronounced it, "fatchist"). In his long career of public service, his skin would never be thinner nor his temper more volatile than it was in Algiers in the winter of 1942. Press criticism particularly was a chafing new experience for military officers accustomed to anonymity in a peacetime army. "I'm no reactionary!" Eisenhower exploded after a flurry of accusatory articles. "Christ on the mountain! I'm idealistic as hell!"

At the end of a very long day he returned to Villa dar el Ouard—"Villa of the Family"—for some supper. Axis bombers had again knocked out the heat, gas, and water, forcing an orderly to cook over an open wood fire in the dining room hearth. The tessellated stone floor was as cold as a meat locker. The drafty villa had seven bedrooms, a library with a Ping-Pong table, and a music room with a grand piano. Sometimes Eisenhower picked out "Chopsticks" or joined his staff in belting out West Point songs or cowboy tunes. On more somber evenings, however, he put a record on the phonograph and listened to his favorite passage from Verdi's *Il Trovatore, "Vedi! le fosche notturne spoglie,"* also known as the Anvil Chorus. The villa echoed with the sound of singing Gypsies working their forge. Eisenhower's Scottie puppy, Telek, newly arrived from London, chased his own tail round and round.

Even an officer as strong and selfless as Eisenhower at times felt overwhelmed. "It would be idle of me to say that I have not felt some degree of strain," he had written Marshall a few days earlier. One acquaintance described him as a "lonely man who worried, worried, worried." Eisenhower rarely yielded to self-pity, but occasionally a bitter tone crept into his letters, as when he told General Arnold, "I have literally slaved like a dog." The Darlan uproar eclipsed the extraordinary accomplishments of his soldiers in TORCH, and he regretted that.

He regretted, too, not devoting himself more robustly to the battle for Tunisia. "I live ten years each week, of which at least nine are absorbed in political and economic matters," he told Marshall. Some British generals, who were to supply three-quarters of the combat troops in Tunisia, had

growing reservations about a man who had never led a battalion in action but now commanded armies.

"Eisenhower far too busy with political matters…. Not paying enough attention to the Germans," Brooke, the British Army chief, would write in his diary on December 7. Eisenhower possessed charm, an evenhanded knack for uniting allies, and "more than his share of luck," Brooke conceded. But he seemed "unable to grasp the urgency of pushing on to Tunis before Germans build up their resistance there." Eisenhower had no illusions about his responsibilities. Harry Butcher wrote in his diary entry for Thanksgiving Day: "The whole thing in Algiers and to the east needs vigorous coordination that only Ike himself can arrange."

The low moan of air raid sirens sounded. Above Algiers harbor he could see crimson anti-aircraft shells coiling into a purple sky crisscrossed with tracers and searchlight beams. Every gun battery and warship within ten miles appeared to be firing. Smoke generators around the port churned out an oily fudge that blanketed parts of the city. Barrage fire and smoke were the only real defenses. Of the mere half-dozen Allied fighters available to intercept enemy planes at night over Algiers, three had been destroyed on the ground by Axis bombs or shot down by overzealous Allied gunners.

Concussions rattled the windows. Eisenhower would have his air commanders on the carpet again tomorrow; among other consequences, bumbling air defenses threatened to provoke a revolt by terrified French and Arab civilians. He walked into the master bedroom at the back of the villa. Fragments of spent anti-aircraft shells rattled on the roof like hailstones.

To his son, John, at West Point, Eisenhower had recently written, "I hope that you occasionally are brushing up on your Mediterranean geography because some day I will want to talk over this campaign with you and get your ideas as to whether or not we did it correctly." But for the moment the general was tired of thinking large thoughts. From a stack of paperbacks next to his bed he plucked a pulp Western and for a few placid minutes lost himself in a world of rustlers and cowpokes and dance-hall doxies before drifting off to sleep.

"The Dead Salute the Gods"

THERE was no roasted peacock for Thanksgiving in John Waters's 1st Battalion. Tucked once again into the Tine River valley, twenty-five miles west of Tunis, his tank crews settled for a breakfast of greasy mutton stew with hardtack, heated over gasoline-soaked dirt and washed down with thick tea. Their cigarettes long gone, the men rolled dried eucalyptus leaves in toilet paper and pretended they were Chesterfields.

Each soldier habitually watched the sky as he ate, smoked, scribbled a letter, or cleaned his weapon. Luftwaffe pilots now attacked on average once an hour, and the Americans had renamed the Tine glen "Happy Valley." German troops had reoccupied Djedeïda airfield just hours after Wednesday evening's raid, and once again Stukas landed and took off with the crisp efficiency of a taxi rank. Their plummeting attacks reminded one reporter of "swallows diving after midges on an evening at home." Captain Evelyn Waugh of the British Army wrote of the Stuka, "Like all things German, it is very efficient and goes on much too long."

German Me-109 fighters also lurked in the clouds or slipped along an adjacent valley before suddenly popping over the ridgeline in a terrifying whirlwind of bombs and bullets that bounced like scarlet marbles off the macadam. Officers tweeted their air-attack whistles and every man dove for the nearest slit trench. Virtually all road traffic now moved at night: a cavalcade of burned-out vehicles suggested the hazards of daylight driving. The relentless attacks so infuriated the U.S. troops that they fired at enemy aircraft "with any weapon we had in our hands, including a mortar," one soldier reported. A gallows humor took hold: "Famous last words: 'Don't worry, boys, those are our

Spitfires.'" The unofficial motto of Allied forces in Tunisia soon became "Dig or die."

On the rare occasions when Allied planes dominated the skies, fratricide added to the ground troops' torment. Word soon spread of an incident near Medjez-el-Bab, where a company of American tank destroyers was helping secure the town on Thanksgiving morning when eleven U.S. P-38 Lightnings flew over. Jubilant at the unexpected help from friendly fighters, the tank destroyer crews raced across the open terrain, waving and smiling. Built with distinctive twin fuselages, the P-38s languidly circled until the sun was behind them, then dropped to fifty feet and executed five textbook strafing runs in three minutes.

The attack all but destroyed the shocked company, which fired not a single retaliatory shot. Five men were killed—including the unit's only World War I veteran—and sixteen wounded; nearly every vehicle and antitank weapon was destroyed or damaged. One outraged company commander in the 1st Armored Division ordered his men to shoot any airborne object larger than a goose. And another bromide circulated among American soldiers: "If it flies, it dies." Allied pilots grew so accustomed to being fired upon by their own troops that the formula for recognizing enemy aircraft from the ground, "WEFT"—check the Wings, Engines, Fuselage, Tail—was said to mean "Wrong every fucking time."

Despite such demoralizing episodes, the contraction of the Axis line permitted General Evelegh's two brigades to nudge eastward a few miles along the Mediterranean road on the Allied left flank, and down the Medjerda valley from Medjez-el-Bab on the Allied right. But neither brigade lunged forward to rock the Germans back on their heels before they could dig in. In the Allied center, Blade Force remained static. Waters drove forty miles to Béja for consultations with the Blade commander, who told him to keep 1st Battalion in defensive positions along a three-mile stretch of Happy Valley. There were to be no more forays onto the plains of Tunis without orders.

Before dawn on November 26, Waters returned by jeep to his command post in a gritty walled enclosure known as St. Joseph's Farm, half a mile south of the Tine. A brisk wind tossed the gum trees lining the river; on the far bank, an Arab farmer harrowed his field behind a brace of oxen. The tinkle of collar bells carried across the water. Camouflage netting and haystacks hid the American jeeps and radio antennae in the farm compound.

Blue grease pencil on a crude map showed the disposition of the battalion's fifty-two surviving Stuart tanks: Rudolph Barlow's Company C, still reveling in the previous day's airfield rumble, plugged the eastern entrance to Chouïgui Pass, which angled to the right from Happy Valley two miles downstream of St. Joseph's Farm; Major William R. Tuck's Company B was hidden behind a low hill overlooking the Tine, just north of the pass; Major Carl Siglin's Company A waited on a cactus-covered ridge a mile south of the pass, almost within hailing distance of Waters's headquarters.

Shortly before noon, a sentry using a pair of French naval binoculars spotted a nimbus of dust several miles downriver. Waters loped up a hill and confirmed the approach of what he called "a beautiful column, preceded by some pathetic Italian reconnaissance armored vehicles." Three German companies, including armor from the 190th Panzer Battalion, were rolling from Mateur to reinforce Axis troops retreating from Medjez-el-Bab. No sooner had Waters begun counting the enemy tanks than rounds came screaming into St. Joseph's Farm. Men yanked down the camouflage netting, cranked the engines of their Stuarts, and heaved their bedrolls to the ground. The first tank battle of World War II between German and American forces had begun.

To buy time, Waters ordered three 75mm assault guns to occupy an olive grove along the river road. Mounted on armored half-tracks, they opened with a brisk cannonade of thirty rounds at a thousand yards' range: the only effect was to raise more dust and provoke a retaliatory volley through the olive branches. On Waters's order the howitzers hurried back to the farm, masking their retreat with a few smoke rounds. The approaching Mk IV Panzer tanks, Waters soon realized, had a new, long-barreled 75mm gun unknown to Allied intelligence. The new gun's muzzle velocity of nearly

3,000 feet per second was twice that of American tank guns and had correspondingly greater penetrating power.

From the ridge southeast of the farm, Major Siglin, in a tank named *Iron Horse,* and eleven other Stuarts from Company A now charged down the hill to the valley floor. Machine-gun tracer rounds lashed the air in crimson flails. The Stuarts' main guns barked and barked. An Italian armored car was struck, and lurched to a smoky stop.

Then the German panzers answered with a deep roar and a Stuart abruptly lurched up. Less than a hundred yards away, Lieutenant Freeland A. Daubin, Jr., commanding a platoon of three tanks on Company A's right flank, saw "long searing tongues of orange flame" erupt from every hatch of the shattered tank and "silver rivulets of aluminum" puddle beneath the engine block. Sparks spouted from the barrel as ammunition began to cook. Thick black smoke boiled from the burning rubber tracks and bogey wheels.

Another Stuart was hit, and another. They brewed up like the first. Crewmen tumbled from the hatches, their hair and uniforms brilliant with flame, and they rolled across the dirt and tore away their jackets in burning shreds. Others were trapped in their tanks with fractured limbs, and their cries could be heard above the booming tumult as they burned to death in fire so intense it softened the armor plates. Even near misses from the German guns were devastating. A shell that failed to penetrate the hull still carried enough force—thousands of g's—to shear off a Stuart's rivet heads, which then richocheted inside the tank like machine-gun bullets. One tank commander later reported that a glancing shot gouged metal from the side of his turret "like a finger rubbing along a pat of butter, producing a brief rosy glow on the inside of the turret wall as the steel became white hot at the point of impact."

Wreathed in gray smoke, the panzers closed to within 300 yards. Siglin's *Iron Horse* and the other surviving Stuarts scooted up and back, their drivers blinded by smoke and dust as they wrestled their gearshifts and steering levers. Compared to the German tank guns, the Stuart 37mm "snapped like a cap pistol," a platoon leader observed. "Jerry seemed annoyed." Lieutenant Daubin on the right flank pumped more than eighteen rounds at a single German Mk IV; the shells simply bounced off the bard plates, which shed "sparks like a power-driven grindstone." Daubin tap-danced furiously on his driver's shoulders and shouted instructions to zigzag backward. At less than fifty yards, a panzer round struck the forward hatch and the Stuart's front end buckled like a tin can hit with a hammer. The blast killed the driver and blinded the bow gunner. Bullets cut down the loader as he climbed from the hatch. Wounded but alive, Daubin tumbled to the ground and crawled into a ditch. His tank continued to roll backward from the battlefield, swallowed in flames.

In ten minutes half of Captain Siglin's twelve tanks had been destroyed. But now Waters sprang the trap for which Company A had been bait. In their zeal to attack Siglin's Stuarts, the Germans failed to notice Major Tuck's Company B hidden behind the ridge just north of the entrance to Chouïgui Pass. As the Axis formation passed, less than a hundred yards away, Tuck and his tanks came pounding over the crest of the hill to fall on the enemy flank and rear. At point-blank range even the squirrel gun's two-pound shell could punch through the thin armor on panzer engine doors and docks. The enemy tried to wheel around but it was too late. Dozens of American rounds ripped into the German tanks. Seven panzers were destroyed, including a half-dozen of the new Mk IVs.

The Axis survivors fled down the Tine, pursued by yelling, vengeful Americans. German infantry and two surviving tanks took refuge in the walled farm compound that Siglin's company had unsuccessfully attacked the day before. This time the Americans forced the gates and rampaged through the garrison, shooting up the parapets before retreating back outside the wall. Other Axis troops were hunted down and killed in the vineyards above the river. After dark, the German commander withdrew the remnant of his force eight miles north to Mateur, where he was sacked and

court-martialed for retreating without orders. “Our losses,” the German war diary for November 26 noted, “were considerable.”

So, too, were American losses, although Waters had essentially traded tank for tank. This first armored battle had ended in a draw. In the final mêlée at the farm compound, the intrepid Major Siglin had been killed by a tank round through the turret of *Iron Horse.* His body was returned to St. Joseph’s Farm for burial, a stark refutation of the old lie that the weakest fruit drops to the ground first. Perhaps the greatest tribute came from the British Lancers who arrived after the skirmish to find Happy Valley choked with pillars of black smoke from burning tanks. “The Americans had done well,” the Lancers’ historian later wrote. “A gallant effort.”

Once again the Allies had a sense of momentum. On the left flank, the 36th Brigade broke loose and cantered forward. In the center, Blade Force had cleaned out the Tine valley; Mateur, the key to Bizerte, lay just over the horizon. And on the right flank the race for Tunis would be decided by a series of pitched battles that now began almost within artillery range of the capital.

Ten miles south of Happy Valley, British infantrymen from the 1st Battalion of the East Surreys captured the Medjerda valley town of Tébourba before daylight on Friday, November 27. Tommies found half-cooked eggs and a beefsteak still sizzling in a police station kitchen vacated by enemy pickets. Two weeks earlier, Tébourba’s population had been 4,000; now a quick census tallied half a dozen Arabs, three Italians, a pig, a donkey, and some chickens. Bombs and artillery had smashed every building except for a few squat hovels and the Hôtel de France, facing the central square. Tébourba, the correspondent Drew Middleton reported, was “dusty and empty, as such towns are when war has rolled through them.”

Tucked into an oxbow of the Medjerda, Tébourba lay midway between Medjez-el-Bab and Tunis, within olive groves of beguiling geometric precision. The Surreys posted a company at the stone Medjerda bridge a mile south of town. Another company scrambled up Djebel Maïana, a steep, barren hill a mile to the east and soon renamed Point 186 for its height in meters. From it, the railway, the river, and Highway 50 could be seen running roughly parallel toward Djedeïda and beyond, as could Stukas landing at the reoccupied Luftwaffe airfield less than four miles away. The distant minarets of Tunis were also visible with the naked eye: thin, graceful fingers poking through the Mediterranean haze. Officers trooped up the hill amid the thistles and darting bank swallows to behold a view that “was to remain a haunting memory through many tough days ahead,” an American armor commander later wrote.

The Surreys were spread thin across a seven-mile arc, but euphoria was the order of the day. General Evelegh spoke of entering Tunis in twelve hours. Another British brigade—the 1st Guards—would soon arrive from Algiers with three battalions to fill out Evelegh’s 78th Division, and more American units from the 1st Armored Division were drawing close from Oran. The Surreys grabbed their blankets from trucks in the olive groves and agreed that a short rest was warranted before they pushed on. Visiting officers were guided up the hill for the inspirational vista. Among the tourists was the prime minister’s son, Randoph Churchill, a plumpish toff in a commando uniform who paused long enough to rebuke a soldier digging a foxhole in an olive grove: “My good man, do you realize that by digging a trench in that spot you may be killing a tree well over a thousand years old?”

At 11:30 A.M. the Germans returned—“Tanks! Tanks!” someone yelled—and euphoria vanished with the tourists. Seventeen panzers swarmed through the olive groves on both sides of Point 186 and shot up the Surreys’ trucks. For two hours, fighting raged from ranges of a hundred yards to a few feet. Shell fire and machine-gun bullets chewed through branches and into Tébourba, riddling the high

cactus hedges and the few hovels previously spared. Eight British field guns defended the town; one by one they fell silent. So did the smaller 2- and 6-pounders. Welsh gunners danced over the dead to shove another shell into the breech and yank the lanyard. A Tommy promised a mortally wounded comrade: “We’ll be in Tunis eating bloody great oranges in a week.”

The British line buckled, then held, and at two P.M. the firing ebbed. Seven of eight guns had been knocked out, with the sole functioning 25-pounder now manned by a single sergeant. Eight wrecked panzers stood in a semicircle, the bent barrel of one just a few feet from the muzzle of the shattered British gun that had destroyed it. Debris littered the ground, including Chianti bottles and tins of Portuguese sardines blown from the German hulls. Nine surviving panzers lumbered back down the railway line toward Djedeïda, and Wehrmacht tankers who had escaped their burning wrecks darted among the cactus patches, firing pistols over their shoulders like fleeing robbers. Wreckage discomposed the perfect groves, and the shell-riddled corpses of thousand-year-old olive trees lay among those of Surreys killed in action.

There was not a moment to be lost, but a day passed before a counterattack could be organized. As the Surreys buried their dead, two more battalions—one British, one American—pushed forward. Their orders were to seize Djedeïda—the troops now called it “Deedahdeedah”—and punch on to Mateur the same day. Many soldiers skipped breakfast and lunch, believing that an empty digestive tract lessened the chance of contaminating a gut wound. At one P.M. on Saturday, November 28, two companies from the 5th Battalion of the Northamptonshire Regiment, known as the Northants, climbed onto nineteen tanks from the U.S. 2nd Battalion of the 13th Armored Regiment. A dozen or more Tommies clung precariously to each tank, and two more companies of Northants trailed on foot, 300 yards behind. They set off for Djedeïda along the rail embankment the retreating Germans had followed the day before.

For two miles the Anglo-Americans rolled in an attack wedge across undulating terrain dotted with orchards and gum trees. Larks and red partridges flushed from the underbrush in a whir of wings, but the only sign of human life was the clutch of officers watching with field glasses from Point 186, like spectators at a racetrack. Troops on the right flank almost brushed the Medjerda with their sleeves as the low, white profile of Djedeïda came into view. The American tankers drove General Lees—double the Stuart’s weight, with a 75mm gun in the hull, a 37mm squirrel rifle in the turret, and four machine guns. If bigger and more lethal, the Lee had distinct flaws. At more than ten feet tall “it looked like a damned cathedral coming down the road,” as one tanker complained. The larger gun could traverse just a few degrees—which meant it could fire only in the direction the tank was heading—and was set so low that virtually the entire hull had to be exposed in order to shoot.

Perfectly camouflaged, the German ambushers waited until the lead American platoon—four tanks abreast—drew to within three hundred yards. Then gashes of fire leaped from the hidden revetments. Half a dozen antitank guns rocked the General Lees and the cackle of machine guns swept the landscape. Tommies dove from the tanks; some ran for a shallow ditch fifty yards behind, while others sheltered behind the armor hulls or simply fell dead. Soon five Lees were burning and the rest pulled back, firing at cactus copses and gun flashes. Major Henry E. Gardiner, a thirty-seven-year-old Montanan commanding the tank force, dashed forward in a half-track with a medic to one of the stricken tanks. Opening the rear door, they dragged out one boy—he was “horribly wounded,” Gardiner reported, “having a huge chunk torn from his back and shoulder”—then retreated under searing fire when other wounded men on the battlefield waved them away.

The Northants swung to the right to outflank the enemy through the gum trees by the river. Gusts of German fire stopped them cold, and Stukas drove them to cover. Several tanks sought to force the same flank by following the rail line hugging the north bank of the Medjerda. As Lieutenant Eugene F. Jehlik searched for enemy gun pits from his open hatch, a German shell decapitated him. His headless

corpse toppled into the tank onto his horrified crew, and the flanking attack collapsed. The ubiquitous Major Gardiner laid Jehlik behind a hillock, marking the body with a pair of upright shell casings for later retrieval.

There was nothing for it but retreat. The counterattack had failed completely, undone by a lack of surprise, of airpower, of artillery, of tactical nuance. Brits and Yanks "fought in each other's presence rather than in close coordination," the 1st Armored Division later concluded. After nightfall, Gardiner led two British medics and several stretcher bearers back onto a battlefield so well illuminated by burning General Lees that ambulances immediately drew German fire. Each tank, an American soldier observed, "burns like twenty haystacks." The smell of charred flesh enveloped the flaming hulls—medics had yet to learn to approach these crematories from upwind—and across the killing ground, pleas for water mingled with whimpers from men too ruined even for thirst.

At an aid station in Tébourba, the dead were stacked in the shadows, and ranks of stretchers with wounded soldiers awaited evacuation. Burn victims lay with faces raw and black, their eyebrows gone and their skin hanging in curly shreds. Among those Gardiner brought out was Private Roy Bates, a twenty-two-year-old West Virginian who had waited nine hours for rescue in the company of dead crewmates. From a four-inch hole in his right thigh, a surgeon pulled a one-pound shell fragment, which Bates now clutched. "As soon as I get well," he promised, "I'm going back up there and cram this down somebody's throat."

British soldiers, stone deaf from the din and with tears streaking their grimy cheeks, drifted back to a farm west of Point 186 designated as a rallying point for the Northants. "When they reached the farm they stumbled blindly toward the barn and pitched forward on their faces," Middleton reported. An infantryman tormented by Stukas all afternoon shouted, "Who'll give sixpence for a Spitfire?"—cynically echoing a Battle of Britain slogan that had encouraged schoolboys to donate pocket money for more fighters. Soldiers listening to the BBC hooted at reports that Allied troops were surging toward Tunis. One listener compared such communiqués to *Alice in Wonderland*: "a pack of lies but very interesting in spots." Correspondent A. D. Divine reported seeing on a Roman column the inscription "D.M.S.," an abbreviated supplication which he translated as "The dead salute the gods." The sentiment seemed germane.

Toward midnight, a feeble attempt was made to reorganize the Northants for a night attack on Djedeïda, but the order was recognized as witless and soon cancelled. Evelegh's two brigades had already suffered 580 casualties, exclusive of the Americans killed, wounded, and missing, and he considered it prudent to wait until morning before he tried again.

* * *

Regrettably, this decision by the British commander was not relayed to the U.S. 5th Field Artillery Battalion, which hurried toward the battlefield on November 28 with a dozen badly needed long-range howitzers and the conviction that Djedeïda belonged to the Allies. Luftwaffe pilots above Highway 50 dropped flares "so evenly spaced they looked like street lights," an American officer wrote. A command tent outside Tébourba reminded one battery commander of "an old Frederic Remington painting my father had of the Civil War, all done in black and gray, of tense, hard-faced officers poring over a map." There, at nine P.M., the gunners learned that German troops still held Djedeïda. But the British artillery chief, under whose command the Yanks now fell, insisted the town would capitulate by midnight. Lieutenant Colonel Warren C. Stout, commander of the 5th Field Artillery, was told to reconnoiter the terrain north of Djedeïda with an eye to placing his guns near the airfield.

At 9:30, Stout drove forward in a small convoy with four staff officers, three battery commanders, and ten enlisted men. His orders were clipped and precise: "Radio silence. Come

forward on foot at all halts. This is our first mission under British command." A rising moon in the east drenched the olive groves with light. In a stand of trees beyond Point 186, a British sentry flagged them down with a warning: "Tank battle at the next turn. Bad show, sir." Moonlight glinted off Stout's spectacles and gave his face a greenish hue. He told his men to "move forward according to plan." A mile farther east the convoy halted again. Several charred General Lees burned south of the road. "It looks as if there's been a major change in the situation," a staff officer observed. Stout shook his head with the resignation of a man embracing his fate. "I have my orders," he said.

Less than a mile from Djedeïda, Stout told his battery commanders to wait in the olive trees while he scouted ahead with a driver and two staff officers. The dim shape of his command car melted into the night. Half a minute later, the distant tree line "erupted in blue-white sheets of flame," one of the battery commanders, Captain Joseph S. Frelinghuysen, later recalled. Yellow tracers converged on the road from both flanks. The wide-eyed officers heard the crack of an antitank gun, then silence. For forty-five minutes they waited, debating their course in voices pinched with anxiety, unable to raise Stout on the radio and unaware that in Tébourba, moments before the rest of the battalion was to start toward Djedeïda, the British had canceled the move on grounds that "the town was unsafe."

At midnight, three gallant, foolish captains agreed to press ahead to search for Colonel Stout. Each took a jeep with a driver and a machine-gunner. A fourth officer declined to follow. "I wish you luck," he said, "but I sure as hell disagree with you." Creeping into the tree line, the jeeps had nearly reached the wreckage of Stout's car when German gunners opened up again from both flanks.

"The world exploded in my face," Captain Frelinghuysen later wrote. "The air reeked with raw gasoline mixed with cordite and TNT." In less than a minute, the ambush was over. Several dozen German soldiers surrounded the jeeps. To Frelinghuysen, who had miraculously survived without injury, "their deep-flanged helmets and gray faces had a death's head aspect."

He and nine others were taken prisoner. Colonel Stout, his driver, and the two staff officers with him lay dead. The 5th Field Artillery had been stripped of its leaders before firing a single shell. The Germans also captured the 1st Armored Division's radio frequencies, as well as secret recognition signals and documents detailing the American order of battle.

Dawn on November 29 brought a renewed attempt by Evelegh to punch through to Djedeïda. The battered Northants again attacked past Point 186 with a dozen American tanks. German defenders yielded the high ground they had occupied the previous day, but when the American tankers rushed forward, an ambush of antitank guns set four General Lees aflame and scattered the rest. On the left the Northants' D Company took a ridge and disappeared; nothing more was seen of the unit until a few men strayed back an hour later. "Drag ass outta here," a tall American gunner hollered. "There's thirty German tanks comin' this way."

Not yet, but the point was taken. Bloody and bent, the Anglo-Americans fell back. The tank battalion had been reduced to twenty-five Lees, less than half strength, and the Northants were as undone as the Surreys had been two days earlier.

This Sunday—precisely three weeks after the TORCH landings began—marked the apogee of the Allied offensive for the next six months. For now, Tunis would come no closer than that mesmerizing white vision on the horizon. The attackers had been too few, too weak, too dispersed, too tardy. Now they were dispossessed of the initiative, which slipped like a turncoat across the battlefield from west to east. Churchill in London declared that Djedeïda had been captured. Soldiers who had failed to do just that guffawed at the BBC again, and the Tunisian theater edged into that inevitable condition of war in which anything might be believed, except what was uttered by persons in authority.

Captain Frelinghuysen and other artillerymen captured in the Djedeïda ambush huddled in the back of a German armored car during the short ride into Tunis. Down the tree-lined avenues they rode, sniffing the rich odors of coal smoke and animal dung. "We had achieved General Eisenhower's

objective," Frelinghuysen observed dryly, "of reaching Tunis as fast as possible."

At El Aouina airport, whence the captives were to be flown to prison camps in Italy, the Americans watched as Allied bombers briefly pummeled the field and flew away. At the all-clear signal, German soldiers heaved grappling hooks into a burning Junkers transport plane bombed moments after landing from Italy. Bulldozers dragged the wreckage off the runway. Landings resumed instantly, and Wehrmacht troops clattered down the aircraft ramps before the propellers stopped spinning. Only then did an ambulance pull up to the burning Junkers, and German rescue workers in asbestos suits begin pulling injured men from the wreckage.

Another captured officer turned to Frelinghuysen. "People who fight a war like that," he said, "will be hard to beat."

The southern prong of the First Army's drive on Tunis had been parried, but the northern thrust toward Bizerte still offered hope. After more than a week of little progress, Evelegh's 36th Brigade abruptly found itself racing eastward through the village of Sedjenane on November 27 and into the wild heath of the coastal uplands. At dawn on the twenty-eighth, the brigade was told to seize a crossroads ten miles west of Mateur by sunset; the order meant covering twenty-six miles on Route 7 at speeds unprecedented if not improvident.

Four thousand British troops gobbled a breakfast of bully beef and quickly broke camp. Led by the 8th Battalion of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, they climbed through the morning on a road barely as wide as a single lorry and tortured with hairpin turns. The cork harvest had left black scars around the tree trunks; stacks of curing bark awaited transport to market. Women in magenta robes thrashed their laundry in trickling creeks, while children wearing filthy kaftans rode the rumps of spavined donkeys. Squalls blew in from the Mediterranean, thickening a mud the Argylls likened to "a mixture of putty and glue." Every few hundred yards, soldiers with shovels climbed down from their personnel carriers to scrape the wheel wells. Sappers exhumed a few mines planted by the retreating Germans. Despite such delays, the column had traveled fifteen miles by midday, pleasing the officers. Dotted with isolated crofts beneath a scudding sky, the countryside resembled the dramatic terrain at Inverness or Fort William. The Highlanders felt much at home.

Shortly before one P.M., the battalion pushed into a valley formed by two imposing hills on either side of Highway 7. On the left, Djebel el Azzag rose 1,300 feet. Olive trees covered the lower flanks, yielding at altitude to grasses through which the wind snaked like a thing alive. Lieutenant Colonel J. G. Mackellar, the Argylls' commander, christened this slope Green Hill. On the right, south of the road, Djebel el Ajred soared even higher, to 1,800 feet, its summit shingled with bare rock. This, Mackellar called Bald Hill. At the far end of the valley the hamlet of Jefna perched in the crotch between the hills where the narrow-gauge rail line vanished into a tunnel. It was there that British scouts spied a few figures in field gray scurry into foxholes. The hills seemed "no more menacing than those previously passed that day," an Argyll wrote, and the enemy troops appeared to be a small patrol of the sort seen all week.

Both presumptions were fatally wrong. Jefna and the adjacent hills had been meticulously prepared for battle with sheltered gun pits, interlocking fields of fire, and excellent camouflage. A German account called it "a Tunisian Verdun on a minor scale." The valley was defended by five Italian antitank guns and the 21st Parachute Engineer Battalion, commanded by Major Rudolf Witzig. Boyish and rosy-cheeked, with eyes set so deep he appeared to be squinting from the cavern of his skull, Witzig had fought on Crete, in Russia, and in France. His greatest exploit, for which Hitler had personally handed him the Knight's Cross, was the May 1940 assault on Eben Emael, a supposedly

impregnable fortress vital to Belgian defenses. With several dozen new explosive devices called shaped charges, Witzig and seventy-seven men landed on the fort in ten gliders, and in twenty minutes routed the garrison of 800 defenders at a cost of twenty-six casualties. The fall of Eben Emael allowed German panzers to surge through a gap in the Belgian line, driving British and French forces toward Dunkirk. Now Witzig and his paratroops waited in ambush at Jefna and on the flanks of both hills.

The Argylls stopped for lunch. At 1:30 P.M., Colonel Mackellar, a chipper man with a dimpled chin, ordered A Company to push into the valley. Because of the stress on speed and on reaching the crossroads by dark, the Argylls sent no pickets up to the heights and ordered no reconnaissance scouts —precautions even the greenest subaltern should have taken. A few machine-gun bursts at suspected enemy positions failed to stir the disciplined Germans. The Argylls' A Company edged down the draw with eight armored Bren carriers on the road and dismounted infantry stumping through a plowed field on the left. Mackellar followed with his other company commanders.

The column had nearly reached Jefna when, on Witzig's signal, a solitary antitank round ripped into the lead carrier and the fusillade began. An Italian gun destroyed the last carrier, blocking retreat. Then machine-gun and mortar fire raked the column from west to east and back again, quickly demolishing the rest of the carriers and laying Argylls in bloody windrows. Within ten minutes, A Company was destroyed; only eight men would return to fight another day. Mackellar ordered his Y Company into the valley, where it was immediately pinned down. B Company then surged forward on the left with ambitions of cresting Green Hill, but it, too, was immobilized by fire, as was X Company after brief progress on the skirts of Bald Hill. With his entire battalion imperiled, Mackellar inched back down the road. There, in one of those winsome moments characteristic of British men-at-arms for centuries, his second-in-command whispered cheerfully, "Look, George, partridges!" A covey of seven birds fled into the brush.

Only darkness saved the Argylls from obliteration. Mackellar ordered his companies to rally half a mile back of the western mouth of the valley. Among the 150 casualties were three company commanders, shot respectively in the shoulder, chest, and thigh. A courageous battalion medical officer walked down Highway 7 with his stretcher bearers, calling into the gloom: "Is anyone there?" They brought back eight men, including a driver found in a carrier cab with both feet shot away. "If only I had even one foot, I could drive this damn thing out," he said, and died, faithful to his stripes.

The brigade regrouped for a day, then tried again with a two-battalion assault at dawn on November 30. Shouting and waving, the Royal West Kents reached the scalded peak of Bald Hill at a cost of 161 casualties, only to be driven off by Witzig's men, who had been reinforced during the lull. On Green Hill, a commando battalion failed even to reach the crest. Fighting was bitter, and some bayonets were thrust with such ferocity that they could not be pulled out again.

A British brigade of more than four thousand had been stopped by a force one-tenth its size. German casualties totaled fourteen killed, twenty wounded, and a man missing. Another high-water mark could now be chalked on Allied maps. For six months, the Jefna position would remain as impregnable in fact as Eben Emael had been in reputation.

Exhausted Tommies collapsed in their open bivouacs and slept on their arms in the streaming rain, slack-mouthed and undreaming. On Green Hill and Bald Hill, the scent of juniper and damp earth soon soured with rotting bodies; by spring they would be bleached clean, speaking bone to bone. Eight Bren carriers stood rusting on Highway 7 for half a year, spaced as evenly as kilometer posts. The 36th Brigade commander, described as a "gaunt and gangling figure who lacked joviality," was sent home for being too old and too tired. He was fifty-three. Given the dual setbacks at Djedeïda in the south and Jefna in the north, General Anderson authorized Evelegh to suspend his attack while the First Army tried to gather itself, again.

Word of the aborted offensive reached every Allied unit except those that needed the information most.

In a pretty moment of optimism during the first drive on Djedeïda, Evelegh conceived two flanking attacks intended to distract an enemy believed to be buckling. On the north coast, 500 seaborne British and American commandos would land near Bizerte on various missions of mayhem. South of Tunis, a paratrooper battalion was to overrun an airfield and shield the right wing of the Allied drive into the capital. Both forces set off in buoyant spirits, unaware that the offensive had been canceled and that the brigades they were relying on for reinforcement would be nowhere near.

The commandos departed at last light on November 30 from the mossy fortress at Tabarka, on the coast near the Algerian border. Six British and four American troops, each comprising fifty men—plus eight Algerian donkeys engaged to carry the mortars—filled thirteen landing craft. Recruited mostly from the Iowa and Minnesota men of the 34th Division, the American commandos had trained with their British mentors so long that they smoked Players, drank Twinings, and wore British battle dress like lads from Yorkshire or Chelsea.

"Never give the enemy a chance," the British *Handbook of Irregular Warfare* advised. "Every soldier must be a potential gangster." Major Jack A. Marshall, an American troop leader, later recalled, "Commando duty attracted malcontents. About half of my men had been court-martialed at least once…. Several had been busted more than once." The requirements for commandos included fitness, intelligence, the ability to swim, and immunity to seasickness.

Unfortunately none of these manly virtues inhered in the donkeys, which after sixty miles across choppy seas in a small boat were in no condition to walk, much less pack mortar tubes up the coastal hills. As the landing craft neared the beach at Sidi el Moudjad, the braying, biting, kicking, vomiting beasts were heaved over the side with commando curses so vivid that even the coxswains blushed. Three donkeys promptly sank; the rest somehow made shore, where they contributed nothing to the expedition.

Sixteen miles west of Bizerte, soaked to the armpits, the commandos headed inland at 3:15 A.M. on December 1. After being assigned sectors on the map in which to operate, the ten troops split up. Within minutes, they discovered what no map had disclosed: the hills were covered with heather so dense that one soldier likened himself to "an ant in a hairbrush." Only by dropping to all fours and nosing along trails made by wild goats could the men cover even a mile in an hour.

For three days, the commandos blundered along the north coast, waiting for an Allied juggernaut that never arrived. Tipped off by locals to the intruders, German troops reacted with swift fury. Two troops—one British and one American—were ambushed shortly after landing, and only five Americans escaped. A German officer reported to Tunis that the commandos "were decimated in a short fire fight. We took fifty-two prisoners." So impenetrable was the undergrowth that men simply knelt and fired by earshot, like Civil War soldiers in the Wilderness. Four commando teams raided a Bizerte airfield, destroying gasoline stocks and several parked aircraft; German soldiers newly arrived from Italy, still wearing their fine uniforms and singing as they counterattacked, drove them away. A troop captain who had edged to within four miles of downtown Bizerte was killed on the second afternoon; another was shot a day later. Unable to move his legs, he was carried on a stretcher rigged from two rifles and cotton rope. "Get the men away from this position," he urged, and then died. His soldiers buried him on a lonely ridge.

The captain's advice was finally heeded by Lieutenant Colonel Claire Trevor, the expedition commander, "a tall, Dracula-like figure with a bushy mustache" who "treated all men with equal contempt." The surviving commandos rendezvoused north of Garaet Ichkeul, a shallow salt lake

outside Bizerte. “Failure of the British attack from the south left us in confusion,” reported Jack Marshall, the American troop commander. “Radio silence could not be broken.” The men were exhausted and reduced to emergency rations. Soldiers listening to a radio receiver heard the propagandist Axis Sally promise the annihilation of “renegade U.S. and British commandos” in northern Tunisia; more disturbing was her accurate recitation of the names of men captured or killed in the past three days. Colonel Trevor proposed a final night raid on Bizerte, but after heated debate his troop commanders balked. On December 4, the men turned west, walking at night along a track so faint they sometimes had to grope for it with their hands. Two days later the commandos closed within Allied lines. The raid had cost 134 men killed or captured, more than half of them American.

If the commando foray had been “essentially fruitless,” in Major Marshall’s phrase, the paratrooper mission south of Tunis was a foolish, wanton mistake. Five hundred and thirty British paratroopers, dropped from forty-four American transport planes, were to “spread alarm and despondency.” Aerial reconnaissance, however, failed to disclose that the targeted German airfield had been abandoned, and no attempt was made to ring up sympathetic French farmers for intelligence even though the telephone system worked well. Nor could Anderson or Evelegh explain why an entire battalion should be risked on a target that could easily be bombed from the relative safety of 20,000 feet. “The fact of the matter was that the British army had no idea of how or when the new airborne capability should be used,” the mission commander subsequently concluded.

That commander was Lieutenant Colonel John D. Frost, who two years later would win renown at the disastrous “bridge too far” in the Dutch town of Arnhem. “We were not the least worried,” the tall, mustachioed Frost later wrote. “We imagined ourselves being *Primus in Carthago,* gloriously.”

There was no glory, of course, no triumphant entry into Carthage at the head of the Allied legions. Parachuting twenty-five miles below Tunis on November 29, the battalion then headed northward with a few commandeered donkey carts—“looking like a fucking traveling circus rather than a parachute battalion,” as one soldier later recalled. “There was a medieval look about us,” another man wrote, “with helmets slung at saddle bow, the jerkin-look of our belted smocks, and my Sten slung over my back like a crossbow.” Within hours, German panzers had cornered the paratroopers, who escaped one predicament only to fall into another and then another, each time losing more men to enemy fire. Tormented by thirst, Frost’s men licked split cactus leaves and sucked rainwater from their uniforms as they tacked to the west for three days in search of the Allied line.

Down to less than a hundred rifle rounds among them, the surviving Tommies at noon on December 3 flagged down an American patrol eight miles from Medjez-el-Bab. “Dr. Livingston, I presume?” Frost asked a puzzled Yank. At five P.M., the 180 men still able to stand formed ranks and marched into Medjez. Two hundred and eighty-nine paratroopers were dead, wounded, or missing. More than half the battalion had been destroyed in what would be the last significant airborne mission in the North African campaign, a harrowing, heroic gesture of singular futility.

“Jerry Is Counterattacking!”

IN late November, Eisenhower and Clark made a two-day visit to what they stoutly referred to as “the front,” although getting there did not even involve venturing into Tunisia. The expedition—Clark called it “a Boy Scout trip”—began badly on November 28, when the jeep leading the generals’ armored Cadillac struck and killed a twelve-year-old Algerian boy who stepped into traffic. Regrets were issued, and the convoy drove on. Unable to find Anderson’s headquarters before sunset, the group blundered about in the dark until the same star-crossed jeep skidded into a ditch, injuring five soldiers. Eisenhower and Clark spent the night with a bewildered French family in Guelma, forty

miles south of Bône, then tracked down Anderson at first light. After several hours of earnest discussions in a farmhouse, the American generals piled back into the Cadillac and returned to Algiers. Miserably ill and wheezing like a man who had been gassed, Eisenhower fell into bed to run the war from his room at the Villa dar el Ouard.

He had much to think about. Foremost was the shocking news from the Toulon naval base, where seventy-seven French ships had been scuttled in one of the greatest acts of self-immolation in military history. In occupying Vichy France on November 11, German forces had stopped short of the base and, for more than two weeks, sought the fleet's voluntary submission. Darlan at the same time continued to urge his old rival, Admiral Jean de Laborde, to sail his fleet to North Africa and throw in his lot with the Allies. De Laborde temporized until German patience snapped. In the early hours of November 27, SS panzer troops stormed the Toulon base gates. De Laborde ordered signal blinkers on the yardarms to flash the fatal message: "Scuttle! Scuttle! Scuttle!"

French sailors opened the sea cocks, grenaded their boilers, and smashed all radios and navigation instruments. The intruders finally reached the fleet flagship at Jetty No. 6, where an interpreter on the wharf yelled in broken French: "Admiral, my commander asks you to give up your ship intact." An indignant de Laborde gestured to the deck settling beneath his feet and roared, "The ship is sunk!" Among the vessels lost were three battleships, seven cruisers, and thirty-two destroyers. Eisenhower characteristically saw the silver lining: at least the prize had not fallen into enemy hands.

Of greater concern to the commander-in-chief was the Tunisian front, which he better understood after viewing it, albeit from a distance of 120 miles. Eisenhower concurred in Anderson's decision to suspend the offensive, but he harbored doubts about his First Army commander. He could look past Anderson's brooding reticence—that "queer thing, human nature," in the Scottish general's phrase. But Anderson's Caledonian pessimism cut against the American grain and contributed to the mood swings that so buffeted the Allied camp. Anderson "is apparently imbued with the will to win, but blows hot and cold by turns, in his estimates and resulting demands," Eisenhower wrote Marshall on November 30. Clark had been particularly offended by what he called "the Anderson setup." American troops, Clark urged, "should be withdrawn from his command and organized in a separate sector of the front under their own commander." For now, Eisenhower resisted such a blow to Allied unity. He was learning, as he would later write, that "nothing is more difficult in war than to adhere to a single strategic plan" and to resist the "constant temptation to desert the chosen line of action in favor of another one." To Marshall he added, "Everything is coordinated to the single objective of taking Tunisia. We are devoting everything to Anderson's support."

Some things about the war had become clearer, including Allied intelligence miscalculations. Before TORCH, planners had estimated that the Germans would have 515 warplanes available to help defend Tunisia; the actual number exceeded 850, plus nearly 700 transport planes. By contrast, Anglo-Americans in the forward areas had only two small British fields and, at Tébessa, fifty-four U.S. P-38s, of which only forty could actually fly. A new battlefield ditty, sung to the tune of "The White Cliffs of Dover," included this verse:

There'll be Stukas over the vale of Tébourba
Tomorrow when I'm having tea.
There'll be Spitfires after, ten minutes after,
When they're no bloody use to me.

To Eisenhower's surprise, American tanks and armored tactics also seemed wanting. U.S. Army

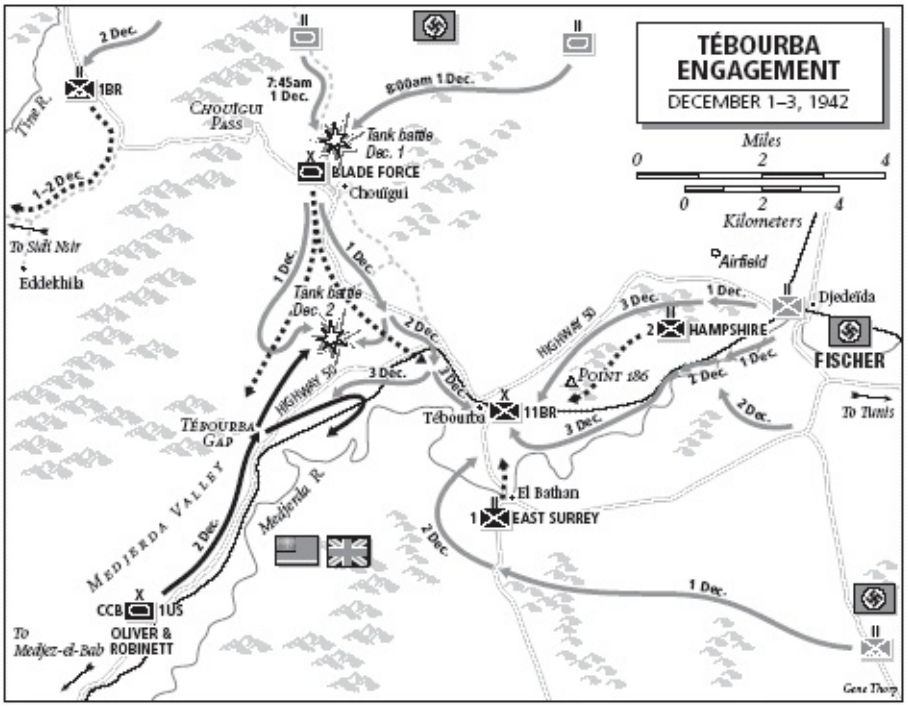
doctrine held that tanks ought not fight other tanks, but should leave that job to specialized tank destroyers while armored formations tore through defenses and ripped up the enemy rear. Regulations had prohibited the development of tanks heavier than thirty tons, and until 1941 tank armor was constructed only to stop small-arms fire. Allied armor was simply overmatched. The inconsequential M-3 Stuart caused one American general to muse that "the only way to hurt a Kraut with a 37mm is to catch him and give him an enema with it" the half-track mounted with a 75mm gun was already known as a "Purple Heart box." American tanks were so flammable they were dubbed Ronsons, after a popular cigarette lighter advertised with the slogan "They light every time." American armor crews, moreover, knew little about reconnaissance, worked poorly with the infantry, and showed an alarming propensity for blind charges, now known as "rat racing."

All of these issues required the commander-in-chief's urgent attention, as soon as he could rise from his sickbed. For the moment, he dictated a wheezy message to Marshall: "My immediate aim is to keep pushing hard, with a first intention of pinning the enemy back in the fortress of Bizerte and confining him so closely that the danger of a breakout or a heavy counter-offensive will be minimized."

Even as this pretty delusion flew to the office of the Army chief of staff in Washington, the "heavy counter-offensive" Eisenhower intended to forestall was already in motion. On the same day that he and Clark drove east from Algiers, Kesselring flew south from Rome. In Tunis, he upbraided Nehring for excessive caution and for the abandonment of Medjez-el-Bab, which he called "a definite change for the worse." Axis troops were pouring into Tunisia at a rate of a thousand a day, but aerial reconnaissance on November 29 counted 135 British and American tanks in Tunisia east of Béja. Soon the Allies would be too strong to unseat. After inspecting the Medjerda valley on the afternoon of the twenty-ninth, Kesselring issued orders at 5:45 P.M. that "every foot of ground must be defended to the utmost, even dying for it." The bridgehead must be widened, he added, to "play for time."

Nehring gave the task to the newly arrived commander of the 10th Panzer Division, Major General Wolfgang Fischer, who had been training in France after combat duty in Russia. "Attack the enemy troops in the vicinity of Tébourba," Nehring told Fischer, "and destroy them." Tanks rolled directly from the Bizerte quays to the front. Mules and horses pulled captured French 75s toward Djedeïda. German 88mm guns used for anti-aircraft protection were stripped from the airfields, to be used as antitank weapons in the west. Fischer scurried about the countryside in an armored car that served as his command post; his staff rode motorcycles. Quickly they fashioned four strike groups with sixty-four tanks and fourteen armored cars for a spoiling attack scheduled to open on December 1. Only thirty German soldiers remained in Tunis. Everything would be risked on this throw of the dice.

From decrypted German messages on Monday, November 30, Anderson learned that the Germans intended to take the offensive. At 4:52 on Tuesday morning, a "special priority signal" notified Allied commanders that the 10th Panzer Division had been ordered to attack Tébourba at dawn. If the warning ever reached frontline troops, it had little effect. At eight A.M., two V-shaped German formations personally led by Fischer slammed into the village of Chouïgui from the north and northeast. Blade Force—including John Waters's tank battalion—crumpled under the assault and fled south to the Medjerda valley.



“All around us men were running back down the road shouting, ‘Jerry is counterattacking!’” a British private recalled. Fischer followed with the deliberation of a natural killer. From a hill to the west, the journalist A. D. Divine watched the approaching dust clouds—“incandescent, enormous, and beautiful”—and listened as the heavy throb of engines drew closer. Then the panzers lurched over a ridgeline and, “using the folding of the ground, raced from one dead area to another” as they spilled into the river valley.

Fischer’s tanks had closed to within a few hundred yards of Highway 50 west of Tébourba when British artillery opened fire. Standing outside their tanks for a cigarette break, German crews cocked an ear at the tearing-silk sound of incoming shells; unhurried, they stubbed out their butts, remounted, and trundled off in search of defilade. At least for the moment, Fischer’s attack from the north had been checked.

Two German infantry groups attacked Tébourba early Monday afternoon from the east and southeast. The first pushed out of Djedeïda only to be stopped by the 2nd Battalion of the Royal Hampshire Regiment, which had replaced the decimated Northants two days earlier. Fischer vented his disgust at the Wehrmacht infantry in a scathing message to Nehring: “Not the slightest interest existed, no aggressive spirit, no readiness for action…. It is impossible to fight successfully with such troops.” Nor did the attack from the southeast succeed in capturing the stone Medjez bridge at El Bathan. There the East Surreys held their ground, with little help from the American 5th Field Artillery Battalion, whose officers now mostly lived in a German prison camp. Out of ammunition and unable to raise the British artillery commander for orders, the Americans retreated to Medjez-el-Bab without permission rather than risk the capture of their guns.

As darkness fell on December 1, the Allied hold on Tébourba was more precarious than Fischer’s pique implied. German forces invested the town from three sides. If the panzers from the north severed Route 50, three Allied battalions around Tébourba would be cut off. To forestall such a disaster, Evelegh ordered forward 4,000 troops from Combat Command B (CCB) of the 1st Armored Division, the first sizable American force to reach the Tunisian front.

They came running. After two tedious weeks on the road from Oran, the CCB troops were

truculent and confident, even though most of the division was still en route from Liverpool. For 700 miles across Algiers and into Tunisia, wherever British traffic controllers had posted road signs warning of soft shoulders—"Keep clear of the verges"—pranksters with black paint altered them to "Keep clear of the virgins." As reinforcements poured into Medjez-el-Bab, a British staff officer thrust his head into a command vehicle and exclaimed, "Thank God you've arrived!" Yes, reinforcements had arrived in strength, including the Americans: Germans and virgins beware.

The CCB commander was Brigadier General Lunsford E. Oliver, a fifty-three-year-old, Nebraska-born, West Point–trained engineer known as Bugs. His brigade—designated a "combat command" as part of an Army organizational brainstorm—comprised six battalions, two of which were already in northeast Tunisia as part of Evelegh's armored spearhead. Oliver put his headquarters in a red-roofed farmhouse five miles north of Medjez. John Deere machinery stood in the barnyard, and the irrigated fields were full of lemon, almond, and apricot trees. On the morning of December 2, he dispatched the commander of his 13th Armored Regiment, Colonel Paul McD. Robinett, with orders to organize Allied tank units around Tébourba and repulse the German counterattack.

Robinett was delighted to take over. Battlefield command would give him a chance to demonstrate his personal credo: "Always do whatever you can to keep your superior from making a mistake." At five feet four inches, with a cavalry strut and a cowcatcher chin, he was known alternately as Little Napoleon, Little Caesar, and Robbie. His Army career included membership on the Olympic equestrian team, study at the French cavalry school at Saumur, and service as a strategic planner and intelligence officer for George Marshall. He had long offered a dollar to any soldier who could outshoot him; only one man—a deadeye pistoleer from the 3rd Infantry—had ever collected. A prodigious cusser in his youth, Robinett now prided himself on having "learned to cleanse my mouth." A forty-eight-year-old bachelor from the Ozark foothills of Missouri, he was arrogant and querulous —"fussy like an old maid," a 1st Armored officer said. "He annoyed everyone." Within days he would annoy the British high command, which considered him "all talk and grouse." The dismissal sold him short: for all his niggling, he was a capable tactician who knew the art of war.

Robinett arrived on a ridgeline four miles west of Tébourba just in time to see the Americans butchered. Before General Fischer could resume his attack, thirty Stuart tanks had barreled forward without artillery support. German pilots saw them coming, and the attack was repulsed with heavy losses at a cost of only four panzers. Then a company of General Lees had been ordered by a battalion commander to make a frontal assault despite the bitter objections of the company commander. Following the rail line two miles west of Tébourba, the tanks charged at midday across open ground without reconnaissance against an enemy of uncertain strength.

Within twenty minutes, eight Lees stood in flames. So efficient were German antitank gunners that panzer crews stood in the open, pulling on their meerschaums without bothering to mount their own tanks. "They appeared to be watching the show," one lieutenant reported. German 88mm rounds —already known as "demoralizers"—zipped chest-high across the ground, leaving a trail of spinning dust devils. Survivors gathered the wounded and left the dead to burn. Apart from stirring British admiration—"the most intrepid chaps I ever saw," one Tommy said—the attack had accomplished nothing. Upon hearing the news, Bugs Oliver commented, "The boys stuck their necks into a noose."

Now the noose was cinched around Tébourba, as Robinett could see from his ridgetop command post. Plumes of oily smoke spiraled from the wrecked Lees a mile below and from the wrecked Stuarts farther north; the Germans would tally Allied thirty-four tanks and six armored cars destroyed that day, and 200 Anglo-Americans captured. Every few minutes another enemy gun jounced down the road from the north, then vanished into a haystack or a farm shed. Robinett counted at least twenty-five panzers, and many more no doubt remained hidden. The roar of new German machine guns—each MG 42 could spit 1,500 rounds a minute—carried up the ridge with a sound one soldier likened to "the

hammers of the devil."

Robinett had seen enough. As John Waters and other commanders reported in, he realized that two of the three American tank battalions had been reduced to half strength. Blade Force apparently no longer existed. With timely, vigorous leadership—Robinett had himself in mind, of course—and the proper massing of armor, the Allies might well have blunted the German attack before it gained momentum. But this infernal rat racing and confused command structure had crippled First Army. Without sufficient airpower, the capture of Tunis remained a pipe dream. Robinett also concluded that Anderson, Evelegh, and now Oliver lingered too far in the rear to control the battlefield.

He scrambled down the hill for the careening drive through the olives back to Medjez. He would recommend an Allied retreat. Tébourba must be abandoned.

Oliver agreed, and so did the British; but not until the next day, after more men had been lost and the task had become harder. Tébourba was held by Lieutenant Colonel James Lee with nearly 700 Hampshires and 500 East Surreys. While American tanks were being roughly handled north of town on December 2, British infantrymen fought for their lives 2,000 yards west of Djedeïda. General Fischer himself led the German infantry, personally capturing fifteen soldiers, whom he drove to a Bizerte prison camp before returning to the front with two fresh companies of panzer grenadiers.

Fischer also deployed the Wehrmacht's latest secret weapon, sent by Hitler with a guarantee that it would be "decisive" in the Tunisian campaign. No one had ever seen a tank like the Mk VI Tiger: developed as a birthday present for the Führer the previous spring, it was a sixty-ton monster with an 88mm main gun and frontal armor four inches thick. The first Tiger to arrive at Bizerte seized up on the dock; the second broke down on the road west. But four others rumbled to Djedeïda under Captain Nikolai Baron von Nolde, who sported the gym shoes he always wore in combat. Crushing everything in their paths, at mid-morning on December 2 the Tigers and several smaller tanks slammed into the British line.

From a range of twenty yards, a Tiger obliterated a platoon on Colonel Lee's left flank; one corporal ringed by Germans was last seen "swinging round and spraying them with a tommy gun." The panzers then wheeled south to rake the battalion headquarters at White Farm, killing six signalmen. On the British right, a company holding the north bank of the Medjerda counterattacked with bayonets, but by midday they, too, had been overrun. Seven men survived. German losses also were heavy. When Nolde stepped into the open to deliver an order to another captain, a British antitank round ripped away both of the baron's legs in their gym shoes; a sniper's bullet killed the second German captain. "The situation is very unpleasant," a Wehrmacht lieutenant wrote in his diary. "A wounded Tommy is lying fifty meters in front of us in the branches and leaves, but it is only possible to bring him in after dark. He has been shot through the lung." At midnight, the Hampshires pulled back two miles to form another line between the river and Point 186. Surreys anchored both flanks.

If Wednesday had been unpleasant, Thursday was worse. Marking their own lines with white flares, the Germans greeted the day with Stuka attacks and four hours of artillery and mortar fire. By noon they had outflanked and captured Point 186. "Throughout the morning extremely fierce and confused fighting took place," a Hampshire captain reported. Fischer's dispatch to Tunis concluded: "Indications are that the enemy is being softened and is beginning to yield."

A British major, H. W. Le Patourel, led a futile counterattack to retake the hill; last seen in heroic silhouette with a pistol and grenade, he would posthumously win the Victoria Cross only to reappear, wounded but alive, in an Italian prison hospital. At dusk on December 3, two German pincers met at

the Tébourba train station to complete their double envelopment. Reduced to forty officers and 200 men, Lee formed a defensive square around the battalion command post. “It was Dunkirk all over again,” a Surrey later recalled.

General Anderson had, in fact, commanded the Surreys at Dunkirk as a brigadier, and perturbations seized him, too. In a message to Evelegh he declared:

> Commander is dissatisfied with the position 78th Division is getting itself into. It is not sufficient, indeed it is highly dangerous, for it to allow itself to become hemmed-in in a narrow sector round Tébourba…. To allow the enemy to entrench themselves on the Chouïgui ridge, overlooking Tébourba, would be very nearly fatal.

“More elbow room,” Anderson added, “or he will have us out.”

Too late. At seven P.M. Lee ordered his surviving men to fix bayonets and strip the dead for extra weapons. Disembodied German voices called for surrender—“We will treat you well.” A Hampshire answered: “Bollocks!” Beneath the frosty brilliance of Very flares, the men pivoted to the west and formed a line with their right flank on the rail tracks. “Give it to them when you’re close enough,” Lee advised. Then, firing his Bren, he loosed a great roar—“Charge!”—and they plunged toward Tébourba. Two German panzers and an infantry company cut down the first screaming ranks before yielding to the surge. Tommies swept past the roofless church and into the broken town. Pausing long enough to form ranks they marched down the deserted main street counting cadence—“Left, right, left!”—only to discover that enemy troops had severed Highway 50 to the west. Tébourba had been abandoned at Evelegh’s behest, but once again critical orders had failed to reach those who most needed to know them.

Even Colonel Lee was deflated. He ordered the men to cut their way out in small groups. Into the darkness they slipped in twos and threes. Some drowned in the Medjerda; others crawled along the railbed cinders beneath the vermilion arcs of machine-gun bullets. “Looking back to Tébourba,” an officer later wrote, “we could see many fires and the streaks of tracer as the enemy tried to shoot up what survivors remained.” The once handsome market town was now as ugly as an exit wound.

At noon on December 4, Fischer phoned his division headquarters. “Tébourba taken,” he reported tersely. “Heavy losses inflicted on the enemy. Valuable booty.” An American lieutenant who watched the Tommies drift into Medjez-el-Bab over the next couple of days reported to Robinett: “But for occasional curses and groans of the wounded, they came on in silence—damn well-trained.” A reporter for *The Times* of London found the survivors “savagely angry with the enemy.” “One night in Glasgow,” a soldier proposed, “and then I’ll go back to the bastards.”

At a field hospital in the rear, dying men arrived so pale that the dirt on their foreheads stood out as vividly as Lenten ashes. Surgeons worked without pause through the night and the next day, donating their own blood for transfusions when stocks ran low. Henry Gardiner, the American major whose tankers had been fighting around Tébourba for a week, arrived with an arm full of shrapnel from the latest battle. He found a foul-smelling ward tent “illuminated by candlelight. The shadows were long and grotesque. Two men in adjoining cots were completely swathed in bandages except for one small hole” for their mouths. “From time to time they would feebly paw the air.” One soldier borrowed a long cigarette holder, “and this enabled him to smoke, since the cigarette was kept just beyond the range of the gauze.”

Several miles to the east, a German doctor called, “Next up!” from his table, then lopped off the leg of another ruined boy. A British prisoner working in an Axis surgery later described how “with

delicate respect they placed the amputated limb among the severed members in the darkest corner."

The East Surreys had departed England six weeks earlier with 793 men; they returned to Medjez with 343. The Hampshires, even more undone, counted 194 survivors out of 689. Yet another foreign field would remain forever England. Among the casualties was Colonel Lee, who had been wounded and captured in the final debacle. Of 74 British field guns around Tébourba, 53 were lost. Fischer's tally of Allied losses during the three-day fight included 55 tanks, 300 other vehicles, and more than 1,000 prisoners. Reporter Philip Jordan wrote, "There is an air of uncertainty up here at advance H.Q. and staff officers half-laughingly—but only half—are wondering if we are going to be surrounded…. How rapidly the atmosphere changes."

Colonel Robinett, insufferably eager as always to preserve his superiors from their own folly, took it upon himself to inform George Marshall directly of Allied failings. Sitting in his command post on the heights west of Tébourba, he wrote the chief a confidential letter that would eventually find its way to an angry Eisenhower:

> The coordination of tank attacks with infantry and air attacks has been perfect on the German side. On our own it is yet to be achieved…. Men cannot stand the mental and physical strain of constant aerial bombings without feeling that all possible is being done to beat back the enemy air effort…. They know what they see, and at present there is little of our air to be seen.

Yet for all his bumptious gall, Robinett possessed an unsparing analytical mind. He recognized that he himself was culpable in the rout, having failed to organize a night counterattack that might have saved more Surreys, Hampshires, and Americans. He "had not foreseen the possibility and had no plan for such a contingency," he later admitted. "Frankly, I was too new at the game."

> "My dear C-in-C," Anderson wrote Eisenhower on December 5, "the fighting on 3 December resulted in a nasty setback for us." With the thin satisfaction of a pessimist whose apprehensions have been confirmed, Sunshine catalogued his army's infirmities: "heavy dive bombing attacks" "faulty use of the field artillery" "faulty handling of the U.S. medium tanks."

"There was abroad a sense of careless dash and a failure to adopt proper action and tactics when faced by a serious assault by tanks, until too late," he added. "The affair at Chouïgui the day before with Blade Force should have shown the red light, but evidently did not do so." Some battalions now mustered fewer than 350 men, while the "enemy has already [reinforced] and can continue to reinforce far more rapidly than I can." Logistics remained spotty, with a "collection of wheezy French lorries" hauling supplies. In consequence the offensive must again be suspended for at least four days.

"I am very sorry," Anderson concluded, "but there it is."

Fischer and his 10th Panzer Division had no intention of waiting. Sensing a weak link in CCB, the Germans attacked along a one-mile front at seven o'clock on the cool, clear morning of December 6. Two waves of Stukas hammered the 1st Battalion of the 6th Armored Infantry Regiment, which had dug in three miles southeast of Tébourba, below the crest of Djebel el Guessa. Wehrmacht paratroopers worked up a saddle to gain the ridgeline, and in twenty-five minutes the American left flank had been turned. A confused, terrified .50-caliber gunner turned his weapon against one of his

own platoons, and dead soldiers soon lay like sprats in a tin; a single man survived. Then panzers struck the American right, crushing soldiers in their foxholes and mortally wounding a company commander. He would die in a German ambulance and be buried in a shallow grave on the road to Tunis.

As the battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel William B. Kern, struggled to save his unit from extermination, Battery C of the 27th Armored Field Artillery Battalion opened fire on twenty panzers at a range of just under a mile. This sally distracted the Germans, who now slewed on the gunners. Giving ground slowly, the artillerymen retreated into a rocky amphitheater with their half-track-mounted howitzers. The panzers came on, each tank trailed by a field-gray cloud of infantrymen on foot or motorcycle. At 10:50 A.M. the battery commander, Captain William H. Harrison, first radioed for help. His frantic pleas ended at 11:20 with this transmission:

> For Christ's sake, isn't there anything besides C Battery in this First Armored Division? We're putting up a helluva fight, but we can't hold out all day. Please, *please* send help!

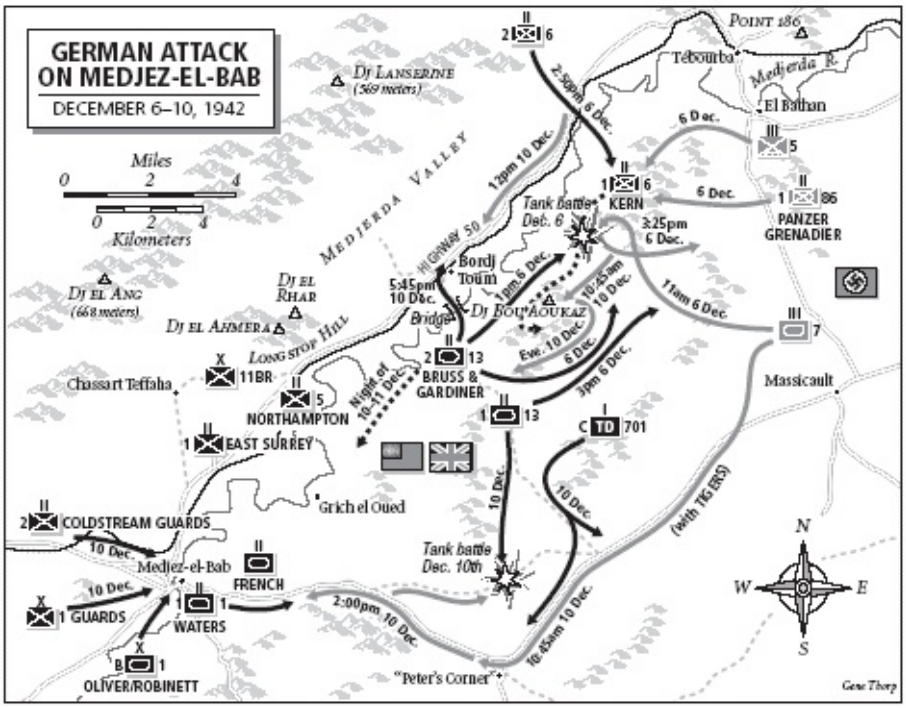
Help had been ordered forward by General Oliver at eight A.M., but for unexplained reasons the 2nd Battalion of the 13th Armored Regiment failed to get word. Not until one P.M. did Lieutenant Colonel Hyman Bruss and his tanks cover the six miles along the Medjerda to Djebel el Guessa. Compounding tardiness with tomfoolery, Bruss split his force, conducted no reconnaissance, and ordered the tanks to "charge up the valley as quickly as possible." Reinforced with five new Shermans from Patton's units in Morocco, the General Lees arrived at flank speed with no inkling of where Colonel Kern's men were, much less the enemy. German gunners waited until the Shermans, five abreast, closed to a quarter mile.

Fifteen minutes later every Sherman and most of the General Lees stood in flames. "Shells were cutting through the wheat on either side of us," Lieutenant Philip G. Walker later wrote. "I walked from tank to tank trying to make them fire and retire. They seemed petrified. I cursed and insulted, climbing on tanks and shouting." An explosion killed a soldier in the turret beneath Walker's feet. Shell fragments peppered his arm, eyelid, and right temple. "I was swearing and crying from frustration and pain. Took a shot of morphine and felt better."

More American tanks blundered into the kill zone after giving German gunners time to reposition and reload. The disaster was complete. Wearing full-length sandwich boards painted with huge red crosses, Wehrmacht medics traipsed from hulk to flaming hulk, salvaging a few wounded. In the confusion, Kern's battalion had escaped destruction, but still suffered 219 casualties. All five Battery C howitzers were destroyed, the last at ranges of twenty yards or less, with thirty-nine casualties among the gunners including the valiant and now captured Captain Harrison. Eighteen tanks were lost. On Robinett's recommendation, Oliver sacked Colonel Bruss. His crippled battalion would go to Henry Gardiner, as soon as the major returned from the hospital.

Rain began that night and fell incessantly for three days. Cold, sodden soldiers wondered, as their fathers had in the Great War, whether the Germans could make it rain whenever they pleased. Although Fischer's troops had also been stung, the galling defeat at Djebel el Guessa infected First Army with a despondency that spread at viral speed. Now known as Stuka Valley, the Medjerda glen seemed sinister, even demonic. German psychological operations spooked the men further, especially

the tactic of firing all small arms at dusk and lofting flare after flare as if in prelude to an attack. The "total effect was in fact terrifying and this was a factor in the combat," the CCB intelligence officer noted.



Latrine rumors became virulent: the Germans had shot prisoners, used poison gas, enlisted Arab cannibals. More and more Arab looters and collaborators were shot or had their houses blown up by Allied vigilantes; rarely was there a legal process that did credit to Anglo-American jurisprudence. French troops hanged Arab bodies from balcony rails in Béja as a crude warning, and commandos burned an entire Arab village in retaliation for the alleged shooting of a French forester. Anxious soldiers exchanged stories of things they had seen, or at least heard about: of a bushwhacked sentry found with his eyeballs strung like beads; of a British soldier who had dared chat up an Arab woman and was found sliced into fleshy strips laid out to spell "Beware" of a jeep driver who, decapitated by an 88mm shell, drove for another thirty feet, fifty feet, half a mile, clutching the steering wheel in a death grip. German panzers were reported "like an escaping murderer, at a score of points at once," one correspondent wrote. Infiltrating enemy tank crews were said to be master sculptors, capable of disguising a Mk IV as a Sherman with a few handfuls of mud. Soldiers collected good-luck amulets—shrapnel was especially popular, the view being that like repelled like—and every pocket became a potential reliquary.

"In an attack half the men on a firing line are in terror and the other half are unnerved," the British theorist J.F.C. Fuller had written. Some First Army troops confused smoke shells with billowing enemy parachutes; others betrayed their positions by trying to shoot down German flares. Disquiet seeped into the upper ranks as well. Evelegh had pulled back British and American troops another four miles closer to Medjez-el-Bab, but Oliver protested daily that CCB was too vulnerable. Anderson was ready to quit Stuka Valley altogether. He floated the idea in a "most secret" message to Eisenhower on December 8.

"Reason is necessity to rest and refit troops and make them ready to resume offensive," Anderson wrote. "Present positions are too exposed and widespread." Building a new line fifteen miles west of Medjez could "prove to be the wisest course," he suggested, although "I regret giving up Medjez-el-Bab." In a subsequent note late that night, Anderson told Eisenhower, "There are limits to human

endurance." Lest the commander-in-chief miss the point, Anderson added in another message on December 9: "The spirit is willing but the flesh has reached its limit."

Even before Eisenhower's reply came back from Algiers, CCB was told to prepare to retreat toward Béja under Operation HAIRSPRING. Thirty minutes later, the retreat was canceled. Juin and Barré had learned of the British plan. The French generals were horrified. Did General Anderson not know the strategic value of Medjez? Had he not heard the wisdom of Hannibal—that Medjez was the key to the door? Throwing his left-handed salute, Juin stalked off to phone Giraud, who then hectored Eisenhower into countermanding the order.

A new plan emerged: the British 1st Guards Brigade would move up to occupy Medjez, while CCB and Evelegh's troops pulled back just west of the town to be, in Anderson's phrase, "reinforced, rested, reclothed, and refitted." The move was scheduled for the night of December 10.

Omens and auguries haunted the valley. Villagers with a few pathetic possessions bundled on their backs fled into the hills from farm hamlets near Djebel el Guessa. A drunk German deserter blundered into Allied lines with tales of grenadiers massing in the hollows. The rain stopped, but standing water drowned the trails. Every field became a quagmire. The air was heavy and unstirring.

At eight A.M. on December 10, General Oliver went forward to reconnoiter. Soon afterward, French pickets came pelting through the lines bellowing, *"Tank Boche! Tank Boche!"* Two panzer columns with an estimated total of sixty tanks advanced on either side of the Medjerda. By noon the enemy on Route 50 had been stopped by American tanks and a dense minefield near the village of Bordj Toum, ten miles downriver from Medjez-el-Bab. The parallel force on the south side of the river clumped through the mud to attack Colonel Kern's 1st Battalion, now retrenched midway between Tébourba and Medjez on the craggy heights of Djebel Bou Aoukaz, known as the Bou. Kern held, and the Bou remained in American hands.

But a greater threat loomed from the southeast. Fischer dispatched his 7th Panzer Regiment with artillery and thirty tanks on a bold flanking sweep to take Medjez from the rear. Through Massicault they rolled, Tigers among them, smashing ten of John Waters's remaining Stuarts and half-tracks. Waters retreated with his remnants through Medjez-el-Bab and across the Bailey bridge spanning the Medjerda. By early afternoon the enemy was at the gates, two miles from town, with a chance to bag the whole of Combat Command B. Only an intrepid French force of zouaves, *tirailleurs*, and artillerymen held them at bay.

Holding a poor map in his lap and a capricious radio microphone in his left hand, Robinett sat in a farmhouse three miles southwest of Medjez, trying to piece together a battle he could neither see nor hear. He had been unable to reach Oliver, and repeated pleas to Evelegh's headquarters for reinforcement by American Shermans went unanswered. Medjez appeared doomed, but at 1:30 P.M. Robinett ordered the 1st Battalion of his 13th Armored Regiment to attack due south from the Bou in an effort to catch the flanking Germans from behind.

It nearly worked. A company of Stuarts fell on seven surprised enemy armored scout cars and destroyed them with a smoking broadside at fifty yards. But then the panzers appeared—"the whole top of the high ground was alive with them," an American captain remarked—and the counterblow stopped in mid-career. Squirrel-gun rounds bounced off the panzer glacis as usual, and the wider German tracks provided more purchase in the mud. Outmaneuvered and outgunned, American commanders were reduced to aiming at the panzers' gun sights in a futile effort to blind them.

Nineteen Stuarts were lost, their crewmen machine-gunned as they climbed out of their stricken tanks. Two dozen surviving Yanks hid in a ravine, then scuttled north to swim the Medjerda. At 4:30

P.M., Robinett ordered all remaining American troops around the Bou to cross the one-lane bridge at Bordj Toum after dark and pull back to Medjez on Highway 50.

Moments after this order went out, Oliver returned to the command post, muddy and exhausted from a harrowing day spent dodging German patrols. Collapsing into a chair, he listened in anguish to Robinett's account of 1st Battalion's counterattack. His eyes brimmed with tears. "My God, why did you attack with the light tanks?" Oliver said. "You have ruined me!"

Robinett pulled himself to his full, unimposing height, jaw thrust out, gaze level and unblinking. "No, General," he answered. "I have saved you."

He had indeed, although salvation was ephemeral on the night of December 10. Medjez had been preserved for the moment, but more than three battalions of American troops remained at risk. Oliver chose not to venture down the valley again; bucking the traffic that would soon jam the road from Bordj Toum to Medjez seemed more than his frayed nerves could handle. Instead, the evacuation was left to the senior officer on the Bou, a forty-three-year-old West Pointer from Ohio, Lieutenant Colonel John R. McGinness. Oliver lay down on a straw mat pulled from an olive press and dozed off.

Rain was falling again, heavy as birdshot, as the long columns debouched from the ravines around the Bou. Blackout lights—cat's-eye slits—gleamed from the trucks and half-tracks inching toward the river and the macadam highway that would carry them to safety. A flare arced across the sky a mile to the northeast, hissing for half a minute before winking out. Somewhere in the dark near the Bordj Toum rail station, 300 German infantrymen and two dozen panzers had bivouacked after a day of brutal combat so close that artillery gunners fought with rifles as infantrymen. Somewhere also in the dark two platoons of British soldiers waited for the Americans; Evelegh had first pledged to hold the bridge until at least 10:30 P.M., then, under pleas from CCB, had extended the deadline to four A.M. and eventually to dawn.

A CCB infantry platoon crossed the narrow Bordj Toum bridge, followed by a company of General Lees. Tank tracks creaked across the plank deck only inches from the edge on both sides. As the Lees swung onto Highway 50, German voices sang out near the rail station. A few yellow muzzle flashes stabbed the darkness, followed by a machine gun's stutter. An officer ordered his infantrymen back toward the bridge for better cover until the gunfire could be sorted out.

But panic had been building for a week, fed by stories of headless drivers and eyeballs on strings. Another sputtering flare projected—as Robinett later observed—"new terrors into the minds of the weak." If minds were weak, legs remained strong: the cold light revealed silhouetted men sprinting back across the bridge, their eyes glazed with fear. "The Krauts! The Krauts!" Fear raced down the column like a lit fuze. A panting officer splashed through the mud to Colonel McGinness's jeep. His words tumbled out: Germans had broken through; no Brits could be seen; panzers were said to block the bridge already.

A casual stroll to the front of the column would have disproved it all. No breakthrough had occurred. The British, while modest in strength, were standing their ground not far from the bridge. The panzers were wrecks, knocked out in earlier fighting. The shots had been inconsequential.

But McGinness was not the man to vanquish bogeys. Ignoring reasoned pleas from his subordinates and taking counsel only of his fears, he issued the fateful order: "Turn the column around." The battalions would return to Medjez on an unpaved goat path along the south bank of the river.

The first few vehicles at the column's tail, now its head, managed to reverse course and plow west through bumper-deep mud. But each passing set of wheels and armored tracks churned the mire more. After a few hundred yards, vehicles began to bog down—first the tanks, then the half-tracks and guns and jeeps and trucks. Swearing, sweating soldiers stuffed bedrolls and ration cases beneath the wheels and tracks. They hacked at the mud with shovels and picks until their hands bled, while drivers

gunned the engines and groped for traction in the muck. Clutches burned out. Axles and transmission rods broke. Tracks slipped from their bogey wheels. Gas tanks ran dry.

At 1:30 A.M. an aide shook Oliver awake. Smelling faintly of olive residue, the general read with disbelief the radio transmission from McGinness. The column had mired. Most vehicles were stuck, and McGinness had "ordered their abandonment and destruction." Oliver tried to raise the column by radio. No one answered.

The sopping dawn revealed a spectral, half-buried procession strung out for three miles along the swollen Medjerda. Thermite grenades had melted through engine blocks, leaving silver puddles of metal congealing in the mud. A few soldiers, ignoring the abandon-ship order, continued to rock their trucks back and forth in a stubborn search for grip. Some troops had tossed away their rifles and wandered into a boggy field; like dead men they slept where they fell, swaddled in mud. Hundreds of others staggered westward eight miles into Medjez, too weary even to watch for Stukas. Officers organized foraging parties to gather straw for the shivering troops.

McGinness stumbled in at noon, spattered and bedraggled. Although Patton, upon hearing of the debacle, proposed a firing squad, Oliver simply sacked him—making McGinness the second battalion commander from the 13th Armored Regiment relieved in three days. "I never felt so bad in my life," Oliver said. Eisenhower also considered firing Oliver, but would instead send him home for promotion and eventual division command. Robinett, promoted to brigadier general, soon succeeded him as CCB commander.

He would take over a ghost unit. The miring at Bordj Toum had cost eighteen tanks, forty-one guns, and 132 half-tracks and wheeled vehicles. Buried to the headlights, most of the carcasses were too deep for even the Germans to salvage. With more disbelief than anger, Anderson observed, "It was a crippling loss." In two weeks at the front, CCB had lost three-quarters of its tanks and howitzers, and comparable portions of half-tracks and trucks. Never having anticipated such grievous losses—especially not the destruction of 124 tanks and the complete wearing out of the rest—the Americans had no system to provide quick replacements. Many dismounted armor crews were reduced to traffic duty for weeks; one battalion had six tanks left. Two days after Bordj Toum, Anderson declared CCB no longer combat worthy.

It was humiliating, and nearly past imagining for the cocky young men who had rolled out of Oran and Algiers only a month before. A. D. Divine, the South African–born journalist who had spent many weeks with the Americans, shrewdly assessed their shortcomings:

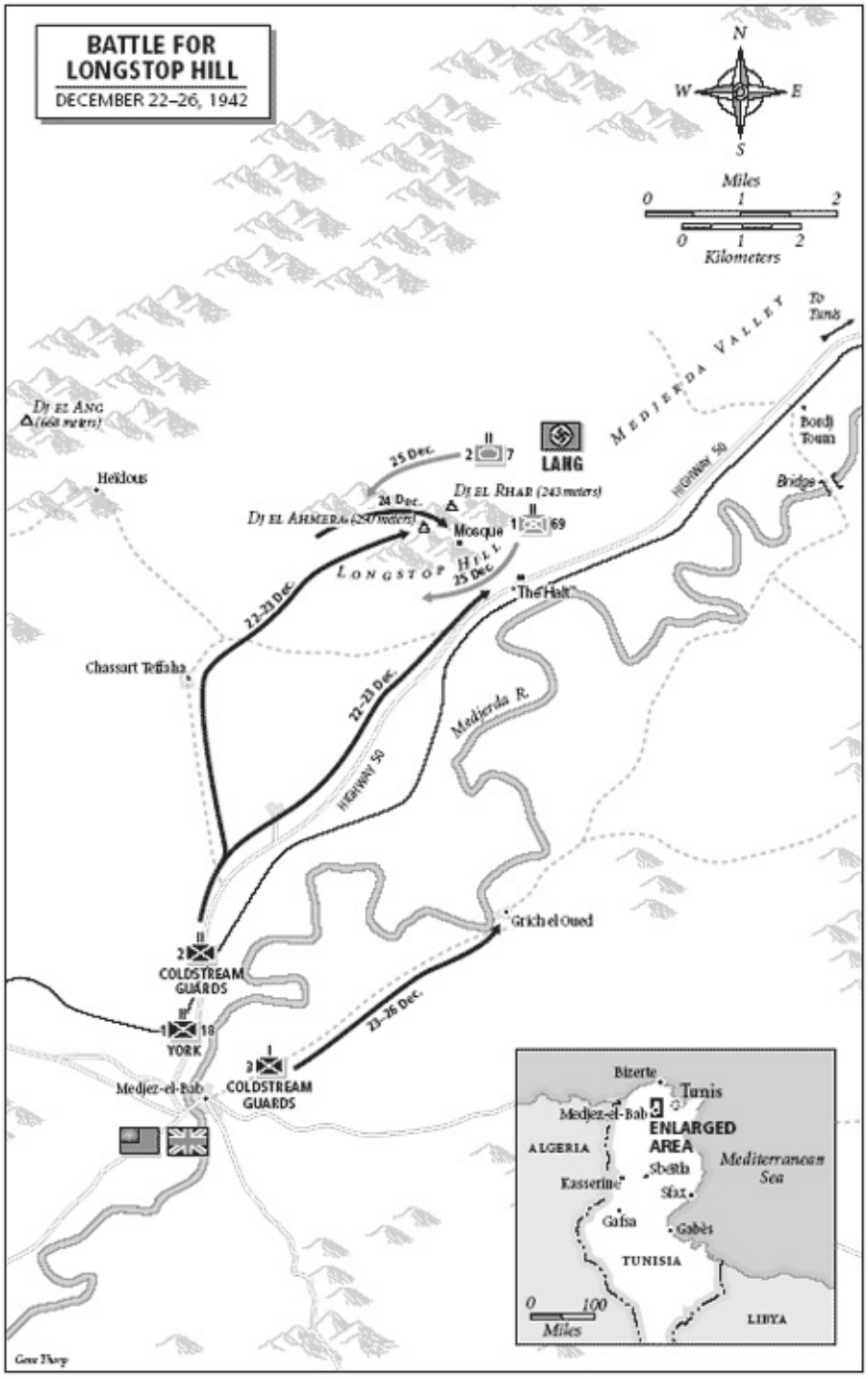
> The faults were clear enough: the greatest of them was an initial lack of appreciation of the possibilities of the enemy; a certain indiscipline of mind; a tendency towards exaggeration…. Men used the skyline because the view was better from there. Men neglected camouflage because it might smack of overanxiety. Men failed to dig slit trenches because the work was hard.

Other deficiencies could hardly be blamed on green soldiers. Virtually no bazookas had been shipped to Tunisia; Patton had plenty in Morocco, a thousand miles from the front, where he was testing their penetrating power against live goats placed in a light tank. Another three weeks would pass before ordnance officers discovered that American tank crews had gone into combat with training ammunition rather than more explosive, more lethal armor-piercing rounds. And not only had German tanks, tactics, and airpower proved superior, so too had the enemy's field glasses, tank sights, smokeless powder, and machine guns.

Even more important, little cohesion obtained among Allied formations or even between American units. They had fought not as an army, but as a disjointed confederation. Neither leaders nor the led had yet proven themselves, despite flashes of competence and many acts of valor. British command had been as deficient as American command. In a crucial phase of the campaign, when every rifle squad counted—infantrymen were particularly valuable in seizing hilly redoubts and holding passes—whole battalions had been thrown away, beginning with those in Operations RESERVIST, TERMINAL, and VILLAIN, and extending through the destruction of the Argylls, the Hampshires, the Surreys, the commandos, Frost's paratroopers, and now McGinness's 2nd Battalion, which lost all but ten vehicles.

Eisenhower again chose to be optimistic. "We are having our troubles; so is the enemy," he wrote in a note to himself on December 10. "If we can make up our minds to endure more and go farther and work harder than he does…we can certainly win." History would reveal the correctness of his appraisal, but he could hardly foresee the pain implicit in the phrase "endure more and go farther." A month of fighting had ended, the first in what would be thirty months of pitched battle between the Allies and the Axis. All the players were now onstage. Although the combat in these initial weeks had been small scale—companies and battalions hurled against other companies and battalions—soon the bloody epic would embroil regiments, divisions, corps, and, eventually, armies.

There was yet time for the Allies to regroup, to punch through, to seize the whole of the African shore and avoid the deadlock of World War I trench warfare. But that time was short.


BATTLE FOR LONGSTOP HILL
DECEMBER 22–26, 1942
N
W
E
S
Miles
0 1 2
0 1 2
Kilometers
To Tunis
Medjerda Valley
Dj el Ang (668 meters)
Heïdous
25 Dec.
II 2 7
LANG
Dj el Rhar (243 meters)
24 Dec.
Dj el Ahmera (250 meters)
Mosquée
II 1 69
Longstop Hill
25 Dec.
22–23 Dec.
The Hall
Highway 50
Bordj Toum
Bridge
Chassart Teffaha
22–23 Dec.
Medjerda R.
Highway 50
Grich el Oued
II 2 COLDSTREAM GUARDS
III 1 18 YORK
I 3 COLDSTREAM GUARDS
23–26 Dec.
Medjez-el-Bab
Bizerte
Tunis
Medjez-el-Bab
ENLARGED AREA
ALGERIA
Sbeïtla
Mediterranean Sea
Kasserine
Sfax
Gafsa
Gabès
TUNISIA
0 100
Miles
LIBYA

6. A Country of Defiles

Longstop

For eleven days in mid-December, both sides licked their wounds along the Medjerda valley. War clawed out a no-man's-land between Medjez-el-Bab and Bordj Toum, seven miles wide and crowded with shades. Patrols went out and patrols came back, or failed to. Sniper bullets whizzed about like small, vexing birds. Shells rustled overhead, and smoke drifted from the gun muzzles in stately gray hoops above poplar groves now smashed to splinters. Concussion ghosts rippled the pup tents, like pebbles in a pond. Anything that moved drew fire, but Arab farmers still scratched their fields with ancient plows, veering around the shell craters; sentries squinted from their dugouts and debated whether the furrows were shaped like an arrow to signal enemy pilots. "Hovering there on that borderland that divided the two hostile armies," a correspondent later wrote, "was like standing on a window ledge of a high building waiting to commit suicide."

Medjez was wrecked, but German guns continued to make the rubble dance—the British called it "their shelling programme." Whenever a dud landed, French soldiers murmured, *"Fabriqué à Paris!"* in tribute to saboteurs toiling among the forced laborers at home. Life moved underground. A Grenadier Guard battalion occupied the shaft of an abandoned lead mine, and "it was only after some days that they discovered a complete family of Arabs living in darkness at the far end." Foxholes and trenches—"coffin slits," to the Tommies—scarred the landscape like pox. British sappers proudly turned the eastern approaches to Medjez into "one bloody great mine."

By December, 180,000 American troops had arrived in northwest Africa. Yet fewer than 12,000 of them could be found at the Tunisian front, plus 20,000 British and 30,000 ill-equipped French (who now counted as 7,000 in the Allied calculus). Together they lived at the sharp end. Blackout rules for the long winter nights meant everyone turned in at six P.M. and rose at four A.M. Canned stew and biscuits were "donkey dung" and "armor plating." Soldiers softened their hardtack by dipping it into ersatz coffee brewed from pulverized dates, with the color and taste of ink. GI toilet paper was rough-hewn enough to be used for double-sided stationery, and troops caught up on their correspondence even as they battled ferocious dysentery.

"No shave, no bath, very little food, no beds, no liquor, no women, no fun, no nothing," an American soldier wrote his sister. A platoon leader in the 18th Infantry Regiment apologized for not sending Christmas presents; he had spent his last $50 on eyeglasses for nine of his men after Army stocks ran short. "Thanks for giving me the grandest gifts of all," added Lieutenant Robert M. Mullen, "faith and love." In three months he would be dead. Mail finally arrived for some troops—many had received nothing for two months or more—and Christmas packages often implied a certain homefront incomprehension of life in the combat zone: bathrobes, slippers, and phonograph records were particularly popular.

A redhead in a knit cap, slender as a thread at 100 pounds and given to drink and melancholy, showed up with a typewriter to educate America. Ernest Taylor Pyle had recently become a war correspondent after writing more than 2 million words as a roving reporter during the Depression. From Tunisia he wrote:

There are none of the little things that make life normal back home. There are no chairs, lights, floors, or tables. There isn't any place to set anything, or any store to buy things. There are no newspapers, milk, beds, sheets, radiators, beer, ice cream, or hot water. A man just sort of exists…. The velvet is all gone from living.

The lull allowed Brits and Yanks to take each others' measure in circumstances other than abject bloodletting. Scruffy GIs noticed that no matter how foul the weather, the Tommies shaved every morning, religiously; in their trousers, collarless shirts, and broad suspenders, they reminded one American officer of "old-fashioned workingmen cleaning up on a Saturday night." Every British officers' mess seemed to have a Christmas goose fund, to which each man contributed 200 francs and extensive advice. Yanks soon adopted the expression "Good show!"—although always uttered sardonically. Because British sutlers provided many staples for both armies, the Americans at times fed on treacle pudding and oxtail stew with jointed bones. Steak-and-kidney pie in British "compo" rations inspired a field kitchen ditty:

We've eaten British compo,
We like the meat the best,
We know a cow has kidney,
But where in hell's the rest?

Across the killing fields, the Germans and Italians also took stock. Axis troop strength in the Tunisian bridgehead had reached 56,000, with 160 tanks, roughly equal to the Allies but with the added benefit of Luftwaffe air superiority and good defensive terrain. From the Mediterranean coast twenty miles west of Bizerte, the line extended just east of Medjez-el-Bab and then down the entire length of Tunisia. German soldiers held the northern sector, with the 10th Panzer Division shielding Tunis, and the Italian Superga Division held the south. Nowhere was the enclave deeper than forty miles, and no shoulder-to-shoulder manning of such a long front would have been possible even if Nehring had been so inclined.

General Nehring's success in blunting the Allied offensive failed to atone for the abandonment of Medjez and his persistent pessimism. Without warning, his replacement had arrived on December 8: Colonel-General Hans-Jürgen von Arnim, whom Hitler whisked from a corps command in Russia to take over the newly formed Fifth Panzer Army in Tunis. Nehring flew home. With a bird of prey's beaked nose and stern countenance, the fifty-three-year-old Arnim issued from a Prussian family that had been producing officers for the Fatherland since the fourteenth century. Having compiled a distinguished record in both the Great War and this one, he gave Kesselring a diligent, quick-thinking field commander. On December 13, Arnim announced that since Allied forces around Tébourba had been obliterated, the Fifth Panzer Army would go over to the defensive to await the next blow.

Defense meant fortifications, and fortifications required laborers. Sixty thousand Jews served nicely. Mostly artisans and tradesmen, Tunisian Jews were a tiny minority with a long pedigree; on the island of Djerba—said to be the original of Homer's Land of the Lotus Eaters—tradition held that the small Jewish community had arrived after the sack of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar II in 586 B.C. Under a Vichy-inspired statute, Tunisian Jews had been banned from teaching, banking, and other professions since 1940. When the Axis invaded, life soured even more.

On November 23, German troops had arrested a number of Jews in Tunis, including the president of the Council of the Jewish Community. On December 9, the city's grand rabbi was ordered to

provide overnight a list of 2,000 young Jews for a labor corps; when the rabbi requested a delay, the quota was increased to 3,000. All were to appear with tools. After only 120 workers showed up, Axis troops rampaged through the streets and synagogues in various Jewish quarters, seizing hostages. A secret OSS assessment reported: “Equipped with tools and food by the Jewish community, 3,600 laborers were finally drafted.” Hundreds worked under Allied bombardment in Bizerte and at the Tunis airfield. Hundreds more dug defensive trenches for Major Witzig near Green and Bald Hills, and for General Fischer’s men west of Tébourba. Others were press-ganged to tend the horses and mules that hauled ammunition.

In mid-December, the Council of the Jewish Community was told that as “allies of the Anglo-Saxons,” Jews were expected to provide 20 million francs to cover bomb damage in Tunis. A rapacious Tunisian bank loaned the money at 8 percent interest, taking Jewish land and property as collateral. The Germans also began plundering Jewish gold, jewelry, and bank deposits. Meanwhile, the clang of picks and shovels could be heard in the rugged hills above the Medjerda valley.

Prodded by Eisenhower, Anderson sent word to Algiers that the Allied offensive would resume on the night of December 23–24. By then, enough supplies could be stockpiled at the Tunisian railhead for a week of hard fighting, and a full moon would light the way. Evelegh’s 78th Division, with American help, would secure the left flank on the high ground above the Medjerda, while the British 6th Armoured Division, just arrived from Britain, blasted through to Tunis on the southern lip of the Medjerda valley.

“This means a most un-Christian Christmas, but perhaps this will be forgiven in view of all the facts,” Anderson told the commander-in-chief. He agreed with Eisenhower that the Allies could not allow “passive acceptance of a strong Hun bridgehead,” although he put the odds of seizing Tunis at “not more than 50–50, I think. But it is also certainly not an impossible task. Far from it. With good planning and execution, stout hearts and fair weather, we will do our utmost to gain success. If we deserve God’s help, we will gain it.”

At the same time, Anderson urged Eisenhower to keep his eye fixed on Tunis. Several schemes had floated from Allied Forces Headquarters for operations in southern Tunisia; none would contribute to the paramount objective of capturing the capital and severing the Axis lifeline to Italy. First Army was already “living hand to mouth, with reserves temporarily exhausted,” Anderson warned, and he planned to throw 80 percent of his strength into the Christmas Eve offensive. “The essence of any plan,” he advised Eisenhower, “must be to *concentrate maximum strength* at the chosen point of attack.”

Before launching his offensive, Anderson first had to capture an annoying German outpost on an annoying Tunisian hill six miles down the Medjerda valley from Medjez-el-Bab. Djebel el Ahmera had been seized by Fischer’s men after the debacle at Bordj Toum bridge. Two miles long and 800 feet high, the hogback ridge appeared to have been welded at a right angle onto the prevailing hill mass: it jutted into the valley within a few hundred yards of the river, creating a bottleneck at the gap where Highway 50 and the rail line to Tunis passed. The British named the hill Longstop, a cricket term.

Longstop offered omniscience. From its crest, nothing in the Medjerda valley could move undetected—not a rabbit, not a man, certainly not a tank. Scented with thyme, covered with heather and scrub juniper, the hill had a dark and forbidding mien even in sunlight. It was so rocky as to seem bony, with powdery soil that covered a climber as flour covers a miller. Although modest in height, Longstop was intricately complex, with a thousand secret folds and dips. Olive groves bearded the lower flanks; a few gum trees stood sentinel on the crest. One British officer considered the terrain “so

foul, broken, blasted, and inhospitable that the Devil himself was surely the principal agent in its creation." Longstop exemplified why another officer called Tunisia "a country of defiles."

Had the British spent less time execrating the hill and more time studying it, subsequent events might have been different. For two critical errors preceded the attack by the 2nd Battalion of the Coldstream Guards. First, Allied intelligence believed the hill was held by a single German company with four to eight machine guns; in fact, enemy strength approached a battalion and included three companies from the 69th Panzer Grenadier Regiment commanded by Colonel Rudolf Lang, another sinewy veteran of Eben Emael.

Worse yet, the British had misread both ground and map. Longstop was actually two hills: Djebel el Ahmera dominated the main crest, separated by a ravine from the slightly lower Djebel el Rhar to the northeast. To capture one without the other was to capture neither. This second knoll was unseen by British reconnaissance, which was conducted by telescope at a distance of seven miles. Even so, Djebel el Rhar was plainly marked on Allied maps, and infantrymen had rambled across the hills for two weeks in November and early December. "We failed to realize its tactical importance," the Coldstreams later acknowledged. The error proved most unfortunate.

* * *

As required by the unwritten rules of military calamity, the initial attack went well. Nearly a week of fine weather had dried the ground and lifted spirits. The Coldstreams were keen to close with the enemy in their first fight since Dunkirk two and a half years earlier, and they tramped forward in bright moonlight that filtered through scudding clouds. At 11:15 P.M., on Tuesday, December 22, a barrage by sixteen British guns confirmed for the Germans the Allied assault that Luftwaffe reconnaissance had detected earlier. For fifteen minutes the artillery barked. Muzzle flashes reddened the olive leaves and white smoke spiraled up like spun moonbeams where the shells struck Longstop's crest. Then the cannonade lifted, and four Coldstream companies pushed off.

An undefended col on the northwest face of the hill fell immediately. The crest proved tougher. A sudden constellation of German flares was followed by machine-gun bursts and grenades that cascaded down the slope. Slipping on the scree and shooting from the hip, the Coldstreams scrambled toward the top even as a company commander and sergeant major fell dead. German pickets from the green 754th Infantry Regiment counterattacked with bayonets, then scuttled back through the heather with a few parting shots. Coldstreams followed—the terrain was so jumbled that some tried to navigate by stars glimpsed behind the thickening clouds—then dug in among the rocks. On the right flank of the hill, next to Highway 50, another Coldstream company seized a rail station known as the Halt, then promptly lost it to a German counterattack.

No matter: Coldstreams held the high ground, including the highest, at Point 290. All major objectives on Longstop had been taken in two hours. The Coldstream commander chose not to bring forward his reserve company or to reattack the Halt. Soon, as planned, an American battalion from Terry Allen's 1st Infantry Division would arrive to relieve the Coldstreams, who would get a day's rest in Medjez before joining the main attack down the valley.

Officers set their command post beside a small white mosque on Longstop's south face. Word arrived that the Yanks were making their way up the hill, slowly. Occasional mortar rounds gave way to silence broken only by the raspy whispers of British sergeants and the chink of entrenching tools in the bony ground. Djebel el Rhar squatted in the darkness, unseen and unsensed, 800 yards beyond Point 290. Rain began to fall.

An hour passed, then two. The moon set, the darkness deepened, the rain intensified. Finally, at three A.M. on December 23, the sound of the American challenge and countersign carried up the hill in stage whispers: “Brooklyn?” “Dodgers.” “Brooklyn?” “Dodgers.” A Coldstream sergeant shushed the newcomers as they emerged from the gloom. Bulling through the waist-high heather, each GI was as wet as if he had fallen into a lake. The Americans, one Tommy complained, always seemed as noisy as “Blackpool beach on a summer Sunday afternoon.”

The relief in combat of one battalion by another is difficult for kindred units in daylight and fine weather; between strangers of different nationalities at night in a downpour, the task is infinitely harder. The British guides posted to intercept the American companies either missed them completely or were uncertain where they should go. The commander of the 1st Battalion of the 18th Infantry Regiment, Lieutenant Colonel Robert H. York, lost his way near the Halt and was pinned down by enemy machine-gun fire. He eventually stumbled into the Coldstream command post near the white mosque, but with his staff officers still wandering the night and 800 of his infantrymen scattered across the hill. At 4:30 A.M., their duty done as they defined it, the Coldstreams decamped. Back through Medjez-el-Bab they hiked in squelching boots, sleepless and hungry. A thousand men sang “Good King Wenceslas” as they marched.

Dawn on Longstop revealed the full peril of the American battalion. Half the hogback remained in German hands. The Coldstreams had abandoned several forward positions before American troops arrived, and enemy soldiers quickly reoccupied them. Told by the British that only a few Wehrmacht troops remained to be mopped up, Colonel York learned from enemy prisoners that in fact an entire battalion of panzer grenadiers invested Longstop, with reinforcements coming. Flashes of field gray and an occasional coal-scuttle helmet could be glimpsed among the boulders to the east.

Then the enemy struck. “They just appeared out of nowhere,” Captain Irving Yarock later recalled. Panzer grenadiers on the right flank near the Halt surrounded Company A, which in the night had become separated from the rest of 1st Battalion. Grenadiers built fire lanes with their mortar and machine-gun fire, paring away and destroying one piece of the company at a time before starting on another wedge. One American officer and thirteen enlisted men escaped death or capture.

Along the hill crest, German gunfire rattled “like a boy drumming a stick along an endless iron fence,” wrote one chronicler. Brown mortar smoke foamed over ridges “leaping with light” from enemy artillery. Rock splinters sliced the eyes and noses of men unable to dig in more than a few inches. Shell fire severed telephone wire; messengers dispatched from the battalion command post simply vanished. “The mud would foul your rifle after a few clips, and you’d throw it down and crawl around hollering for another rifle,” Sergeant Charles C. Perry of Company C later said. “There were extra rifles—by the dozens—after the first day and night of Longstop.”

Pinned in a cactus patch a thousand yards behind his Company B, York pleaded for artillery counterfire. British gunners responded slowly, uncertain of the Yank positions and hampered by the incompatibility of British and American radios. A few shells finally detonated in delicate white puffs that reminded an observer of “a gigantic white chrysanthemum.” Hardly deterred, the Germans by three P.M. had seized all positions held before the original Coldstream attack, including Point 290. By last light, the 1st Battalion had edged back into defensive positions on Longstop’s west and south faces.

The Coldstreams had just finished a late breakfast on December 23 when the first call for help came from the Americans. Disbelief yielded to angry disgust. Couldn’t the Yanks even hold a hill that had been gift-wrapped for them? Impenitent, the 18th Infantry commander, Colonel Frank Greer, appeared at the British command post near Medjez-el-Bab to warn that York’s exhausted, depleted men were at risk of losing the hill altogether. There was no alternative: the only available reserves were the exhausted, depleted 2nd Coldstreams, who trudged back toward Longstop with what one man

described as “the…bored indifference of a man who goes to work he does not love.”

Not until dusk did the British vanguard reach the col below Longstop’s northwest face. Rain had transformed the Medjerda valley into a vast brown sea too quaggy even for mules. A brace of bullocks was harnessed to pull a few guns forward. Wheeled vehicles bogged down 5,000 yards from the hill. Even tracked carriers could get no closer than Chassart Teffaha, a farm hamlet two miles away. There, in a damp cellar that stank like a slaughterhouse, surgeons worked by candlelight over boys beyond surgeoning; stretcher bearers dumped another load and headed back into the night without even bothering to fold stretchers stiff with blood. One in every four riflemen was converted into a coolie, shouldering heavy green ammunition boxes and crates of mortar rounds. Up the scree they trudged in the rain. Dead men slumped in their shallow trenches, some already green and bloated, others as alabaster and dignified as lunar princes. A Coldstream officer later in the war would speak for the living in describing “the release of fear, the release of the bird under the ribs” that every sane man felt on the slopes of Longstop Hill that night.

A lull persisted past dawn and into Thursday afternoon, December 24. Then Allied artillery opened again, with a barrage calculated to dump 750 shells in a hundred-yard square around Point 290. In the valley below, one witness wrote, “guns flashed from every cluster of trees. The shells shrieked through the rain and clouds.” At five P.M., the Coldstreams attacked on a 1,200-yard front with modest help from American riflemen. Stalking and grenading, the troops swept across the ridgeline, bellowing at the enemy, who bellowed back. Those watching from below followed the Coldstreams’ progress by the ascending rivulets of red tracers. Tiny figures vanished into hollows, then reappeared, climbing steadily. A white flare bright as a nativity star signaled the recapture of Point 290.

From that pinnacle, in the failing light, the Coldstreams at last saw Djebel el Rhar: half a mile across a deep gully. The final peak, a Coldstream major lamented, “had never been appreciated.” There was nothing for it but to press on. A gallant platoon skittered down the ravine and up the far slope to the crest. German defenders killed the officers and sergeants, and shredded the rest with mortar fire.

The German shelling paused briefly, then resumed with a cannonade that would continue until morning. Too much had been wagered to stop now. Eight British and American companies occupied all of Djebel el Ahmera and one flank of Djebel el Rhar, ground that had cost them more than five hundred casualties, including the Coldstream battalion commander and adjutant. German losses also had been heavy, but Arnim and Fischer drove to Colonel Lang’s command post east of the hill to demand resistance to the last man: the Tunisian bridgehead itself was at stake. More Wehrmacht infantrymen, and tanks from the 7th Panzer Regiment, had been ordered forward.

At 7:15 P.M., General Evelegh reported to the British high command that Longstop was “in our possession, in most places.” He was confident—as only Santa Claus could be—that the rest of the hill would fall by Christmas morning.

The rain slowed to a drizzle, then stopped for the first time in two days. A monstrous, blood-orange moon drifted behind the breaking clouds. Backlit by desultory shell fire, British victualers darted up with tins of cold plum pudding for men who spooned it down behind their pathetic fieldstone parapets. Flares rose to define the dead. Another mortar barrage crumped across Point 290—German gunners had the range to the inch—and a Cockney voice shrieked, “Get this man out! Get this man out!” Medics hurried forward with stretchers rigged from rifles and phone-wire lashings.

A hunched figure in a trench coat scuttled from foxhole to foxhole, handing out razor blades. “Muddy Christmas,” the American chaplain murmured. “Muddy Christmas.”

Eisenhower had yet to set foot in Tunisia, but an acerbic message from Marshall on December 22 had sent him hurrying eastward:

> Delegate your international problems to your subordinates and give your complete attention to the battle in Tunisia.

At 6:15 A.M. on the twenty-third, unable to fly because of foul weather, Eisenhower climbed into the armored Cadillac and sped from Algiers in a five-vehicle convoy. Rain tattooed the highway blacktop, already slick with mud from trucks shuttling to the front. The commander-in-chief wore what he called his goop suit: overalls hiked to the armpits, with cuffs buttoned around his shoes; a heavy field jacket; and a knit cap with a hooded visor. He carried a zippered purse with his lucky coins, and a swagger stick that concealed a wicked dagger in the handle. Slumped in the rear seat with reading glasses perched on his nose, he flipped through a stack of reports or stared morosely at the sopping countryside.

He suspected that the Tunisian campaign had already stalemated. The thought grieved him: deadlock would be broken only by a static, protracted slugging match. That was precisely what the combined British and American chiefs had urged him to avoid in a message earlier in December: "Losses in the initial assault may be heavy but should be less than those that are bound to occur if you become involved in a long, drawn-out attrition battle." Did anyone in Washington or London really understand what a close-run thing the race for Tunis had been? In a note to Churchill, Eisenhower suggested that if the Allies had landed in Africa with an extra half-dozen transport companies—perhaps 600 additional trucks—"this battle could have been over."

He hardly bothered defending the deficiencies in his army and his own generalship. "The best way to describe our operations to date," he wrote his friend Major General Thomas Handy, "…is that they have violated every recognized principle of war, are in conflict with all operational and logistic methods laid down in textbooks, and will be condemned, in their entirety, by all Leavenworth and war college classes for the next twenty-five years."

Even so, he continued "praying steadily to all the Gods-of-War." Perhaps Anderson's new offensive would turn the tide. If not, he would have to consider the advice Churchill had offered in a private message on December 16: "Engage and wear [the Germans] down, like Grant and the Confederates in 1864." Grant's casualties in 1864, as Eisenhower well knew, had exceeded 200,000. Was the prime minister ready for the Wilderness? Spotsylvania Courthouse? Cold Harbor?

As always, he contemplated the art of generalship through the lens of his own shortcomings. "Through all this I am learning many things," he wrote in a mid-December note to himself. One lesson was "that waiting for other people to produce is one of the hardest things a commander has to do." Even more important, "an orderly, logical mind [is] absolutely essential to success":

> The flashy, publicity-seeking type of adventurer can grab the headlines and be a hero in the eyes of the public, but he simply can't deliver the goods in high command. On the other hand, the slow, methodical, ritualistic person is absolutely valueless in a key position. There must be a fine balance…. To find a few persons of the kind that I have roughly described is the real job of the commander.

Shortly after noon, the convoy rolled into Constantine, ancient seat of Numidian kings. The city

resembled a Tibetan lamasery, with great limestone walls—described by one visitor as “cubes of frozen moonlight”—and a thousand-foot gorge, the most dramatic in the Atlas Mountains. Constantine supposedly had withstood eighty sieges in antiquity, but it was helpless before the onslaught of Allied clerks, camp followers, and brass hats who were building a vast supply dump. Eisenhower stretched his legs, gaped at the ravine—the stench of tanneries wafted from the bottom—and drove on.

Even as they neared the Tunisian border, the worries of Algiers were hard to leave behind. His problems with the French persisted, despite Marshall’s facile advice to “delegate your international problems.” On December 17, General Giraud had again demanded supreme command in North Africa; he still refused to allow French soldiers to obey Anderson’s orders, and without informing Eisenhower he kept shipping colonial troops to a front that could not sustain them. The logistics pipeline was so sclerotic that all rail loadings at ports and supply depots had been suspended for four days in mid-December. Inventories were hopelessly muddled, a problem compounded by the mingling of British and American units. To calculate ammunition needs, World War I data had been used until ordnance officers discovered that modern divisions, although comprising half the manpower of their Great War counterparts, used more than twice as many shells and bullets. And absurd problems continued to arise. A convoy had just arrived from Britain with a huge consignment of tent pegs—and no tents. One AFHQ message to Washington pleaded, “Stop sending stockings and nail polish.” As if Eisenhower did not have enough worries, Marshall this very day had asked him to find a suitable meeting place in Morocco for Roosevelt, Churchill, and the Allied military brain trust. “Do *not* discuss any of this with British until clearance is given from here,” the chief added.

Increasingly, the strain showed in the furrows on Eisenhower’s broad brow and in the violet rings beneath his eyes. “It is easy for a man to be a newspaper hero one day and a bum the next,” he wrote his son on December 20. One aide described him as “a caged tiger, snarling and clawing to get things done.” Staff officers treated him with the hushed deference usually reserved for convalescents or lunatics. “I am very much worried over the terrific pressure being put on him more or less to do the impossible,” Marshall had written the week before. Privately the chief wondered whether Eisenhower hesitated to drive his troops because a majority of casualties would necessarily be British. Roosevelt’s impatience was less nuanced: “Why are they so slow?” he asked.

The strain on Eisenhower also revealed itself more sharply. When the American air chief, Major General James H. Doolittle, who had won the Medal of Honor for leading a retaliatory raid against Japan earlier in the year, tried to explain why Axis planes dominated the Tunisian battlefield, Eisenhower snapped, “Those are your troubles—go and cure them. Don’t you think I’ve got a lot of troubles, too?” During a recent lunch at the Hôtel St. Georges, Eisenhower had asked a staff officer to call diners and waiters to attention. “Tell everybody here,” he added, “that anyone who wants my job can damned well have it.” On December 17—the day Giraud had demanded his job and a day after Churchill’s Civil War analogy—he told his aide Harry Butcher, “Damned if I’m not about ready to quit. If I could just command a battalion and get into a bullet battle, it would all be so simple.”

Following an overnight stop at Guelma, the motorcade pressed into Tunisia the next morning. At two P.M. on Thursday, December 24, after picking up General Anderson in Aïn Seymour, Eisenhower arrived at a remote farmhouse outside Souk el Khémis on the north bank of the Medjerda, twenty miles west of Béja. Soldiers peered through teeming rain from their haystack burrows. Harrows and a tractor had been conspicuously positioned to suggest agricultural rather than military purposes. Jeeps and the Cadillac were banned from the barnyard lest their tracks betray the headquarters of V Corps,

formed earlier in the month under Anderson's subordinate, Lieutenant General Charles W. Allfrey, to coordinate the Allied advance on Tunis.

Eisenhower and Anderson clumped through mud ankle deep to find the farmhouse parlor crowded with wet, spattered officers. Robinett and his CCB battalion commanders had been invited for a pep talk, which Anderson now delivered in a grim monotone. ("He seemed greatly depressed," Robinett commented later.) Eisenhower appeared no happier. Groping for words, he offered neither censure nor praise for CCB's earlier travails, nor inspiration for battles yet to come. Robinett and his men filed past to shake hands with the generals, then vanished into the rain to wonder why their leaders seemed so gloomy.

The same melancholy prevailed for the next two hours, as Anderson and Allfrey spread a large map to review the battlefront for the commander-in-chief. Winter rains would worsen in January and February, Anderson said. Interrogated "natives" told him so. He had "ordered trials of moving various sizes of equipment" through the mud, but "nothing could be moved satisfactorily." No offensive was likely for at least six weeks, until the ground dried.

Eisenhower nodded. Earlier in the day, he had seen four soldiers futilely try to wrestle a motorcycle from the muck. There was no avoiding the obvious: a winter stalemate was at hand. Sensing the commander-in-chief's bitter disappointment, Anderson offered to resign. A successor, someone with a brighter outlook, might have more luck with the Germans and the French. Eisenhower dismissed the proposal.

Perhaps CCB could move south, Eisenhower suggested, where the weather was drier and the ground firmer. Robinett could be reunited with the rest of the 1st Armored Division, which would soon reach Tunisia. Anderson's earlier plea "to *concentrate maximum strength* at the chosen point of attack" was ignored, along with his Presbyterian musings about only the deserving earning God's help.

The current offensive would be postponed indefinitely—with the exception of the current attack on Longstop Hill. The hill must be captured to eliminate the German salient near Medjez. The First Army log noted: "Decision was made to defer advance on Tunis owing to weather." Eisenhower excused himself from the conference to dictate a message to London and Washington: "Due to continual rain there will be no hope of immediate attack on Tunis. May be possible later by methodical infantry advance. Am attempting to organize and maintain a force to operate aggressively on southern flank."

Rain drummed off the farmhouse roof. Soldiers wrapped themselves in their gas capes and burrowed deeper into the haystacks. The dark afternoon slid toward dusk, and a wet, cold, miserable Holy Night.

"They Shot the Little Son of a Bitch"

ALGIERS on Christmas Eve was festive if not quite spiritual. The white houses spilling down the hills gleamed beneath a mild winter sun. Palm fronds stirred in the sea breeze. French mothers bustled from shop to shop in search of toys and sweets for their children. The price of Algerian champagne—Mousse d'Islam—doubled during the morning. Outside the city, soldiers decorated scrawny evergreens with grenades, mess kits, and ammunition bandoliers. Security had relaxed to the point that a sentry's challenge was answered not with the daily countersign but rather with "It's us, you daft bugger!" Nipping from hidden casks of wine, troops washed their uniforms in gasoline and gave one another haircuts in preparation for midnight chapel services. A signalman in the 1st Division picked up a BBC broadcast of Bing Crosby singing "White Christmas" men from the Fighting First huddled around the radio and wept. Those of a more cynical persuasion, tired of looking at veiled women,

composed a parody: “I’m Dreaming of a White Mistress.”

Morale officers in Algiers and Oran had worked hard to keep thousands of soldiers diverted after the initial weeks of an occupation characterized by “extremely bad discipline and long lines of soldiers at the houses of ill-fame.” Activities now ranged from French-language classes to chaperoned mixers. (“I have seen cases where a Jewess or a girl of easy virtue was present, and the chaperones took all the girls home,” an officer reported with evident approval.) Engineers emptied local swimming pools and converted them to basketball courts. Softball and volleyball leagues were organized—more than 20,000 softballs and 3,000 basketballs would be requisitioned for the war theater in the next ten months—although, owing to occasional sniping by disaffected Algerians, some games were said to be played “at high tension.” Moviegoers in Algiers could see *Yankee Doodle Dandy* or *Mutiny on the Bounty,* and the Oran opera house was transformed into an American service club. The first variety show performance, scheduled for Christmas Eve, featured an act billed as the Robert Taileur Troupe and His Spanish Twins. None of the troupers spoke English, so a bilingual captain had agreed to stand on stage and translate the punch lines.

Alas, there would be no troupe, no Spanish Twins, no delayed guffaws at ribald jokes. Nor would there be midnight mass, brothel visits, or mixers with girls of virtue impeccable or otherwise. Admiral Darlan’s hour had come round.

The Little Fellow, as Clark and Murphy called him, had become littler in Allied eyes. Not only was Darlan an international embarrassment, he had failed to lure the now-scuttled Toulon fleet into the Anglo-American camp. Many of his acts as high commissioner caused irritation if not outrage, including his demand for 200 Coldstream and Grenadier Guards to serve as an honor company for the annual celebration of Napoleon’s victory at Austerlitz. Graffiti scrawled on the walls of Algiers demanded, “Death to the traitor Darlan!” His recent attempt to win over Allied correspondents with a champagne reception only intensified their vilification.

Darlan seemed weary of it all. “His small blue eyes looked incredibly sad,” reporter John MacVane noted. At a luncheon for Allied officers on December 23, the admiral voiced interest in joining his son, who had nearly died of polio and was recuperating, at Roosevelt’s invitation, in Warm Springs, Georgia. “I would like to turn this thing over to General Giraud,” Darlan told Clark. “He likes it here and I don’t.” Clark pulled Murphy aside and said, “You know, the Little Fellow may do it.” Murphy nodded. “Yes, he might.” After lunch Darlan ushered Murphy into his office and confided, “There are four plots in existence to assassinate me.”

One would suffice. At 2:30 P.M. on the twenty-fourth, the bells in the English chapel on Rue Michelet struck the half hour as a tall young man with a shock of dark hair stepped from a Peugeot sedan. Dressed in black and wearing a brown overcoat, he strolled to the south gate of the whitewashed Summer Palace, where he signed the registry under the name Morand. Asking to see Admiral Darlan on a personal matter, he was directed to a small anteroom in a Moorish arcade where the high commissioner kept his office. He lit a cigarette and waited on a threadbare couch.

Fernand Bonnier de la Chapelle was the son of a French journalist father and an Italian mother. An antifascist monarchist, he had returned to his native Algiers from metropolitan France after the German invasion of 1940 and had fallen in with a royalist cabal keen to transform the pretender to the French throne, the exiled count of Paris, into Henri VIII. Precisely how the plot evolved, or why an attack on Darlan was expected to advance the cause of a French monarchy, would never be known. But shortly after three P.M. Bonnier heard the crunch of tires on the gravel drive in the garden outside. From his coat he pulled a Rubis 7.65mm revolver, which he had test-fired that morning at a nearby golf course after receiving absolution for his sins from a priest involved in the conspiracy.

Returning from lunch, Darlan walked slowly down the narrow corridor. He had spent another difficult morning with Murphy, who had pressed him on the prickly issues of political prisoners and

restoring the rights of Algerian Jews. The spa in Warm Springs sounded ever more inviting.

As he opened the door to his study, the admiral heard the snick of a cocking pistol behind him. He whirled. Bonnier fired twice at point-blank range into his victim's face and abdomen. Darlan collapsed across the threshhold, eyes wide and unblinking, blood streaming from his mouth. An aide rushed in to seize the assassin by the throat, only to take a bullet in the thigh for his trouble. Bonnier bolted toward a window to escape through the palace grounds, but a spahi cavalryman dragged him back into the room. Another clubbed him with a chair, knocking away the pistol.

Half a mile away, at the Hôtel St. Georges, Clark was clearing his office desk before leaving for Christmas Eve dinner when he heard running feet in the hallway. The door flew open and Murphy burst into the office. "They shot the little son of a bitch!" he exclaimed. "He's on his way to the hospital."

A voluble mob of Frenchmen had already gathered in the waiting room when Clark and Murphy arrived at Maillot Hospital. Pushing through the crowd and into the surgical suite, the Americans found that the admiral had just been pronounced dead on the operating table. "The Little Fellow," Clark later said, "looked calm and quiet."

Clark handled bloodshed with his usual brisk efficiency. Affecting a turn-out-the-guard scowl, he doubled the pickets at the St. Georges and ordered all officers to arm themselves. Machine-gun posts were set up in the hotel gardens and outside other important Allied buildings. "The whole headquarters is in an uproar," one officer reported. Trucks jammed with armed soldiers carrying gas masks rumbled back and forth through the streets. Holy Night festivities were canceled, and in camps across Algeria troops were ordered to stand to in the mud with their weapons in the event of a "native uprising."

While Clark considered that Darlan's death was "like the lancing of a troublesome boil," he moved quickly to score propaganda points by implying Axis complicity in the murder. An official AFHQ statement declared, "Complete order reigns in Algiers notwithstanding general indignation caused by the event." The suggestion that the citizenry might riot in pique at Darlan's demise struck many as ludicrous. One correspondent observed that he had "never seen happier faces in Algiers."

Eisenhower had insisted that no Signal Corps officers accompany him eastward on his inspection tour and for hours after the shooting he remained beyond reach at the V Corps command post in Souk el Khemis, 400 miles away. The first frantic radio message went out from Algiers at four P.M., but a courier failed to find the commander-in-chief. A phone call from AFHQ to First Army headquarters at five P.M. obliquely reported that the "most serious thing has happened" less than an hour later, another message disclosed that Darlan had met with an accident and that the AFHQ staff was "very anxious to get in touch with C-in-C who is in forward area. Get him to ring General Clark immediately." None of these dispatches reached Eisenhower in timely fashion.

A long afternoon of meetings stretched into a long evening. General Evelegh's message at 7:15 P.M. suggesting that Longstop Hill would fall by Christmas morning was the first good news Eisenhower had heard all day. At eleven P.M. he was just about to sit down with Anderson and Juin for a late Christmas Eve supper when a radio officer stumbled in with a message from Clark: "Have just returned from hospital. Darlan is dead."

The Cadillac pulled across the muddy barnyard to the farmhouse. Someone would erase the tracks before dawn. Just forty miles south, Eisenhower's boyhood hero, Hannibal, had been smashed at Zama by Scipio Africanus to close the Second Punic War in 202 B.C. He hoped to visit the site someday, to understand by walking the ground what had gone wrong for the Carthaginians. But not

now. The trip back to Algiers would take thirty hours. Always a more subtle political thinker than Clark, Eisenhower expected that the assassination would carry unforeseen consequences. Darlan's death ended one problem, he mused aloud in the back of the car, but no doubt created many more.

General Evelegh's prediction proved all too accurate. Longstop Hill *did* fall on Christmas morning.

Badly reduced, with his main force driven into a vulnerable swale southeast of Djebel el Rhar, Colonel Lang chose to gamble. A small detachment would pin down the Anglo-Americans with frontal fire while a tank company looped around the hill to the north and grenadiers, led by Lang personally, swung along the south face above the Halt. The counterattack was set for first light on Friday, the twenty-fifth.

More than a hundred Algerian *tirailleurs* with horse-drawn caissons and not a syllable of English among them had reinforced the 18th Infantry's Company B during the night. With grunts and gestures, an American lieutenant positioned the company along the col on Longstop's northwest slope. For reasons unclear, artillery observers had left their posts on Longstop during the night and returned to the hamlet at Chassart Teffaha. An appalled officer ordered them back on the hill as the eastern sky lightened with Christmas dawn.

Too late. At seven A.M. the German attack opened, with shelling so intense an American officer described being simply "blasted all around." Colored signal rockets soared over Djebel el Rhar to launch the flank assaults. Ten panzers negotiated the mud north of the hill and slammed into the French. Lacking antitank weapons, the *tirailleurs* broke. From 800 yards, panzer volleys enfiladed the left flank of the American line on Djebel el Ahmera. Without artillery, the Yank reply was a paltry spatter of light mortar and rifle fire, along with a few grenades tossed more in defiance than as a military response. Unable to reach Colonel York at the battalion command post, the B Company commander announced darkly: "We will fight to the last man." His executive officer, Lieutenant Edward McGregor, found himself thinking obsessively of the Little Big Horn.

The right flank also crumpled under an assault from the Halt by Lang and his grenadiers. Enemy fire began falling in the rear, suggesting encirclement from both wings. American and British officers would each claim to have been left in the lurch by the unannounced withdrawal of their allies along various Longstop knobs. But without doubt, the Coldstreams holding forward positions at the crest of Djebel el Ahmera now faced annihilation.

At nine A.M., after learning that the Germans had once again captured Point 290, General Allfrey authorized Evelegh to abandon Longstop. Runners darted forward with orders to retreat. Platoons leapfrogged back to Chassart Teffaha for the rest of the morning, sowing mines to discourage German pursuit. The ammunition and medical supplies so laboriously hauled forward were now loaded on carts and carriers for the return to Medjez-el-Bab.

Rain fell again as the survivors trudged back, at the last pitch of exhaustion. As Christmas night descended, officers walked ahead of the jeeps and trucks waving white handkerchiefs for drivers to follow; some were so weary they veered off the road every few hundred yards anyway. Men sheltered in Chassart or Medjez and "clung together like sick kittens on a hot brick," in the phrase of the infantryman-turned-cartoonist Bill Mauldin. Christmas dinner consisted of British compo, supplemented with "a few scraggy chickens boiled in the muddy water of the Medjerda."

Word soon circulated of who was missing and who was known to be dead. As always after a fight, infantrymen checked to see if their closest buddies had survived before tabulating the battle's net worth. British casualties totaled 178 men; officers had been hit especially hard, and of a dozen

Coldstream platoon sergeants on Longstop, one still stood. American losses were precisely twice as heavy: 9 officers and 347 enlisted men killed, wounded, or missing. With 40 percent of the 1st Battalion gone, the 18th Infantry levied replacements, picking random names from a regimental roster to prevent commanders from simply dumping their shirkers and misfits. Platoons voted on whether to keep Christmas packages addressed to the dead, or send them home unopened.

Longstop belonged to the Germans, who renamed it Weihnachtshügel, Christmas Hill. There was much celebrating in the handsome house on the corner of Place de Pasteur in Tunis, where Arnim lived, with toasts of Tunisian red wine hoisted in honor of Lang's *Kämpfer;* sentries even set up a small Christmas tree, decorated with garlands and white candles. The revels came to a rude end at 10:30 P.M. on the twenty-sixth, when an American bomber, damaged by flak and losing altitude, jettisoned its 4,000-pound bomb before crashing on the western fringe of Tunis. The bomb detonated in the dense Arab neighborhood along Rue el Mekhtar, demolishing every house in a 16,000-square-foot area and killing eighty-four civilians.

Of the Tommies and Yanks who had held Longstop, some held it still: six months later, skeletons in moldering battle dress were found facing east on Point 290 with their kit intact, oddly unmolested by scavengers. Such constancy from the dead offered small comfort to the living; the enemy resumed his "shelling programme," ventilating parts of Medjez so completely that one man likened the town to "a cheese-grater." Upon hearing the bitter news about the destruction of his battalion on Longstop, Terry Allen reduced four days of fighting to four words: "Objective lost, mission unaccomplished."

"This Is the Hand of God"

FOR a man who had just lost a critical battle and spent thirty hours in the rear seat of a car, Eisenhower was in buoyant spirits on Christmas night. Stiff and pallid after the long drive, he soon revived upon reaching AFHQ headquarters at six P.M. A quick staff meeting; a quicker, handwritten sympathy note to Madame Darlan ("You have the consolation of knowing that he died in the service of his country and that we view his passing with regret"); and then it was off to Beetle Smith's mosaic-floored villa. Eisenhower ambled into the foyer singing in his fine deep voice:

God rest ye merry, gentlemen,
Let nothing you dismay.

With a small clique of officers, the commander-in-chief tucked into a Christmas feast of plum pudding, champagne, and roast turkey. Patton had sent from Casablanca two live birds, one of which survived the journey long enough to be stuffed, cooked, and devoured. So merry and undismayed did the gentlemen celebrate that at breakfast the next morning Harry Butcher requested only "a bowl of cold aspirin."

The investigation by French authorities into Darlan's murder was conducted with such brisk efficiency that a coffin was ordered for Bonnier de la Chapelle even before his trial began. A perfunctory prosecution followed by a perfunctory defense—"I have brought to justice a traitor," Bonnier proposed—led to the foreordained sentence of death from a secret military tribunal. The defendant seemed so certain of reprieve that he discussed with police interrogators his future career in diplomacy. "They will not shoot me. I have liberated France," he told a priest. "The bullets will be blank cartridges." At 7:45 A.M. on Saturday, December 26, Bonnier was trussed to a stake in the courtyard of a police barracks and executed even before he finished murmuring his prayers. "He was,"

Churchill later noted, “surprised to be shot.”

As his assassin was being dispatched in squalid anonymity, Darlan was about to receive a funeral worthy of a North African potentate. On Christmas Day, 8,000 people had filed through Government House in downtown Algiers, where the admiral lay in state on a catafalque blanketed in floral wreaths, and guarded by spahis and *tirailleurs* with bared halberds. “Not a tear was shed,” one correspondent insisted. Another witness claimed that General Giraud’s eyes moistened. Perhaps it was in gratitude: he would now succeed Darlan as high commissioner. Bereaved or otherwise, the genuflecting mourners—including the assassin’s father—paid homage at the bier, which was crowned with the admiral’s little billed cap. Then sailors in snowy white puttees hoisted the coffin into a black hearse and the cortège wove through the city to the Cathédrale St. Philippe.

As the funeral service began, at nine A.M. on Saturday, French officials packed the right side of the vast nave; on the left sat a large delegation of Allied officers who had been instructed to forgo “all sidearms and mourning badges.”

The requiem mass droned on. At one point the principal mourners were supposed to walk to the bier, make the sign of the cross, and sprinkle the coffin with a cedar sprig dipped in holy water. Ever the Kansas Protestant, Eisenhower remained in his pew. Clearly enjoying the commander-in-chief’s discomfiture at these papist rituals, his naval chief, Admiral Andrew B. Cunningham, punched him playfully in the shoulder. “Go ahead,” Cunningham whispered.

“I can’t do it.”

Cunningham gestured with a tilt of his head. “Go ahead.”

Eisenhower trudged up the aisle, declined to genuflect, then dunked the sprig and splattered “enough water to drown the man in the coffin,” as Cunningham later recounted. The commander-in-chief stomped back to his seat, glowering, while his amused lieutenants could hardly contain their mirth.

It was over except for the final review. Mourners filed from the church to stand on the cathedral steps. Pulling on his white gloves and glancing at the sky as if expecting heavy weather, Eisenhower took his place next to Giraud. Then a French navy band played the “Marseillaise” at a somber tempo; a Signal Corps movie cameraman recorded the Allied officers holding their salutes amid sidelong glances and eye-darting worthy of a Borgia wedding. Eight sailors emerged from the church with the casket on their shoulders. Zouaves marched past on the Chemin du Thelmely, followed by spahis on white chargers, a British color guard, and a company from the 34th Division. An Army officer with a clipboard noted “the following errors, which should be avoided the next time: American company failed to fix bayonets before passing in review. Also, they failed to do ‘eyes right.’ Dispersal was not properly organized.” Who the critiquing officer expected the corpse to be “the next time” was not recorded.

The procession wound down the Rue Michelet to the Summer Palace. Here, at the scene of the crime, the unlamented admiral would remain in a private chapel pending his burial in the Sailors’ Cemetery. Now the Little Fellow was carrion for every epitaph writer in Christendom. De Gaulle saw Darlan as a symptom of “the long disease of the state.” Harold Macmillan, who had just arrived in Algiers as Churchill’s political representative at AFHQ, was slightly more generous: “Once bought, he stayed bought.”

But perhaps the shrewdest assessment came from David Hunt, a British intelligence officer. “The murder fell like a stone into a small pond and the ripples were only brief,” Hunt wrote. “It was as if Darlan had never been.”

Finger-pointing occupied Allied high councils for weeks after the offensive stalled on Longstop Hill. Anglo-American ties in particular showed signs of corrosion. A charming, divided-by-a-common-language mutual incomprehension had long characterized relations between the armies, as for example in the American aphorism that "Britain is a country where somebody is for ever lovingly bringing you a cup of tea up six flights of stairs." Or the story of the American headquarters clerk who took a phone call from a British officer with such a thick accent that the Yank asked his officemates, "Is there anyone here who understands French?" Many an Englishman was appalled at the long initial "A" common in American pronunciation of the word "Arab"—"very ugly this, but done in the best circles," one reporter sniffed. Harold Macmillan, whose mother was from Indiana ("I am a Hoosier," he declared with perfect Oxbridge diction upon introducing himself to Eisenhower), advised a British officer: "You will find the Americans much as the Greeks found the Romans—great big vulgar, bustling people, more vigorous than we are and also more idle, with more unspoiled virtues, but also more corrupt. We must run AFHQ as the Greeks ran the operations of the Emperor Claudius."

Yet a harsher, toxic tone now seeped into the alliance. Britain had long benefited from American bounty, and only indebtedness breeds contempt quicker than familiarity. British Army references to the Americans as "our Italians" could be heard for the first time; a British correspondent voiced the widespread view that "the Americans were frivolous about the war—gifted amateurs." A senior British general told a colleague that he considered the Yanks "crashing bores. Their hospitality and generosity were boundless, [but] their business efficiency and hustle, pure baloney." For their part, the Americans coined another bromide: "The British cope, we fix."

Longstop—the first protracted, cheek-by-jowl infantry combat shared by the cousins—intensified the enmity. A 1st Guards Brigade after-action account of the battle excoriated the 18th Infantry:

> The plain facts are that the Americans did not retain possession of the key points, and did not really make a major effort to get them back…. I have nothing whatever to say against the Americans myself, except that they were unfitted and unprepared for the task they were asked to perform, which would, in fact, have been difficult for any battalion.

To Major General Terry Allen, that American Hotspur, those were fighting words. Since the capture of Oran six weeks earlier, Allen had impatiently waited in an Algerian bivouac with his 1st Division, watching from afar as the British struggled in Tunisia. He had put his affairs in order, preparing himself for whatever ordeal lay ahead.

"Please always remember that I love you more than anyone has ever loved anyone," he wrote to his wife, Mary Fran. As if to shed the skin of a previous life, he burned various personal records, including the July 30 letter in which Marshall had warned Allen to "be on your guard" against excessive drinking. (Allen dismissed such "ridiculous allegations made against my personal habits.") By incinerating "all that stuff," Allen told Mary Fran, he hoped to purge all "rancor or ill-will in my mind or in my heart." The little bonfire provided a rite of purification; only the enemy deserved his malice. As Ernie Pyle observed, "He hated Germans and Italians like vermin."

Yet as the weeks passed he had grown incredulous, for the Big Red One remained idle while Anderson built a logistical network that could support more troops at the front. Allen and Ted Roosevelt continued to train their men hard, but garrison life suited the Fighting First no better than it did its commander. Clutching his zippered leather valise, on which he had written "Hands off! Please return" three times in blue ink, Allen swept into AFHQ headquarters in Algiers. "Is this a private

war," he was said to have demanded, his perforated cheeks hissing with indignation, "or can anybody get in?"

Frustration turned to outrage as pieces of the division were shaved off and shipped east. First the 5th Field Artillery had been sent to the British at Tébourba, where most of the battalion's officers were promptly captured. Then a battalion from the 26th Infantry was dispatched to southern Tunisia. Allen believed that "infantry, like whiskey, loses potency when diluted" moreover, fragmenting the division undermined morale. Men did not risk their lives in battle for cause or country, Allen insisted, but to keep faith with their buddies. "A man fights to help the man next to him, just as a company fights to keep pace with its flanks," he insisted. "Things have to be that simple."

The last straw had been the dispatch of his 18th Infantry—one-third of the Big Red One's infantry strength—and the subsequent mauling of the regiment's 1st Battalion on Longstop. Grieving for his dead men and furious at the British slur against them, Allen had no intention of ignoring the charge that his troops were "unfitted and unprepared." He ordered the division intelligence officer to investigate the 18th Infantry's performance during Longstop. Predictably, the subsequent account painted a far different picture, of British malfeasance as well as American failings. British commanders had "completely misused" York's battalion, the investigation concluded. Allen stuffed the report in his valise and set off for British V Corps headquarters in Tunisia.

General Allfrey read the paper over breakfast while Allen sucked on a cigarette, eyes narrowed against the smoke.

"I can't understand the rumors that I hear from Beetle Smith and General Eisenhower of the Americans being incompetent soldiers," Allen said when Allfrey finished. "Particularly the reports from the higher echelons of command in your army."

The blood had drained from Allfrey's face. "I have no apologies," he said with a shrug. "I haven't heard anything like this from the commander of the Guards brigade or the division commander." He gestured with the sheaf of papers in his hand. "What are you going to do with this?"

Allen kept his gaze steady, then reached across the table, took the report from Allfrey, and tore it in half. "I hope this will be a lesson to the British high command on how to deal with the Americans," he said. "I am not going to cause an international incident over this, but I expect that if I get any British troops under my command, I'll give them a lot better treatment than you have given my men." He saluted and walked out.

If not precisely gracious, the gesture was generous. Allen had averted a row and cauterized an ugly wound. But many more such flourishes would be necessary before the war approached the Allied ideal of a righteous crusade in which good men dared to trust one another.

The bottom of the year had come, and with it the nadir of Allied fortunes in Africa. The abandonment of the drive on Tunis "has been the severest disappointment I have suffered to date," Eisenhower confessed in a cable to the combined chiefs on the twenty-sixth. His original orders from London and Washington had directed him to carry the TORCH offensive "to the east through Libya against the rear of the Axis forces in the Western Desert." In this he had failed, and no bowl of cold aspirin would set it right.

There would be no trapping of Rommel's rump army in Libya between Anderson's First Army and Bernard Montgomery's Eighth Army, now lumbering westward out of Egypt. Rather than crushing Axis forces in the jaws of a vise, the failed Allied strategy gave interior lines to the enemy and all but guaranteed that four armies—Anderson and Montgomery, Arnim and Rommel—would slug it out in a campaign of attrition not unlike that on the Western Front a quarter century before.

An enormous siege loomed, and perspicacious strategists could begin to see that a fast, mobile campaign of maneuver would never come easily against Fortress Europe. An armed *Gefreiter* dug into a hillside was harder to remove than an impacted molar. Someone with perfect prescience might have seen that failure at the gates of Tunis had cascading consequences: delaying the invasion of the Italian boot by several months, preventing Allied armies from breaching the Gustav Line south of Rome until 1944, and extending the Italian campaign until the end of the war. But all that lay in the future, and was impossible to know.

For now, there were deficiencies to address. The tactical shortcomings of the U.S. Army had been all too evident, and they were meticulously catalogued by observers dispatched from the War Department. One report declared:

> The German army makes war better than we are now making it. The prevailing attitude is that the North African operation is just another maneuver with live ammunition. The enemy is regarded as the visiting team, and this is *not* a major game. Even units suffering heavy casualties did not evince hatred of the enemy…. Both officers and men are psychologically unprepared for war.

In another assessment, a colonel concluded, "More than discipline, I believe, [is] the lack of valor, the desire to kill or be killed; the will to fight is missing." A major general indicted junior officers in particular for "not leading their men well, which is evidenced by the comparatively large proportion of casualties among field officers who have to supply the impetus to their juniors to move forward."

All this was terribly true, but subtle changes could be sensed in the Americans. They were learning fieldcraft: how to keep off ridgelines, how to camouflage slit trenches, how to flush German crews from their tanks with white phosphorus smoke sucked into the engines. At first, few had known what many now knew: that battle is incessant noise, confusion, danger, and misery. Ernie Pyle was right: the velvet *was* all gone from living. They had seen things no man should see: incineration; evisceration; the soldier, killed by a booby trap, whose face resembled the "cracked porcelain surface of an old vase—thousands of small splits from the concussion."

They were becoming hard-bitten. They were wary of excessively gungho leaders—known as "questers for glory"—but appreciative of those who remained calm and tactically alert. They had learned that combat was slower than expected, a choreography of feint, thrust, withdrawal, and parry; that the battlefield often seemed empty and lonely; that death was ubiquitous, a fifth element added to air, fire, water, and earth. True, they did not hate yet; but they were developing the capacity for hatred, which required a nihilistic core of resignation and rage. C. Russ Martin, a sergeant in the 1st Division, hinted at this upon hearing of the death of his twin brother in North Africa: "Twins, we feel for one another, and the minute he got killed, I knew it, a sensation and a kind of relief from worrying about him. I didn't have to worry about him anymore."

In the wake of Longstop, another weary general sat down to explain himself. Marked "personal and most secret," Anderson's lengthy Christmas Day letter to Alan Brooke was indeed both. "Things have not gone well and all my plans have had to be scrapped," Anderson wrote. "I am very disappointed, as I am convinced we had an excellent chance of smashing our way into Tunis with my concentrated force, the Boche being rather widely spread." But he and Eisenhower had agreed "to bow to *force majeure*…. This is the hand of God."

He flicked through other campaign issues: Eisenhower seemed determined to shift the battle to

southern Tunisia; the Americans had chosen not to give the British the remaining Sherman and Lee tanks from CCB; Darlan's murder was probably "for the best," although to strengthen Giraud further by making him commander-in-chief "would be disastrous. The man lives in the clouds."

But Anderson's great theme was the manifestation of the divine in this muddy, embattled world. He returned to that motif as he finished his dispatch. "I feel deflated and disappointed, but it is no use getting depressed. It would be too easy if we all attempted everything and succeeded.

"The Almighty," he added, "is much too wise to spoil us mortals that way."

Part Three

7. CASABLANCA

The Ice-Cream Front

AT 10:30 P.M. on Saturday, January 9, 1943, the presidential limousine rolled through the White House gates and turned south past the rime-glazed Ellipse and the Washington Monument. Only four blocks from the executive mansion, the car veered down a guarded ramp on the east side of Fourteenth Street and vanished beneath the Bureau of Engraving and Printing. The new presidential rail coach, *Ferdinand Magellan,* stood on a secret spur built two months earlier to allow secure shipments of newly printed paper money from the government presses overhead. Secret Service agents opened the limousine door and carried the president half a dozen steps to the railcar, gently setting him into an armless wheelchair. Gray and haggard from another war winter in Washington, Roosevelt nevertheless grinned broadly as he slipped a cigarette into his holder. The great adventure had begun.

A few final items were hoisted onto the train, including gas masks and a rack of M-1 carbines. To avoid suspicious piles of luggage at the White House, agents had picked up the suitcases of the president's thirty traveling companions at their houses. The porters and waiters who normally staffed the presidential train had been replaced by Filipino mess stewards from the White House yacht. Custom built by the Pullman Company, the *Ferdinand Magellan* was a plush, wheeled fortress with window glass three inches thick and an armored rear door that weighed nearly a ton. The main coach had four staterooms, an observation deck, a dining room that could seat twelve, and a galley stocked with presidential favorites, including wild duck, terrapin, and vintage wines. A baggage car behind the engine had been converted into a communications center, with a coding machine and four transmitters powered by a pair of 10,000-watt generators capable of lighting a small town.

With a steamy sigh, the train lurched forward, clacking past the Navy Yard. Not until half an hour before departure had the engineer been given any inkling of their destination: feint north into Maryland as if heading to the Roosevelt home in Hyde Park, New York, he was told, then turn around on a siding at Fort Meade and head south. So secret was the trip that Roosevelt was listed on the manifest simply as "Register Number 1." His press secretary would learn that the president had left Washington only upon walking into his empty bedroom on Monday morning.

Roosevelt loved maps, and he had pored over the route of their five-day journey: twenty-seven hours by train to Miami—the stewards would burn incense to mask the ripening odor of dirty laundry—then a chartered Pan Am flying boat to Trinidad, followed by another flight to Brazil, and a third leg 2,000 miles across the Atlantic, to Gambia on Africa's west coast. Navy ships had been posted along the water route in case the plane went down; all crews were sworn to secrecy. This would be Roosevelt's first flight since 1932, and the first time an American president had ever left the country during war.

But their final destination still remained secret even from some members of the traveling party. With his affection for the clandestine, Roosevelt had dropped a clue yet to be deciphered. At the usual White House party for family and friends on New Year's Eve, before his champagne toast "to the united nations' victory," the president had shown his guests a new film directed by Michael Curtiz. Starring Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman, the melodrama told the story of an American expatriate struggling with his conscience and his heart in Vichy North Africa in 1941.

Capitaine Renault: What in heaven's name brought you to Casablanca?
Rick: My health. I came to Casablanca for the waters.
Renault: The waters? What waters? We're in the desert.
Rick: I was misinformed.

No one had guessed that *Casablanca* was anything but a movie.

There was no Rick in Casablanca, no Ilsa, no Nazi goons or tinkling piano in the Café Américain. But of intrigue there was plenty, and not even Hollywood could imagine the goings-on in the well-heeled suburb of Anfa. A kind of Roman camp was under construction, roughly a mile square and enclosed by concertina wire hung with pebble-filled tin cans. At the center of the camp stood a white four-story hotel that resembled a riverboat stranded amid date palms. German Armistice Commission members had lived here before November 8; the rooms had since been cleansed of canned *Schweinebraten* and photographs of toothy, buxom girls on skis. The Signal Corps had installed three switchboards, a message center, and forty-one miles of phone cable.

Fragrant with begonias and mimosa, the lush grounds swept down to the sea, where roaring surf heaved against a black breakwater. Eighteen villas dotted the Anfa landscape, each recently appropriated from a wealthy French *colon*. Secret Service agents removed eavesdropping microphones from several villas, but left the volumes of Boccaccio illustrated with fine pornographic woodcuts. The grandest of the houses, Dar es Saada, had a living room with a twenty-eight-foot cathedral ceiling and zebra-hide sofas; steel shutters protected the tall windows. Engineers converted the swimming pool into a bomb shelter reinforced with steel plates stripped from the late *Jean Bart*. As ordered, Army carpenters built a wooden ramp up the steps to the villa's front door. They wondered why.

Supplies and personnel poured into the camp, including officers dragooned as hotel desk clerks. American soldiers prowled the area with mine detectors and Geiger counters. Physicians tested food and bottled water for poisons before the provisions were placed under armed guard. A pallet of fine brandy arrived from London. From Algiers, as requested, Eisenhower shipped three cases of gin, three cases of Scotch, and five young captains from the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps. With excruciating indirection, a protocol officer tried to find out whether a regimental band from the 2nd Armored Division knew how to play "Hail to the Chief." Belated attempts were made to teach American soldiers some decorum: on posters in company billets, George Washington on horseback admonished them not to curse.

Overseeing this feverish activity was the putative viceroy of Morocco, George Patton. In the two months since TORCH's end, Patton had converted Casablanca into a vast supply depot and a port of debarkation for the thousands of troops pouring into Africa every week. "Every other four-wheeler horse cab had two or three Americans on board," author A. B. Austin wrote. "You could see them strolling through the parks, sitting with French girls in cafés, riding on bicycles and in jeeps, playing baseball." Soldiers firing tommy guns chased quail through the cork forests outside town, while officers hunted wild boar with platoons of Moroccan bush-beaters. French municipal officials assured American generals that venereal disease in Moroccan brothels had long been "absolutely steady"—at 100 percent. So comfortable was life in Casablanca, with its nut-cake patisseries and sleeve-tugging flesh merchants, that it became known as "the Ice-Cream Front."

Patton was miserable. Whether careering about in his huge Packard limousine or staring at the sea from his office atop the Shell Oil building, he brooded at being shunted into this backwater also known as Boring Acres. During a brief visit to Tunisia he strutted about, crowing, "Where are the

Germans? I want to get shot at." Later he scribbled, "I want to be Top Dog and only battle can give me that." Favorable press clippings fed his vanity—Bea had collected more than a thousand articles about her husband since November 8. Yet such meretricious laurels only whetted his thirst for real glory. "Personally," he wrote in a letter home, "I wish I could get out and kill someone."

Patton discharged much of his frustration at his immediate superiors. He had been heartsick to learn of Clark's promotion to lieutenant general, which gave him three stars to Patton's two. Clark was "too damned slick," Patton declared, and "makes my flesh creep." He railed at Eisenhower's perceived tilt toward the British and his use of English colloquialisms such as "tiffin" and "petrol." "I don't think he or Clark have any idea what they are going to do next," he said. Patton sensed a growing rift between the two men and happily encouraged it by offering a sympathetic ear to each. Clark for more than an hour "spent his time cutting Ike's throat," Patton told his diary on January 10, "[and] feels that Ike has sold out to British." For his part, Eisenhower confided worries about Clark's loyalty. "He and Clark are at outs," Patton wrote privately.

But high-command politics would have to wait. The first of a hundred high-ranking guests had begun to filter into Casablanca for the conference now code-named SYMBOL. Patton was their host, and his full attention was needed to keep his visitors happy.

Arriving from Washington, London, Gibraltar, and Algiers, the conferees landed at a new airfield ten miles inland, where they were quickly bundled into waiting limousines. To confound prying eyes during the drive to Anfa, the car windows were smeared with mud. A diplomat reported seeing GIs around the runway "working up mud like nursery children, and slinging it with infinite satisfaction at a clean, polished sedan."

The American chiefs of staff had departed Washington on January 9 in a pair of transport planes carrying six steamer trunks of trinkets for trading with the locals, as well as parkas, snowshoes, and other arctic gear in the unlikely event the aircraft missed Africa and crash-landed on the Russian steppe. They had not even left the Western Hemisphere when a protocol squabble erupted over whether the plane carrying Admiral Ernest J. King, the flinty chief of naval operations, should remain airborne at Puerto Rico until George Marshall landed first, as befitted the senior officer in the delegation. This flapdoodle was followed, on the leg to Gambia, by such dire warnings from the quartermaster general about malevolent African mosquitoes that each passenger was encouraged to take full malaria prophylaxis. When the plane taxied to a stop at the Gambian seaport of Bathurst, Marshall was first down the stairs—in mosquito boots, gloves, and a floppy veiled hat like a beekeeper's—only to be greeted by nonplused British officers in khaki shorts and shirtsleeves.

Now, finally, they were in Casablanca.

Churchill and his entourage arrived after a ten-hour flight in an unheated bomber from a field near Oxford. As was his custom on long plane trips, the prime minister wore a silk vest and nothing else. Each passenger had been issued a parachute, currency from every country in which the plane might conceivably crash, and a device for catching the dew so as not to die of thirst—if "we were clever enough to use it properly," one passenger wrote. Churchill, who adored skullduggery no less than Roosevelt did, sometimes traveled disguised in a false beard; on this trip, he settled for an RAF uniform. Upon landing in Casablanca, he dodged security officers trying to shoo him into a car and instead marched around the tarmac, smoking a cigar and shaking hands while his twenty suitcases were unloaded. "Any fool can see that is an air commodore disguised as the prime minister," a British general quipped. One admirer thought he resembled "a big English bulldog who had been taught to give his paw."

He was perhaps more fox than dog. The Casablanca conference, while reviewing progress of the campaign in Africa, was primarily intended to chart the Allied course for the rest of the war, although in Stalin's absence: he refused to leave the Soviet Union while the battle for Stalingrad continued. Roosevelt had warned his lieutenants that "at the conference the British will have a plan and stick to it."

True enough. Churchill was no keener on a frontal assault across the English Channel than he had been six months earlier, during the TORCH debate; on November 9, even with the African landings still in progress, he had begun agitating for "a decisive attack on Italy, or, better still, southern France." To help build the British case for a continuing Mediterranean campaign, he had ordered a headquarters ship, H.M.S. *Bulolo,* to Casablanca. With its war room full of planning studies bound in red leather dispatch folders, *Bulolo* symbolized the British empire's formidable bureaucratic firepower.

On the evening of his arrival at Anfa Camp, Churchill gathered his military chieftains in Villa Mirador, a stone's throw from the slightly grander Dar es Saada, which awaited Roosevelt's arrival. The prime minister knew that the American military considered the Mediterranean "a kind of dark hole," where additional "periphery pecking" would simply delay the cross-Channel invasion needed to attack the Nazi jugular. The Americans also believed the British had little sympathy for their struggle in the Pacific against the Japanese. But for Churchill, as his physician Lord Moran put it, "the control of the Mediterranean meant…control of the Western world." The Middle Sea was critical to British imperial fortunes in Egypt, the Middle East, and India; Churchill also deemed it the Axis's most vulnerable point.

The prime minister quickly outlined the British plan for Casablanca: he would lobby Roosevelt; the British chiefs would lobby their American counterparts; all issues would be discussed fully, without reference to clock or calendar. The relentless logic of the British position would eventually win through, Churchill promised, like "the dripping of water on a stone."

The task involved nothing less than the future of civilization. To Harold Macmillan, Churchill and Roosevelt were, respectively, the Emperor of the East and the Emperor of the West. The former had a plan, indeed he did, and he intended to stick to it. Now all that remained before SYMBOL began in earnest was for the Emperor of the West to arrive with whatever thoughts he had on how to win the war.

Speedy Valley

As the Allied brain trust gathered in Casablanca to plot future campaigns, the current campaign in Tunisia sputtered. Baleful weather and tenacious Germans had thwarted the Allied drive toward Tunis. Eisenhower now expected his troops to remain stalled for at least two months, and he shifted his attention farther south, with an attack plan that required the first big military operation launched in a Tunisian winter since the Punic Wars.

Operation SATIN envisioned a quick lunge across southern Tunisia to the coastal town of Gabès, 260 miles south of Tunis. A rear guard laying minefields would then block any counterattack by Rommel's army driving from Libya into Tunisia, while the main force pushed eighty miles up the coast to capture Sfax, a small port now defended by 2,700 Axis troops with fifteen tanks. The attack was intended to prevent Rommel's army from joining Arnim's; it also would lure the defenders of Tunis from their breastworks and give Anderson's mired First Army another chance to spring forward. SATIN was to be an American production, undertaken by the U.S. II Corps, which now included the 1st Armored Division, one of Terry Allen's infantry regiments, and various other units. SATIN was bold but also perilous, and it constituted an abrupt change in theater strategy. No longer was the immediate

Allied objective the capture of Tunis and Bizerte, but rather the destruction of Rommel's army by Montgomery's hammer bashing the enemy against the SATIN anvil. Although 437,000 soldiers and 42,000 vehicles had been landed in North Africa since November 8, Anglo-American forces in Tunisia remained thin and undersupplied. To lengthen the Tunisian battlefield would stretch Axis troops—still flowing into the bridgehead at a rate of 1,000 a day—but also the Allies. "The Allied forces now appear to be extended over a very wide front, with practically no depth to their position," the combined chiefs observed in early January with undisguised anxiety. "This situation is fraught with danger." A SATIN spearhead to the coast might sever Rommel from Arnim, or it might be crushed between those two German grindstones. "It looks as if the II Corps is to be bait, a sheep tied to a post," an American staff officer wrote in early January.

Eisenhower and his staff concocted SATIN, then paid it little attention as the impending Casablanca conference and other diversions intruded. In the first two weeks of January, the proposed SATIN force grew from 20,000 men to 38,000; that meant pushing forward not 450 tons of provisions daily, but 800 tons, a task beyond the frail Allied supply system. The plan had grown "logistically out of hand," a senior supply officer warned. Bickering persisted over the operation's ultimate objective, and whether swinging as far south as Gabès made sense. But Eisenhower was adamant that "it was fatal to do nothing." The attack was scheduled for the fourth week of January.

Eisenhower made several moves intended to exert tighter command over the newly configured front, none satisfactory and one ultimately disastrous. In a former Constantine orphanage, he established a forward command post from which he assumed "personal command of the battle area" despite remaining 200 miles from any fighting. As his proxy in Constantine when he was back in Algiers, which was almost always, Eisenhower summoned Lucian Truscott, the conqueror of Port Lyautey and a new major general. Because Truscott lacked the commander-in-chief's rank and stature, his influence over the British, French, and even American contingents was largely limited to passing messages to and from AFHQ headquarters.

Mark Clark was a candidate to command American forces in southern Tunisia, but in early January he received a post "for which he has begged and pleaded for a long time," in Eisenhower's tart phrase: the new U.S. Fifth Army, comprising all those underemployed troops in Morocco and Algeria. George Marshall, still obsessed with the nonexistent threat from Spain, insisted the new army remain on guard against Spanish treachery, leaving the Tunisian campaign to others. "Ike doesn't think Clark is disappointed—in fact thinks he is rather relieved as he hadn't wanted the [Tunisian command] particularly," Harry Butcher wrote in his diary. Some believed that Clark was indeed happy not to risk his reputation in actual combat; the British, who despised him—"very ambitious and unscrupulous," Alan Brooke wrote privately—were happy to see him leave AFHQ headquarters.

No sooner had he taken Fifth Army—"his own manure pile," Eisenhower called it—than Clark began fretting over his future and whether the Mediterranean war would end before he had proven himself in a battle command. At the same time, his relentless self-aggrandizement again discomfited his superiors. Eisenhower this winter had twice privately warned his old friend about the hazards of overweening ambition, and Marshall—as furrow-browed as any prophet—lectured him against self-promotion. "Clark admitted he had perhaps been overly ambitious, and would knuckle down and do the job assigned to him like the good soldier he is," Butcher told his diary.

But who would command II Corps? Eisenhower had just the man, and in him the makings of a disaster.

"I bless the day you urged Fredendall upon me, and cheerfully acknowledge that my earlier

doubts of him were completely unfounded," Eisenhower had cabled Marshall in November. This unctuous poppycock soon would yield to resurgent doubt and then bitter regret, but for now Major General Lloyd R. Fredendall remained in good odor, not least because he was perceived to be "a Marshall man," and of all the officers in all the world *he* had been chosen by the U.S. Army to lead its inaugural corps in combat against the Third Reich.

At fifty-nine, with periwinkle-blue eyes and hair the color of gunmetal, he was second oldest of the thirty-four men who would be entrusted with American corps command in World War II. Short, stocky, and opinionated, Fredendall had earned a reputation in the prewar Army as a capable trainer and a skilled handler of troops. Reporters liked him for his hail-fellow accessibility and imperturbable air—he liked to sit cross-legged on the floor at two A.M. playing solitaire, like Grant's whittling during the Wilderness carnage. His father had been a pioneer in Wyoming Territory, eventually serving as the sheriff of Laramie and a scourge of cattle rustlers before accepting an Army commission in the Spanish-American War. Young Lloyd went off to West Point in 1901, only to flunk mathematics and depart after six months. Reappointed by a Wyoming senator, he again lasted just a semester. "A very soldierly little fellow, but extremely goaty at mathematics," his academy roommate observed. After earning a degree, improbably, at MIT, Fredendall took an infantry commission in 1907.

Thirty-five years later he arrived in Oran during TORCH with a peaked cap perched at his trademark rakish angle, and a conviction that neither Eisenhower nor Clark wanted him in Africa since he outranked both in pre-war, permanent grade. As de facto military governor in Oran, Fredendall showed exceptional tolerance for Vichy thuggery; a prominent French Fascist received the American contract for airport reconstruction despite pronouncing himself against "the Jews, the Negroes, and the British." When an American diplomat protested, Fredendall threatened him with arrest, thundering, "Lay off that stuff! What the hell do you know about it?" Orders issued from his headquarters in Oran's Grand Hotel were headed, "II Corps—In the field," which provoked hoots from those living in tents and slit trenches.

Unencumbered with charisma, Fredendall substituted bristling obstinacy. Truscott found him "outspoken in his opinions and critical of superiors and subordinates alike." On the telephone, Fredendall employed a baffling code, which he often abandoned in mid-conversation whenever he and his auditor had become sufficiently confused. During a mid-January conversation with Truscott—whose stenographer eavesdropped on an extension—Fredendall reported:

> I do not have enough MENUS…. Relative to the force at Ousseltia, it has been passed from the head ASH TRAY to a second ASH TRAY…. Everything DAGWOOD of GARDEN has been withdrawn or collapsed. I cannot spare any CLOUDS.

Translation: He was short of infantry. A unit that had been serving under a French commander was now under a different Frenchman. Forces north of Pichon had been routed. Fredendall had no extra battalions.

Fredendall also harbored the Anglophobia so common in senior American officers; II Corps became a hotbed of anti-British sentiment to the point of mocking English accents and perpetuating the calumny that "Ike is the best commander the British have." As the corps staff checked out of the Grand Hotel for the front—the real front—a ditty circulated among them:

> *When the British First got stuck in the mud*
> *And settled down for tea,*

They up and beckoned for the Fighting Second
To help in Tunisee.

Lloyd Fredendall's chosen avenue for Operation SATIN started on the eastern border of Algeria in ancient Tébessa, the walled city of Solomon the Eunuch and headquarters of Rome's Third Legion. Nine miles southeast of Tébessa, in a sunless gulch accessible only by a serpentine gravel road, II Corps planted its flag and began staging for the grand march to the sea that would cleave the Axis armies in half. Soon Fredendall and sixty-eight staff officers had established residence in the ravine, officially called Speedy Valley but also known as "Lloyd's Very Last Resort" and "Shangri-La, a million miles from nowhere." Inexperienced and unusually young, the II Corps staff was dubbed "Fredendall's kindergarten" their commander had thrown up his hands in mock horror, exclaiming, "My God, I am going to war surrounded by children!" Three thousand support soldiers—signalers, anti-aircraft gunners, engineers—infested the fir copses around Speedy Valley. "The woods are stiff with troops, and it sounds like the Battle of the Marne though no enemy is within many miles," a lieutenant wrote. Combat units mustered farther east, toward Bou Chebka and Kasserine.

Tébessa's high plateau was "cold as a snake," one officer reported, adding, a few days later, "Everyone is freezing." Perpetual shade and frequent snow squalls made Speedy Valley particularly inhospitable. Officers lived and worked in "igloos"—frigid tents with crushed stone floors—wearing every stitch they owned, including wool watch caps that "made the place look like a lumber camp," a reporter commented. Wearing a knit balaclava with an upturned visor, Fredendall slouched in his canvas chair near a potbelly stove and studied the map, played solitaire, or gabbed with passing correspondents like a cracker-barrel clerk in a country store. He had ordered a bulletproof Cadillac similar to Eisenhower's, and periodically called Oran to find out why the car had not arrived.

Day and night, Speedy Valley was a bedlam of pneumatic drills and jackhammers. In a most perplexing decision, Fredendall had commanded the 19th Engineer Regiment to shelter his headquarters by boring a pair of immense, double-shafted tunnels in the ravine wall. The project was like "the digging of the New York subway," Fredendall's aide reported. Working from a blueprint labeled "II Corps Tunnel Job," engineers began excavating two complexes fifty yards apart, each with parallel shafts six and a half feet high, five feet wide, and braced every four feet with timbers ten inches thick. Walls and ceilings were lined with planks milled in the nearby forest and overlapped like shingles. Each complex was to be U-shaped, running 160 feet into the hillside with the parallel shafts joined at the rear by ample galleries designed for offices and a magazine. Fredendall supervised the construction with pharaonic intensity, and the gloomy ravine soon assumed a Valley of the Kings ambience. The work occupied a valuable engineering company for weeks.

Some officers believed the tunnels a prudent precaution against enemy air attack. Others—noting that Speedy Valley was seventy miles from the front, well concealed, and protected by an anti-aircraft battalion—considered the project a ludicrous embarrassment. Some questioned Fredendall's courage. Breaking off a chat with visiting reporters at the sound of airplanes overhead, he would roll his eyes heavenward and mumble, "Some of ours, I hope." Fredendall's chief engineer, Lieutenant Colonel William A. Carter, later recalled, "We had no proper explosives to use for tunneling, and our men had no experience in tunneling…. But I could not convince him that it would take a long time to do what he wanted.

"To make the digging as unpopular as possible in an effort to have it stopped, I made sure the blasting was done at night to keep everyone awake," Carter added. "But that did not stop it."

As the Tunisian front lengthened from north to south, Allied and Axis troops jostled each other in a fringe of a fire that extended 200 miles from the Mediterranean to the Sahara. In the far south, Colonel Raff's task force recaptured the oasis town of Gafsa, gateway to the great desert. Suspected Tunisian collaborators and looters, who sometimes could be identified by the stolen light fixtures hanging from their burnooses, were rounded up outside the pink-walled kasbah and remanded to French troops.

"Of the thirty-nine Arabs slated to be shot, only one escaped," Raff reported. "One of them didn't die immediately so a member of the firing squad pulled out his pistol and pumped four bullets into the man's head at close range…. They lay in the Tunisian sunlight on view for the whole town to see."

In the muddy north, Allied troops of different nationalities were mingled even more as Eisenhower tried piecemeal reinforcement of desperately weak French segments of the line below the Medjerda valley. Confusion was the result. Ted Roosevelt, who had been peeled away from the 1st Division on temporary duty to help the French, initially was charmed by the Byronic landscape of ancient ruins on a wind-swept tell. "You and I could have a lovely time here were it the piping days of peace," he wrote Eleanor on January 16. But this romanticism soon clouded over. In the course of a single month, the Fighting First's 26th Infantry had thirty-three other units attached to it, while the regiment's 3rd Battalion noted in the daily log, "We have served under everything but the Rising Sun and the swastika." Roosevelt wrote:

> The units are all mixed—French, English, American. That makes command and coordination a major problem. To mix and fragment units is a military crime of the gravest sort…. I have done all that lies in my power. Man does what he can and bears what he must.

Among the most active outposts were five camps run by the Special Operations Executive, a British organization established in 1940 to nurture indigenous resistance groups, with help from the American OSS. Intended to bolster Anderson's First Army and Fredendall's II Corps, each camp was commanded by a British officer who supervised recruits drawn from Vichy concentration camps and other seedbeds of disaffection. Collectively they were known as the "Bad-Eyes Brigade," for the unusual number of brigands in bifocals.

The senior American in the operation, Carleton S. Coon, was a corpulent Harvard anthropologist who had run guns to pre-TORCH Morocco and invented "detonating mule turds," artistically sculpted plastic explosives that were liberally scattered on Tunisian roads to flatten German tires. Fluent in Arabic and French, Coon had taught the fine art of blowing things up to French irregulars in Aïn Taya until one of his pupils, Bonnier de la Chapelle, showed extracurricular initiative by shooting Admiral Darlan; although Coon had no discernible role in the assassination, he was given leave to disappear until Algiers cooled down. Thus had he appeared at the SOE's northernmost post on remote Cap Serrat, forty miles west of Bizerte, under the nom de guerre Captain Retinitis and dressed in a British Army uniform with phony officer's pips cut from the green felt of a billiard table. "Now," a fellow saboteur observed, "the company of rogues and cutthroats is complete."

Leading a band of fifty desperadoes, Coon blew up a railroad bridge, harassed the local Italian garrison, and scattered mule turds by the bushel. His freebooters soon specialized in seizing hostages, usually the sons of elders in villages of doubtful loyalty. The boys were imprisoned in the Cap Serrat lighthouse until their fathers provided authenticated information about enemy positions. "This use of hostages was our chief source of intelligence aside from the work of our own patrols," Coon reported. Less successful were booby traps, which according to the professor's accounting claimed only two

casualties: “one Arab and one cow.”

From Cap Serrat to Gafsa and at all points in between, the Tunisian winter proved crueler than most Allied soldiers had imagined possible in Africa. “It is still bitterly cold and as our military with its customary dumbness did not envisage this and considered Africa as a tropical country, we are not well prepared,” Roosevelt wrote. Disclosing that “I have not changed my underclothes for twelve days,” T.R. catalogued what he was wearing: “wool union suit, then my wool trousers and shirt, then a sweater, then a lined field jacket, then my lined combat overalls, then a muffler, then my heavy short coat.” Disheveled as always, he was still freezing.

So were the tens of thousands of other soldiers whom Ernie Pyle christened the “mud-rain-frost-and-wind boys.” Supply trains could not keep pace with the battalions flooding into Tunisia, and II Corps was short of field glasses, machine guns, truck parts, and especially hot food. “If you don’t eat for three days, canned Army grub tastes like chicken,” one resigned soldier wrote home. Another offered an improvised recipe for gruel: cracked wheat and condensed milk boiled together with two rolls of Life Savers. An officer in the 1st Division reported that the battalion cook had been nicknamed Hitler. “We often wonder if all the hogs in America have been turned into Spam and all the cows into corned beef,” he added. Cattle rustling flourished; soldiers claimed that grilled beefsteak was actually “Tunisian deer” or “German chicken.”

Dysentery, parasites, trench foot, and bad teeth bedeviled those living in the open in mid-winter. So did Luftwaffe fighters. Soldiers joked bitterly about “Stuka time”—comprising nearly all daylight hours—and “Spitfire time”—the half hour or so each day during which friendly aircraft appeared. Slit trenches were dug deeper with each strafing until they became caves. Skittish soldiers often confused migrating “Messerstorks” with approaching enemy planes. After strafing caused 250 Allied casualties in one week along a six-mile stretch of road outside Medjez-el-Bab, Evelegh ordered that all vehicles destroyed in air attacks be removed from sight immediately to avoid lowering morale. Morale sank anyway.

“Never out of artillery range, mail weeks catching up, warm rations one time…. An old man at twenty,” one private wrote. Day by miserable day the troops eased themselves into combat “like an old man with chilblains getting into a hot bath,” A. J. Liebling observed. The troops also edged toward that timeless state common to veteran armies in which the men trusted no one less wretched than themselves. Still they did not hate. But each time they had to bundle up unopened mail for the dead and return it to the rear, their blood rose. An officer noticed that American artillery barrages now elicited raucous cheers. “Lay it on them!” the men yelled. “Give it to the bastards!” And the poignancy of young men dying young intruded every hour of every day. This farewell note was found in a dead pilot’s sunglasses case:

> Mother, please do not grieve but rather console yourself in the fact that I am happy. Try to enjoy the remainder of your life as best you can and have no regrets, for you have been a wonderful mother and I love you. Jim.

It was enough to incite a man to murder.

As the day for SATIN drew nearer, the man who would lead the armored thrust to the coast finally stepped onto the Tunisian stage. Major General Orlando Ward, commander of “Old Ironsides”—the 1st Armored Division—had waited first in Britain and then in Oran for permission to unify his force at last. Ward had been no less irked than Terry Allen at the splintering of his division. He held Mark

Clark responsible for keeping him in England while CCB landed in TORCH and headed east. "I should have begged to go instead of taking orders," he told his diary in mid-November. Paul Robinett, eager as ever to prevent his superiors from making a mistake, fueled Ward's anguish by telling him, "I would either go or be relieved of my command." But Ward played the dutiful soldier, and now his moment had arrived.

Ward was a quiet, genteel man, with large sensitive eyes set in an oval face; some thought he resembled a schoolmaster more than a tank commander. Known as Dan to his family, he was Pinky to everyone else, though only graying wisps remained of his crop of red hair. "I am fifty and at times feel my age," he had confessed a year earlier. A residual reddish cowlick grated so on George Marshall's mania for order when Ward worked for him in the late 1930s that the Army chief had demanded, "Ward, make that hair lie down."

Born in Missouri and raised in Denver, Ward had graduated from West Point a year ahead of Eisenhower, invaded Mexico with the 7th Cavalry in 1916, and fought five battles in France. Homesick for his new bride, Edith, he wondered whether he was better suited to farming. "The husband in me tends to make me not much of a soldier," he told his diary. Transfer to the field artillery put to rest the farmer in him (although not the horticulturalist: as commander of a frontier post in Wyoming in the 1920s, he planted 25,000 trees). His innovations in gunnery at Fort Sill in the 1930s became the stuff of legend, including a technique that reduced the time required to concentrate the fire of twelve battalion howitzers from several hours to six minutes. ("Like squirting a hose," he said with a shrug.) As secretary of the Army General Staff before the war, Ward so impressed the phlegmatic Marshall that the chief recommended he be immediately promoted two grades, from colonel to major general, cowlick be damned.

Ward was honest, ambitious, and emotional. "If the sermon moved him, the pew would shake," his daughter Robin recalled. He could be irreverent, often quoting *Alice in Wonderland*: "Sentence first, verdict afterwards!" To a group of younger officers he had recently confessed, "It has been my observation that most generals are generally unaware of their most peculiar peculiarities." While working in Washington, he had often visited the National Zoo to study the monkeys on the theory that their behavior would illuminate that of the primates in the War Department. An imperishable grief also marked him: When his daughter Katherine, just eighteen, had died of cancer on Christmas Day, 1938, Ward entered "a period of numbness from which I will never recover."

Ward had two peculiarities of his own that informed his generalship. The first was a picayune Anglophobia. He likened the U.S. Army to "a pointer pup. If someone with a red mustache, a swagger stick, and a British accent speaks to us, we lie down on the ground and wiggle." On invasion day, November 8, he wrote in his diary, "Went to church. They prayed for Empire, and the King, but not the Allies." The destruction in Oran harbor of his armored infantry battalion during the British-led Operation RESERVIST simply fed his prejudice. "I hate to serve under the British," he wrote. "They have misused my troops enough already."

The other peculiar trait was an instant willingness to take offense from General Fredendall, his superior officer. Arriving in Constantine on January 15, Ward wrote in his diary, "Went [to] corps HQ to see Fredendall. Did not see fit to see me as I waited over an hour…. Corps does not look with favor on matters I suggest." Ward urged the concentration of Old Ironsides for maximum combat power in SATIN, but his advice was brushed aside in favor of what Ward considered a "dribbling commitment" of the division. Fredendall seemed "prone to make map judgment *sans* advice" by issuing orders without reconnoitering the terrain to determine if his map corresponded to reality. Ward soon concluded that Fredendall and the II Corps staff were not even studying the map carefully before drafting deployment orders "on absurd lines."

Even as Allied leaders in Casablanca were struggling to resolve their differences in pursuit of a

common purpose, the senior American commander in Tunisia and his top armor lieutenant had, with remarkable speed, cultivated a deep mutual hostility. Staff officers were surprised, then perplexed, then alarmed at this inauspicious development, explicable only in terms of personal chemistry and human folly.

"The Touch of the World"

THE Emperor of the West arrived in Casablanca at 6:20 P.M. on Thursday, January 14, 1943, tired but exhilarated after the five-day journey from Washington. With the gray in his cheeks offset by the glint in his eye, Roosevelt was bundled into a mud-smeared sedan for the circuitous drive to Anfa Camp. Installed in Villa Dar es Saada, the president welcomed Churchill for the first of ten meals and forty-three hours of conversation they would share in Casablanca. An air-raid warning after midnight required them to finish the colloquy by candlelight before Roosevelt finally went to bed at three A.M. "Winnie is a great man for the status quo," he mused, smoking a final cigarette in his uptilted holder. "He even *looks* like the status quo, doesn't he?"

Preserving the *status quo ante bellum*—particularly in maintaining His Majesty's empire—was very much part of the British scheme and, in keeping with Churchill's plan, the prime minister wooed Roosevelt while his military lieutenants wooed the American joint chiefs. At 2:30 P.M. on January 15, a dozen of the most senior generals and admirals in the Anglo-American alliance strolled back from lunch to a high-ceilinged, semicircular banquet room off the main corridor of the Anfa Hotel. Full of sunbeams and the fragrance of cut flowers, the room was dominated by a large rectangular table. Sentries guarded the door, where a neatly printed placard read: "Business: Chiefs of Staff Conference." This would be the third session of the combined chiefs in Casablanca, and before returning to the paramount issue of a global war strategy they were to hear from General Eisenhower this afternoon on the Tunisian campaign and his plan for Operation SATIN.

Poor Eisenhower: yet another room filled with bemedaled generals whose military plumage bespoke battlefield exploits greater than his own. He looked haggard, thanks to his high blood pressure, the purple bags beneath his eyes, and the lingering grippe—exacerbated by chain smoking—that had kept him in bed for four days after Christmas. "Ike seems jittery," Roosevelt later commented. The flight from Algiers this morning had hardly been restful. Two engines on Eisenhower's Flying Fortress had failed and the passengers spent the last fifty miles of the flight standing at the exits with parachutes on, ready to jump. As he strode to the head of the table the British eyed him curiously, still intrigued by how such a man could emerge from lowborn obscurity to hold this high command.

He spoke without notes. Yes, there had been setbacks in Tunisia, unfortunate delays. The roads were bad, the weather horrid, the mud unspeakable. A single dirt runway needed 2,000 tons of perforated steel matting to make it mud-proof, but to carry that matting required the total cargo capacity of the North African rail system for at least a day. British and American soldiers had learned valuable combat lessons. As for the French—and here Eisenhower took his revenge for those long hours in the Gibraltar tunnel—they had the misfortune of being led by General Giraud, who "might be a good division commander but has no political sense and no idea of administration." In a final plunge of the knife, Eisenhower added that dealing with the late Darlan had been easier.

The SATIN offensive, scheduled to begin in a week, looked promising. "At first, operations on the right flank were looked upon primarily as a diversion," Eisenhower said. "But it now seems probable that it will be possible to advance on Sfax and hold it with infantry, while withdrawing the 1st Armored Division as a mobile reserve further to the rear." If successful, SATIN would cut the Axis

forces in half.

Watching this performance with heavily lidded eyes was General Sir Alan Brooke, chief of the Imperial General Staff and among the greatest soldiers of the war. Immaculate, punctilious, utterly fluent in French, Brooke came from a family of Northern Ireland baronets known as "the fighting Brookes." With brilliantine-black hair and a face as pinched as an ax blade, he had narrow shoulders, spindly legs, and the unnerving habit—as described by an admirer—of "shooting his tongue out and round his lips with the speed of a chameleon." He had been mentioned in dispatches six times in the Great War, but his charmed life had changed in April 1925 when he rolled his Bentley on a slippery road, breaking his own leg and his wife's spine; she died a few days later.

"I very much wish I could have been finished off myself at the same time," Brooke wrote. Increasingly taciturn and withdrawn, he developed a pronounced stoop and a perpetual frown. Remarriage brought new happiness—for decades, Brooke wrote his second wife lyrical love letters, always signed "Your devoted old Alan"—without rectifying the stoop, the frown, or the taciturnity. "Colonel Shrapnel" 's signature phrase was a blunt "I flatly disagree," often accompanied by the snap of a pencil. In January 1943, he was fifty-nine years old. Birding was his greatest civil passion, and he could treat *The Truth About the Cuckoo* like Holy Writ. This very morning, prowling the beach with his field glasses, Brooke had jubilantly spied a goldfinch, a stonechat, sanderlings, and a ring plover, all carefully recorded in his journal.

Such sightings did not distract him from the task at hand. As the officer largely responsible for extracting the British Expeditionary Force from Dunkirk in 1940, Brooke was disinclined to underestimate German ferocity, and he flatly disagreed with what he privately described as Eisenhower's "ridiculous plan" for SATIN. As for Brooke's opinion of the commander-in-chief himself, his diary entry for December 28, 1942, was unsparing: "Eisenhower as a general is hopeless! He submerges himself in politics and neglects his military duties, partly, I am afraid, because he knows little if anything about military matters."

Now Brooke pounced on Eisenhower like a hawk on a pigeon. How, he asked, would the II Corps drive to the sea be coordinated with Anderson's First Army in the north and Montgomery's Eighth Army in Libya? If Anderson was bogged down for two more months, would not Arnim's forces "thin out in the north and defeat the Sfax forces in detail?" Montgomery was still a week from reaching Tripoli, and Eighth Army would be "quite immobilized" until the shattered port there could be reopened. Rommel no doubt "would react like lightning" to any attack on Sfax that threatened his logistics lifeline. The Desert Fox still had an estimated 80,000 German and Italian troops, Arnim 65,000. Would not II Corps risk being trapped between Arnim and Rommel, with little prospect of help from Anderson or Montgomery? In fact, an Ultra decrypt today had disclosed that Rommel's 21st Panzer Division had already begun moving north into Tunisia.

Eisenhower tried to regroup in the face of this onslaught, but he got no help from the American chiefs, Hap Arnold, Ernest King, and Marshall. The latter appeared somnolent after a heavy lunch and had yet to open his mouth. "Fredendall's plan," as Eisenhower called it, envisioned Ward's 1st Armored Division as a counterpunching force to stave off Rommel. Eisenhower faced "the dilemma of either allowing the troops in the north to deteriorate by remaining inactive in the mud, or suffering some losses through keeping them active." The latter, he believed, "was the lesser of the two evils." Even so, he looked forward to discussing the issue further and "to make any necessary adjustments in the plan."

Eisenhower saluted and left the room with the grim look of a man in full retreat.

The British and American chiefs of staff or their deputies had met fifty-six times since an initial strategy session in January 1942, but Casablanca revealed that they were still not speaking the same language. They reached quick agreement at Anfa on several matters, including the need to bolster Stalin's Red Army, to concentrate air attacks against the German homeland, and to suppress marauding U-boats, whose number had doubled in 1942. But the preeminent issues were how to divide Allied war resources between the Pacific and Atlantic wars, and where the next blow should fall. On these vital questions, no unity obtained. It is axiomatic that commanders in conference tend to be on their best behavior and therefore at their least useful. The first few days of SYMBOL demonstrated that they could also accomplish little while behaving badly.

No sooner had Eisenhower left the conference room than Brooke resumed the dripping of water on stone that Churchill required. He believed that "final victory in the European theater before the end of 1943" was possible. Repeating arguments he had made in earlier sessions, he also maintained that Japan's offensive power had already been blunted and that Tokyo's defeat was certain once Germany surrendered. But if the Germans were allowed to defeat the Soviet Union, the Third Reich could become impregnable. Therefore, the Allied strategy should be not just to defeat Germany first, as Roosevelt and Churchill had agreed a year earlier, but to put the overwhelming weight of Allied resources into the European theater.

But where to strike next? The American inclination was to "strike directly at the heart of the enemy over the shortest possible route": a cross-Channel assault on the north coast of France aimed at Berlin. Yet—and here those red leather folders from the *Bulolo* reappeared, to reveal wondrously precise studies and statistics—the Germans had forty-six divisions in France and the Low Countries, plus another eleven available nearby in Germany. Moreover, good east-west rail lines in northern Europe would allow the Wehrmacht to shuttle seven more divisions from the Russian front to the west in two weeks. By September 1943, the latest prudent date for a cross-Channel invasion before bad weather intruded, the Allies could stage twenty-five divisions at most in Britain, hardly an invincible force; also, shipping and landing craft shortages meant that the initial assault wave against the fortified Atlantic Wall would be limited to six divisions, although Eisenhower's own planners in London had recently recommended at least twelve.

All of which argued for further Mediterranean operations, starting in Sicily. The island had five hundred miles of mostly unfortified coastline. As Churchill had told Stalin, "Why stick your head in the alligator's mouth at Brest when you can go to the Mediterranean and rip his soft underbelly?" Owing to the flimsiness of the Italian rails, vulnerable to Allied air attack, the Wehrmacht could move only one reinforcing division south in two weeks. Knocking Italy out of the war, the British estimated, would cost Germany fifty-four divisions and more than 2,000 planes. And reopening the Mediterranean and the Suez Canal would save the Allies the equivalent of 225 ships, Brooke concluded—a huge bonus in a global war where shipping was often more precious than manpower. The red folders snapped shut.

As Brooke had listened to Eisenhower with predatory patience, so Admiral King listened to Brooke. Easily the most pugnacious of the three American chiefs—fittingly, he had an anchor tattooed on one forearm and a dagger on the other—he had been described by one admirer as "a formidable old crustacean." Bibulous and lecherous, with a foghorn voice that could be heard the length of a carrier deck, King was "always ready to find Albion perfidious," in Marshall's phrase, and the admiral smelled perfidy in this room amid the hibiscus and hair oil. The Pacific was *his* theater, and he would not step back. King has "his eye on the Pacific. That is his eastern policy," a British admiral concluded. "Occasionally he throws a rock over his shoulder. That's his western policy."

King threw a rock. He did not object to Sicily per se, but he believed that the British did "not seem to have an overall plan for the conduct of the war." Their dismissal of the Pacific was simply

anathema. Tokyo was replenishing its empire with raw materials from conquered territories, he asserted, and fortifying an inner defensive ring in the East Indies and the Philippines. Bitter fighting with flamethrowers and grenades would persist on Guadalcanal for nearly another month, and a comparably bitter campaign was just ending in Papua New Guinea, where American and Australian casualties exceeded 8,000. In the far north, a small American force had just landed on Amchitka to begin reclaiming the Aleutians; that campaign would last until summer.

Like Brooke, King recycled arguments made in earlier sessions; the discussions were beginning to seem circular. The admiral considered it "necessary for the united nations to prevent the Japanese having time to consolidate their gains." Of nine fronts now engaged by Allied forces, four were in the Pacific. Were the British aware that only 15 percent of the Allied war effort was being channeled into the Pacific? That proportion, King believed, should be doubled.

If not precisely a lie, the 15 percent statistic was certainly not the truth. More than half of U.S. Army forces overseas and one-third of the combat air groups were arrayed against Japan; virtually all U.S. Marines overseas—now four divisions, and growing—also served in the Pacific. At least three times as many ships were required to transport and sustain troops in the vast Pacific as were needed in the Atlantic.

No matter: it was "essential to maintain the initiative against the Japanese and not wait for them to come against us," King argued. As for Brooke's rebuttal—that the Allies lacked sufficient resources to wage all-out war against both Japan and the European Axis—King shrugged. Hap Arnold and Marshall remained silent. The session broke up before five P.M.

Battle lines had been drawn. Brigadier General Albert C. Wedemeyer, a War Department planner who so distrusted the British that he secretly tape-recorded meetings with their officers, bitterly opposed further dabbling in the Mediterranean. "If we subscribed to the British concept," Wedemeyer warned the American chiefs after the meeting, "we should disperse our forces in an area which is neither vital nor final." But a cross-Channel invasion in 1943 looked unlikely without a change of heart in London.

Brooke recorded his assessment of the day's events later that night. In an uncharacteristically fraternal diary entry, he wrote: "There is no doubt that we are too closely related to the Americans to make cooperation between us anything but easy."

Casablanca lay a thousand miles from any battlefield, but the casualty roll here was growing. SATIN had been mortally wounded; Eisenhower's reputation was injured, if less grievously. "Deficient of experience and of limited ability," Brooke concluded in his diary. Word soon circulated that the Tunisian offensive had been scrubbed. Clark told Patton that the British were simply trying to garner all the glory in Tunisia by excluding Americans from the final kill. "If so," Patton wrote in *his* diary, "it is too terrible for words."

After his humiliating performance in the hotel conference room, Eisenhower slowly walked beneath the coconut palms to Villa Dar es Saada. The president wanted to see him at four P.M. Precisely what Eisenhower should do now in Tunisia, particularly with II Corps, was as uncertain as his own future. "His neck is in a noose and he knows it," Butcher would write two days later. Despite Marshall's efforts to give Eisenhower rank comparable to the senior British field generals', Roosevelt balked at awarding him a fourth star. Harry Hopkins recorded the private exchange at Anfa:

> The President told General Marshall that he would not promote Eisenhower until there was some damn good reason for doing it, that he was going to make it a rule that promotions

should go to people who had done some fighting, that while Eisenhower had done a good job, he hasn't knocked the Germans out of Tunisia.

And now Marshall himself was irked at Eisenhower's limp showing before the combined chiefs.

Sitting in his zebra-skin living room, Roosevelt ruminated at length on the improbability of France regaining her prewar stature. After wondering aloud "what I'm going to do with Tunisia after the war," he quizzed Eisenhower on the campaign.

"Well? What about it? What's your guess?"

"Sir?"

"How long it'll take to finish the job?"

Eisenhower hesitated. The president seemed far too sanguine about fighting in the Tunisian winter.

"With any kind of break in the weather, sir, we'll have 'em all either in the bag or in the sea by late spring."

"What's late spring mean? June?"

Eisenhower nodded. "Maybe as early as the middle of May. June at the latest."

He had committed himself. Victory in Africa by mid-May.

That night Eisenhower lingered in Patton's villa until 1:30 A.M., confiding his anxieties. "He thinks his thread is about to be cut," Patton wrote in his diary. "I told him he had to go to the front. He feels that he cannot, due to politics."

Brooke's deputy, General Sir John Kennedy, observed of Churchill: "He is difficult enough when things are going badly, more difficult when nothing is happening, and quite unmanageable when all is going well." Despite frictions within the military councils, SYMBOL was going very well in the prime minister's estimation; if not unmanageable, he was certainly ubiquitous. Escaping from the Anfa compound on January 16, he was found strolling the beach near the El Hank lighthouse, pockets bulging with seashells. During another beachfront expedition, he came upon several American sailors with a guitar; at his request, they serenaded him with "You Are My Sunshine." Walking back to Villa Mirador after a late-night dinner, Churchill was challenged at three A.M. by a young sentry from North Carolina who bellowed, "Corporal of the guard! I have a feller down here who claims he is the prime minister of Great Britain. I think he is a goddamn liar."

Mornings, he lounged about in a pink gown, nipping breakfast from a wine bottle or studying his traveling collection of military maps. Eventually dressing in his coverall "zip rompers," he played countless hands of bezique, or watched field marshals build sand castles and skip stones into the surf. "Come and see my maps," he urged. "Will you have a whiskey?" Long past midnight he debated issues large and small with his minions, whose bleary yawns he dismissed: "Very well, if you don't care about winning the war, go to sleep." He tended "to view with contempt suggestions that did not originate with himself," a British general observed, and when challenged he huffily replied, "You have grown fat in honors from your country, and now you betray her. All you want is to draw your pay, eat your rations, and sleep." Excessive civility annoyed him, too. "We don't get paid to be polite to each other," he snapped. All in all, he was having a wonderful time.

Roosevelt also found Anfa a great tonic. He lunched in the villa garden, drank old-fashioneds, and read a popular play, *The Man Who Came to Dinner*. Two of his sons, both in uniform, stayed with him at Dar es Saada; the president guffawed at their two A.M. account of touring Casablanca's cobble-paved souk and red-light district—a walled village where visitors sipped sweet mint tea as dusky

harlots lifted their skirts and ground their hips like a prurient vision from Burton's *Arabian Nights*.

A state dinner for the sultan of Morocco and his grand vizier went well, though Churchill grumbled because, in deference to Muslim sensibilities, no alcohol was served. The prime minister insisted on a postprandial open bar so he could recover from the pernicious effects of teetotalism. At noon on January 17, Roosevelt received General Noguès, still clinging to power as Moroccan resident-general. When Noguès complained that Jews in Morocco and Algeria were demanding restored sufferage, Roosevelt jauntily replied, "The answer to that is very simple, namely, that there just aren't going to *be* any elections, so the Jews need not worry about the privilege of voting." The president also proposed restricting Jewish participation in law, medicine, and other professions to reflect Jewish percentages in "the whole of the North African population." This, he told Noguès, would "eliminate the specific and understandable complaints which the Germans bore towards the Jews in Germany" for disproportionately dominating certain occupations. Despite his commitment to the large freedoms underpinning the Allied cause, Roosevelt no less than Churchill could be "a great man for the status quo."

Around and around went the chiefs. Debate descended into dithering, then regained the altitude needed for earnest dialogue, which still led nowhere. On Saturday, January 16, the morning after Eisenhower's rout by Brooke, Marshall opened the session with a dozen rapid-fire questions, some incisive and all legitimate. The American chiefs, he said, were curious "to learn the British concept as to how Germany is to be defeated." Would Sicily be "merely a means towards an end, or an end in itself?" American strategists believed that if Mussolini's government showed signs of collapse, Hitler would send Wehrmacht troops to reinforce the easily defended Italian boot. What then? What should be the Allies' "main plot" for winning the war? "Every diversion or side issue from the main plot acts as a suction pump," Marshall added.

Brooke had spotted a whimbrel, a yellow wagtail, and five small owls. He had also seen this American argument winging around Anfa many times by now. Out came the red leather folders. "The Germans have forty-four divisions in France," he said in a monotone that implied exasperation. "That is sufficient strength to overwhelm us on the ground and perhaps hem us in with wire or concrete…. Since we cannot go into the Continent in force until Germany weakens, we should try to make the Germans disperse their forces as much as possible."

There it was, and there it remained. The Americans, whose delegation included but a single logistician frantically thumbing through three loose-leaf notebooks, tended toward observation and generality. British statements bulged with facts and statistics from *Bulolo*'s humming war room. The Americans had an inclination; the British had a plan. The American chiefs also lacked a viable alternative to Churchill's "soft underbelly": Roosevelt had held but a single planning session with his military brain trust before Casablanca, and if the president held strong views on the timetable and strategic trajectory of the war he had yet to share them with his chiefs.

That evening, Marshall told Roosevelt that the American chiefs intended to endorse the British plan for the invasion of Sicily, now codenamed HUSKY. As selfless as he was austere, Marshall was enough of a poker player to know when to fold his hand. The new requirement for twelve assault divisions in a cross-Channel invasion rather than the anticipated six; the need for more robust amphibious training, so amply revealed during TORCH; a decision to cut back landing-craft production in favor of more urgently needed convoy escort warships; and the simple need for Allied unity: all played into his decision. The British, moreover, were "not interested in occupying Italy," Marshall told the president. "This would add to our burdens without commensurate returns." Roosevelt agreed.

The Army chief also knew the strategic value of a good bluff, and for two days he kept his change of heart from the British. More sparring followed, more circular squabbling, especially over the Pacific. “We cannot defeat Germany and Japan simultaneously,” Brooke pleaded on Monday morning, January 18. “Because of the distances involved, the British chiefs of staff believe that the defeat of Japan first is impossible, and if we attempt to do so we shall lose the war.” Marshall simply reiterated his opposition “to interminable operations in the Mediterranean.”

After two stormy hours, the meeting broke up at one P.M. Despondency etched Brooke’s narrow face. “It is no use, we shall never get agreement with them,” he told Field Marshal Sir John Dill, the senior British officer in Washington. Dill urged resolve. “You cannot bring the unsolved problem up to the prime minister and the president,” he warned. “You know as well as I do what a mess they would make of it!”

And then the logjam broke. The British proposed a compromise in which the Allies agreed to retain the initiative against Japan without undermining “any opportunity that may present itself for the decisive defeat of Germany in 1943.” Marshall, King, and Arnold pored over the paragraph, scratched a few minor amendments, and pronounced themselves satisfied. Roosevelt and Churchill blessed the agreement at 5:30 P.M. in Dar es Saada and returned to their cocktails. The document, Admiral King suggested, “goes a long way toward establishing a policy of how we are to win the war.”

The plan indeed affirmed the primacy of the war against Germany. It enshrined a Mediterranean strategy, while confirming the American determination to punish Japan without mercy. It also demonstrated the ability of the British to outmaneuver and outmuscle their American allies. The experience had been chastening. “They swarmed down upon us like locusts,” Albert Wedemeyer told the War Department.

“We lost our shirts,” Wedemeyer added. “We came, we listened, and we were conquered.”

* * *

If Roosevelt shared these sentiments, he kept them to himself, perhaps because he recognized the inevitability of American dominion. The old imperial order was cracking under the pressure of global war, and all the red leather folders in the British Commonwealth would not preserve the status quo forever.

Besides, the president had pressing business. At 9:20 A.M. on January 21, dressed in a felt hat and gray suit, he set off in an olive-drab Daimler limousine escorted by motorcycles, reconnaissance cars, and a pair of jeeps bristling with Secret Service agents. North they sped through the blustery morning, eighty-five miles to Rabat. “Roadsides were a panorama of Arabs and Moors in their flowing robes and burnooses, veiled women, French *poilus,* large bearded natives astride the rumps of tiny burros… and innumerable cyclists,” a captain in the motorcade reported. To distract curious onlookers from the Daimler, Secret Service agents stood in their jeeps and pointed at the sky or pretended to tumble halfway out of the vehicles. Outside Rabat, agents erected a privacy screen and lifted Roosevelt from the car into the front seat of a jeep.

Patton, immaculate in jodhpurs and gloves, greeted him with a salute and a crinkled grin. Though he hid it well, the strain of guaranteeing security for SYMBOL had exhausted him. At three one morning Patton barged into the Secret Service command post at Anfa. “The Heinies know the president is here and they’re coming to get him!” he warned. Agents calmed him down and sent him packing—“They are a bunch of cheap detectives always smelling of drink,” Patton fumed. The demands of this inspection trip further inflamed him. First, Clark had ordered him to find some “Negro troops who had participated in our landings” to show the president, who was considered partial to Negroes. Then the Secret Service insisted that all 20,000 troops under review be disarmed and kept 300 feet from the road; soldiers could keep their rifles but no bullets. Now as the motorcade rolled through the 2nd

Armored Division, a dozen agents kept their submachine guns trained on the docile troops standing at attention. Patton was furious.

Rumors that FDR was in Africa had provoked derisive scoffs. “Anything is possible,” the 2nd Armored Division chaplain said, “but this story to our mind reaches the height of fantasy.” Then the order “eyes right” was given and there he was, sitting sidesaddle in the jeep: the leonine head, the big shoulders, the jaunty cant of the cigarette holder clenched between his teeth. From deep in the ranks came a plainly audible “Jesus!” The president waved, and the motorcade swept on to the 3rd Infantry Division.

They stopped for a lunch of boiled ham and sweet potatoes at an Army field kitchen while a band played “Chattanooga Choo-Choo.” Next came the 9th Infantry Division—Clark drew Roosevelt’s attention to a conspicuously placed contingent of black soldiers—before the procession sped through Port Lyautey to Mehdia. Precise rows of American and French graves overlooked the turquoise Sebou River below the Kasbah walls. A bugler blew “Taps” as aides propped two wreaths against a plaque commemorating the “Battle of Mehdia, November 8–11, 1942.” His bared head bowed, Roosevelt contemplated the dead for a long, long moment.

Cold rain drenched the Secret Service agents in their jeeps on the return to Casablanca. The sight pleased Patton, who was riding in the Daimler with the president. Roosevelt “says India is lost” to the British empire, Patton wrote in his diary that night, “and that Germany and Japan must be destroyed.” For his part, Roosevelt later noted that Patton had told him “at least five times that he hoped to die with his boots on.”

Back in his villa, Roosevelt ate a quick supper and went to bed at 9:30. This had been a long day for the Emperor of the West, but a gratifying one. He had seen the future: the legions of democracy in serried ranks of herringbone twill, brave men who would unshackle a continent.

The distant roar of surf rolled over Anfa’s green lawn like a dreamy cannonade. Translucent with African light, a cloudless sky domed the camp, and only a frond-tossing breeze off the sea restrained the midday sun from overbearing intensity. At fifteen minutes past noon on Sunday, January 24, twenty-seven reporters and almost as many photographers were herded through two rows of barbed wire toward Dar es Saada. They had spent the morning in an empty bungalow used as a holding pen, amusing themselves with a French edition of the *Decameron* and swapping conjectures on why they had been summoned to Casablanca.

Sitting cross-legged on the damp Bermuda grass, the scribes glared at an officious press officer who bustled among them warning, “No questions, no questions.” Purple sprays of bougainvillea climbed the white columns of a loggia leading from the villa’s rear door to the terrace, where a pair of leather drawing-room chairs stood before a microphone. “We’ll need *four* chairs,” a young officer called. Two more quickly appeared. A dozen admirals and generals drifted through the shrubs or leaned against the orange trees, and no sooner had the reporters voiced their surprise—Was that Marshall? What the devil was Brooke doing here?—than they fell silent in astonishment at the sight of the prime minister and the president emerging from the villa, escorted by the khaki-clad figures of Generals Giraud and De Gaulle.

Immense effort had been devoted to getting these two French rivals to share the same stage. Giraud considered “petit De Gaulle,” as he called him, “a self-seeker and a bad general.” De Gaulle, the £70 million his Free French movement had received from the British notwithstanding, considered Giraud an Anglo-American puppet. When Roosevelt summoned Giraud to Casablanca for a public display of French unity, he came running, only to find that his stock had tumbled since those heady

hours at Gibraltar when Eisenhower had begged for his help. After their first meeting at Anfa, Roosevelt had dismissed him as “a dud” and “a very thin reed,” and the Army’s supply chief opened his own session with Giraud by instructing the translator, “I want you to begin by telling this Frog that Uncle Sam is no Santa Claus.”

For his part, De Gaulle refused to leave London for Casablanca until Churchill, livid and embarrassed, threatened him with financial excommunication. “We call him Jeanne d’Arc and we’re looking for some bishops to burn him,” the prime minister said sourly. Roosevelt had long considered De Gaulle an aspiring tyrant, and he found no reason to reform his opinion during their meeting in the Dar es Saada living room. To forestall any Gallic treachery, the entire Secret Service detail—a dozen of them cradling submachine guns—had secretly taken positions behind drapes and doorways throughout the villa.

But here they were on the Dar es Saada terrace, two immensely tall Frenchmen wearing identical expressions of peevish disgruntlement. Two agents hoisted Roosevelt from his wheelchair and set him as gently as a porcelain figurine on one of the leather chairs. Eleven days of sun had bleached the dark hollows beneath his eyes. He removed the cigarette from his lips and called greetings to several reporters he knew; to the rest, he offered a broad grin. Churchill, dressed in gray pinstripes and carrying a cane, slumped into another chair. A black cigar swiveled in his face. Photographers trampled the bird-of-paradise beds in a frenzy of clicking shutters.

“You’ll run out of ammunition before we’ve finished,” the prime minister warned. He had objected to a noon photo session on grounds that it was far too early for him to appear at his best, but had agreed to “put on a very warlike look” for the occasion. Now he scowled at the sun and tugged the brim of his homburg. One reporter thought he resembled “Peter Pan with a cigar stuck in his mouth” to another, he seemed “a rather malicious Buddha.” Roosevelt asked if he would care to remove his hat for the cameras.

“I wear a hat to keep the sun from my eyes,” Churchill replied. “*You* should wear one.”

“I was born without a hat,” the president said with a chuckle. “I don’t see any reason for wearing one now.”

As the generals took their chairs—Giraud stiff as a tin soldier, De Gaulle slouching, cigarette between his thumb and forefinger—Roosevelt offered a few sketchy words about the conference just ended. Details must remain secret, he said, but the meeting had been “unprecedented in history. The chiefs of staff have been in intimate touch. They have lived in the same hotel. Each man has become a definite personal friend of his opposite number on the other side.”

The chiefs stared impassively from their foliage redoubts.

So, too, had Generals Giraud and De Gaulle been in intimate touch, the president added. (In truth their brief dialogue had been limited, as one diplomat noted, to each offering “the other the privilege of serving under him.”) Asking in fractured French for the two generals to demonstrate their commitment to the liberation of France, Roosevelt grasped each by the elbow and almost physically lifted them from their seats. They stood, they shook, they sat—so quickly that the photographers howled and they had to repeat the pose with grim, waxwork smiles. “This is an historic moment,” the president declared. The generals then stalked off through the banana trees, leaving their minions to release a joint statement of haikulike concision: “We have seen each other. We have discussed.” Roosevelt waved and called after them, “Bon voyage!”

“It was all rather embarrassing,” reporter Alan Moorehead later recalled, “like the first rehearsal of an amateur play.”

Now the president had another issue he wanted to raise.

“I think we have all had it in our hearts and heads before, but I don’t think that it has ever been put down on paper by the prime minister and myself, and that is the determination that peace can

come to the world only by the total elimination of German and Japanese war power," he said. Perhaps even the British journalists knew the story of U. S. Grant, who at Appomattox in April 1865 had demanded unconditional surrender from Robert E. Lee?

Similar terms seemed fitting in this war, Roosevelt said. "The elimination of German, Japanese, and Italian war power means the unconditional surrender of Germany, Italy, and Japan." He glanced at a sheaf of notes. "It does *not* mean the destruction of the population of Germany, Italy, or Japan, but it does mean the destruction of the philosophies in those countries which are based on conquest and subjugation of other people."

The reporters might even consider calling this conference the "unconditional surrender meeting," he added. Churchill nodded. "I agree with everything that the president has said." The Allies must insist upon "the unconditional surrender of the criminal forces who plunged the world into storm and ruin."

No one scrutinizing that Buddha-like countenance guessed that Roosevelt's proclamation had caught the prime minister short. After the war, Churchill suggested that the unconditional surrender demand had taken him completely by surprise, but that was disingenuous; the issue had been raised by Roosevelt on the evening of January 18, when Churchill even proposed a joint statement "to the effect that the united nations are resolved to pursue the war to the bitter end." He had then cabled London for advice from his war cabinet, which on January 21 unanimously endorsed the concept and, unlike the prime minister, also favored extending the surrender demand to cover Italy. What Churchill had not expected was that Roosevelt would make such a blunt declaration here and now.

For his part, the president later said the notion "just popped into my mind"—a ludicrous claim: in the notes he referred to at the press conference, the term "unconditional surrender" appeared three times. After contemplating the concept for over six months, Roosevelt had broached it with his military chiefs at the White House on January 7; none of them objected and, what is more remarkable, neither Marshall nor any other chief thought to initiate staff studies of what the demand might mean for the conduct of the war. At Anfa, the American chiefs had briefly discussed the issue among themselves, listening without comment to General Wedemeyer's impassioned warning that "unconditional surrender would unquestionably compel the Germans to fight to the very last" and would "weld all of the Germans together."

What was done was done, and much debate would be devoted in the coming months and years to the consequences of such a grand action taken with so little forethought. Clearly, Roosevelt was eager to avoid the mistakes of 1918; the ambiguous armistice signed then had later allowed the Nazis to claim that political betrayal rather than battlefield reverses caused Germany's defeat in World War I. But the president's Civil War analogy was flawed: Grant had issued his famous terms in 1862 during the siege of Fort Donelson in Tennessee, not three years later in Virginia. Nor was unconditional surrender a feature of Britain's wars: none of the fifteen since the end of the sixteenth century had ended thus. Perhaps a closer parallel lay in the Third Punic War, when Rome demanded that Carthage unconditionally surrender all her "territory, cities, and citizens," as scholar Anne Armstrong has observed; the Carthaginians refused, and the war ultimately ended with their city's obliteration in 146 B.C.

What was done was done indeed. The reporters had their story. Soon they would repair to the same airy room where the chiefs had met, collectively churning out 100,000 words on their typewriters, while censors scrutinized each new page before passing it to Signal Corps radiomen for transmission. But first the two leaders invited the correspondents to come forward and shake hands. Squinting from under his hat brim, Churchill extended a hand to each in turn, asking, "What's your paper, eh? What's your paper?" Next to him Roosevelt canted his head and beamed like a ward heeler cadging votes. "Pleased to meet you," he said. "Pleased to meet you."

As a Scottish reporter strolled toward the hotel with an American colleague, he cocked a thumb toward the president. “Ah,” said the Scot, “he has the touch, the touch of the world, has he not?”

The Sinners’ Concourse

EARLY that afternoon, while the hacks pounded their keyboards, Roosevelt and Churchill slipped out of Anfa in the olive-drab Daimler. For four hours they drove due south on Highway 9, stopping only for a roadside picnic of boiled eggs, mincemeat tarts, and Scotch packed in a wicker hamper. American fighter planes patrolled overhead and Patton’s sentries stood guard every hundred yards for 150 miles. Late-afternoon shadows stretched toward the Atlas Mountains as the motorcade pulled into Marrakesh in a moil of dust, luggage, and swaggering Secret Service agents.

Churchill had beguiled the president with tales of the thousand-year-old “Paris of the Sahara,” a red adobe caravanserai of desert nomads and snake charmers and “the largest and most elaborately organized brothels in the African continent.” General Marshall’s stern demand that Roosevelt “refuse any invitation of the prime minister” to visit this suspected nest of Axis agents had been ignored. For a few sweet hours president and prime minister, respectively code-named A-1 and B-1, would retreat as far from the war as possible.

Their refuge was the estate of La Saadia, loaned for the occasion by the rich American widow who owned it. The russet stucco villa (fifteen bedrooms) was embellished with intricate Moorish carvings, sunken baths, and ceiling frescoes in gold and royal blue. Five gardeners tended the lush grounds and the immense emerald-green swimming pool. As at Anfa, Army engineers had feverishly installed wheelchair ramps, secure scrambler phones, and extra electrical transformers. The villa’s French butlers were supplanted by American soldiers who received a quick course in dining room etiquette and practice in serving food from huge platters to other GIs pretending to be the president, the prime minister, and their courtiers. It was all too much for the supervising American lieutenant, who suffered a nervous breakdown and was locked in a bedroom after heavy sedation with a bottle of bourbon.

Looming above La Saadia was a six-story observation tower with a winding staircase. At Churchill’s insistence, two aides fashioned a chair with their clasped hands and carried Roosevelt up sixty steps to a wicker chair on the open terrace; Lord Moran, the prime minister’s physician, later recalled the president’s “paralyzed legs dangling like the limbs of a ventriloquist dummy.” The Atlas soared ten miles distant, a mesmerizing spectacle of pinks and violets that deepened as the sun sank. “It’s the most lovely spot in the whole world,” Churchill murmured. He sent down for the president’s coat and draped it across Roosevelt’s shoulders tenderly.

They sat in reverent silence. Arabs rode their swaying camels through the city gate called Bab Khemis. The red walls of Marrakesh dissolved to an oxblood hue. Electric lights twinkled around the great souk and the square known as the Sinners’ Concourse, where shackled slaves from central Africa once stood at auction and where sultans had staged mass executions to discourage revolt. From every minaret in Marrakesh the muezzins’ cry called believers to evening prayer as the Atlas darkened and the mingled scents of honeysuckle and orange rose on the evening airs, wafting across the little terrace like the precise odor of piety.

Darkness and hunger finally drove them down. The president took a last wistful look at the indigo mountains before hooking his arms around the necks of his porters. Churchill followed, softly singing a tuneless ditty of his own composition: “Oh, there ain’t no war, there ain’t no war.”

In the world where there *was* a war, the transactions at Casablanca would help chart its course until, thirty-two months later, Berlin and Tokyo lay in ruins. The main strategic consequence of the eighteen meetings held by the combined chiefs at Anfa was a year's postponement of a cross-Channel invasion, a delay that probably saved the Allies from catastrophe. The weight of numbers accumulating in North Africa, and the decisions taken in the TORCH debates the previous summer, gave the Mediterranean strategy a certain inevitability, which Casablanca simply confirmed.

But what should happen after Sicily remained unclear; the British no less than the Americans lacked a comprehensive vision for winning the war. American chiefs so frequently asked, "Where do we go from here?" that the British grew huffy. The danger inherent in a Mediterranean strategy was that war against the European Axis would veer into a protracted fight against Germany's junior partner, Italy; the soft underbelly might also have "chrome steel baseboards," in Marshall's ominous phrase. And as Admiral King had observed at Anfa, for at least another year "our main reliance in Europe is on Russia." That would hardly please the Russians, who were still locked in titanic struggle at Stalingrad. "Nothing in the world will be accepted by Stalin as an alternative to our placing fifty or sixty divisions in France by the spring of this year," Churchill acknowledged.

The compromises at Anfa had been greased with ambiguity, and the coming months would show that some of the chiefs' plans were either unsound, unfeasible, or simply undone by events. Schemes to invade Burma and attack the Japanese naval base at Rabaul died a-borning. Shipping shortages—an arcane subject understood by almost no one outside a small, briny priesthood—put "a stranglehold on all offensive operations," in Brooke's words. To refit eleven French divisions, as Roosevelt had blithely promised Giraud, would require 325 cargo vessels the Americans simply could not spare.

Hopes for an Anglo-American bomber offensive to pummel German targets had also faltered. "I note that the Americans have not yet succeeded in dropping a single bomb on Germany," Churchill observed in early January. That was unfair: not only had more than 600 planes been diverted from the U.S. Eighth Air Force in Britain for use in Africa, but nearly all aircrews and support units had been stripped bare; the paltry force of American bombers and fighters remaining in the United Kingdom pounded German submarine pens in France, as the British wanted. Many months would pass before air commanders could fulfill the chiefs' January 21 order to wreak "the progressive destruction of the German military, industrial, and economic systems, and [undermine] the morale of the German people to a point where their armed resistance is fatally weakened."

Many months would also pass before the demand for unconditional surrender seemed germane. Some strategists agreed with J.F.C. Fuller that the term would "hang like a putrefying albatross around the necks of America and Britain," needlessly prolonging the war and turning its end into an Armageddon. Yet certain clear advantages accrued, as Roosevelt knew. The unambiguous demand reflected Allied public opinion, provided a moral lode star, and seemed a natural corollary of total war. Britain now was committed to smashing Japan even after Germany collapsed. Most important, the Russians would worry less that their Western allies might sign a separate peace of the sort made with Admiral Darlan. Little evidence ever emerged that the declaration fundamentally altered the military course of the war; perhaps it discouraged membership in German resistance cabals, which remained pitifully weak. If uttered without sober reflection, the demand could also be considered "a word of encouragement and exhortation addressed by companions to each other at a turning point on a journey which promised still to be long and arduous," as the British historian Michael Howard has concluded.

A sense of companionship *was* among the most enduring legacies of Casablanca. True, the Americans had been outgeneraled at the conference table. British guile and imperial heft had won through on most issues—"We were a reluctant tail to the British kite," Robert Murphy lamented. The wariness that characterized the Roosevelt-Churchill relationship throughout the war persisted. British

commanders remained supercilious. “[Americans] are difficult though charming people to work with,” Brooke told his diary, and “Marshall…arrived here without a single real strategic concept.” American resentment could be seen even in a typed British transcript of the daily meetings: before the document was sent to Washington, some pencil turned aerodromes to airdromes, defence to defense, and honour to honor.

Yet Roosevelt’s assertion that “each man has become a definite personal friend of his opposite number” sold the real relationships short. Something closer to kinship was developing, albeit with all the fraternal squabbles and envies to which brothers are heir.

Vice President Henry Wallace had observed that Franklin Roosevelt was a great waterman who could look in one direction while rowing a straight line in another. The president was at the oars with Churchill but he was looking at other horizons. Roosevelt recognized that the prime minister was “pretty much a 19th century colonialist,” as the diplomat Averell Harriman put it, and “that the old order could not last.” The war was a fault line. American strength was here for all to see, even in those bored soldiers lining the road for 150 miles to Marrakesh. Yes, the Yanks had been outgeneraled, and their shortcomings as strategic planners revealed—to none more clearly than themselves. But the British would never impose their will so easily again. Casablanca, like the African campaign as a whole, was part of the American coming of age, a hinge on which world history would swing for the next half century.

Dinner at La Saadia that Sunday night was fabulous, served without a faux pas by the GI butlers. The president and prime minister began with cocktails at eight in the salon. Their host was the senior American diplomat in Marrakesh, Kenneth Pendar, who as one of the Twelve Apostles had briefly been held under arrest with Murphy in Algiers during those early hours of TORCH. Sprawled on a divan with his arm extended, Roosevelt joked to Pendar, “I am the pasha. You may kiss my hand.” At table, filet mignon and lobster were followed by a three-foot-high nougat sculpture of a Moorish tower; a candle flickered inside to dramatic effect, and spun sugar on the platter’s edge approximated the distant mountains.

Many a toast was drunk—to king, to country, to president, to unconditional surrender—and many a song was sung. At midnight Roosevelt and Churchill repaired to two cleared tables in an adjoining room to write their communiqués to Stalin and to Chiang Kai-shek, the generalissimo who led the Chinese resistance against the Japanese. When the dispatches were finished at 3:30 A.M., they contained a “catching quality” of optimism, Pendar later wrote. “The prime minister seemed much more in the present and more of an extrovert,” he added. “The president on the other hand often sat gazing into space as he worked. That night he had a look that was not exactly sad, yet it was the look of someone who comprehended sadness.”

Four hours later, Roosevelt was wheeled to La Saadia’s front steps and carried to the Daimler for the short drive to the airport. It was time to go home. Churchill planned to linger in Marrakesh for another two days, but insisted on accompanying the president to the plane. “I love these Americans,” he told the physician Moran. “They have behaved so generously.” Now the bleary prime minister appeared wearing monogrammed black velvet slippers, a quilted dressing gown embellished with red dragons, and an RAF air marshal’s cap, which only partly concealed his deranged hair. Brandishing his cigar at the photographers on the runway, he grumbled, “You simply cannot do this to me.”

Good-byes exchanged, Roosevelt settled into his seat for the long journey. He scribbled a note of thanks to be mailed to Pendar from the White House: “Marrakesh seemed far from wars and rumors of wars.” A cordon of American troops ringed the airfield. Wispy morning fog drifted across the tarmac.

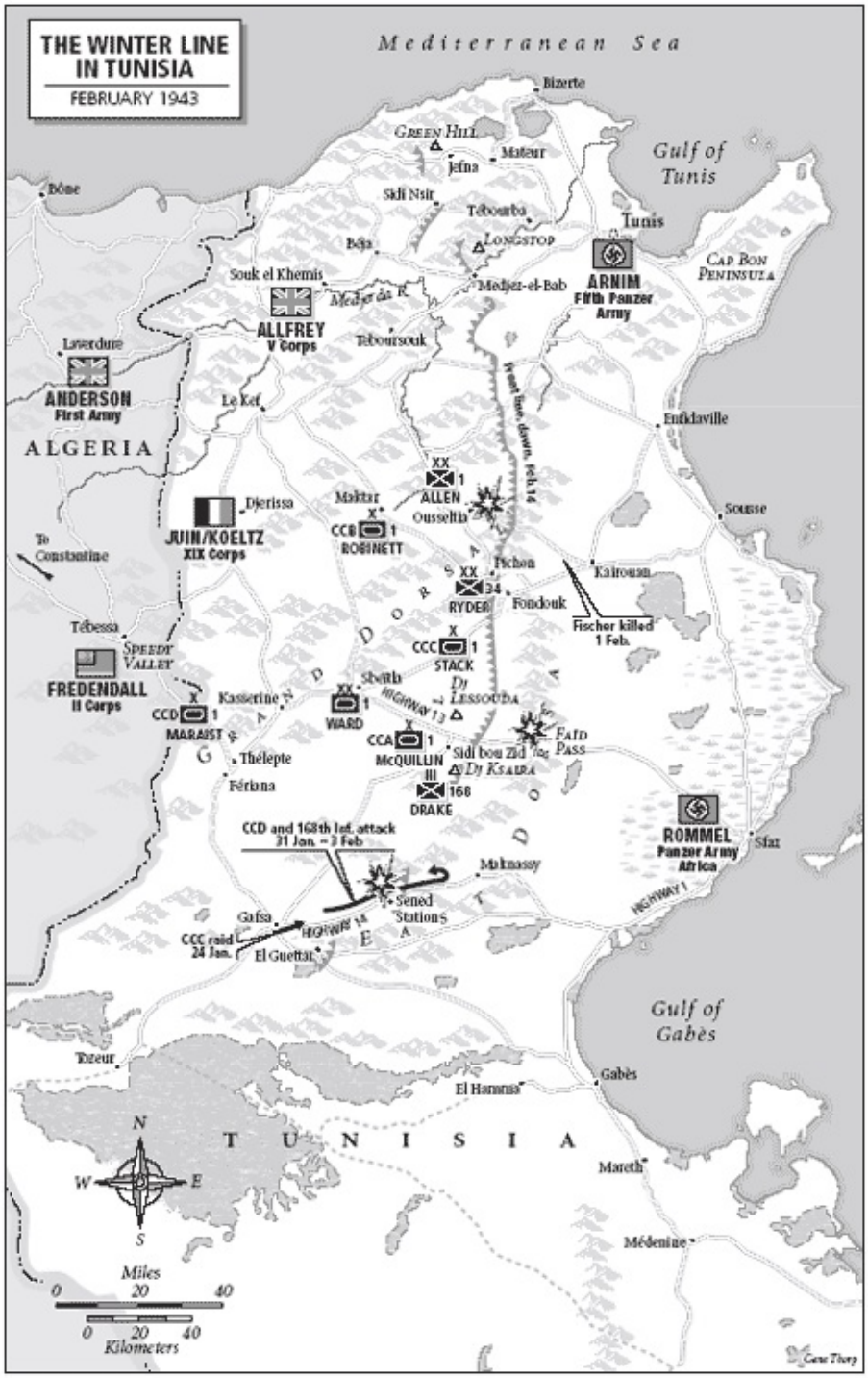
To the southeast, the mountains blazed like the thrones of angels in the rising sun. Churchill climbed back into the car. “Don’t tell me when they take off. It makes me too nervous,” he said. The prime minister clutched Pendar’s arm. “If anything happened to that man, I couldn’t stand it. He is the truest friend. He has the farthest vision. He is the greatest man I have ever known.”

8. A Bits and Pieces War

"Goats Set Out to Lure a Tiger"

THE almond trees bloomed early in central Tunisia, sweetening the January air with white blossoms that soon carpeted the ground as if strewn for a wedding. Arabs trotted to market on their braying donkeys, carrying faggots of firewood or panniers heaped with green onions. Veiled women peered through the iron grilles in their front doors at soldiers hurrying along the roads. War and rumors of war flared along the Eastern Dorsal, but mostly there was an intense bustle, as though scenewrights were building a proscenium on which great battles were to be staged once the curtain lifted. Men died —in firefights and in minefields and in plane crashes; at the temporary American cemetery in Maktar, grave markers were fashioned from the wooden slats of ration crates after the stack of crosses purchased from a local monastery ran out. But deaths remained few enough for the fallen to be unique and even flamboyant, like the American officer shot dead by a sniper in his jeep outside the Ousseltia Valley: while the jeep was being towed back to Allied lines, its brakes stuck, the vehicle caught fire, and soldiers for miles along the front could see what appeared to be a corpse riding a comet across the Tunisian pan.

As a first line of defense in extending the Allied battle lines south of the Medjerda River, the Anglo-Americans had entrusted the Eastern Dorsal to the French. General Juin's 35,000 troops formed a frayed picket line for 200 miles down to the Saharan oasis at Tozeur. Relations between the French and British were even more strained than those between Brits and Yanks. "British senior officers are what they are," Juin wrote Giraud. "What we think in them is stupidity or obstruction is often only the result of a slowness in, or absence of, imagination." A British colonel described his French counterpart in Tunisia as "a comic-opera soldier on the stage, 45 years' service in the Foreign Legion, covered with medals held on to his tunic by two bits of cotton…. We get on like fighting cocks."



The French possessed almost no antitank weapons, but Allied planners considered most of the Eastern Dorsal too mountainous for German armor. Besides, the French lacked almost everything else, too: ammunition, artillery, uniforms, boots. Horses pulled trucks, men pulled wagons. Artillerymen wagged signal flags to communicate between batteries, as their forefathers had in Napoleon's legions. Morale slumped; some French soldiers pleaded for American helmets, to fool the Germans into thinking they were facing better-armed U.S. troops. Scattered on the lonely ridgelines, A. J. Liebling wrote, the French units resembled "goats set out to lure a tiger." An American liaison officer reported to Eisenhower that the French were "somewhat discouraged" because "it seems to be a question of running or being overrun."

"This past week has been a succession of disappointments," Eisenhower confessed to his diary after returning to Algiers from Casablanca. "I'm just writing some of them down so as to forget them." The abandonment of SATIN was one; he cited, as well, the "signs of complete collapse" by the French.

Other disappointments went unlisted. Neither Roosevelt nor Churchill had been effusive in his praise at Casablanca, and Eisenhower felt unappreciated. “His work and leadership had been taken rather for granted,” Butcher wrote on January 17. The “absence of clear-cut words of thanks from the president or prime minister showed that they had their noses to the political winds.” Harry Hopkins told Butcher at Casablanca that taking Tunisia would prove Eisenhower “one of the world’s greatest generals,” but without such a victory his fate was uncertain. “Such is the life of generals,” Butcher mused. Some British journalists had begun speculating that the commander-in-chief might be sacked, and editorial writers at home also voiced impatience. “Mud is a silly alibi [for the] failure of the Allied forces to deliver a knockout blow,” an Oklahoma newspaper opined. In a note to a West Point classmate, Eisenhower wrote, “There is no use denying that at times discouragement has piled on top of discouragement.”

The abrupt scuttling of SATIN sent Allied planners back to the drawing board. There would be no drive to the sea, at least not until Montgomery’s Eighth Army was in Tunisia to lend support. Instead, Fredendall’s II Corps was to conduct raids and keep the enemy off-balance until better weather allowed a coordinated offensive. “We must keep up a bold, aggressive front,” Eisenhower wrote Marshall, “and try to keep the Axis forces back on their heels.”

At a commanders’ meeting in the Constantine orphanage on January 18, the commander-in-chief laid out this new strategy, calling it “offensively defensive.” Juin listened closely, then warned, “The Germans will not remain inactive.” Eisenhower replied with the exasperation of a man who had had a difficult week: “I don’t want anything quiescent on this goddam front during the next two months.”

In this the Germans accommodated him, beginning that very day. Axis troops already occupied the mountain passes in the north, including the portals at Jefna and Longstop Hill that gave on to Bizerte and Tunis. Now they set out to capture the four main gaps through the Eastern Dorsal in central and southern Tunisia. Control of the passes would enlarge the Axis bridgehead and safeguard the coastal corridor linking Arnim’s Fifth Panzer Army and Rommel’s troops, who were closing into Tunisia from Libya. It would also guarantee Tunis’s water supply—a reservoir forty miles southeast of Medjez-el-Bab—and keep the initiative in the Axis camp. (Eisenhower on January 11 had asked his staff about cutting off drinking water to the capital; he was told that because of heavy rains and multiple sources “no action can be taken against the water supply of Tunis.”) Field Marshal Kesselring had not abandoned his ambition of driving the Anglo-Americans back through Constantine and Bône, but first he needed firm possession of the Eastern Dorsal.

On the afternoon of January 18, after a feint by fifty panzers toward British lines in the north, Tiger tanks and 5,000 Axis infantrymen slammed into the French around the reservoir. The enemy swarmed like wasps into the Ousseltia Valley, which controlled the critical pass to the holy city of Kairouan. Reporter A. D. Divine described French troops “retiring from crest to crest, fighting like mountain goats in an area of rock and shaley slopes.” Within a day the equivalent of seven French infantry battalions had been cut off on the ridgelines. Juin reported that he was “not hopeful.”

General Anderson ordered a British infantry brigade to counterattack from the north, then asked Fredendall to dispatch Robinett’s CCB from the 1st Armored Division to block further Axis advance in the south. At 5:15 P.M. on January 19, from his lair in Speedy Valley, Fredendall phoned Robinett with an order so circumspect it seemed delphic:

> Move your command, i.e., the walking boys, pop guns, Baker’s outfit and the outfit which is the reverse of Baker’s outfit, and the big fellows to “M,” which is due north of

where you are now, as soon as possible. Have your boss report to the French gentleman whose name begins with “J” at a place which begins with “D,” which is five grid squares to the left of “M.”

Robinett later observed that translating this message, so freighted with mystery and confusion, probably took “about as much of my time as it did of the opposing German commander’s.” The corps commander’s desires having at last been divined, 3,400 men and three dozen CCB tanks marched fifty miles to *M*aktar while Robinett reported to *J*uin at *D*jerissa. On the morning of January 21, American tanks rumbled down a perilous corkscrew road into the Ousseltia Valley, filled with “a lake of morning mist, beautiful, almost ethereal,” Divine reported.

Three days of desultory fighting followed, with neither side robust enough to win a decisive advantage. Five battalions from Terry Allen’s Big Red One joined Robinett, who theoretically was under French command but continued to receive contradictory orders from Fredendall, including one message that required nine hours to decode. “An excellent example of lack of coordination in the high command,” a CCB assessment concluded, although the maverick Robinett was never wholly displeased at any confusion among his superiors that enlarged his autonomy.

By January 24 the battlefield had stabilized with the German line three to eight miles west of where it had been a week earlier. American casualties exceeded two hundred. Jubilation swept Speedy Valley at a report that more than four hundred Germans had been captured, but the whooping subsided when a second dispatch reduced the figure to fewer than forty.

French casualties were catastrophic, with prisoner-of-war losses alone close to 3,500 and some battalions pared to 200 men. “The French can no longer be counted on for much,” Truscott reported.

Even Giraud now recognized the idiocy of his refusal to integrate French units into the Allied command structure. On January 24, with French concurrence, Eisenhower gave Anderson command of the entire Tunisian front, including French and American units. Fredendall’s 32,000 men in II Corps would join the 67,000 British and American soldiers already in First Army, rather than reporting directly to Eisenhower through Truscott.

Until dry weather arrived in the north, and the drive on Tunis resumed, II Corps was to “act defensively” in protecting the Allied right wing. Eisenhower had decreed on January 18—and he repeated the order on January 26 and February 1—that the 1st Armored Division was to remain concentrated in a tight fist as “a mobile reserve” capable of countering any Axis attack in lower Tunisia.

He had no sooner issued these orders than he undercut them by authorizing the extended diversion of CCB to reinforce the Ousseltia Valley and by encouraging Fredendall to “blood” the rest of Old Ironsides in various raids. Instead of being “well concentrated,” as Eisenhower advised, the division was soon scattered across southern Tunisia.

As in the initial planning for SATIN, Eisenhower had issued ambiguous directives and then failed to ensure that his orders were properly executed. Again he was distracted by matters large and small: planning had begun for the invasion of Sicily, with Patton chosen to command the American forces; Churchill and his retinue intended to visit Algiers in early February, despite warnings of a plot to assassinate “the Big Cigar Man” a variety show produced by Irving Berlin was scheduled to tour North Africa with 300 troupers; some American officers were drinking excessively, and, Eisenhower wrote Beetle Smith on January 26, “barracks used by our soldiers are not kept as neat and homelike in appearance at they could be.”

Some of these issues required a supreme commander’s attention, but they compromised Eisenhower’s efficacy as a field general. Once again he considered moving to Constantine to take

direct command of the front; once again he decided that the press of business in Algiers precluded the move. Instead he watched from afar and issued plaintive edicts urging that "every man do his best."

"As much as we preach simplicity in the Army," he wrote a friend in Washington in late January, "I sometimes feel it is the one thing most frequently violated in my own thinking."

Orlando Ward, who ostensibly commanded the 1st Armored Division, watched the splintering—again—of Old Ironsides with deepening dismay. Orders to Robinett in the Ousseltia counterattack had bypassed Ward completely. He had little to do except draft plans that the corps commander seemed determined to ignore. "Fredendall and his staff continue to command this division in detail—even arranging platoons," Ward scribbled in his diary.

Ward proposed recapturing another of the key Eastern Dorsal passes with a strong attack on Maknassy, nearly a hundred miles south of the Ousseltia fight and fifty miles due east of Gafsa on the road and rail line to Sfax. On January 23 Fredendall summoned Ward to Speedy Valley, where the clamor of pneumatic drills from the tunnel project echoed through the frozen hills. Fredendall in fact liked the Maknassy proposal, which would put American troops in striking distance of Rommel's line of retreat up the Tunisian coast, and he scheduled the attack for January 30. But first he wanted to launch a raid against Sened Station, a miserable whistle-stop in a shallow bowl midway between Gafsa and Maknassy.

Ward shifted uneasily. Such a raid would "give our hand away" and alert the Germans to American designs on Maknassy, he warned. Fredendall dismissed the objection with an impatient wave and told Ward to "knock the shit out of the Italians at Sened Station" the next day. Ward saluted, uttered a terse "Will do," and left Speedy Valley to return to his headquarters, six miles to the southeast.

At four A.M. on January 24, a raiding party of 2,000 American troops departed Gafsa in trucks for the twenty-eight-mile trip to Sened Station. Shortly before noon, artillery fire opened on the crossroads. Within three hours, the village had fallen, a hundred Italians lay dead or wounded, and nearly a hundred other bewildered prisoners had been rounded up. The raiders returned to Gafsa in time for dinner. American casualties totaled two wounded.

Fredendall was in high feather. At 3:30 P.M. he phoned Truscott in Constantine. "Remember that force I sent toward Maknassy looking for trouble? They ran into some stuff and smeared it. As soon as I get the details I will give them to you. I thought you might like to have some cheerful information from down here." At 9:30 P.M., Fredendall called again to boast that among the enemy captured was an Italian brigadier general. (Under closer scrutiny, he proved to be a lieutenant.) "Trump that if you can, damn it!" the corps commander exclaimed.

There was little celebrating at Ward's command post. A few prisoners had been captured, but now the Germans were aware of American eyes on Maknassy. Moreover, the 1st Armored Division was currently split into three parts and scattered across a hundred miles; Allen's Big Red One covered an even bigger arc. Allied units were so fragmented that Jack Thompson, a reporter for the *Chicago Tribune*, had begun calling the Tunisian campaign "a bits and pieces war."

"Whole staff completely disgusted with the high command as inefficient and meddlesome," Ward confided to his diary on January 28. "I agree, but we can't talk that way. We must absorb and hide our misgivings no matter what they are."

As a postscript he added: "Fed up but conscience is very clean."

General von Arnim duly noted the dustup in the far south and immediately reinforced both Maknassy Pass and the unfortunate garrison at Sened Station. But the mountain pass thirty miles north of Maknassy worried him more. Bisected by Highway 13 as it angled from Kasserine in the west to Sfax on the eastern coast, Faïd Pass was a narrow defile between razorback ridges and red shale chimneys twisted into fantastic shapes. French strategists considered Faïd vital in controlling central Tunisia, as Medjez-el-Bab was in controlling the north. Arnim called it "my nightmare": barely 500 yards deep and half a mile wide, the pass gave on to the broad, flat coastal plain to the east and the broad, arid Tunisian plateau to the west. The ubiquitous Colonel Raff had seized Faïd from 200 Axis defenders in early December; more than a thousand French troops held it now, the last significant gap in the Eastern Dorsal still in Allied hands.

That was about to change. The 21st Panzer Division had rearmed after repairing to Tunisia from El Alamein at the van of Rommel's retreating army. On January 30, battle groups from the division struck Faïd Pass in a three-pronged attack as precise as a pitchfork. One French outpost reported being duped by Germans wearing U.S. Army uniforms and shouting, "Do not fire. We are Americans." Rippling fire from thirty panzers drove the French back yard by yard, and body by body, until by late afternoon the valiant defenders were encircled.

In the noisy perpetual shade of Speedy Valley, tearful French officers pleaded with Fredendall for help. The two battalions besieged at Faïd could hold out only a few hours more. The Americans must counterattack immediately, in force. "This is the most important point in the line," one French officer said. "It must be held."

Fredendall was reluctant to abandon his planned drive on Maknassy, which was scheduled to begin in a few hours with another 2000-man raiding party. He believed that the attack would siphon Axis troops away from Faïd. But French pleas, and a vague directive at mid-morning from Anderson to "restore" the situation at Faïd, forced his hand.

Prompt, decisive action could well have saved Faïd Pass and altered the grim course of the Tunisian campaign in the coming weeks. Fredendall instead ordered a mincing sequence of half-measures destined to make a bad predicament truly dire. He began at 9:30 A.M. by ordering the 1st Armored Division's Combat Command A to counterattack Faïd Pass but without weakening defenses around the town of Sbeïtla on the road to Kasserine. Part of CCA headed east along Highway 13, but at a glacial pace slowed further by air attacks—first by Stukas, then by misdirected American fighters. At 2:30 P.M., still seven miles short of the pass, the CCA commander, Brigadier General Raymond E. McQuillin, decided to bivouac for the night and delay his attack until the next morning.

McQuillin's nickname was Old Mac, and it was all too apt. Born in 1887, he was placid and fusty, with a snowy crown and the straight posture of a Kentucky long rifle. A bachelor cavalryman, McQuillin in a long career had served as a White House aide in the 1920s and later commanded the Signal Corps Buzzer School. "As a man he was wonderful and warm, but as a commander he was a 20th-century George Armstrong Custer, in many ways a genuine blockhead," one 1st Armored officer said.

Having granted the enemy an extra half day to winkle out the remaining French, Old Mac spent the night pondering the maps and blaring radios in his cramped command half-track. He was joined by Truscott, who had come forward from Constantine as Eisenhower's man on the ground, and Ward, a spectator in his own division's fight. Neither visitor sensed trouble, although portents abounded: McQuillin's tardiness; French distemper at the sluggish American response; and feuding between McQuillin and the senior infantry officer assigned to the counterattack, Colonel Alexander N. Stark, Jr. Stark, commander of the 26th Infantry from Allen's Big Red One, was known as Old Stark for reasons no more flattering than those informing Old Mac's moniker. He had won the Distinguished Service Cross in World War I, but was a heavy drinker, and staff officers routinely searched his jeep

for hidden bottles. “It was nerve-racking,” his operations officer later recalled. “I thought, ‘This man has got to be sober.’…He should never have been in a position like that.”

The American assault began at seven A.M. on Sunday, January 31, just late enough for the sun peeping over the Eastern Dorsal to catch the attacking GIs flush in the face. An intelligence officer warned McQuillin that the Germans had emplaced 88mm anti-aircraft guns as antitank weapons above the western approaches to Faïd Pass, but Old Mac “strongly rejected the validity of the report,” a 26th Infantry officer recorded.

Truscott and Ward drove 800 yards north to climb Djebel Lessouda. A mile long and 2,000 feet high, the hill lay on the desert pan like a whale on a beach. Prickly pears planted for livestock fodder covered the lower slopes in neat rows. Breathing hard, the two generals climbed a steep shale incline glittering with flecks of mica. The crowing of cocks and a cur’s insistent bark carried from the shabby hamlet of Poste de Lessouda, where McQuillin’s command post occupied a cactus patch along Highway 13.

In the panorama from Lessouda’s eastern flank, both Truscott and Ward noted similarities to the terrain of the American high plains. Here in Tunisia, reporter Philip Jordan wrote, was “that half-world where cultivation does not quite know where to cease or the desert to begin.” Seven miles to the south lay the dark green cedars and white stucco houses of Sidi bou Zid, once an important camel market and now a somnolent town of 500 Arabs and a few French farmers. Seven miles to the east, the Eastern Dorsal rose like an ocean swell. From Poste de Lessouda the blacktop ran taut as a bowstring through the nick in the ridgeline that marked Faïd Pass.

Gazing east with their field glasses through the morning haze, Truscott and Ward saw a dozen Sherman tanks and a battalion of Stark’s infantrymen following Highway 13 toward the pass; pushing out of Sidi bou Zid farther south, a battalion from Ward’s 6th Armored Infantry tramped across irrigated vegetable fields cut by the narrow ravines, or wadis. An artillery battery spoke just below Djebel Lessouda, and moments later white puffs flowered around Faïd.

The American force looked puny in the expanse of the Tunisian plain, and puniness against Germans in the desert usually proved fatal. Given ample time to entrench, the enemy had fortified Faïd Pass with machine guns, mortars, and the 88mm guns whose existence McQuillin had denied. Lieutenant Colonel Gerald C. Kelleher, commanding the 1st Battalion of the 26th Infantry, led his 700 men to within a mile of the pass and then veered left to outflank Faïd from the north. Gunfire rippled from the hills. The battalion scaled one ridge, then a second, only to be pinned down for the rest of the day by an impenetrable wall of Axis fire from the third crest. After dark, Kelleher ordered his men to creep back down to the plain. American cannoneers found the exhausted battalion commander wandering across the desert and revived him with a supper of French toast and syrup, commodities hoarded for just such an emergency.

For Company H of Ward’s 1st Armored Regiment the day was shorter but worse. In this, their first combat, the tankers were ordered to stage a frontal assault on the pass with seventeen Sherman tanks and a few tank destroyers. Strafed by Messerschmitts roaring down the defile, the tanks pressed into the pass, firing through the morning glare at muzzle flashes real and imagined.

Then the trap was sprung. German antitank gunners opened up from three sides. “The velocity of the enemy shells was so great that the suction created by the passing projectiles pulled the dirt, sand, and dust from the desert floor and formed a wall that traced the course of each shell,” Lieutenant Laurence Robertson later recalled. Shells zipped through the American formation, trailed by thick coils of dust tinted bright green by the tracer magnesium burning on the German rounds. Within ten minutes, more than half the American tanks were ablaze; flames licked from the hatches and exhaust vents, and each wounded Sherman frothed with its thirty pounds of chemical fire retardant.

Back the surviving tanks raced, as fast as reverse gear could carry them, swerving to keep their

thick frontal armor toward the German muzzles. Wounded soldiers lay like trophy deer on the hull decks. Tankless tankers clumped through the mud, chased by swarms of green tracers. When two self-propelled howitzers sank in quicksand to their barrels during the retreat, gunners detonated thermite grenades on the engine blocks within view of the disheartened brass watching from Djebel Lessouda. The survivors shambled into Sidi bou Zid, where French troops shared out a dinner of dates and heavy black bread sliced with a bayonet.

The failed counterattack had cost nine tanks, 100 casualties, and whatever mutual trust had existed between tankers and infantrymen. The enmity between McQuillin and Stark carried into the lower ranks, with each unit convinced the other had left it in the lurch. The parallel attack farther south had also collapsed under Stuka attacks and heavy panzer fire. McQuillin swallowed his discouragement and scheduled another attack for February 1 at one P.M., when the sun would be at a less hostile angle. "McQuillin, put everything into it tomorrow and accomplish your mission," Ward urged in a message at 9:15 P.M. on Sunday. "I am counting on you."

No use. Two infantry battalions surged up the ridgeline three miles south of the pass early Monday afternoon. German gunners "held their fire until we were practically at the foot of the objective," an officer wrote. "The men got a terrific raking over by the enemy as they fell back." One commander signaled McQuillin, "Too much tank and gun fire…. Infantry can not go on without great loss." Fifteen panzers swung out from Faïd Pass and enfiladed the infantry with fire on the left flank until checked by countercharging American Shermans. "They shook us like we had been dragged over a plowed field," one sergeant wrote. McQuillin's message to Ward was equally terse: "Failed to accomplish mission."

Faïd Pass was gone, and with it the Eastern Dorsal. More than 900 French defenders were dead or missing; the 1st Armored alone suffered 210 casualties. Recriminations followed. McQuillin bitterly accused Stark of ineptitude, although his own generalship was wanting. General Giraud dispatched a scathing message to Fredendall, protesting the butchery of French troops. The II Corps commander parried a proposal for yet another assault by telling Anderson, "To retake it will be too expensive, but I can contain the pass." Anderson concurred.

About the only solace for the Allies on this Monday afternoon was the fatal wounding of General Wolfgang Fischer, whose leadership of the 10th Panzer Division had helped win the day for the Axis at Tébourba and Longstop Hill in December. Wandering into an improperly marked minefield west of Kairouan, Fischer's staff car detonated an Italian "devil's egg" that blew off both the general's legs and his left arm. He called for a notebook and managed to scribble a page and a half to his wife, of which the last words were "It will soon be over."

"This Can't Happen to Us"

FREDENDALL'S attention remained riveted in the south, and he entertained the belief that triumph at Maknassy could compensate for debacle at Faïd. Sitting in his canvas chair by the stove in Speedy Valley, he told reporters he intended to press "on to Maknassy, at least, and draw the pucker string tight."

Instead of concentrating the 1st Armored's two combat commands as Eisenhower desired, Fredendall even further fractured the division. The recently concocted Combat Command C had staged the glorious raid on Sened Station a week earlier, and now an even newer Combat Command D was created to seize Maknassy. On January 30 at one P.M., as the Axis attack on Faïd Pass developed, Fredendall by telephone—again bypassing Ward—had ordered CCC to march northeast from Gafsa toward Sidi bou Zid in order to aid McQuillin by hitting the enemy in the flank. Two thousand men

tramped all night to within a dozen miles of Faïd Pass, but at four P.M. on January 31, Fredendall countermanded himself. Persuaded that Old Mac's counterattack at Faïd was succeeding—a hundred miles' distance from the battlefield encouraged such delusions—the corps commander ordered CCC to "turn south and join in coordinated effort…on Maknassy."

CCC swung south for ten miles, and by mid-afternoon on February 1 was poised thirteen miles north of Maknassy. There another barrage of conflicting orders fell, ending with a directive to march north yet again, this time toward Sbeïtla and the road to Kasserine. Greater confusion could scarcely be imagined.

That left Maknassy to CCD, now reinforced with the first units in Tunisia from the 34th Infantry Division and specifically the Iowa boys of the 168th Infantry Regiment. The plan drawn by Colonel Robert V. Maraist—Ward's artillery chief, pressed into service as the CCD commander—was straightforward: artillery, tanks, and infantry would again fall on Sened Station in an attack similar to the January 24 raid, and then press on twenty miles to Maknassy.

Infantrymen from the 1st Battalion of the 168th packed into open trucks late Sunday morning, January 31, for the trip from Gafsa to Sened Station. Having just arrived from Algeria, many still carried their bulky barracks bags. Hundreds of orange cigarette embers glowed from the truck beds. Sened Station had been a walkover a week earlier, the men told one another; the village still was said to be defended only by Austrians and Italians. An engineer officer detected "a sort of Sunday School picnic atmosphere in the morning as we started out."

Then the Stukas came. Eight rolled out of the sun in the first wave, one trailing another with sirens shrieking as bombs tumbled among trucks bunched nose to tail. "All down the road men were lying, some terribly hurt, some dead, some shocked beyond control," one witness wrote. "We sent messages for doctors, ambulances, and stretcher parties, [and] did what we could for men who were bleeding to death." Fifty soldiers had been killed or wounded, the worst toll from a Stuka attack in the entire Tunisian campaign. Another officer wrote:

> It was the most terrible thing I had ever seen, not the bodies and parts of bodies near smoking vehicles, some sitting, some scattered, some blue from powder burns—it was the expressions on the faces of those [who] wandered listlessly around the wreckage, not knowing where to go or what to do, saying, "This can't happen to us."

Sergeants herded the troops back into the remaining trucks, but the planes soon returned, this time with Messerschmitts that dimpled the road with cannon fire. Terrified men pelted into the desert. "Maimed and twisted bodies, some of them still burning, made the men overcautious," wrote Lieutenant Lauren E. McBride. Again the men were loaded on their trucks, only to flee with each rumor of approaching aircraft; finally, the trucks were abandoned and the battalion staggered toward Sened Station in two parallel columns 500 yards on either side of Highway 14. Arriving at dusk in an olive grove three miles from the village, too late to attack at five P.M. as planned, the battalion bivouacked for the night. "My God," the engineer officer reflected, "this Sunday School picnic has really turned into something."

Three different colonels had led the 3,600 men of the 168th Infantry in the last six months of 1942, and a fourth took command in January. Thomas D. Drake, raised in a West Virginia coal town, had enlisted at sixteen, won a Distinguished Service Cross and two Silver Stars in World War I, then served as the first sergeant of Pershing's honor guard. After leaving the Army for college, Drake had returned as an officer in 1923. Now forty-two, he was short, brave, and crotchety, incessantly yelling

"Allez!" at Tunisian date merchants along the road. Two weeks earlier he had issued regimental mess regulations forbidding officers from bolting their meals. "Neither will good table manners tolerate placing elbows on the table and consuming food in a reclining position," he added. The men privately called him Quack-Quack.

As his 1st Battalion huddled in the Sened Station olive groves on the evening of January 31, Drake stood with Fredendall in Speedy Valley before a map of southern Tunisia. Drake was to support the thrust to the east by Colonel Maraist's CCD, Fredendall said. "You will attack tomorrow morning and seize this high ground," he added, pointing to the ridges east of Maknassy. "After taking up an all-around defensive position you will conduct raids into Rommel's lines of communications, doing all the damage you can and preventing his uninterrupted movement north."

But first, Sened Station must fall. Colonel Drake left Speedy Valley and reached Gafsa a few minutes past midnight on Monday, February 1. He planned to reinforce 1st Battalion's morning attack, and an armor captain named Frederick K. Hughes had been assigned to lead the 2nd Battalion that night to a staging area outside Sened Station, where Maraist's force was already hidden in ravines and orchards. Drake cautioned Captain Hughes against "overrunning the front line" in the dark. As the first trace of dawn smudged the eastern horizon, Drake followed in a jeep, ready for a fight.

Except that he could not find 2nd Battalion. Daybreak stole across the flat desert where 800 men should have been fixing their bayonets: the ground was empty but for tuft grass and a few of Maraist's tanks. Military policemen on Highway 14 reported that eighty trucks, including the 2nd Battalion's field kitchens, had barreled through roadside checkpoints and into no-man's-land outside Sened Station. A subsequent investigation revealed that Captain Hughes had led his charges into the heavily reinforced enemy defenses.

Hysterical shooting and a constellation of parachute flares in the east confirmed the worst. The 2nd Battalion was pinned down less than a mile from Sened Station, and would remain so for the next ten hours. Hughes was captured. Soldiers tumbled from the truck beds to scoop shallow foxholes with helmets and hands. Enemy mortars crumped, and machine guns stuttered "like old sewing machines being cranked." The fusillade destroyed seventeen vehicles. Ebony smoke spiraled from burning rubber and gasoline. "They were," an officer in another unit later noted, "in a very bad spot."

Intended to be a cakewalk on the way to Maknassy, Sened Station turned into a daylong pitched battle. At 9:30 A.M., Drake rallied the 1st Battalion from its olive grove. Tromping about in his cavalry boots with field glasses banging against his chest, he roared, "Go on up there! They can't hurt you! They're nothing but black Dagos, and you're Americans!"

By noon the troops remained more than a mile from the village, harassed by Stukas and swarms of bullets that prompted one chaste young private to ask if anyone else could hear "all those bees buzzing?" Men lay on their backs kicking at jammed rifle bolts with their boots. "We learned in that battle that sand and oil don't mix," a lieutenant recalled. The 1st Battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel John C. Petty, was firing from his knees when enemy bullets tore open his stomach; he would cling to life for twelve days before passing. Petty's executive officer bled so profusely from a head wound that his submachine gun clogged with blood. An enemy shell blew through the battalion intelligence officer, Lieutenant Woodrow N. Nance. "I saw his canteen fly up in the air," another officer reported. "He was on his back and gurgling incoherently. He was torn almost in two at the middle." Drake later wrote: "Men were dying everywhere. The sand was kicked up in clouds and the air was filled with whining bullets."

At midafternoon, as Maraist directed artillery and tank fire on the village, Drake ordered a flanking attack on the right by 1st Battalion's Company B. Three rifle platoons fixed bayonets, fanned out in a skirmish line, and surged toward the village. Charred corpses were splayed across the turrets of three smoldering American tanks. A platoon leader whose leg had been reduced to a bloody stump

screamed at the passing infantrymen, “Kill them! Kill them all!”

Sened Station buckled and then fell at four P.M. beneath the weight of 1st Battalion’s assault. An enemy counterattack reclaimed the town long enough to capture the 2nd Battalion surgeon and fifteen medicos who had rushed in prematurely. In a final spasm of grenades and bayonets, the village fell for good to the Americans at 5:30. The captured booty included 152 prisoners and a fleet of Axis reconnaissance bicycles. Most enemy troops melted back toward Maknassy.

Fredendall was considerably less charmed by this excursion into Sened Station than he had been by the one a week earlier. In a message to Colonel Maraist—yet again bypassing Ward, who issued contradictory orders of his own—Fredendall declared, “Too much time has been wasted already…. Use your tanks and shove.”

Shove they did, on Tuesday, February 2. By noon CCD held a ridgeline six miles east of Sened Station. Then Stukas attacked in earnest at four P.M. Twenty-four dive-bombers dropped from the western sun in the rear, unnerving Drake’s already shaky infantrymen, and the subsequent appearance of panzers on the left flank completed their unmanning. An officer in the 2nd Battalion of the 168th Infantry came pelting through the lines. “There has been a breakthrough!” he bellowed. “Save yourselves! Save yourselves!”

Hundreds obeyed. Rising from their holes, they ran toward the rear or vaulted into fleeing vehicles. Drake reported that the men “were wild-eyed as they roared along at full speed. The column was made up of half-ton weapon carriers, jeeps, halftracks, tanks—anything that would roll.” An artillery battalion commander later recalled, “A sort of hysteria took hold of everyone. The [enemy] tanks were knocked out, but the hysteria continued.” A combat engineer added, “All of the infantry soldiers I could see anywhere around were hightailing it to the rear.” His troops fled, too.

Officers cobbled together a straggler line from north to south across Highway 14 at Sened Station to snare those fleeing. There the stampede was finally turned by armed guards as unyielding as those in the Civil War who had demanded, “Show blood!” before admitting any soldier to the rear. Sergeant James McGuiness of Company F wrote his parents:

> Some of the fellows have run off and leave us fighting and don’t think for one minute that I haven’t had the urge to get up and leave. A fellow isn’t yellow, but those shells bursting above and around you day in and day out is really tough.

The American attack was spent. A few tank destroyers edged to within six miles of Maknassy on February 3, but American planes mistakenly bombed U.S. positions in Sened Station that afternoon, discouraging further initiative. “Your outfit is a bunch of darn poor map readers,” Drake complained in a message to the Army Air Forces. “They just bombed my service train bivouac instead of the enemy concentration. Besides that, they are poor bombers as they missed that target by five hundred yards.” By dawn on the fourth all of CCD had pulled back to Gafsa, abandoning Sened Station for the second time in ten days.

The offensive had failed to seize Maknassy, failed to relieve enemy pressure on Faïd Pass, failed to help McQuillin’s CCA. A 1st Armored Division account concluded that “no decisive objective was gained.” American losses totaled 331, among them the 2nd Battalion commander. Lightly nicked in the hand, but psychologically unhinged by the Tuesday afternoon panic, he was replaced by his executive officer, Lieutenant Colonel Robert Moore, the onetime Boy Captain and druggist of

Villisca, Iowa.

Mistrust cascaded like a rock slide. General Anderson and the French doubted the Americans. Eisenhower doubted Fredendall. Fredendall doubted Ward. McQuillin doubted Stark. Stark doubted McQuillin. Fredendall on February 5 summoned Ward to Speedy Valley and read portions of a letter Eisenhower had sent him the previous day:

> One of the things that gives me the most concern is the habit of some of our generals in staying too close to their command posts. Please watch this very, very carefully among all your subordinates…. Generals are expendable just as is any other item in an army; and, moreover, the importance of having the general constantly present in his command post is frequently overemphasized.

With cocked eyebrow and knowing nod Fredendall implied that the cutting reference was to McQuillin, or perhaps to Ward himself. In fact, the letter as a whole made clear that the commander-in-chief's deeper reservations concerned his II Corps commander's Anglophobia and other shortcomings. Eisenhower had confided to Truscott his fear that Fredendall was too rash, inclined to throw away men in "futile rushing around."

Ward sensed Fredendall's game. "He is a spherical SOB. No doubt. Two-faced at that," Ward told his diary. The corps commander "has no loyalty in him for his subordinates."

As recently as February 1, Eisenhower had considered abandoning the Eastern Dorsal and pulling back toward the higher, western mountain range known as the Grand Dorsal. But now he thought better of such a retrenchment: the ethos of the U.S. Army resisted surrendering even an acre of ground fairly won. New orders called for clinging to as much forward territory as possible while the Allied armies prepared for "sustained, aggressive action in the month of March."

Meanwhile the troops buried their dead and again dug in down the length of Tunisia. One company war diary spoke for many brave men: "We could not help wondering whether the officers directing the American effort knew what they were doing."

"The Mortal Dangers That Beset Us"

ERWIN Rommel did know what he was doing. And he would not wait until March.

At eight A.M. on February 12, musicians from the 8th Panzer Regiment band gathered outside a dusty yellow trailer parked beneath camouflage netting near coastal Highway 1 south of Sfax. Citrus perfumed the morning air, masking the usual army odors of canvas and hot oil. Hoisting their tubas and cornets, the bandsmen struck up a serenade for their commander to mark the second anniverary of his arrival in Africa. Then they switched to a brisk march inspired by the struggle of the past two years: "We are the men of the Afrika Korps…"

The trailer door swung open and Field Marshal Rommel stepped into the sun. Against the morning chill he wore a soldier's greatcoat with red lapel facings, gold buttons, and "Afrikakorps" stitched on the cuffs. He was lean and sunburned, like his men, with lips perpetually cracked and crow's-feet etched around eyes long accustomed to squinting. Hatless, he looked older than his fifty-one years. A widow's peak jagged across his broad cranium, and the hair brushed back above his ears lay sleek as feathers. Every soldier in the encampment could see the toll of the past two years in Rommel's face, the anguish of 10,000 German and Italian graves left behind in Egypt and Libya when Panzer Army Africa had crossed into Tunisia two weeks earlier.

"My dear young friend," Rommel had told a staff officer a few days before, "if you only knew how long it's been since I've been able to sleep." Kesselring, who considered Rommel's nerves all but shot, later observed, "The very last armored infantryman knew of the doubts that were rending the heart of his commanding general." So few of Rommel's original "Africans" remained—only 4 of the 1,000 who had come with the 8th Machine Gun Battalion, for example. After the impromptu band concert, the field marshal returned to the trailer to write to his wife, Lucie-Maria:

> It's two years to-day since I arrived on African soil. Two years of heavy and stubborn fighting, most of the time with a far superior enemy…. I have endeavoured to do my duty, both in my own sphere and for the cause as a whole…. We must do our utmost to beat off the mortal dangers that beset us. Unfortunately it's all a matter of supplies. I hope that my decision to remain with my troops to the end will be confirmed. You will understand my attitude. As a soldier one cannot do otherwise.

"Rommel, Rommel, Rommel!" Churchill had exclaimed the previous summer. "What else matters but beating him?" Like most of history's conspicuously successful commanders, he had an uncanny ability to dominate the minds of his adversaries. The son and grandson of school-teachers, he was short and a bit jowly; his face had a bronzed reserve, as if he were already wearing his death mask. A Württemberger from Swabia in the German southwest, with neither Prussian blood nor the crimson trouser stripe of a General Staff alumnus, he embodied several traits of his native region: self-reliance, thrift, decency, and a dour common sense. A much decorated infantryman in the Great War, he remained skeptical of the newfangled tank until the blitzkrieg in Poland imbued him with a convert's passion. He rocketed from lieutenant colonel to field marshal in four years, his reputation burnished by Goebbels's Propaganda Ministry; the young division commander's dash across Flanders and down the French coast to Spain in 1940 was featured in the film *Victory in the West,* which Rommel also helped direct. He still carried one of Goebbels's flunkies on his staff in Africa to stoke his own mystique, which Kesselring considered "the equivalent of one good division."

Rommel's first successes in Africa manifested the audacity, tactical brilliance, and personal style—he occasionally hunted gazelle with a submachine gun from a staff car—that contrasted so invidiously with British lumpishness and won him the sobriquet of Desert Fox. The campaign had seesawed back and forth across 1,500 miles of the African littoral, with Rommel eventually chasing the British Eighth Army back toward the Nile in the summer of 1942. Then came El Alamein, that clanging defeat. Ever since, he had been retreating, under languid but insistent pressure from Montgomery. *Life* magazine called him "a fugitive leading a fugitive army."

"Day and night I'm tormented by the thought that things might go really wrong here in Africa," he had written Lucie a few hours before crossing into Tunisia at dawn on January 26. "I'm so depressed that I can hardly do my work." Insomnia, headaches, low blood pressure, rheumatism, exhaustion, intestinal distress: he was not a well man. Before hurrying back to Egypt for the emergency at El Alamein, Rommel had been medically evacuated to convalesce in the Fatherland; in the four months since then his health had not returned.

At a recent staff conference, a subordinate thought the field marshal "gave the impression of a broken man. We hardly recognized him." Only in the past few days had he showed renewed signs of aggression; his lieutenants hoped that the greening hills of Tunisia would lift him from his torpor. But the real tonic for the old fox was a scent of fresh prey from beyond the Eastern Dorsal: the Americans.

Rommel understood more than most how tenuous the Axis grasp on North Africa was. Through

the end of January, more than 100,000 German and Italian troops had arrived in Tunisia from Europe, with reinforcements of roughly a thousand a day still coming. As Rommel's Panzer Army Africa finished moving into southern Tunisia, the bridgehead numbers would swell to 190,000 soldiers and over 300 tanks, a temporary advantage of fourteen Axis divisions to nine for the Allies.

Yet many of Rommel's German units were at far less than half strength, with barely 30,000 combat soldiers; in January alone, he suffered more than 2,000 casualties in rearguard fighting against the British—and a total of five soldiers had arrived as replacements. Some units were pitifully weak: the 90th Light Africa Division reported only 2,400 troops, the 164th Light just 3,800. Equipment shortages were even more grievous. Authorized 386 tanks, he had but 129, of which only half were ready for combat. Instead of 747 antitank guns, his men had 182; instead of 3,797 machine guns, they had 1,411. Only one-sixth of his artillery strength remained intact.

Rommel may have "exercised an almost hypnotic influence on Hitler," in Kesselring's words, but the Führer was not so beguiled as to provide anything like the quantities of arms and fuel needed for his army. The demands of Stalingrad, now entering its epic final act, as well as an increasingly lethal Allied interdiction campaign in the Mediterranean, meant that only a fraction of the necessary matériel and manpower made it to Africa. As Rommel had told Lucie, it was all a matter of supplies.

True, Rommel's army included almost 50,000 Italian troops, the remnants of Mussolini's imperial force in Libya. Thirty thousand more had been shipped to Tunisia from Italy. But the bridgehead also included a huge number of noncombatants, including colonial civil administrators and camp followers swept along by the retreating army. An official German account estimated that by late February 350,000 Axis men would be in Tunisia, of whom barely one-third could be considered true combat soldiers.

Rommel increasingly blamed the Italians for his woes, and his disdain reflected the attitude of the German high command. Easily caricatured, Italian soldiers in fact showed flashes of ferocity and tactical competence in North Africa, particularly in infantry skirmishes. Yet most Italian troops were badly trained, ill equipped, and poorly led. The best Italian divisions had already been smashed in Russia or while fighting the British in Africa. Il Duce's army, one German general concluded, "was in agony." The standard Italian rifle dated to 1891; Italian grenades were so capricious that British troops were warned never to use them; troops moved by foot or not at all, because there were few trucks. Many Italian recruits were so unlettered that drill instructors tied bandannas around their left arms to teach them left from right. Even an Italophile like Kesselring asserted, "The Italian is easily contented. He actually has only three fashionable passions: coffee, cigarettes, and women…. The Italian soldier is not a soldier from within." The Panzer Army Africa war diary for February 11 noted, "Combat value of the almost totally untried Italian units is the great question…. Experience has unfortunately shown that any optimism is uncalled for."

In these and other matters, Rommel had a natural ally in Arnim. A meeting at a recent conference south of Gabès had been their first since both were young captains in the Weimar Republic eighteen years earlier. They had not cared much for each other then, and that distaste lingered. But Rommel's strategic assessment had a blunt simplicity: the high command must either provide sufficient supplies to the two African armies or abandon Tunisia altogether. The Axis cause in Africa was "a house of cards." He fervently hoped that "sober calculations would win over political dreams."

Arnim agreed. Hitler had promised him six to seven additional divisions, which had yet to materialize. A quarter of his combat strength was Italian, and of the 150,000 tons of supplies he and Rommel estimated they needed jointly every month, far less than half was actually arriving. There had even been talk of shipping to North Africa a penal brigade of homosexuals. "We cannot afford a second Stalingrad," Arnim told Rommel. "Right now the Italian fleet could transport us back."

But such talk of decampment fell on hostile ears in Berlin and Rome, where relinquishing North

Africa was seen as inviting an Allied invasion of southern Europe. Kesselring considered Rommel a weary defeatist eager to repair to Tunis or perhaps the Italian Alps. Promises of more guns, more men, more this and more that, trickled south from the Axis capitals; there would be no abandonment of Tunisia. Hitler in mid-February left for his Eastern Front command post in the Ukraine, where thoughts of North Africa rarely penetrated. Some officers in the Wehrmacht high command had voluntarily placed themselves on restricted rations as a gesture of solidarity with the encircled army at Stalingrad: 2½ ounces of bread a day, 6½ ounces of horsemeat, a half-ounce of sugar, and a single cigarette.

If the troops in Tunisia were to avoid a similar diet, the bridgehead would have to be widened beyond the current fifty-mile coastal strip. Soon Rommel and Arnim would have to defend a 400-mile front against an enemy steadily growing in power, with new tanks, heavy howitzers, antitank guns, and fighters. Allied strength would quickly grow from nine divisions to twenty. In the past month the Anglo-Americans had flown more than 11,000 air sorties over Tunisia, an intimation of things to come.

On January 19, the high command in Berlin had first floated the idea of attacking through Gafsa and Sbeïtla toward Tébessa and from there "either by an advance on Bône or Constantine bring on a collapse of the hostile northern front." Rommel believed the greatest potential threat to the entire Tunisian bridgehead was an American lunge from Gafsa toward Gabès to sever the two Axis armies. If the Germans were to survive in Tunisia—and the field marshal had such grave doubts that he had privately ordered an English dictionary—they must "break up the American assembly area in southwest Tunisia." The leisurely pace of Montgomery's pursuit would allow Rommel's troops at least a fortnight of mischief in Tunisia while a rear guard barricaded the door at Mareth, a fortified line near the Libyan border. After crushing the Americans, Panzer Army Africa could swing back south to repel the British Eighth Army.

Kesselring agreed, and the attack plan quickly coalesced. Arnim's Fifth Panzer Army would strike first in Operation FRÜHLINGSWIND—Spring Breeze—a thrust by two panzer divisions through Faïd Pass on Sidi bou Zid. Spearheaded by more than 200 Mark III and Mark IV tanks, plus a dozen Tigers, FRÜHLINGSWIND was designed to "weaken the American by destroying some of his elements and thereby confuse and delay his advance." Rommel's Panzer Army Africa, including the Afrika Korps, would then strike farther south through Gafsa in Operation MORGENLUFT, Morning Air. When reinforced by a portion of Arnim's army, Rommel—who had designs on the vast Allied dumps at Tébessa and Speedy Valley—would have 160 tanks. "We are going to go all out for the total destruction of the Americans," Kesselring declared.

On February 12, as the panzer regiment band played for Rommel, Arnim fixed his initial attack for dawn on Sunday, February 14, Valentine's Day. It would fall precisely thirteen weeks—a quarter of a year—after the first TORCH landings. In his own encampment, Rommel finished writing orders to shift several units from the Libyan border to a staging area northwest of Gabès that night.

The predatory glint had returned to his eyes. He again emerged from the trailer to greet the officers who had come to Africa with him in February 1941 and were still fighting under his command; now numbering but nineteen, they had been invited to pay their respects in a brief, sentimental reunion. The band once again struck up the familiar march, and the old fighters sang, in voices thick with emotion:

In the scorching sands of Africa, the German panzers struggle,
For our people and for our Fatherland….
We are the men of the Afrika Korps.

* * *

The front remained preternaturally quiet for more than a week after the Maknassy expedition collapsed. For a few francs, Tunisian boys carried messages between American and Italian sentries encouraging each other to surrender; the Italians sometimes did, slipping through the lines with a battered suitcase, a sheaf of pornographic photos, and the address of a cousin in Brooklyn or Detroit. A circuit-riding U.S. Army chaplain conducted services in the shadow of the Eastern Dorsal for troops whose devotions had fallen into arrears; his assistant played "Rock of Ages" on a portable piano and handed each congregant a few sticks of chewing gum, as if they were communion wafers. Red Cross volunteers appeared in blinding snow and dust storms with drums of hot coffee dispensed from a rattletrap truck known as Clubmobile California.

II Corps had suffered more than 700 casualties in the past month, and the first replacement troops filtered into Tunisia from depots in Casablanca and Oran. Many lacked rifles or entrenching tools. One group of 190 replacements included 130 charged with absence without leave or other offenses. A number of "involuntary AWOLs" also showed up—misfits deliberately dumped by their officers, often in a bar or brothel, shortly before their units had sailed from Virginia or Britain.

Some 450 replacements arrived in the 168th Infantry. Very few were trained infantrymen. As the new commander of the 2nd Battalion, Robert Moore took 125 of them to make good his losses at Sened Station only to find that some lacked even rudimentary marksmanship training. When Moore asked one private if he could shoot a Browning Automatic Rifle, the soldier replied, "Hell, no, I've never even seen one." The 168th also received six truckloads of bazookas the night of February 12. "We had never heard of them before," an ordnance officer later recalled, "but we had a piece of paper that explained how to fire them." Colonel Drake scheduled the first rocket-gun training class for Sunday morning, February 14.

Quiescence at the front gave Allied generals a chance to ponder the tangled command structure in North Africa. On February 10, Eisenhower and others at the Hôtel St. Georges each tried to sketch an organizational chart of AFHQ. Every attempt failed in a barrage of crumpled paper. Eisenhower glumly suggested that the organization had become "too complicated to be placed on paper." But the muddle seemed more annoying than lethal. Ultra intercepts of messages from Rommel and Arnim revealed the depth of Axis supply difficulties. Allied intelligence concluded that although Axis infantry battalions outnumbered Allied battalions fifty-five to forty-two in Tunisia, the Allies held a 381–241 advantage in artillery tubes and a 551–430 advantage in tanks. The enemy seemed more likely to improve his defenses and husband his reserves than take the offensive. This judgment, shared by Eisenhower and Anderson, was measured, reasonable, and wrong. Among other defects, it failed to consider the native aggressiveness of Kesselring and Rommel.

Commanders in Tunisia of course took nothing for granted, and seven possible counterattack plans had been drafted in case of a German offensive. To devise a common strategy, Generals Allen and Roosevelt hosted a conference in a French farmhouse in the Ousseltia Valley with Paul Robinett and French officers. Allen was in high dudgeon, his division still splintered and now broadcast the length of Tunisia. "He sucked in his breath as he talked, making a hissing sound familiar to all who knew him," Robinett reported. "The conference was far from orderly, for everyone was trying to talk at once…. Allen was doing very well with his sketchy French, but Roosevelt tried to improve it." Robinett came away shaking his head. "We can't win a war with a debating society," he told his intelligence officer. "We're just asking for trouble." Ready as usual to speak his mind, Robinett wrote to Anderson on February 9, criticizing Allied dispositions and warning that "the enemy could probably concentrate four armored divisions in Tunisia." He also told Fredendall that armor should be fought in mass, "not daubed all over the landscape."

Daubed it was. Anderson still had the British V Corps under General Evelegh in the north. Below Evelegh, the French sector had been shored up by British and American confrères, including the 133rd and 135th Infantry Regiments of the 34th Division. Part of the Big Red One remained with the French in Ousseltia, and Robinett's Combat Command B covered the French southern flank with 110 tanks. Even farther south were CCC and then McQuillin's CCA, responsible for blocking Faïd Pass with help from Drake's 168th Infantry, which had moved north after the fiasco at Sened Station. "The generals of three nations had borrowed, divided, and commanded one another's troops until the troops were never quite certain who was commanding them," a 1st Armored officer observed.

Nor were commanders certain whom they were commanding. On February 6, Orlando Ward drove eighty miles to Speedy Valley from his new headquarters in a cactus patch outside Sbeïtla. Fredendall and many staff officers had shaved their heads, perhaps in defiance of the piercing cold. ("They seemed to expect to be admired," one II Corps lieutenant wrote.) Ward had begun to wonder whether Fredendall drank too much; nevertheless, he was delighted to hear—between TNT detonations in the ever deepening tunnels—that he was to oversee American defenses at Faïd Pass. He returned to his cactus redoubt to learn that the appointment had been revoked without explanation. As his aide recorded in a diary, Ward "was both angry and disappointed."

With good faith gone, hostility spread between Speedy Valley and the 1st Armored encampment. "Infuriated, insulted, disappointed—there's no contrary emotion that I did not have," Ward's operations officer, Lieutenant Colonel Hamilton H. Howze, later said. "One of the most miserable experiences of my life…. It was an unholy mess." Howze, destined for four-star rank, recalled developing "such a detestation for Fredendall that it was hard to control, simply because of the way he treated General Ward."

The greatest insult arrived February 11, in an order entitled "Defense of Faïd Position." Feeling pressure from Anderson to avoid yielding more ground, Fredendall explicitly dictated the positioning of units down to individual companies. Two prominent hills within sight of the pass were to be occupied, Fredendall wrote: "Djebel Ksaira on the south and Djebel Lessouda on the north are the key terrain features in the defense of Faïd. These two features must be strongly held, with a mobile reserve in the vicinity of Sidi bou Zid." In a postscript scribbled in longhand, he added: "In other words I want a very strong active defense and not just a passive one. The enemy must be harassed at every opportunity. Reconnaissance must never be relaxed—especially at night. Positions *must* be wired and mined *now*. L.R.F."

Standing in his small command tent, Ward held up the paper to catch the light. He read the order carefully, then slapped the field table with the flat of his hand. "It's wrong," he said. "It's wrong. He's telling me how to suck eggs."

Fredendall had visited Sbeïtla only once and his knowledge of the Faïd terrain was derived almost exclusively from a map. When the commander of Ward's 1st Armored Regiment, Colonel Peter C. Hains III, saw Fredendall's plan he said simply: "Good God." Troops placed on the two hills would be marooned if a fast-moving attack swept around them. The hills were mutually visible ten miles across the desert but not close enough for defenders on one to help their comrades on the other. These directions resembled a World War I defense, Hains thought, without an appreciation for the speed and power of modern tank divisions.

Ward's objections to "Defense of Faïd Position" seemed to have more to do with the protocol breach of a superior dictating minute troop dispositions than with the tactical plan itself. He protested, but not loudly. "Neither he nor I perceived with sufficient alarm the bad dispositions," Howze later acknowledged.

Orders were orders. Poring over the directive, McQuillin instructed his engineers to lay barbed wire and mines across the entire CCA front, roughly forty miles. "Hell," observed a perplexed young

lieutenant, “there isn’t that much barbed wire in all of North Africa.” Lieutenant Colonel John Waters was given command of the new outpost on Djebel Lessouda. Patton’s son-in-law had become executive officer of the 1st Armored Regiment after his battalion, eviscerated in the fighting before Christmas, had retired toward Algeria for refitting. To convert Djebel Lessouda into a Tunisian redoubt, Waters would receive 900 troops, including a company of fifteen tanks, a four-gun artillery battery, and Robert Moore’s 2nd Battalion.

On February 12, Ward drove to Lessouda, where he and Truscott had watched the failed attack against the Faïd Pass two weeks earlier. The chink of shovels on rock echoed along the escarpment as Moore’s infantrymen clawed out fighting positions in crevices and behind shale parapets. Moore considered the battle plan “excellent to defend against a flood,” less useful in stopping Wehrmacht tanks; having commanded the battalion for barely a week, he kept the thought to himself. His Company E had been peeled away and placed on the desert floor as a forward picket line. Each day the brass shoved the company farther east until it now spanned a five-mile front in the shadow of Faïd Pass, more than an entire battalion should have covered. McQuillin advised stringing empty ration cans filled with rocks as an alarm tripwire. “Sir,” Moore replied, “you can hear tanks coming for miles. How would you hear rocks in a can?” When Moore suggested that certain signs presaged an Axis offensive, McQuillin lost his temper. “Poppycock!” he replied. “The attack is not coming through Faïd Pass.”

Ward found Waters’s command post tucked into a ravine halfway up the slope, with a view of Sidi bou Zid to the south and the pass in the east. “Waters, I’ve got orders here from Fredendall directing where you’re supposed to put all your platoons on and around this mountain,” Ward began. “Never have I seen anything like this before. Here I’m a division commander…”

Ward paused, groping for words. “My division has been taken away from me. All I have left is a medical battalion. I have no command. I can’t tell you what to do.”

Waters nodded sympathetically. Intelligence analysts seemed to think that any attack would likely fall forty miles to the north, again aimed at the French near Pichon or the Ousseltia Valley, but Waters had doubts. Enemy activity seemed to be increasing across the Eastern Dorsal. “General McQuillin, let me ask you a question, sir,” Waters had said after returning from a reconnaissance mission. “Suppose tomorrow morning I wake up and find that I’m being attacked by an armored division coming through Faïd Pass?” Old Mac had scoffed. “Oh, Waters, don’t suggest that.”

Now Ward was pouring his heart out. “I’ve never seen anything like it in my life,” Ward repeated. “I’m desperate. I don’t know what to do.”

There was nothing for it but to entrench and hope for the best. Ten miles southeast of Djebel Lessouda and east of Sidi bou Zid, Moore’s sister unit—the 3rd Battalion of the 168th Infantry Regiment—dug in under the stern eye of Colonel Drake on Djebel Ksaira. Bent like a horseshoe, with the open end facing north toward Highway 14 and Faïd Pass, Ksaira had been shelled so punctually each day by enemy howitzers—at eight A.M., one P.M., and six P.M.—that Drake’s troops joked about German gunners being union men working a daytime shift. To complement Waters’s 900 men on Lessouda, Drake in the vicinity of Ksaira had nearly 1,700, including the regimental band and a fair number of soldiers without rifles.

The last hot food had been served February 10. The men were restricted to cold rations and a single canteen of water per day. Drake no longer issued edicts against eating with elbows on the table: his thoughts had become less culinary than sanguinary. Any soldier leaving the line under fire without permission was to be “killed at once,” he ordered. There would be no quarter for the enemy, either. “Teach all personnel to hate the Germans and to kill them at every opportunity,” he declared. “I will notify you when I want prisoners taken.”

Engineers laid mines along the base of Ksaira. Artillerymen near Lessouda registered their guns

on known features around Faïd. Patrols ventured into the Eastern Dorsal each night, poking at the pass and smaller cuts in the ridgeline. At the tip of the spear, in front of Company E, a single strand of barbed wire was hung with rock-filled cans.

"A Good Night for a Mass Murder"

As commander-in-chief of Allied forces, Eisenhower had been given far greater powers than Marshal Foch possessed in 1918. Yet adjustments made at Casablanca in the Allied command structure threatened to circumscribe that authority in ways Eisenhower had only begun to appreciate. The lifelong staff officer with impeccable instincts about where real power lay—the master bridge player who always knew how many trump remained in play—had nevertheless been slow to realize that the British had outflanked him.

Under a proposal from General Brooke, the combined chiefs on January 20 had agreed that a single general would command both Anderson's First Army and Montgomery's soon-to-arrive Eighth Army in Tunisia. That commander would be Eisenhower; but three British deputies would handle daily sea, air, and ground operations since Eisenhower, as Brooke confided to his diary, had neither "the tactical or strategical experience required for such a task." Admiral Cunningham and Air Marshal Sir Arthur W. Tedder took the sea and air jobs respectively. The ground commander, due to assume command in February, would be General Harold R. L. G. Alexander, who since August had been Montgomery's superior as head of the British Near East Command. This arrangement cheered the Americans, especially Marshall, since Eisenhower remained top dog.

It pleased the British more. In his diary entry for January 20, Brooke wrote:

> We were pushing Eisenhower up into the stratosphere and rarified atmosphere of a supreme commander, where he would be free to devote his time to the political and inter-allied problems, whilst we inserted under him our own commanders to deal with the military situations and to restore the necessary drive and co-ordination which had been so seriously lacking of late!

Unaware of Brooke's disparagement, Eisenhower was happy to have help. But two subsequent decrees from the combined chiefs undercut the commander-in-chief by empowering his subordinates with independent authority. Like a patsy suddenly aware that he has been duped, Eisenhower composed a furious message of protest; only after pleading by Beetle Smith did he tone it down.

But on February 8 he sent two cables to Marshall, warning against "a popular impression of an overriding British control of this great area and operation…. I believe that such publicity as is given in the U.S. should stress the American grip on the whole affair." The empowering of his subordinates, he added, smacked of British rule-by-committee; it violated the sacred U.S. Army principle of unity of command under a single authority; and it threatened to reduce Eisenhower to a figurehead.

"As far as I am concerned, no attention will be paid" to such intrusions from Washington or London into the AFHQ command arrangements, he wrote, because "I would consider it a definite invasion of my own proper field." With that off his chest, Eisenhower wanted to see how the new structure worked in practice. In a press conference on February 10, he briefed reporters and graciously praised his new British deputies. In truth, as Butcher noted, he was "burning inside."

Promotion helped mollify him. On February 11, Eisenhower received his fourth star, becoming the twelfth full general in the history of the U.S. Army; Ulysses S. Grant had been the first. Marshall's

prodding had overcome Roosevelt's reluctance despite the lack of progress in Tunisia. The promotion was political, reflecting a grudging need to give the American commander-in-chief stature at least equivalent to his British deputies.

Upon hearing the news, Eisenhower summoned his domestic staff to the living room at Villa dar el Ouard. Orderly, houseboy, cook, and two waiters braced at attention on the cold tile floor as he promoted each on the spot. That night he sat by a crackling fire, sipping a highball and accepting congratulatory toasts from his new American logistics deputy, Brigadier General Everett S. Hughes, a pouchy-eyed artilleryman. On the phonograph Eisenhower repeatedly played his favorite record, "One Dozen Roses," crooning the lyrics:

Give me one dozen roses
Put my heart in beside them
And send them to the girl I love.

He had weathered Darlan, Casablanca, and the disappointing winter campaign. But given palace intrigue in Algiers—not to mention London and Washington—some believed his neck remained on the block no matter how many stars peppered his shoulders. "I think Ike is doomed," Hughes had confided to his diary in late January. "Too many conflicting forces at play."

Then there was *that* woman. Tongues had begun to wag about Eisenhower and his willowy driver, Kay Summersby. Nicknamed Skibereen after her Irish hometown, Summersby had worked in England as a model and movie extra before enlisting as a military driver in London; she had been assigned to Eisenhower the previous summer, joining him in Algiers in mid-January after surviving the U-boat sinking of her transport ship off the African coast. At thirty-four, discreet, divorced, and comely, she served not only as the commander-in-chief's "chauffeuse," but also as his bridge partner and riding companion. When she turned out in boots, flying jacket, and helmet, Eisenhower teasingly accused her of trying to look like Patton. She was engaged to one of Fredendall's staff officers, a young engineering colonel from New York, but tongues wagged anyway. One drollery circulating in North Africa had the commander-in-chief's sedan stalling on a lonely road. Summersby tinkers under the hood until Eisenhower appears with the toolbox from the trunk. "Screwdriver?" he supposedly asks, to which she supposedly replies, "We might as well. I can't get the goddam motor fixed."

"Discussed Kay," Everett Hughes had written in his diary. "I don't know whether Ike is alibi-ing or not. Says he wants to hold her hand, accompanies her to house, doesn't sleep with her. He doth protest too much, especially in view of the gal's reputation in London." On February 12, after the "Dozen Roses" performance the previous evening, Hughes scribbled, "Maybe Kay will help Ike win the war."

Skibereen was behind the wheel of Eisenhower's armored sedan when his eleven-vehicle convoy slipped from Algiers shortly after midnight on February 12. "You're taking too many trips to the front," Marshall had cautioned Eisenhower after Casablanca, eight weeks after rebuking him for inattention to the Tunisian campaign. "You ought to depend more on reports." In fact, this was only the commander-in-chief's second visit to Tunisia, and the first time he would be close to enemy artillery range. Heavy rain drummed off the car roof. A fierce winter storm lashed the Atlas, knocking down tents and filling slit trenches with icy water. Soldiers burrowed into their bedrolls and dreamed of spring. "I never knew the wind and sand could really be so miserable," Corporal Charles M.

Thomas of the 19th Engineer Regiment wrote in his diary on February 13.

The cavalcade stopped for the night in Constantine before pressing on toward Tébessa at dawn. The conversation in the Cadillac's rear seat centered on whether to retreat to the Grand Dorsal in the event of an enemy attack. Truscott, who had joined the convoy in Constantine, advised against it. He believed Gafsa and Sidi bou Zid should be defended to protect the American airfields now operating south of Kasserine.

"In one respect only have Axis forces demonstrated superiority: the ability to concentrate superior means in local areas and to retain the initiative," he had written Eisenhower in a recent memo. Truscott meant to be encouraging, but the ability to concentrate combat power and keep the initiative lies at the heart of modern warfare. By Truscott's own analysis, the Axis was winning. In other respects he was simply wrong: German armor, tactical airpower, and battlefield leadership had also been superior. But Truscott's reluctance to concede acreage had influenced Eisenhower's decision to overextend the Allied line.

At 1:45 P.M. on Saturday, February 13, the convoy eased down the serpentine gravel road into Speedy Valley. The rain and sleet had stopped, but heavy overcast lent the encampment a monochromatic melancholy. II Corps officers dashed about, throwing salutes and ducking in and out of the tent igloos. Eisenhower climbed from the sedan and stretched his cramped limbs. No one seemed certain where to find General Fredendall or General Anderson, who had agreed to rendezvous here.

Eisenhower cocked an ear. A deafening clamor of pneumatic drills washed through the gulch. Little railcars brimming with rock spoil rolled from several shafts punched into the ravine wall. Soldiers in mining helmets lugged heavy timbers and stacks of wooden shingles. A staff officer explained how engineers for several weeks had been excavating a corps headquarters that would be impervious to air attack. The project was nearly three-quarters complete. Nonplussed, Eisenhower asked whether they had first helped construct frontline defenses to the east. "Oh," the officer answered cheerfully, "the divisions have their own engineers for that!" Muttering to himself, Eisenhower stalked into a briefing tent. A lieutenant colonel used a pointer and a large map streaked with blue and red crayon to show how II Corps was arrayed.

Fifteen minutes later Fredendall strolled in, his boots crunching the crushed stone floor. He was in high spirits with a bounce in his step and a smile on his face. Bill Darby's 1st Ranger Battalion had just conducted a nearly flawless raid on an Italian outpost near Sened Station, the sort of nugatory jab Fredendall loved. At 1:30 in the morning, after a twelve-mile hike across the desert, the Rangers crept to within 200 yards of the enemy camp. One of Darby's company commanders had told his men, "We've got to leave our mark on these people…. Every man uses his bayonet as much as he can—those are our orders. And remember this: We're only bringing ten prisoners back—no more and no less."

Screaming Rangers had attacked on a half-mile front, ignoring Italian pleas of *"Non fiermati!"* as they raced among the tents gunning down men struggling to pull on their trousers. The Americans suffered only one killed and twenty wounded, with enemy casualties estimated at seventy-five. Eleven Italians had been captured—someone miscounted—and, by one participant's account, at least one wounded prisoner was executed during the return march to avoid slowing the column. ("I did what I was ordered to do," one Ranger explained years later. "That was a long time ago. I get a little nervous sometimes when I start telling about some of it.") Fredendall had just returned from Gafsa, where he had passed out to the participants a dozen Silver Stars. The Rangers joked about how it had been "a good night for a mass murder."

Anderson walked in right behind Fredendall. The British commander looked even more morose than usual. He had spent the past half hour in another frigid igloo with Fredendall's G-2—intelligence

chief—who had minced no words in telling Anderson why First Army's estimates of enemy intentions were misguided. Tall and athletic, with brooding eyes and a hussar's mustache, Colonel Benjamin Abbott Dickson possessed an extraordinary mind and a relentless impiety. At West Point, Dickson had been nicknamed Monk because of his middle name and his atheist resistance to mandatory chapel. Resigning his infantry officer's commission after World War I, he had studied mechanical engineering at MIT, held several inventor patents for laundry equipment and warehousing machinery, then reentered the Army in 1940 as an intelligence officer. Monk Dickson was able, loyal to Fredendall, and, now, convinced that bad things were brewing in southern Tunisia.

"Rommel can be expected to act offensively in southern Tunisia as soon as rested and rearmed," Dickson had warned on January 25. He further cautioned that Axis infantry could hold off Montgomery's pursuing Eighth Army near the Libyan border, allowing Rommel to use his tanks "as a striking force" against the Americans. Dickson believed any attack was likely to come through Gafsa or perhaps Faïd Pass, rather than farther north as AFHQ and First Army intelligence insisted, and it was this divergence of views that had led Anderson to seek out Dickson for cross-examination. Before joining Eisenhower, the British general ended the interview with a sour compliment: "Well, young man, at least I can't shake you." Anderson later told Fredendall, "You have an alarmist and a pessimist for a G-2."

For over two hours, Anderson reviewed the disposition of his army for Eisenhower: British V Corps in the north; the French in the center, stiffened by Anglo-Americans; Fredendall's II Corps in the south. Enemy ambitions remained obscure. Bad weather and Luftwaffe air superiority had prevented extensive air reconnaissance. Ultra decrypts from earlier in the month suggested a possible Axis attack out of Kairouan against French forces, but that was likely to be a limited operation intended to grab better defensive terrain. As a precaution, Anderson was keeping his reserves concentrated in the north, including Robinett's CCB and much of Allen's Big Red One. Any thrust through Faïd Pass or Gafsa was likely to be a diversion.

Eisenhower nodded. "General disposition of forces was satisfactory to General Eisenhower on 13 February," Fredendall's operations officer later reported. The commander-in-chief himself would cable Marshall that Anderson's plan was "as good as could be made pending the development of an actual attack and in view of the great value of holding the forward regions." As for Fredendall, Eisenhower was impressed "by his thorough knowledge of his battlefront."

"He seems keen and fit," Eisenhower added, "and I am placing a lot of confidence in him."

An urgent phone call summoning Anderson back to his headquarters in northern Tunisia broke up the conference as late-afternoon shadows swallowed Speedy Valley. Eisenhower and Truscott pared their motorcade to four vehicles; Kay Summersby, a bit awkwardly, remained at II Corps with her affianced colonel. At six P.M., after some quick sightseeing around Tébessa—it was not every day a man could contemplate the ruins of Solomon the Eunuch—the convoy sped southeast forty-five miles for a view of the American airfields at Thélepte and Fériana, then swung northeast another forty miles to the 1st Armored Division command post at Sbeïtla.

Ward and Robinett waited in a small tent tucked into a cactus patch. Old comrades greeted one another by candlelight with affection accrued through years of keeping faith in the feeble interwar Army and now enhanced by a sense of common destiny in this perilous land. Ward and Eisenhower had been a year apart at West Point. As for Robinett, upon first meeting Eisenhower in 1929 he had been so smitten by the engaging young major that, he later confessed, "I hoped to win your friendship."

Ward quickly sketched the disposition of the 1st Armored, including the marooning of Drake and Waters on the two hills near Faïd Pass. He was cheerful and precise, masking the turmoil churning within. Earlier in the evening Ward had poured out his heart to Robinett about II Corps' meddling, but to Eisenhower he avoided criticizing Fredendall even as he made clear that he had been stripped of virtually all authority in his own division; Ward had last controlled CCB, for example, in Northern Ireland. With 294 tanks and substantial artillery, the division was hardly impotent, but the units were scattered along a sixty-mile crescent.

Then Robinett took the floor, jaw jutting. He had scouted the approaches at Fondouk enough to curtly dismiss Anderson's preoccupation with an enemy thrust in the north. "The only evidence of an attack in this area is nervousness in higher headquarters," he told Fredendall in a message on February 12. He repeated that to Eisenhower, then condemned the current placement of CCA troops around Faïd Pass. They were isolated, "in no sense mutually supporting," Robinett said. The Eastern Dorsal had "lost its importance for the time being and should be given up without squandering additional means in the hope of covering up past losses.

"Only a question of prestige gives the position any importance," Robinett added, "and prestige is little compared with the troops." Given superior German tanks and antitank guns, the entire Allied position was "impossible." In short, the situation was grave. He sat down.

This analysis was greeted with the politesse reserved for an idiot savant or a tiresome house pet. Eisenhower looked thoughtful and said nothing. Truscott glowered and said nothing. A French officer who had joined the conference broke the silence: "Now that General Eisenhower is here and the Americans are in force, the situation will be restored." But even he seemed unconvinced.

The conference ended with salutes and farewells. Robinett mounted his jeep for the frigid drive north to CCB's bivouac in Maktar. Eisenhower promised to take up the issues he had raised—tomorrow. "The yielding of ground," Robinett later observed, "even worthless, untenable ground, involved too much loss of face." Eisenhower and Truscott climbed back into the Cadillac, this time with Ward wedged between them, for the thirty-mile drive east to Sidi bou Zid. It was eleven P.M.

Another cactus patch, another command post, another briefing. In a cramped personnel carrier roofed with a tarpaulin, McQuillin offered a brief summary of the latest intelligence. No changes had been observed in German positions around Faïd Pass; the enemy had "not been very active." Colonel Hains, commander of the 1st Armored Regiment, followed with a more detailed sketch of CCA's dispositions. Hains pointed out that the 1,700 men around Djebel Ksaira were especially vulnerable. A few portents could be divined, Hains added. For example, small scouting parties south of Faïd Pass had been attacked by German aircraft, suggesting that the enemy was hiding something. A French farmer reported that Axis pickets had prevented Arab field hands living across the Eastern Dorsal from traveling west to work. Allied pilots flying over the coastal plain earlier in the day had strafed a fleet of more than 300 enemy trucks—enough to carry an infantry regiment—but the trucks had been empty.

Eisenhower had sensed enough unease among his commanders in the past twelve hours to feel perturbations himself. ("Ike would swap stars for divisions," Ward scribbled in his diary.) But he limited his comments to the issue of minefields around American positions. Why had it taken so long to lay mines? Why were there so few? The Germans needed only two hours to prepare a new position against counterattack. Here it had taken more than two days. "Get your mine fields out first thing in the morning," he snapped. Sidi bou Zid must be held.

Otherwise he said nothing. The CCA war log noted that Eisenhower "listened to a description of our situation and dispositions without comment."

He stepped from the personnel carrier. The overcast sky had brightened, with clouds backlit by the moon. A few hundred yards to the northwest stood the vaguely biblical silhouettes of palm trees

and squat, flat-roofed buildings in Sidi bou Zid. As Eisenhower listened, an infantry captain addressed his men: “We do not pray for victory, nor even for our individual safety. But we pray for help that none of us may let a comrade down—that each of us may do his duty to himself, his comrades, and his country, and so be worthy of our American heritage.” Eisenhower’s eyes welled with tears.

Colonel Drake appeared, summoned by McQuillin from Djebel Ksaira to be decorated for his valor at Sened Station two weeks earlier. While waiting for the ceremony to begin, Drake asked McQuillin, “General, what will we do if the enemy attacks from the pass in the east?” McQuillin shushed him. “Don’t bring that up.” Now Drake stood at rigid attention as Eisenhower plucked a Silver Star from his pocket and pinned it to the colonel’s fatigue jacket. “Drake,” he said, “I think you’re going to go a long ways.” It was the most prescient remark he had made all day.

At 1:30 on Sunday morning, Eisenhower took a brief stroll in the desert, mindful of the prickly pears. Even his zippered goop suit and heavy gloves could not repel the high desert cold. It would take the rest of the night to drop Ward at Sbeïtla and return to Speedy Valley, and another long day to reach Algiers. He had much to contemplate. Ten miles to the east, he could barely discern a serrated notch in the black ridgeline where Faïd Pass pierced the Eastern Dorsal. He climbed into the warm sedan and headed in the opposite direction.

A week later, when the moment for excuses and scapegoats had arrived, Eisenhower would remind Marshall that it “would naturally be a delicate matter for me to interfere directly into tactical dispositions.” No one asked whether it was not less delicate to permit the destruction of his men. In truth, Eisenhower—preoccupied with strategic and political issues, and having no personal combat experience—had simply failed to grasp the tactical peril on that Valentine’s Day morning. In trying to serve as both supreme commander and field general, he had mastered neither job. The fault was his, and it would enlarge him for bigger battles on future fields. But it was not his fault alone. Mistakes clattered down the line, along with bad luck, bad timing, and the other handmaidens of havoc.

A dearth of frontline intelligence from patrols, pilots, and prisoners meant that since February 8 virtually all information about enemy intentions had come from Ultra decrypts. Yet the Germans had changed plans several times, and much of the scheming by Kesselring, Rommel, and Arnim had been done tête-à-tête, without resort to radio transmissions vulnerable to Allied interception. On February 13, Ultra disclosed that the 21st Panzer Division had been ordered forward, and that Sunday was to be “A-day” for an operation by Arnim’s Fifth Panzer Army. Having rushed back to his headquarters from Speedy Valley to assess this news, Anderson issued a warning, which arrived at II Corps as coded message No. 915 at 1:29 A.M., just as Eisenhower was pinning the Silver Star on Drake: “Urgent. Absolute priority. Information from First Army leads to belief attack will take place tomorrow.” Alerts flashed through the Allied command.

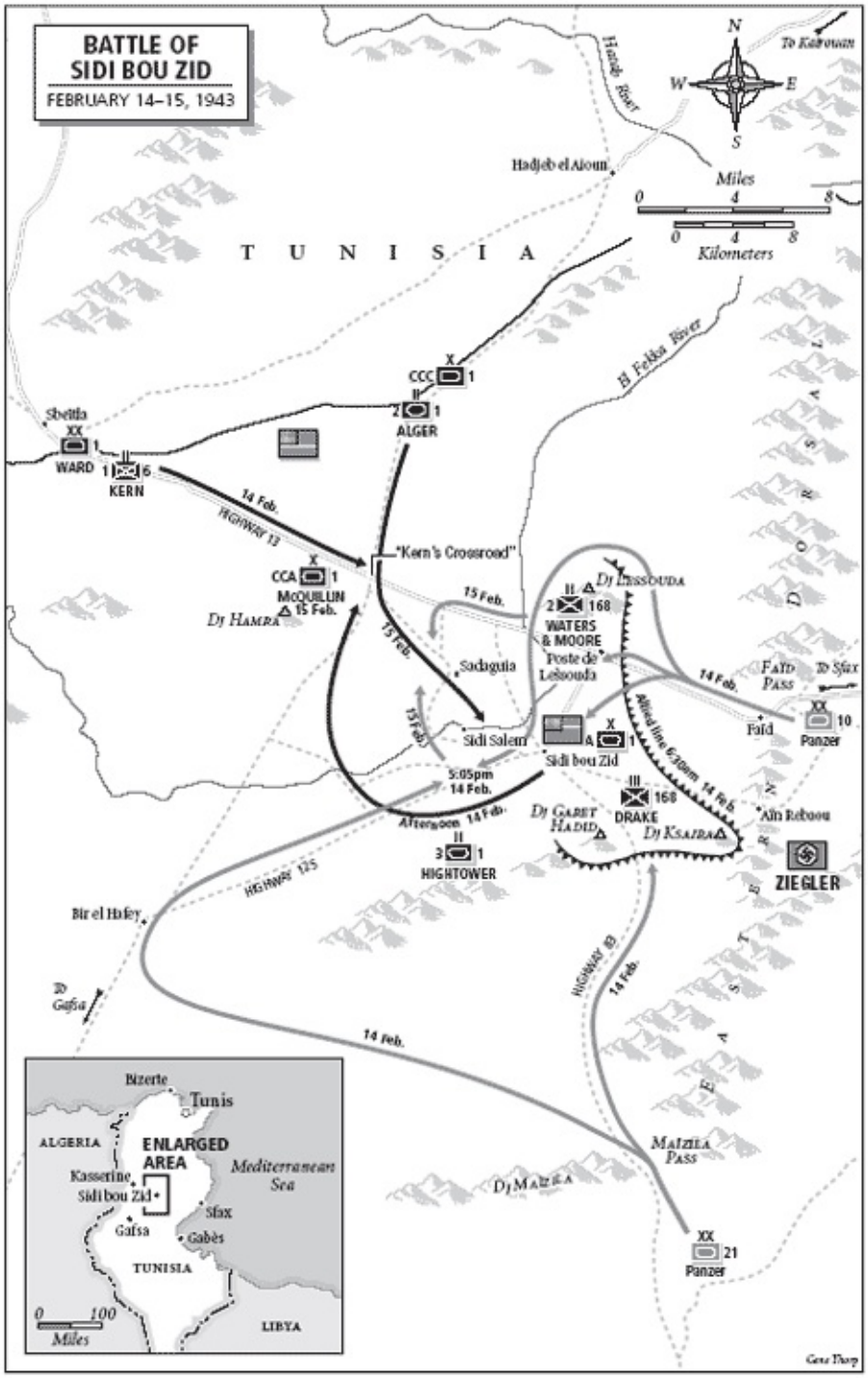
But the warning did not specify the avenue of attack. Other intercepted messages revealing that Luftwaffe fighters would arrive Sunday morning at Kairouan reinforced the near certitude in AFHQ and First Army that the attack would come in the north. Yet another message circulated through II Corps that “Rommel has been reported critically ill in a Tunisian hospital and was probably thereafter evacuated from Tunis by air.”

Fantasy obscured fact; small errors compounded large. More than 100 enemy tanks from the 10th Panzer Division had moved south toward Faïd Pass without Allied pilots seeing them. American scouts reported that a small defile below Faïd Pass was “impassable for armored vehicles,” but they had failed to detect enemy engineers feverishly regrading the trail. Lieutenant Colonel Waters, before snatching a few hours of sleep in his rocky den on Djebel Lessouda, sent a patrol with a radio to Faïd

Pass, but the patrol stopped three miles short of the Eastern Dorsal. “I didn’t go out to check them,” Waters later admitted. “My error.” Despite a stiff wind blowing from the west, the patrol soon heard a faint rumble from the direction of the pass, like the slow roll of kettledrums—or the thunder of massing tanks. Dutifully reported, the noise was dutifully noted, and a few CCA supply vehicles were dutifully dispatched toward the safety of the rear.

A cold drizzle added to the misery of soldiers huddled without campfires, hot food, or hope in a better tomorrow. GIs stuffed rags in their rifle muzzles and wrapped the bolts in oilskin. Skittish sentries barked the code-word challenge—“Snafu!”—at suspicious shadows and strained to hear the proper countersign: “Damned right!” Southeast of Djebel Ksaira a patrol of five tanks and two dozen men led by Lieutenant Laurence P. Robertson laagered for the night in the lee of the Eastern Dorsal with their Shermans parked back-to-back like the spokes of a wheel. Robertson ordered the engines switched off one by one at ten-minute intervals to create the illusion that the platoon was drawing farther away rather than stopping.

Below Djebel Lessouda, ammunition handlers dumped an extra hundred rounds at each howitzer in Battery B of the 91st Field Artillery Battalion. The battery commander, Captain W. Bruce Pirnie, Jr., thought the gesture “seemed sort of silly. We had spent a quiet ten days in our position.” Everyone hoped that any disturbance of the peace would be brief. General Eisenhower himself had predicted as much in a message to the War Department earlier in the day: “Axis cannot risk at this moment to embark on operation which might mean heavy losses of men and equipment.”


BATTLE OF
SIDI BOU ZID
FEBRUARY 14–15, 1943
N
W
E
S
To Kairouan
Hadjeb el Aioun
Miles
0 4 8
0 4 8
Kilometers
T U N I S I A
El Fekka River
CCC 1
2 1
ALGER
Sbeitla
XX 1
WARD 1 6
KERN
14 Feb.
HIGHWAY 13
"Kern's Crossroad"
CCA 1
McQUILLIN
15 Feb.
Dj HAMRA
15 Feb.
15 Feb.
Sadaguia
Dj LESSOUDA
II 2 168
WATERS & MOORE
Poste de Lessouda
14 Feb.
FAID PASS
To Sfax
XX 10
Panzer
Faid
Allied line 6:30pm 14 Feb.
Sidi Salem
A 1
Sidi bou Zid
5:05pm 14 Feb.
Afternoon 14 Feb.
III 168
DRAKE
Dj GARET HADID
Dj KSAIBA
Aïn Rebaou
II 3 1
HIGHTOWER
HIGHWAY 125
ZIEGLER
Bir el Hafey
HIGHWAY 13
14 Feb.
To Gafsa
14 Feb.
MAIZILA PASS
Dj MAIZILA
XX 21
Panzer
Bizerte
Tunis
ALGERIA
ENLARGED AREA
Mediterranean Sea
Kasserine
Sidi bou Zid
Sfax
Gafsa
Gabès
TUNISIA
LIBYA
0 100
Miles
Gene Thorp

9. KASSERINE

A Hostile Debouchment

ABRIEF, howling sandstorm swept across the Tunisian plain early Sunday morning, February 14. German sappers cinched bandannas across their noses and finished lifting the last American mines from the western mouth of Faïd Pass. At four A.M. a bobbing procession of lights, almost ecclesiastical in grandeur, emerged from an olive grove east of the gap. Soldiers in black tunics tramped down Highway 13 carrying lanterns to guide more than a hundred tanks—a dozen Tigers among them—and as many infantry lorries and half-tracks. Exhaust stink and the creak of armor tracks filled the defile.

As dawn spread behind him, the commander of Operation FRÜHLINGSWIND, General Heinz Ziegler—a Russian Front veteran who now served as Arnim's chief of staff—climbed a rocky parapet above the squalid hamlet of Faïd. Light seeped across the desert, exposing the odd humps of Djebel Lessouda on Ziegler's right and Djebel Ksaira on his left. Ziegler liked what he saw: nothing. The Americans did not appear aroused, nor even alert. At precisely 6:30 A.M. the drivers shifted into gear and panzers spilled from the Eastern Dorsal onto the plain. Behind them the sun rose through the dust in an enormous, molten orb.

They came down like the wolf on the fold. First to fall victim was the infantry squad dispatched by John Waters the previous night, now obliterated by German tanks three miles from Faïd. The Americans sent no radio warning; the prearranged rocket signal intended to trigger an artillery barrage on the pass went unfired. Every man in the squad was killed or captured. Two miles on, the 10th Panzer Division slammed into ten tanks from Company G of Colonel Hains's 1st Armored Regiment. This morning, as on every morning, the tankers had left their night bivouac in a ravine near Sidi bou Zid and moved to a squat hillock east of Djebel Lessouda known as the Oasis. Having watched the routine each dawn for a week, the Germans knew precisely where to find them. Several crews had dismounted and were fixing breakfast when a swarm of green fireballs blew through the picket line at half a mile per second, trailing fantails of brown dust. One astonished sergeant likened the noise to "half of the Krupp Iron Works moving out of the German Ruhr valley." Within minutes the American tanks were annihilated; so were half a dozen others from the same company rushing forward to help. Sixteen columns of black smoke corkscrewed into the sky. It was barely 7:30 A.M.

Three miles east of Djebel Lessouda, the attackers split up. One pack of eighty tanks and trucks veered north and then west to encircle the hill; two others angled south toward Sidi bou Zid. Captain Bruce Pirnie, who the night before had considered the provision of extra shells for his Battery B an extravagance, reported "a tremendous force of tanks and infantry approaching us, not more than two thousand yards away…. Scarlet and white flashes." Gun captains shortened the range of their shells by reducing their powder from charge 7 to charge 5 to charge 3 as the enemy drew near. The smaller charges "really changed the sound of the howitzers," Pirnie later wrote. "They sounded impotent, just a little pop and hardly any recoil. We were scared and green." The gunners fired until "the Germans were so close that our fire couldn't clear the crest in front of us." Pirnie radioed Waters on Djebel Lessouda behind him. "We can't hit them," Pirnie said. "They've gotten in under us." "If you can't fire," Waters replied evenly, "move back to where you can."

Crews broke for the rear, belatedly. Only one of four guns escaped, jouncing across the desert. Pirnie followed at the wheel of a careering ammunition half-track. The Germans reminded him of wild

dogs hunting in a pack. When they again drew close he sabotaged his last tube with thermite grenades stuffed down the muzzle. As in every catastrophe, petty inconvenience would remain as vivid in memory as the blackest strokes of tragedy: Pirnie would always recall his shoes, purchased from an Irish cobbler before TORCH. They hurt like the devil.

One after another the American units fell. A platoon of tank destroyers was itself destroyed by tanks. The 2nd Battalion of the 17th Field Artillery—armed with eighteen World War I–vintage 155mm howitzers and somehow forgotten in the confusion—waited east of Sidi bou Zid for orders to decamp. The German attack on the battalion "erased it, getting every gun and most of the men," a staff officer reported. Battery A of the 91st Field Artillery fired in a smoking frenzy from Sidi bou Zid until all forward observers were killed or wounded, blinding the gunners. "We didn't know exactly where to fire," one lieutenant said. "There was artillery fire, machine gun fire, armor-piercing tank shells whizzing through the town." Tossing their dead into an empty trailer, the artillerymen leapfrogged west.

Enemy bullets and tank shells sheeted across the desert. Soldiers scooped shallow foxholes with their helmets or clawed at the ground until their fingers bled. "All around me comrades were being machine-gunned from tanks," one soldier recalled. "Their screams were faintly heard due to the terrific explosions." Another soldier stumbled upon a cowering group of troops too frightened even to speak. "I broke down and went off by myself," he later confessed. A third soldier leaped into a jeep and cranked the ignition so insistently the key snapped in half. An anti-aircraft platoon leader, having "lost his sense of direction in the confusion and stampede of other units," unwittingly bolted southeast to deliver himself and his men into German hands. Enemy outriders also seized four ambulances, each jammed with wounded GIs; most of the medical detachment of the 168th Infantry and the collecting company of the 109th Medical Battalion would fall prey, with the loss of 100 men, including ten physicians. Wehrmacht medics passed out oranges to savagely burned American prisoners.

The enemy without question had made "a hostile debouchment," as a clerk scribbled in the CCA war diary. General McQuillin, trying from his command post on the southeast edge of Sidi bou Zid to make sense of the shrieking radios and billowing smoke, believed the morning could still be made right with a brisk counterattack. At 7:30 A.M. he ordered the commander of the 3rd Battalion of the 1st Armored Regiment to "clear up the situation." Lieutenant Colonel Louis V. Hightower, a thirty-three-year-old West Point classmate of John Waters, emerged from McQuillin's tent with his briefcase in hand. He climbed onto his Sherman tank—named *Texas*, she flew the Lone Star flag from a radio antenna—and cantered toward the Oasis. With the early destruction of Company G, he had three dozen Shermans left.

Two miles north of Sidi bou Zid, the first Stukas attacked. Little damage was done to Hightower's tanks, but the bombs "smoked us up so that we couldn't see through the dust," he later recounted. Then green fireballs ripped into the formation, "close to the ground like a ricocheting stone in water." Shermans left and right burst into flame. "Sometimes two or three men got out," one sergeant reported. "Sometimes no one got out. Most of the tanks burned when hit." A shell snipped the head of the H Company commander from his shoulders. The platoon commanded by Lieutenant Laurence Robertson, sent on patrol to the southeast the previous night, abruptly roared through a gap in an American minefield to join the mêlée. Chased for miles by thirty panzers, Robertson had bought enough time to escape by firing smoke rounds at his pursuers to simulate artillery fire. It was now apparent that the attack from Faïd Pass was complemented by the 21st Panzer Division spilling from Maïzila Pass twenty miles south. The enemy intended to snare all of CCA in a double envelopment.

Hightower pulled the remnants of his battalion back into Sidi bou Zid in a zigzagging retreat, and clattered out the south side on the Gafsa road. Behind them, Luftwaffe squadrons methodically obliterated the town. A captain in a jeep raced through the olive groves that sheltered the CCA supply

trains. “Take off, men!” he bellowed. “You are on your own.” Some bolted; others desperately cranked engines that refused to start—lint from camouflage nets had clogged the fuel filters on many jeeps and trucks. A major sprayed the Sidi bou Zid fuel dump with machine-gun bullets as appalled tankers, their Shermans nearly dry, darted among the flames to salvage a few five-gallon tins.

Uncertainty yielded to confusion, confusion to panic. A horizontal avalanche of men and vehicles slid west across the desert, making for the intersection of Highways 13 and 3, ten miles from Sidi bou Zid and almost halfway to Sbeïtla. (This junction soon would be known as Kern’s Crossroad after the battalion commander sent to secure it, Lieutenant Colonel William B. Kern.) Thomas E. Hannum, an artillery lieutenant, was reminded of the Oklahoma land rush, except that “the air was full of whistles” from enemy projectiles. Another gunner watched as several half-tracks “suddenly blossomed out with red and black, like the first puff of fire in oil, and then seemed to settle down like a sinking ship.” Indefatigable Tunisian peddlers stood along the road holding up eggs, tangerines, and tiny gasoline stoves.

Now reduced to a dozen tanks, Hightower’s battalion also swung west at fourteen miles per hour to provide a screen for those in flight. Hightower soon spotted panzers half a mile to the south; one pincer from the 21st Panzer Division was closing in on Sidi bou Zid. An even larger enemy tank force —the number swelled with each report—bore down from the north after looping around Djebel Lessouda. “It looks,” suggested one tanker, “like a dryland Dunkirk.”

Hightower angled south with four Shermans to buy time while the rest of his force continued toward the crossroads. At 700 yards, *Texas* hit two enemy tanks with well-aimed shots from her 75mm main gun. Watching with field glasses from an open hatch, Hightower cheerfully reported that a panzer turret “broke into flame like a flower.” A German shell drilled *Texas* through the bogey wheels, and darted out the other side “like a rabbit.” Other rounds glanced off the Sherman’s turret and hull. “Each shell that hit sounded like a giant anvil or tremendous bell,” Hightower later recalled. After shooting two more panzers, *Texas* was struck from the left by a round that punctured the fuel tank and landed spinning on a hatch cover. Above the crackle of flaming gasoline Hightower roared, “Let’s get the hell out of here!” The crew “boiled out like peas from a hot pod before the tank had stopped running.” Five men sprinted west as their tank blew up behind them.

Of fifty-two Shermans in action, six survived the afternoon. At 1:45 P.M. half a dozen Tigers bulled through the rubble on Sidi bou Zid’s northern outskirts. At 5:05 P.M., tanks from the 21st Panzer in the south and those from the 10th Panzer in the north met two miles east of town on Highway 125. The double envelopment had taken less than twelve hours.

The disaster was all too evident from the shaley brow of Djebel Lessouda, where John Waters watched the attack with both dismay and professional discernment. The folly of the Allied battle plan was clear: after losing Faïd Pass in late January, the Americans should have either recaptured the Eastern Dorsal—at whatever cost—or retired to defensible terrain on the Grand Dorsal. Instead they had dispersed across a vulnerable open plain where the enemy could defeat them in detail. Lessouda, like Djebel Ksaira in the hazy distance, was so steep, with such a commanding vista of the dun world below, that the Americans had been bewitched by an illusion of security. In fact, the hill provided Waters only with a panorama of his own imminent destruction.

When the first wave of eighty German tanks and half-tracks had looped north around the hill at dawn, a combination of glare, dust, and wishful thinking prevented Robert Moore and his 900 infantrymen from shooting, on the remote chance that the force was friendly. Colonel Hains had radioed Waters from Sidi bou Zid. “There must be something going on,” Hains said in one of the

war's premier understatements. "There is an awful lot of firing out there in front of you now."

Better visibility and dire reports from routed forces to the east soon clarified the predicament. By 8:30 A.M., German officers in peaked caps stood on their tank turrets just beyond rifle range, raking Lessouda with field glasses. Led by motorcycle troops, an enemy column on the east pressed up the lower slopes through a narrow wadi. At a range of 300 yards Moore gave the command to fire. A stabbing red volley rippled from the rocks and the Germans fell back, leaving a trail of dead and wounded. Two Wehrmacht officers and six enlisted men were taken prisoner.

At noon the enemy tried again, this time pressing up the southern face where Waters's command post was tucked into a gulch. Gray-clad figures darted through the olive trees and tuft grass below. Unable to reach Moore by radio, Waters sent his driver up the hill to find him. A few minutes later the soldier stumbled back, ashen, blood bubbling from a hole drilled through his chest by one of Moore's nervous infantrymen. "Sir, I couldn't get up there," he told Waters, "and I got shot." Waters wrapped him in a bedroll with two shots of morphine, and soon the young man was dead.

Waters radioed Hains. "Pete, I'm going to shut this thing off," he said. "They are all around here and looking for me now, but I don't think they've discovered this half-track yet." Not only were German patrols closing in, but locals had begun combing the battlefield to strip the dead and betray the living. Moore was marooned with his infantry on the upper slope. "I'm going to dismantle the radio and I'll hide the parts," Waters added. "I will go into the next little ditch and hide out there until dark."

Try to hold on, Hains urged. "Good luck to you, John."

"Never mind about me," Waters said. "Just kill those bastards at the bottom of the hill."

At four P.M. Waters heard footsteps on shale. Assuming that it was one of his own officers, he rose from his hiding place beneath an overhanging ledge. Fifteen feet away, seven German soldiers led by two Arabs whirled around; a short burst of Schmeisser bullets fired from the hip missed Waters by inches and pinged off the rocks. Delighted to capture such a high-ranking officer—soon enough the enemy would learn he was also Patton's son-in-law—the Germans marched him half a mile down the hill. Several Wehrmacht officers sat in a makeshift command post listening to dance music on a big radio. Waters was plopped in a motorcycle sidecar and driven through Faïd Pass to begin a voyage that would take him to Tunis by truck, to Italy by transport plane, and finally over the Alps by train to a Bavarian prison camp. For John Waters, the war was over.

Ten miles to the southeast the war went on, badly, for Drake and his men. With nearly a thousand troops already dug in on Djebel Ksaira, Drake decided to herd the rest of his command—now bivouacked in various wadis southeast of Sidi bou Zid—onto Garet Hadid, a slightly loftier escarpment four miles west of Ksaira. Soon 950 riflemen, musicians, cooks, and clerks were perched on the barren rock like nesting birds. Nearly one-third lacked weapons. After watching the artillery flee near Djebel Lessouda, Drake had called McQuillin at eight A.M. on a field phone to report the makings of a rout. When Old Mac disputed his characterization, Drake snapped, "I know what I'm talking about. I know panic when I see it." McQuillin hesitated, then told Drake: "You are on the spot. Take command and stop it."

The arrival of the 21st Panzer Division precluded any chance to "stop it." Half the panzers swung cross-country far to the west for the backdoor attack on Sidi bou Zid, which Hightower would only briefly disrupt. The rest drove straight north along Highway 83, into the gap between Djebel Garet Hadid and Djebel Ksaira. American troops on the two hills spattered the enemy with enough steel to delay this prong of the German advance six miles from Sidi bou Zid. Enemy gunners answered with

artillery, mortar, and tank fire. “It seems like everything the enemy uses is designed to harass a man,” one American private concluded.

Drake soon recognized that his position was desperate if not hopeless. Enemy tanks near Sidi bou Zid appeared to be methodically pirouetting over the slit trenches to crush the remaining defenders. Several American units around Djebel Ksaira tried to steal away before officers hectored them back into the line with threats and curses. At 11:30, McQuillin at Sidi bou Zid reported by radio to General Ward’s headquarters in Sbeïtla: “Enemy tanks closing in and threatening both flanks and…Drake. Any orders?” Ward replied: “Continue your mission.” At 12:08 P.M. McQuillin reported: “Enemy right on top of us.”

Drake was scanning the battlefield from a rocky knob on Garet Hadid when a staff officer approached. “General McQuillin is on the telephone,” the officer said. “He is pulling out and you are to stay here.” Drake flew to the phone only to find the line dead. Two signalmen followed the wire to the abandoned CCA headquarters outside Sidi bou Zid. The command post had temporarily moved seven miles west, then joined the ragged exodus toward Sbeïtla. McQuillin “fled so fast he even left the codebook” behind, Drake later complained.

At two P.M., Drake reached McQuillin by radio. Swallowing his anger, he asked permission to pull his men off Djebel Ksaira. McQuillin passed the request to Ward, who relayed it to Fredendall. At Speedy Valley, a hundred miles from the shooting, life looked less bleak. Within eight minutes, McQuillin was told: “Too early to give Drake permission to withdraw.” McQuillin radioed the message to Garet Hadid: “Continue to hold your position.”

A few minutes later Drake dictated a ninety-three-word message directly to Ward. Scribbled on three sheets of British toilet paper, the note ended: “Talked to McQuillan [*sic*] once by radio, said had requested help. Germans have absolute superiority ground and air…. Unless help from air and armor comes immediately, infantry will lose immeasurably.”

A young lieutenant folded the message and slid it into the breast pocket of his fatigue shirt. He scrambled down the back slope of Garet Hadid and headed west in a jeep, a dispatch rider in search of the cavalry.

Eisenhower and Truscott had returned to Speedy Valley from Sidi bou Zid at dawn on Sunday morning, the fourteenth. In his goop suit, with a wool hat pulled over his eyes, the commander-in-chief “looked pinched with cold,” Kay Summersby reported. “He was very tired and very depressed.” He crawled into a tent near Fredendall’s command post and slept for two hours in a sleeping bag spread across a cot, snoring loudly.

Rising at midmorning, Eisenhower conferred with Fredendall and Anderson. Both affected a bluff élan. Information was sketchy, they admitted, but the enemy attack appeared to be a local affair. “There was no reason to think that McQuillin would not be able to hold his own,” Truscott later wrote. No other enemy activity was reported along the front, but Anderson wanted to evacuate exposed Gafsa in the far south as a precaution, retracting the Allied right flank to the more defensible foothills of the Grand Dorsal. Eisenhower agreed. He told Marshall in a subsequent message, “I really believe that the fighting of today will show that our troops are giving a very fine account of themselves even though we must give up part of our extended line.”

The truth would soon out. Some troops indeed were fighting with uncommon valor; many were not fighting at all. Most were befuddled and frightened. Hightower’s gallantry, coupled with resistance around Djebel Ksaira, had allowed hundreds of McQuillin’s men to escape, but several thousand others were trapped, captured, or dead. Of the five battalions controlled by CCA, two were

surrounded and three were on the way to obliteration. Nine Axis battalions had slammed into the Americans, and although the depleted German units barely added up to a full-strength armored division, they included two of the Wehrmacht's most celebrated formations: the 10th Panzer Division, spearhead of General Heinz Guderian's breakthrough at Sedan in May 1940, and the 21st Panzer, the first German division in Africa and perhaps the most experienced desert fighters on earth. Moreover, the second phase of the offensive, MORGENLUFT—Rommel's attack in the south—had yet to begin.

No sense of urgency gripped Speedy Valley. There was concern, yes, and vexation at an annoying foe who refused to relinquish the initiative. But no commander seemed to have an inkling that life-and-death consequences derived from decisions made *right now*. Anderson's eyes remained fixed on the north, peering for enemy columns that did not exist. CCA had yet to identify 10th Panzer as the agent of its destruction; consequently, Anderson surmised that the division remained poised to strike the French near Kairouan. Not only was Ward's 1st Armored Division too dispersed to throw an effective counterpunch, but the division artillery chief's diversion to command the improvised CCD two weeks earlier had deprived the most lethal American defensive arm—massed howitzers—of its leader and his staff.

Eisenhower summoned reinforcements from Morocco and Algeria, but not many; the Americans remained as fixated on the fantasy of an Axis strike through Spain as the British did on a prospective blow in northern Tunisia. Those who heard the trumpet came slowly: the U.S. 9th Infantry Division, for example, was missing half its vehicles, which had been left at home in TORCH or sent as replacements to the Tunisian front. Other troops, unaccountably, were left on the sidelines, including more than 4,000 gunners in the 13th Field Artillery Brigade, who had landed with tubes and full transport in Algeria in December and would remain there until mid-March.

With Summersby again behind the wheel, Eisenhower left Speedy Valley at 11:30 A.M. Sunday for the return to Algiers. Fifty-five miles northeast of Tébessa, while Hightower fought for his life and Waters hid under a rock, Eisenhower ordered the motorcade to stop at the ancient city of Timgad. Built by Rome's Third Legion in A.D. 100 the town had been consigned to oblivion for centuries until French archaeologists excavated the site in the 1880s.

For more than an hour, the Allied commander-in-chief and his band wandered through streets paved in blue limestone and lined with Doric colonnades. The white bones of Timgad ribbed a hillside dominated by the Emperor Trajan's forty-foot triumphal arch. Commode seats were still graced with marble arms in the shape of frolicking dolphins. Little imagination was needed to hear the clatter of chariot wheels, or to smell cedar burning on the altars of Jupiter Capitolinus. A guidebook invited visitors to conjure "barbarians from the outer desert in paint and feathers flitting along the narrow byways," and the scuffing cadence of Roman soldiers helmed in bronze. Eisenhower and Truscott studied an inscription chiseled between two columns in the great forum: *"Venari lavari ludere ridere hoc est vivere":* To hunt, to bathe, to play, to laugh—that is to live.

"When you remember me in your prayers, that's the special thing I want—always to do my duty to the extreme limit of my ability," Eisenhower wrote his wife a few hours later, during a stop in Constantine. Finally returning to Villa dar el Ouard after the long last leg to Algiers, he sat at the grand piano in the room where a few nights before he had belted out "One Dozen Roses." Sometimes Eisenhower amused himself at the keyboard by plunking "Chopsticks" with two fingers. This night, weary and morose at the increasingly bad news from Tunisia, he instead, very slowly, picked out "Taps," then stood without a word and went to bed. To err, to fret, to grieve, to learn—that, too, was to live.

None Returned

WITH Anderson's decision to shorten his southern flank and evacuate Gafsa, GIs took a last quick wash in the hot-spring Roman baths and headed northwest. It was Sunday night, February 14. Soon Highway 15 was jammed with overloaded refugee carts, bleating livestock, and 180 Army trucks. A tearful bordello owner who introduced herself as Madame LaZonga pleaded with American officers for deliverance. Deliverance came. At midnight Madame rode out of town on the back of a General Stuart with six young women she identified as her daughters, all waving like beauty queens on a Columbus Day parade float. Combat engineers blew up the power station, "plunging us into total and rather sinister darkness," one British officer noted. Then they wedged six tons of ammonal, plastic explosives, bangalore torpedoes, guncotton, and "great quantities of cortex" into a subterranean gallery beneath Gafsa's sixteenth-century citadel. The blast, at six on Monday morning, was audible for thirty miles. "Rocks three feet in diameter flew more than a hundred feet into the air," an engineer captain reported proudly. The explosion also demolished nearly three dozen houses; the bodies of thirty residents were recovered immediately, and eighty people remained missing when Axis troops arrived a day later.

The sprawling air bases at Fériana and Thélepte, forty-five miles up Highway 15, were next to be abandoned on Anderson's order. Evacuation of the 3,500 troops had begun at eleven on Sunday night. For the benefit of future German occupants, a departing officer tacked up a large wall map showing the latest battle lines around Stalingrad, where Field Marshal Friedrich Paulus of the Wehrmacht's Sixth Army had just surrendered.

Thirty-four Allied airplanes grounded for repairs were scuttled with thermite grenades. An engineer who had been detailed to destroy 50,000 gallons of gasoline recounted, "Before I finished the Germans were attacking the field. I was the last one out…. They were shooting at me, but there was an awful lot of smoke and they couldn't see me very well." The enemy nevertheless captured fifty tons of aviation gas and oil, and the engineer was not, it so happened, the last one out. The evacuation order failed to reach Company C of the 805th Tank Destroyer Battalion, which instead heeded a previous command to attack the approaching enemy. Repulsed, utterly, the company suffered seventy-five casualties and lost all twelve tank destroyers along with sixteen other vehicles.

A battlefield bromide cautions: "Never believe a straggler and rarely believe a casualty." Both breeds had begun trickling in to 1st Armored Division headquarters, and their collective tale of prodigious German strength fell on deaf ears. Colonel Hightower arrived at Ward's command post in the Sbeïtla cactus patch on Sunday night. He was, a witness reported, "badly used up and declared that his battalion had been wiped out." Hightower confirmed that Tigers were involved in the attack along with scores of other panzers. Messages from Djebel Lessouda and Djebel Ksaira provided detailed if fragmentary intelligence about enemy tanks, guns, and troop concentrations.

Yet a mood of benighted denial had settled over the Allied high command, which no eyewitness testimony could dislodge. Anderson visited Robinett at Maktar and proposed borrowing a single tank battalion to drive the enemy from Sidi bou Zid. A French proposal to fling *all* of CCB into the counterattack was rejected by the British as imprudent given the suspected German legions waiting to pounce in the north. Shortly after eight P.M. on Sunday night, Anderson sent Fredendall a message:

> As regards action in Sidi bou Zid: concentrate tomorrow on clearing up situation there and destroying enemy…. Army Commander deeply regrets losses suffered by CCA, but he congratulates them on their fine fight, is confident they will decisively defeat the enemy tomorrow, and is sure that the enemy must have suffered losses at least as heavy as their own.

This hallucination whisked through Speedy Valley without challenge and on to Ward. He and his operations officer, Hamilton Howze, then wrote the order to counterattack with a force weaker than the one already routed: a tank battalion, a tank destroyer company, an infantry battalion from CCC, and a few artillery tubes. “I didn’t like it much,” Ward told his diary, but he neither protested the order nor tried to enlarge the contingent. Howze, who admitted to knowing little about armor tactics, later acknowledged an enduring shame “for not contesting the order more strongly, even at the cost of my commission.”

The tank battalion chosen to lead the counterblow had never seen combat. Fitted with new Shermans and commanded by Lieutenant Colonel James D. Alger, a twenty-nine-year-old West Pointer from Massachusetts, the 2nd Battalion of the 1st Armored Regiment held battle honors dating to the Black Hawk War. But in this war the unit was green as grass. Ward told his diary: “Alger was more or less on his own.”

Robinett stood by the road in Maktar as the tanks rolled south, stripped for battle. “Off we went across the desert,” a lieutenant later recalled. “We knew not what we were getting into.” As for young Alger, Robinett reported that he “saluted and smiled as he passed.”

Half a mile south of Highway 13 and midway between Sidi bou Zid and Sbeïtla, Djebel Hamra provided a fine grandstand from which to watch the enemy get his comeuppance, and by midmorning on Monday, February 15, a covey of officers and correspondents had scaled the 2,000-foot crest. McQuillin arrived along with the CCC commander, Colonel Robert I. Stack. So did Hains and Hightower and the ubiquitous Ernie Pyle, with his “signature belch, inventive profanity, [and] wondrous hypochondria.” At Ward’s headquarters in Sbeïtla that morning, an officer had assured Pyle, “We are going to kick hell out of them today and we’ve got the stuff to do it with.”

The day was dry and sunny. A mirage shimmered like spilled mercury around Sidi bou Zid, a dark green smear thirteen miles distant. Beyond the town, the hazy lavender trapezoid of Djebel Ksaira sat on the horizon. Djebel Lessouda loomed to the left, tethered to the long ribbon of Highway 13. A landscape that from a distance seemed flat as a billiard table was in fact corrugated with subtle folds and dips. Even from Hamra’s Olympian summit the plain teemed with Arab farmers plowing their fields behind plodding black bullocks. Birdsong and the smell of dung rose on the morning thermals.

Just before one P.M., Alger’s battalion appeared on a camel track from the north. The column wheeled with parade-ground precision around a lone gum tree and headed southeast for Sidi bou Zid at eight miles per hour. Dust plumed behind each Sherman. Tank destroyers flared to the flanks, and an infantry battalion followed in trucks and half-tracks, trailed in turn by a dozen artillery tubes. From a radio truck blared “The Stars and Stripes Forever,” clearly audible on the hillcrest, where a lieutenant who was immune to the prevailing confidence of his seniors murmured, “‘Into the valley of death rode the six hundred.’”

Alger had been told to push beyond Lessouda and Ksaira “and then hold until friendly infantry could withdraw” from the hills where they were trapped. Ward’s staff drew his route with blue pencil and a straight edge on the only map available, a 1-to-100,000 scale sheet on which each mile of terrain was represented by less than an inch of paper. Drivers were to use Ksaira’s north nose as a homing beacon. No reconnaissance was conducted, and Allied intelligence put enemy strength at only sixty tanks. This was less than half their actual number.

At 1:40 P.M., twenty Stukas materialized like swallows in the brilliant air; they caused little damage but deranged Alger’s formation and confirmed that German commanders knew of the

counterattack. Alger again paused after hearing a radioed warning that American planes planned a counterstrike on Sidi bou Zid. When no friendly planes appeared, he pressed on, neatly overrunning a half-dozen enemy antitank guns hidden along a wadi near the hamlet of Sadaguia.

Ward sat in his command post listening to radio traffic and eating lunch from a wooden tray. At 2:45 he heard CCC report: "Tanks now approaching Sidi bou Zid…. Enemy's lack of reaction suspicious but, on present indications, enemy force must be small or sucking us in." On a sheet of lined paper he scribbled a message for Drake to be dropped by airplane: "Daisy Mae join Lil Abner in the moonlight. He will give you a lift. Ward." Howze also sent a radio message alerting the men on Djebel Ksaira to their imminent salvation: "Keep your eye peeled and be ready to jump on the bandwagon."

No sooner did these optimistic messages go forth than a flare arced over Sidi bou Zid, "like a bright diamond in the afternoon sun," A. D. Divine reported from Djebel Hamra. Muzzle flashes winked near the town; twenty seconds later, enemy artillery airbursts spattered the American gun batteries. Alger reported the telltale dust feathers of approaching enemy tanks on his left and, ten minutes later, his right.

Into the trap they had ridden, into the valley. "Brown geysers of earth and smoke began to spout," wrote Pyle. He was astonished to see Arabs go on plowing, as if declining to acknowledge disfigurement of the day's tranquility. An ammunition carrier detonated, "with flames leaping and swaying. Every few seconds one of its shells would go off, and the projectile would tear into the sky with a weird *swhang-zing* sort of noise." Divine, standing at McQuillin's elbow, reported that "within a matter of minutes the golden dust that trailed [Alger's tanks] like banners had turned black. Blue smoke and red smoke from the German signals mingled with it…. We saw the counterattack falter and break and shatter."

The killing was confined mostly to an onion field a thousand yards square and two miles west of Sidi bou Zid. Tank rounds by the hundreds skipped across the furrows, many of them striking armor plates with electric blue flashes. By 4:30, American tanks were brewing up from Company D in the north, Company E in the center, and Company F in the south. Subsequent tests would show that the Sherman's main gun could not penetrate a Tiger's frontal armor even at point-blank range, while a Tiger could puncture a Sherman a mile away. Less scientific but no less relevant was the calculation by an American soldier that medium tanks once holed took twenty minutes to burn up and that "it takes ten minutes for a hearty man within to perish." Battle din muffled the sounds of those hearty men within, as if they were screaming underwater.

At 4:50 P.M., Colonel Stack radioed Alger. What was happening? What did the battalion need? "Still pretty busy," Alger answered laconically. "Situation is hard. No answer to second question. Further details later." Moments later a German round severed his radio antenna. Another struck the gun barrel and jammed the turret; four more in quick succession blew through the engine and turret, killing the radio operator and triggering dreamy clouds of fire retardant. Leaping from the hatch with two crewmen, Alger sprinted north across the desert. Within half an hour he was a prisoner, soon to join John Waters in a German camp.

Stack warned Ward that getting to Lessouda and Ksaira looked doubtful: "May not be able to reach position indicated to you by sundown." Five minutes later he ordered his infantry battalion to hold in place rather than risk encirclement. At six P.M., the attack was canceled outright, and all survivors began pulling back. Four Sherman tanks kept in reserve rallied below Djebel Hamra to await their fifty-two sisters. But, as the battalion war diary recorded, "None returned."

"As dusk began to settle, the sunset showed red on the dust of the Sidi bou Zid area," McQuillin later reported. "There was no wind, and the frequent black smoke pillars scattered over the terrain marked locations of burning tanks." He counted twenty-seven tanks aflame, but "the heavier dust

cloud near Sidi bou Zid no doubt obscured more that were afire. It was easy to recognize a burning tank due to the vertical shaft of smoke." Throughout the evening the desert leaked beaten, smoke-stained tankers. "I found myself all alone wandering amongst the dead and wreckage," recounted one soldier. "The night had a dead silence except for a few howling dogs." German salvage teams fanned across the shell-plowed field, scavenging weapons by the light of flaming tanks and hosing brains and gore from the few Shermans that had failed to burn.

By morning, CCA would estimate casualties from the past two days at 1,600 men. Nearly a hundred tanks had been sacrificed, along with fifty-seven half-tracks and twenty-nine artillery pieces. Also lost, after such obviously inept generalship, was whatever confidence the ranks still held in the high command.

Listening to the bray of voices from the radio, Ward refused to give up hope. At 10:30 Monday night, he told Fredendall, "We might have walloped them or they might have walloped us."

Anderson had no illusions. "We are dangerously dispersed," he warned Eisenhower in a message. "It is wise to consider in good time whether we should not voluntarily withdraw to the main ridge of the Grand Dorsal." The "awful nights of fleeing, crawling, and hiding from death," in Ernie Pyle's words, had begun.

"Sometimes That Is Not Good Enough"

THE immolation of Alger's battalion had also been visible from Djebel Lessouda, which provided bleacher seats for Robert Moore and his trapped infantrymen. Except for mortar barrages every two hours, the enemy seemed content to starve the Americans on Lessouda into surrender. At dusk on Monday evening, a lone P-40 flew over the hill and dropped a U.S. mail sack tied to a small parachute. Inside, Moore found a message to John Waters, whose fate was still unknown: "You are to withdraw to road west of Blid Chegas where guides will meet you. Bring everything you can. Ward." Suspecting a trick, Moore radioed McQuillin's command post for authentication. What was the division commander's nickname? "Message okay," came the reply, then added: "Pinky."

At 10:30 P.M. Moore gathered his men on Lessouda's southwestern slope. Hundreds of faces, blued by starlight, turned to hear his instructions. Heavy weapons would be spiked and abandoned. Moore himself was taking only his cherished English sleeping bag and his helmet, with its crease from the French machine-gun bullet in Algiers. They would march in two columns, thirty yards apart, parallel to and a mile north of Highway 13. The rendezvous point lay nine miles west, near the crossroads below Djebel Hamra on the road to Sbeïtla. Wounded men would be carried on litters. If any German prisoner uttered a sound, he was to be bayoneted.

Off they went beneath a full, ascending moon, two snaking lines led by Company F, which Moore had commanded so long ago in Villisca. At the base of the hill the men passed an 88mm gun, "so close that we could have easily reached out and touched it," one officer later reported. A German gunner called out. Moore shushed his men and pressed on. The gunner shrugged and lay back down.

Half an hour later, Moore heard voices in bushes to his left. Perhaps Ward's guides were searching for them. He veered from the column toward the trees, and a dark figure thirty yards away hailed him *auf deutsch.* Moore circled back to the column. "He didn't speak our language," he whispered to a young captain. The voice called out again, insistent this time, and then machine-gun fire ripped across the desert.

"Scatter!" Moore yelled. "Run like hell." Like hell they ran, to all directions of the compass. The first German rounds flew high but within twenty seconds men began to fall. Moore ordered them to flatten out and crawl. In a frenzy they crawled. Artillery from the western edge of Lessouda boomed,

followed by the crump of German mortars blindly gouging the desert. The battalion chaplain, Lieutenant Eugene L. Daniels, told the litter bearers and medics to flee while he remained with the wounded to await capture.

At five o'clock on Tuesday morning, February 16, Moore and a small band from Company F reached the crossroads where Ward had posted sentries. Haggard and red-eyed, lacerated by cactus thorns and desperately thirsty, they found nearly three dozen men from the company already there. Fifteen minutes later, part of Company H staggered in with a dozen German prisoners, followed by Company G. By sunrise, Moore counted 231 men. Others arrived throughout the day in Sbeïtla, where a quartermaster passed out blankets and overcoats. After another head count, Moore reported that of the 904 men he had commanded two days before, 432 remained.

Drake's ordeal was even more hideous. Nearly twice as far from friendly lines, he and his 1,900 men had been squeezed into an ever shrinking perimeter on the crests of Djebel Ksaira and Garet Hadid. "Besieged, good strength, good morale," Drake radioed Ward. Only the first was true. Hunger gnawed at troops whose tongues were swollen with thirst and who repeatedly wandered back from fighting positions on various pretexts. Drake authorized the regimental bandleader to form firing squads if necessary to keep the lines intact.

German intelligence mistakenly believed that only a company occupied each hill—the American force equaled roughly two battalions—and efforts to winkle out the defenders grew increasingly bold. By sunset on February 15, an estimated 300 grenadiers backed by panzers had infiltrated the lower slopes of Ksaira. German machine-gunners and snipers fired at any movement; the band's bass drummer fell dead while carrying extra ammunition to the perimeter, and a clarinetist was killed trying to avenge him. Wounded men died for want of medical aid; dead men lay unburied for want of grave diggers. American counterattacks temporarily repulsed the enemy with showers of hand grenades, but minutes later the coal-scuttle helmets could again be seen darting up the wadis.

At 2:30 P.M. on February 16, Drake on Garet Hadid radioed the 3rd Battalion commander on Ksaira, proposing that "you cut your way out and join me." Lieutenant Colonel John H. Van Vliet, Jr., replied promptly: "There are eight 88s between you and me." As if in confirmation, the enemy pulled onto the flat between the two hills, "unlimbered his guns and shelled our men at will," a lieutenant recalled. "We had no artillery to reply to him and he was out of range of our smaller weapons."

A few minutes later, a message from McQuillin confirmed that no cavalry would ride to the rescue: "Fight your way out. Time and place yours. Air cover will be provided. Instructions will be dropped by plane this afternoon." Two typed sheets followed in a parachute sack which landed on Ksaira rather than Garet Hadid; Van Vliet spent more than an hour decoding the prolix message and then encoding an abridged version for radio transmission to Drake. Soldiers slashed their tires with bayonets and battered surplus equipment with hammers until the hilltops echoed like a forge. A sergeant walked through the small motor pool, firing pistol bullets into every engine block. Men too gravely wounded to walk—there were sixty on Ksaira alone—were draped with canvas and left to German clemency. An officer later described how the regimental chaplain, "standing in full view of enemy snipers with his hands raised in benediction, asked the blessing of God upon the decision." Drake broadcast the code phrase to decamp—"Bust the balloon"—and hundreds of soldiers crept down the rocky slopes beneath a full moon sheathed in clouds. With one delay and another, the last troops did not leave Ksaira until nearly midnight, precluding any chance of reaching safety before daybreak.

"We marched all that night across the sand, in gulleys or dry washes, wherever we could find a

path other than being silhouetted on a skyline," wrote one soldier. "Whenever the moon would come out, or a real or imagined sound was heard, we would halt and crouch down." Weak from hunger and tormented by thirst, GIs soon tossed away machine guns and mortar tubes, then ammunition, blankets, and even rifles. Columns disintegrated into noisy bands of stragglers who offered comrades with full canteens up to a thousand francs for a sip of water. Troops stumbled through the ghostly battlefields where Hightower and Alger had fought, now strewn with dead men. Rooting through incinerated tanks, scavengers pulled out C-ration cans to lick the charred hash and beef stew inside.

Corporal Dave Berlovich, once a Des Moines bookstore clerk, found himself in a thicket with two comrades who insisted he travel alone. "You're marked as a Jew, aren't you?" one man asked. Berlovich recoiled. "Fuck no, I'm a Catholic." His father was Jewish, but Berlovich had been raised in Iowa by his Christian mother. By the glare of a struck match they examined his dog tag: stamped below the corporal's name and serial number was a tiny "H"—for Hebrew—he had never noticed before. Yanking the chain and tag from his neck, Berlovich flung them into a thorn thicket and hurried west at a redoubled pace.

Dawn caught them all in the open, scattered across five miles of desert west of Sidi bou Zid. Their objective, Djebel Hamra, loomed on the horizon, shrouded in mist. A column of trucks appeared on a dirt road, and for a few sweet moments Drake's men believed that rescue was at hand. Then troops in gray poured from beneath the canvas awnings. "Those," a lieutenant informed Colonel Van Vliet, "are not our vehicles." Machine-gun fire from the left flank sent the men fleeing before a maelstrom of bullets and mortar bursts. Drake tried to rally the 400 men still within earshot by dispatching a dozen volunteers to fight a delaying action. The squad "gained the desired ground, a little knoll in the desert," a witness reported, "and there they were able to hold the enemy off for about an hour." Flanked and overrun by panzer grenadiers, the rear guard was wiped out.

At ten A.M., Drake ordered Lieutenant William W. Luttrell to assume command of another squad. "He took one look at me and screamed, 'Lieutenant, take those men and charge!'" Luttrell later recounted. Lacking only a saber to complete the Civil War tableau, Luttrell formed a hasty skirmish line of frightened riflemen. "Move out!" he barked, then watched as his little command was cut to ribbons. "They just went down in front of me—some slow and some quick, some forward and some backward." Luttrell survived to be taken prisoner by a Wehrmacht sergeant with a machine pistol —"Everything is better in Germany," his captor advised—but the scorched smell of passing machine-gun bullets lingered in memory for the rest of his life.

Panzers finished the encirclement, herding the Americans into small groups. "I saw that it was hopeless and put my white handkerchef on a stick and waved it. That was that," Van Vliet reported. From the open turret of a Tiger tank, an officer yelled at Drake, "Colonel, you surrender." Drake replied, "You go to hell," and turned his back until a Wehrmacht major appeared and, in perfect English, offered a seat in his scout car. He had once practiced law in Chicago, the major claimed, and would be honored by Drake's company.

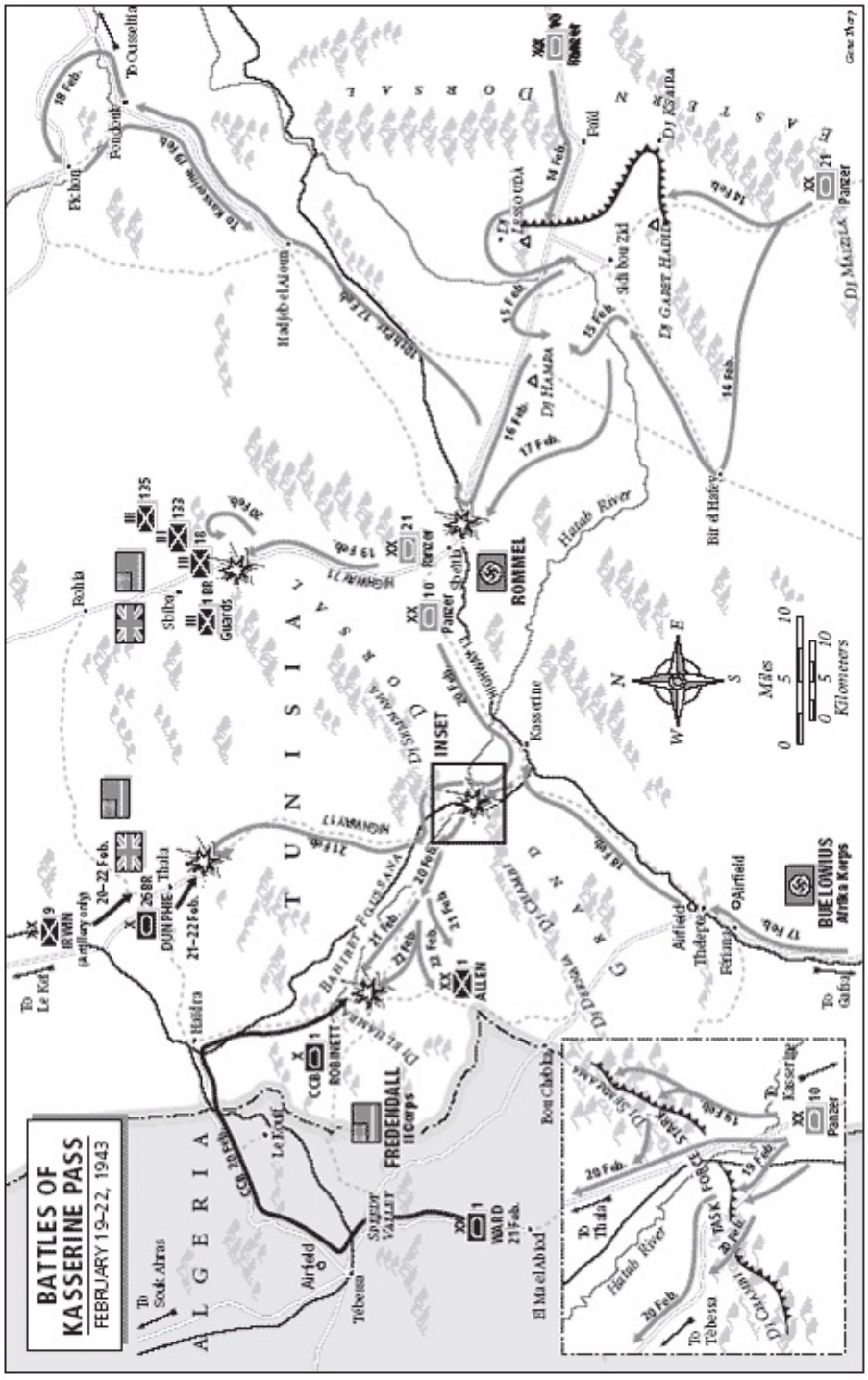
The debacle was complete. Of Van Vliet's men from Djebel Ksaira, some 800 were captured, along with another 600 from Garet Hadid. A burial detail stacked the dead in a mass grave, then joined the column of American prisoners stretching east as far as the eye could see. A few hundred GIs—including the tagless, ecumenical Berlovich—reached Allied lines, many having survived a week or more on stolen eggs and fried cactus leaves. Drake's second-in-command and the only officer to escape, Lieutenant Colonel Gerald C. Line, staggered into the American camp and later wrote his wife, "I haven't found out for sure whether I am sane or insane."

For all military intents and purposes, the 168th Infantry Regiment—Iowa's finest—had been obliterated. "It is pardonable to be defeated," observed Lieutenant Luttrell, who would spend the rest of the war in a German prison, "but unpardonable to be surprised."

Their triumph at Sidi bou Zid left the Germans off balance. FRÜHLINGSWIND had been a stunning success, and the Allied abandonment of Gafsa made MORGENLUFT—Rommel's thrust in the south—superfluous. Now what?

Atrocious Allied communications security helped answer this question. Uncoded radio transmissions broadcast in the clear provided German eavesdroppers with ample evidence of Allied turmoil and intentions. Security in Ward's 1st Armored Division later was judged "unbelievably low," the worst in any American unit in Tunisia; transmissions included such bald disclosures as "If the enemy attacks again I will have to withdraw." Following Anderson's order at 10:40 A.M. on February 16 that II Corps was to forgo further counterattacks, German commanders soon knew with certainty that American troops would fight only a delaying action at Sbeïtla as part of a general retreat. With Kesselring's approval, Arnim ordered his troops on to Sbeïtla, the gateway to Kasserine Pass and the Grand Dorsal.

Rommel's staff car wheeled into Gafsa on Tuesday morning, the sixteenth. Those Tunisians not busy digging out survivors from the American demolitions looted the town with festive abandon, ripping out pipes, window frames, and sinks. Wearing his long leather duster, Rommel watched in amusement as a crowd gathered around the car chanting, "Hitler! Rommel! Hitler! Rommel!" Peasants pressed forward with gifts of eggs and flapping chickens, while German soldiers divvied up cartons of Lucky Strikes found in an abandoned U.S. Army truck.



Arnim had marching orders of a sort, but what was the Desert Fox to do? Kesselring's original scheme called for the 21st Panzer Division to join Afrika Korps troops in the assault on Gafsa, but Arnim had informed Rommel this very morning that he no longer saw any reason to transfer the division. Instead, he had notions of swinging northeast from Sbeïtla to bag more American and British troops around the Ousseltia Valley. Rommel pushed his men on to the abandoned airfields at Fériana and Thélepte, but his eyes were again fixed on the western horizon and the huge depot at Tébessa. Kesselring, conferring with Hitler in East Prussia, was unavailable to referee between his ever more antagonistic commanders in Africa. The Americans were reeling, but Axis momentum now slowed perceptibly for want of a unified command and an overarching offensive vision. A ragged uncertainty took hold. To the Allies' enormous good fortune, more than two days would be wasted by bickering in the German high command.

"I had never gambled," Rommel later wrote, "never had to fear losing everything. But in the position as it was now, a rather greater risk had to be taken." The weaker force must take the longer

chance. A thrust to Tébessa and then on another 140 miles to Bône would unhinge the entire Allied line and "force the British and Americans to pull back the bulk of their forces to Algeria." It could "change the entire complexion of the North African theater of war." In a message to Kesselring and Comando Supremo in Rome, he requested that both the 10th and the 21st Panzer Divisions be placed under his command for "an immediate enveloping thrust of strong forces…on Tébessa and the area north of it." Awaiting a reply from Rome, Rommel dined in Gafsa on couscous and mutton with a local sheikh.

Arnim disagreed, in a phone call to Rommel and in messages to Kesselring. "The terrain would be against us," he warned. Tébessa was mountainous and easily defended; such an attack would take at least two weeks, with uncertain fuel supplies and Montgomery's Eighth Army banging on the back door at Mareth. Better to veer north in a shallow envelopment to relieve the pressure building west of Tunis.

Allied intelligence detected part of this protracted debate. Thanks to Ultra, eavesdroppers heard a message from Rommel on February 17 indicating that he could hardly risk attacking Tébessa with just the fifty-two German and seventeen Italian tanks currently under his command. But other, more critical messages were not decrypted—including Rommel's request for the two armored divisions. Once again Ultra decrypts proved misleading.

Kesselring dithered, then concluded that opportunity outweighed risk and threw his weight behind Rommel's plan in a message to Comando Supremo: "I consider it essential to continue the attack toward Tébessa." After more exasperated prodding by Rommel, who pleaded that the operation had "a chance for success only if the attack is launched without delay," approval would come from Rome at 1:30 on Friday morning. Rommel could have the two panzer divisions "to force a decisive success in Tunisia." There was a catch, however. Rather than lunging as far west as Tébessa, he was told to aim seventy miles due north of Kasserine, at Le Kef, where the roads were better and he could cut off Anderson's First Army. The envelopment would be narrowed by at least fifty miles, roughly splitting the difference between Rommel's proposal and Arnim's.

Rommel ranted at "an appalling and unbelievable piece of shortsightedness" by superiors who "lacked the guts to give a whole-hearted decision." Then, calming himself, he ordered a bottle of champagne. North or west hardly mattered. He was on the attack. Suddenly, he told his aide, he felt "like an old war horse that had heard the music again."

Not since A.D. 647, when the caliph's soldiers burned Sbeïtla and put its Byzantine inhabitants to the sword, had the little town suffered a night like that of February 16–17. "There was indescribable confusion," wrote one officer. "The road was jammed as far as one could see [with] remnants of a beaten force hurrying to the rear." Sbeïtla had already been crowded with hundreds of French colonial troops driven from Faïd Pass two weeks earlier, as well as rear-echelon American soldiers growing more and more edgy at reports of disaster in the east. Now hollow-eyed survivors from a half-dozen shattered battalions stumbled into town, enemy artillery thudding behind them. Most assumed that Rommel rather than Arnim commanded the three armored columns baying at their heels; there was a perverse thrill at being routed by the famous Desert Fox, who, one artilleryman conceded, "was slapping us around like schoolboys. It was discouraging and humiliating but, more than that, it was fantastic."

Panic built slowly. Nurses evacuating a French hospital gave away everything that could not be heaped onto a dray cart, and GIs took off with alarm clocks, letter openers, and bottles of peach brandy. At the American 77th Evacuation Hospital more than 600 burned and otherwise wounded men

lay head to foot in green ward tents to avoid breathing in one another's faces. Pallid medics donated pint after pint of their own blood for transfusions until word came to "pack and run." They packed and they ran in the moonlight. Patients swaddled in Army blankets were hoisted into open trucks, lightless except for hooded lanterns on the rear bumpers. As the convoy rumbled west toward Kasserine Pass, snow dusted the olive-drab lumps in the truck beds. "Retreat," said one surgeon, "is a ghastly word." A sardonic GI supplied the perfect reply in a letter home: "Americans never retreat but *withdraw.*"

Night deepened. Battle sounds drew closer. Tracer fire flicked into the olive groves three miles east of Sbeïtla. "Shooting. Have to go," a soldier scribbled in a letter, then added, "Never so scared in my life." More units fled, some with orders and many without. French officers again harnessed men to carts, horses to gun carriages, and mules to broken trucks, all of which further clogged traffic on Highway 13. Howze implored Carleton Coon and his OSS colleagues to crouch in foxholes and flip Molotov cocktails at passing Tiger tanks. "We didn't want to," Coon later reported. "It was not OSS work." Instead they played poker, using rifle cartridges for chips, and planted a few exploding mule turds. Joining the refugees was a Signal Corps pigeon platoon that had arrived in Sbeïtla on February 11 to supplement radio and telephone communications. No messages had yet been sent by wing; the handlers needed a week to settle their birds before they would home properly. Now 1,500 decidedly unsettled pigeons headed west in a swaying, cooing loft balanced on a truck bed.

At 8:30 P.M., engineers without warning blew up the pump house that fed the aqueduct to Sfax. Subsequent detonations demolished a railroad trestle east of Sbeïtla as well as road culverts and the aqueduct itself. Although most enemy tanks were still miles from Sbeïtla, the ammunition dump soon went up in a thunderous yellow roar heard across central Tunisia.

Retreating soldiers are always predisposed to believe the worst, and the men credited the blasts to enemy infiltrators. Panic that had been isolated now became general. Flight ensued. Terrified drivers tore through the narrow streets, crumpling fenders or veering into ditches. On Highway 13, vehicles raced three abreast like chariots. Arm-flapping officers tried to flag down their men only to be brushed aside, and soldiers unable to hitch a ride hied cross-country. Finding an infantry squad firing wildly into the night a young officer asked what the men were aiming at. One soldier looked up from his smoking M-1 long enough to answer, "I'll be damned if I know, Lieutenant, but everyone else is shooting." Others deepened their shame with casual cruelty. "We were next to a group of Arab houses," a reconnaissance battalion soldier later wrote. "We decided to see what the inside of one of the houses was like so we ran into it with the half-track and knocked off the corner. Five women came out of the house and went over to another." Tommies summoned to reinforce Sbeïtla fought their way through the floodtide. "Get that junk off the road," snarled a British officer, "and let an army through."

The fog of war lay thick on Orlando Ward, and had since the hostile debouchment at Faïd four days earlier. He rarely ventured from the 1st Armored Division command post, and he was hard put to conjure an accurate picture of the battlefield from the shrill dispatches filtering into his Sbeïtla cactus patch. Yet Ward remained calm, even cheerful, despite evidence that the Americans had lost two armored battalions, two infantry battalions, two artillery battalions, and sundry smaller units. Only Fredendall's order on Tuesday evening to destroy the ammunition dump "annoyed and rattled" him. The blast seemed premature, a clear signal to foe and to friend of another American retirement.

Ward was further discomposed by reports that among those stampeding west were McQuillin and many CCA troops not already dead or captured. Old Mac had been awakened at 10:45 P.M. by flares and then machine-gun fire stitching the orchards east of town. Like a chessboard knight, he hopped rearward to the sprawling Roman ruins on the western outskirts, and kept right on hopping past the tomb of the martyred saint Jucundus. Colonel Stack, the CCC commander, watched McQuillin amble past with a French horse cavalry unit, then went to find Ward. "I told General Ward," Stack recounted,

"that if he thought that CCA was his front line, he was mistaken." The general radioed McQuillin and found him "some miles in the rear," Stack added. "Ward ordered McQuillin to stop the retreat of CCA and return to his original position."

At one A.M. on February 17, Ward phoned Fredendall in Speedy Valley to warn of barbarians at the gate. The spearhead of perhaps ninety panzers, including nine Tigers, had pierced the American left flank three miles east of town. Ward did not know how long his division could stand and fight.

Fredendall immediately phoned Truscott in Constantine. The II Corps commander earlier had reported that "the picture…does not look too good," but now his warning was dire. "[Fredendall] considered situation extremely grave, and uncertain of ability to hold," Truscott wrote, scratching notes as fast as he could. Thirty minutes later, Fredendall called back: "Fears that we have lost 1st Armored Division," Truscott scribbled. "Feels that First Army has not given credit to his reports as to gravity of situation."

Truscott had his own spy at Sbeïtla, a colonel who sent him lyrical if poetically licensed private intelligence missives. Shortly after one A.M. the colonel reported that "tanks were fighting in the moonlight in Sbeïtla, and were all around Ward's command post." Truscott now concluded that Old Ironsides would soon be overrun. Fredendall took such counsel of his fears that he soon ordered Speedy Valley abandoned for a new corps headquarters in the primary school at Le Kouif, seventeen miles northeast of Tébessa. The tunnel project was forsaken forever, its incomplete shafts left as dank monuments to an American Ozymandias.

This farrago of bad tidings had the virtue of being wrong. The enemy was near but not *that* near, certainly not with almost a hundred tanks. (And no panzer was yet within eighty arduous road miles of Speedy Valley.) Enough stalwarts had chosen to stand fast that the German advance was checked in midcareer. "Strong enemy resistance," the 21st Panzer reported after several skirmishes. With just sixty-five tanks, the panzer commander decided to await daybreak before pressing his attack. Further weakening the Axis cause, Arnim chose this moment to peel away part of the 10th Panzer Division for a thrust twenty-five miles to the northeast, where his tanks would find nothing but grief from mines and screaming sheets of Allied artillery fire.

Better yet from Ward's perspective, his division had been reunited for the first time since Northern Ireland. Finally convinced that the main Axis attack had indeed come through Faïd Pass, Anderson authorized Fredendall to shift CCB and other American units sixty miles toward Sbeïtla.

"Move the big elephants to Sbeïtla, move fast, and come shooting!" Fredendall told Robinett. In two pachydermal columns they pounded south. Ward placed CCB on his right just east of town, and across Highway 13 the remnants of CCA anchored the left. CCC provided a rear-guard reserve just west of town. Robinett tromped about throughout that long Tuesday night, emplacing his tanks, clucking at the faint-hearts, and displaying all the swagger of a man keen to fight. When a fretful artilleryman voiced fear that his guns had been overrun, Robinett paraphrased Sherman: "When things are going badly at the rear, go to the front—they are always better up there."

In truth, things were not so fine at the front either. CCA had buckled beyond repair, and so had the confidence of the high command. "Everything is going badly at Sbeïtla," Anderson told a French general. At 1:30 on Wednesday morning, the British commander authorized Fredendall to abandon Sbeïtla, while asking that Ward hold until the next evening so fallback fortifications could be dug at Kasserine Pass in the west and at Sbiba in the north. Fredendall protested that by the next evening Old Ironsides would be reduced to smoking scrap. Anderson agreed to compromise by setting eleven A.M. on Wednesday as the decampment hour. Before dawn, the plan changed yet again to give Fredendall more discretion, and Ward was instructed to hold at all costs until hearing otherwise.

"I have had another argument with the big boss here," Fredendall told Truscott, who now had a stenographer listening in on his phone conversations. "He wanted me to hold all day at Sbeïtla…. It

would have been all tangled up in another dog fight. Finally I got them to agree to let me go ahead. They not only want to tell you *what* to do but *how* to do it. Anyway, I think we are going to get our tail out the door alright."

As for Drake, Fredendall added, "We have to write him off."

"Reference to Waters?" Truscott asked.

"No, we don't know a damn thing about Waters."

Fredendall's tone softened. The tunneling sounds at Speedy Valley had been supplanted by the clamor of men striking their tents and loading their trucks. His corps was in tatters, already thrown back fifty miles with 2,500 casualties and no end in sight. His career, too, seemed wrecked. For over thirty-five years he had served in uniform, built a name, earned his stars. But surely Eisenhower would need a scapegoat.

"When do you think the old man would like to have my suit?" Fredendall asked.

Truscott hesitated. "He knows that you are doing the best you can do."

"Sometimes," Fredendall said, "that is not good enough."

Ward and Robinett braced for an attack at dawn on Wednesday, February 17, but no attack came. Position, numbers, and morale lay with the Axis, yet they held back, snuffling cautiously rather than slamming into the disordered Americans. Kesselring remained in East Prussia. Arnim chased his wild goose to the northeast. Rommel ate couscous in Gafsa and drafted petitions to Comando Supremo. Although Luftwaffe squadrons battered Sbeïtla and other Allied strongholds, there was no galloping urgency. The Axis seemed afflicted with the same languor that had marked Allied movements early in the Tunisian campaign, and each passing hour permitted reinforcement and repositioning.

Ward regained his swash. "We stood in the cactus patch all morning and on into the afternoon," a sergeant told his parents. "With the glasses and then with the eye, you could see the dots of the armored fighting vehicles. The general, one of the finest men, stood on the skyline smoking a cigar, very calm, which was good on the nerves of a number of very jittery people, including me."

Fifteen minutes before noon, the attack resumed. Wehrmacht infantry advanced down Highway 13 and panzers struck CCB on the American right, where Robinett had strung a tank destroyer battalion in a picket line several miles east of town. A few crews fired on the converging panzers, but most broke for the rear; then all did. Rather than leapfrogging back by company as planned, the half-tracks "just turned and kept going," one soldier later recalled. "Everybody was throwing out smoke pots, so it made a dramatic scene."

At 1:15 P.M., the panzers sidled toward the 2nd Battalion of the 13th Armored Regiment, whose commander, Henry Gardiner, had fought with gallantry around Tébourba nearly three months before. Gardiner's tankers still mounted the antique M-3 General Lee, but they had been given time to burrow into a wadi and to camouflage artistically with wet clay. "I counted thirty-five enemy tanks come rolling over a rise in the ground almost to the direct front, a distance of about three miles," Gardiner reported. Waiting; waiting; and then at point-blank range he cried, "Boys, let them have it!" Fire leaped from the wadi, striking fifteen panzers and destroying five. The volley "stopped the attack cold," Gardiner added.

For an hour. Then the panzers came again, angry now, with a sweeping attack around the American right five miles south of Sbeïtla. Artillery gun chiefs screamed for more ammunition, their open mouths bright red O's in faces black with grime and powder. Between shellings, men at the last pitch of exhaustion napped sitting upright. "We were all very shaky after the battle of the night before because we had little or no sleep and because we had lost quite a few men," one artilleryman recounted.

Gardiner warned Robinett that his tanks would "soon be in serious trouble." At 2:30 P.M., Ward authorized CCB to withdraw behind her two sister combat commands. For three hours Gardiner's men

fought a deft rearguard battle at a cost of nine General Lees, including the battalion commander's. With his driver dead and his tank in flames, Gardiner hid until sunset, then fled west in the wake of his retreating army.

At dusk, German and Italian troops edged into Sbeïtla. It was rubble, an empty, burning, stinking place of demolished bridges and dribbling water mains. Only the Roman temples and St. Jucundus's crypt, ruins already, had escaped destruction. Robinett might have invoked another Sherman aphorism: "War is cruelty, and you cannot refine it." Darkness slipped down on the Allied column winding west into the thick forests beyond Kasserine Pass, the defile that would give this two-week sequence of battles its name. "The night was heavy with low cloud, and always that intolerable wind… and all the inevitable turmoil and confusion of night movement," wrote A. D. Divine. "Clouds were red with the burning of the Sbeïtla dumps."

Again the Allies had been drubbed. But in the glooming a spark kindled among those who had stood fast and fought well at the end. Pride, vengeance, anger came, yes, and a sense that enough was enough, that from this havoc a ruthless killing spirit could emerge. The war was coming inside them now. Among those trudging beneath the dark towering peaks of the Grand Dorsal was Ernie Pyle, who considered the retreat "damned humiliating" even as he wrote of the soldiers around him:

> You need feel no shame nor concern about their ability…. There is nothing wrong with the common American soldier. His fighting spirit is good. His morale is okay. The deeper he gets into a fight, the more of a fighting man he becomes.

Pyle was telling his readers what he knew they wanted to hear. Oddly enough, it was the truth.

"This Place Is Too Hot"

THE Grand Dorsal extends northeast to southwest for 200 miles before petering out beyond Fériana. Three gaps pierce the range in the south, connecting Tunisia's interior plateau to the Algerian highlands. The second and most dramatic of these is Kasserine Pass, twenty-five miles west of Sbeïtla, just beyond the scrofulous village of Kasserine. For millennia it has offered an invasion alley, west to east and back again. Where it is most constricted, at 2,000 feet above sea level, the pass is barely a mile wide.

Two formidable sentinels stand on the pass's flanks. Djebel Chambi on the south is Tunisia's tallest mountain at 5,064 feet, a forbidding massif that is thickly wooded almost to the crest. Djebel Semmama on the north, 4,447 feet high, turns a sheer face to the pass while offering gentler, scalable approaches from the east. The meandering Hatab River bisects the defile on a northwest-to-southeast heading; significantly, the steep-banked stream, which runs dry in summer but very wet in February, impedes movement between the northern and southern halves of the pass. Fissured with wadis and infested with cactus, Kasserine has an ambience familiar to anyone who has traveled in the American Southwest. It is a badlands.

Traveling west just beyond Kasserine village in the throat of the pass, the road forks. Highway 13, the left tine, continues westerly along the Hatab for another thirty miles to the Algerian border near Tébessa. Both road and river traverse the Bahiret Foussana, a broad valley of scattered farms, as well as zinc, lead, and phosphate mines. The Hatab terrain has been described as "a gigantic, crudely corrugated shed roof draining into a badly bent and twisted gutter." The right tine, designated Highway 17, skirts Djebel Semmama to ramble due north for thirty miles to the hilltop town of Thala

and then another forty to Le Kef.

Kasserine Pass is not impregnable—nothing is, short of heaven's gate—but an Army history notes that it "offers such advantages to defense that a sufficient force could exact an exorbitant price." Fredendall's II Corps possessed a sufficient force, but unfortunately for the Americans that force was not arrayed at the pass. The remnants of Ward's 1st Armored Division had been ordered to reassemble in the uplands south of Tébessa to protect the supply dumps; the rest of the corps was scattered, as usual.

"I am holding a lot of mountain passes against armor with three and a half battalions of infantry," Fredendall told Truscott just before two P.M. on February 17. "If [the enemy] get together any place a couple of infantry battalions, they might smoke me out."

"The artillery of the 9th Division are on the way," Truscott replied.

"If you can get me a combat team of infantry—I haven't got a damn bit of reserve."

"I will do the best I can."

"I need a combat team of infantry worse than hell," Fredendall repeated. "All I have got is three and a half battalions of infantry. They are not enough."

Fredendall sounded like a man running out of tether. Eisenhower was shipping 800 soldiers daily from Casablanca—roughly a battalion a day—but few would arrive in Tunisia before the end of February. "There isn't any hope of getting a combat team up here for a number of days," Truscott said slowly. "The infantry of the 9th Division is moving just as fast as it can now."

"We can expect a little reinforcement?"

"Not a hell of a lot."

Thus the initial defense of Kasserine fell to the 19th Combat Engineer Regiment, 1,200 men singularly miscast for the task. Since arriving at the front six weeks earlier, the engineers had worked almost exclusively on road construction, except for those diverted to dig the now-abandoned tunnels at Speedy Valley. The regiment had failed to complete rifle training before shipping overseas, and only one man had ever heard shots fired in anger. The regimental arsenal included fifty-four dump trucks and half a dozen air compressors.

At nine P.M. on February 17, in chill fog and spitting rain, these ersatz infantrymen finished forming a three-mile skirmish line across the throat of the pass just west of the road fork. For the next thirty-six hours, while the Germans consolidated their winnings down the valley, they waited, lying at night like spoons in a drawer to stay warm, prey to anxiety and tactical pathos. Machine guns were badly sited, foxholes were too shallow, and barbed wire remained mostly on the spools. Nearly every man had entrenched on the floor of the pass, rather than the adjacent heights. Most commanders knew, at least in theory, that a valley could not be held without also controlling its shoulders. But, as one officer later observed, much of the American campaign in Tunisia involved "trying to draw a line between what we knew and what we did."

Just beyond the Roman ruins west of Sbeïtla, Rommel tried to draw his own line between what he wanted to do and what he had been told to do. Hands clasped behind his back, goggles perched on his visor, he studied the distant peaks of Semmama and Chambi. That way led seventy miles to Tébessa and the great supply dumps he had hoped to despoil before following the glory road to Bône. But it also offered, via Highway 17 through Thala, a backdoor route to Le Kef, the objective ordered by Comando Supremo.

A more direct and slightly shorter path to Le Kef could be had by taking Highway 71 north for eighty miles from Sbeïtla along the eastern flank of the Grand Dorsal. The enemy would certainly

contest both routes. Where would the defenses be softer? Left, through Kasserine Pass, or right, directly toward Le Kef? Rommel studied the terrain with his field glasses while staff officers in slouch hats toed the ground with their double-laced desert boots.

His choice had been complicated by Arnim, who instead of giving Rommel the entire 10th Panzer had held back half the division's tanks, including the Tigers, on a thin claim of needing them in the north. While denouncing the "pigheadedness" of his two African commanders, Kesselring had yet to return from East Prussia to adjudicate their squabble. Kesselring believed the order from Comando Supremo contained enough ambiguity to permit Rommel a full attack on Tébessa before he turned toward Le Kef. But Kesselring was not here and Rommel—demonstrating an atypical obedience possibly infused with spite—chose to believe that Le Kef must be his first objective.

At 4:50 A.M. on Friday, February 19, Rommel issued his orders: the Afrika Korps was to drive west and capture Kasserine Pass; 21st Panzer would attack north on Highway 71 toward Le Kef; 10th Panzer—or as much of the division as could be mustered—would concentrate at Sbeïtla, ready to exploit whichever route seemed easier. With two roads diverging before him, Rommel would divide his force and travel both.

Even at his distant remove Fredendall recognized the vulnerability of Kasserine Pass. He peeled away a battalion from Terry Allen's 1st Division and shoved it forward to join the 19th Engineers, along with a four-gun French battery and some tank destroyers. That brought the number of defenders to 2,000. In another call to Truscott late Thursday morning, he asserted that "the 1st Armored gave them a good licking"—a triumph that existed mostly in II Corps imaginations—while asking for 120 replacement Sherman tanks. Truscott could offer fifty-two, nearly enough to outfit a battalion, and he chose not to reveal that Eisenhower had decided to hold back more than 200 other newly arrived Shermans for fear of losing them all.

At eight that evening, Fredendall phoned Colonel Alexander Stark, commander of Allen's 26th Infantry Regiment, who was south of Tébessa.

"Alex, I want you to go to Kasserine right away and pull a Stonewall Jackson. Take over up there."

Stark hesitated. "You mean tonight, General?"

"Yes, Alex, right away."

It took Stark nearly twelve hours to pick his way across the dark bowl of the Bahiret Foussana, alive with challenge—"Snafu!"—and countersign—"Damned right!" He arrived in the pass at 7:30 on Friday morning, just as the Germans did. Unlike the Confederate general whose military genius he was now to replicate, Stark knew little of the capacity or disposition of his troops, many of whom had never heard of him. A quick inspection of the misty pass revealed a predicament even Stonewall would have been hard put to salvage. Except for a single platoon positioned on the slopes of Djebel Semmama, all four infantry companies occupied low ground on the left side of the pass; likewise on the right, where one engineer platoon held Djebel Chambi and three companies held the flats. To shift troops from one side of the defile to the other would require a ten-mile detour to the nearest bridge over the Hatab River. Antitank mines had simply been dumped, rather than buried, on likely enemy approaches. Another 60,000 mines and 5,000 booby traps were on their way from Algeria by cargo plane and truck, but the arrival time was uncertain. Fredendall had also asked Anderson for thirty tons of barbed wire, and every platoon was pleading for sandbags, shovels, and picks.

A German attempt at dawn to seize the pass in a coup de main had been repulsed with good shooting from the French 75s; the Afrika Korps reconnaissance battalion bounced back as if brushing

a hot stove. But at ten A.M., enemy artillery began falling around Stark's command tent three miles west of the Kasserine narrows. "Thirty-five to forty trucks brought up enemy infantry at 10:15," reported a staff officer. "They are making for high ground on our left."

And, soon, on the right. Wraiths in field gray scrambled up the rocky inclines, flopping to fire before scuttling on. Machine-gunners crouched behind them with tripods and ammunition boxes, lashing the pass with flails of tracer fire. American reinforcements arrived early in the afternoon, including the regimental band, a tank platoon, and three companies from the 9th Division's 39th Infantry. The badly laid mines sufficed to cripple five panzers below Djebel Chambi, and Stark's spirits lifted despite German capture of the ridgeline below Semmama's peak.

Shadows swallowed the pass when Stark received a late-afternoon visit from Brigadier Charles A. L. Dunphie, whose British 26th Armoured Brigade straddled the Thala road twenty miles behind the Americans. Stark pronounced the battle "well in hand," despite "slight difficulties with communication" from artillery shells severing his phone lines. Dunphie suspected that Stark was mistaken, a suspicion reinforced when the brigadier ventured forward 400 yards in his staff car for a personal reconnaissance and came streaking back to the tent beneath a swarm of German bullets. Enemy infiltration past U.S. lines was as obvious as it was ubiquitous. The Americans had no reserves, and, Dunphie reported, even the "position of [Stark's] own troops was vague, and in particular he could not tell me where he had laid minefields beyond the fact that they had laid all they could get hold of." In short, Dunphie concluded, Stark "had completely lost control of events…. I thought Stark a nice old boy—gallant but quite out of his depth." Returning to Thala at seven P.M., he reported to Anderson that conditions were "very poor at the pass." For his part, Stark dubbed Dunphie "that blockhead." Even in the face of mortal peril the cousins could not forbear their squabbling.

Stark had not yet "completely lost control of events." That would happen in the next few hours. But Anderson chose this moment to issue a stand-or-die edict effective at eight P.M.: "The army commander directs that there will be no withdrawal from the positions now held by the First Army. No man will leave his post unless it is to counterattack."

Even as this puff of gas circulated through the ranks, many a man was leaving his post, and *not* to counterattack. Enemy artillery fell with greater insistence as the night deepened. "The worst of it all was to see some of your best buddies next to you being shot down or blown up," observed an engineer corporal. "I never knew that there could possibly be so many shells in the air at one time and so many explosions near you and still come out alive." Compounding the terror was a new German weapon deployed for the first time, the Nebelwerfer, a six-barreled mortar that "stonked" targets with a half-dozen 75-pound high-explosive rounds soon known as screaming meemies or moaning minnies because the wail they made in flight was said to resemble "a lot of women sobbing their hearts out."

Night fever spread through the engineer ranks holding Stark's right. "A considerable number of men left their positions and went to the rear," an engineer officer reported. Some were corraled and herded back to the line; more simply melted into the night. Stark's left was even shakier. At 8:30 P.M., enemy patrols overran the infantry battalion command post. German infiltrators cut off the solitary company on the slopes of Djebel Semmama, then seized Point 1191, the mountain's most important ridge. Many GIs who eluded capture were subsequently robbed of their clothes and weapons by Arab brigands. "In some instances the Arabs got the drop on the men with M-1 and '03 rifles they had already obtained," a chagrined company commander told the provost marshal.

Bad as the bad night had been, the foggy morning of February 20 was worse. Rommel rose early to visit an Italian Centauro Division battalion sweeping into the pass from the southeast. At 10:30 A.M.

he drove to Kasserine village, passing the bloated bodies of dead American drivers still behind the wheels of their charred vehicles. On a rail bridge spanning the Hatab River, Rommel met General Karl Buelowius, commander of the Afrika Korps, and General Fritz Freiherr von Broich, commander of the depleted and tardy 10th Panzer Division. The field marshal was displeased. Although Buelowius had ordered two grenadier battalions to resume their assault, the attack seemed sluggish. The Americans were crumbling but stubbornly refused to collapse. Unless the Germans punctured the pass *this very day,* Rommel believed, Allied reinforcements would clot the wound and prevent him from exploiting any breakthrough, particularly since the 21st Panzer had made little progress in its northward probe up Highway 71. He ordered three more battalions into action for a six-battalion attack—10th Panzer on the Axis right, Afrika Korps on the left—supported by five artillery battalions. After sharply berating Buelowius for torpor and Broich for not leading from the front—both stood glum as apprehended truants in their greatcoats and slouch hats—Rommel returned to the command post in the Kasserine train station.

The American collapse began in earnest by late morning. At 11:22 the 19th Engineers' commander, Colonel A.T.W. Moore, warned Stark by radio that enemy infantry and tanks were forcing the pass along Highway 13. An engineer major bellowed: "Forget about our equipment and just save your life." Artillery observers fled, explaining plausibly if ingloriously: "This place is too hot." Companies disintegrated into platoons, platoons into squads, squads into solitary foot soldiers chased to the rear by screaming meemies. Half an hour later, Moore radioed, "Enemy overrunning our C.P.," and bolted for high ground. He soon arrived at Stark's tent to announce that the 19th Engineers no longer existed. In fact, with 128 casualties, the regiment had been sorely hurt but not obliterated.

The "uncoordinated withdrawal," as Moore delicately called it, was mirrored on the American left. Stark ordered his artillery to fall back; French gunners, without tractors to move their 75s, wept as they spiked the guns and took to the hills. Colonel Theodore J. Conway, sent forward by Truscott to assess Stark's plight, was shocked to see troops streaming past him for the rear. Briefly, he thought of Washington on horseback in the battle of New York, whacking his fleeing Continentals with the flat of his sword in a vain effort to turn them; having neither horse nor sword, Conway joined the exodus.

Stark held until after five P.M., when grenades began detonating near his command post in the Hatab gulch. With his staff and two hapless Army cameramen who had just arrived in search of "some action shots," he hurried upriver before striking overland toward Thala. "We had to crawl," Stark later recounted, "as in some instances [German soldiers] were not more than fifteen yards away."

Casualties just among infantrymen totaled nearly 500 dead, wounded, and missing. Italian tanks drove five miles on Highway 13 toward Tébessa without seeing a trace of the Americans except for burning wreckage. At 3:35 A.M. on Sunday, February 21, precisely a week after the Axis offensive had begun, Fredendall's headquarters warned: "Enemy reliably reported in possession of heights on either side of Kasserine Pass…. Attack also going towards Thala on a four-thousand-yard front and has advanced about two thousand yards beyond the pass."

Kasserine Pass was lost. Anderson observed the occasion with another windy exhortation. "There is to be no further withdrawal under any excuse…. Fight to the last man." That, the weary Yanks agreed, simply meant the British were willing to fight to the last American.

"Order, Counter-order, and Disorder"

DEMOLITIONISTS laid slabs of guncotton through the vast dumps at Tébessa and awaited orders to fire the stores. As rumors of an approaching enemy horde flew across the Bahiret Foussana, 400 quartermaster troops scurried helter-skelter. The supply depot's arsenal consisted of two machine

guns and a single 37mm cannon. Sentries paced the ancient walls and peered eastward for telltale coils of dust. A British officer marinated in the lore of Khartoum and Balaklava proposed repelling any approaching panzers with grenades flung from the parapets. Four hundred thousand gallons of gasoline in five-gallon flimsies were loaded into boxcars for evacuation, but more than a million meals' worth of rations would be abandoned if the enemy attacked. Hatchet-wielding cooks stalked like madmen through Tébessa's coops and hutches, slaughtering every chicken and rabbit rather than leave them for the Germans. The little garrison gorged on stew for breakfast.

As always in the great clash of armies, the small dramas draw the eye. Ted Roosevelt was helping the French near Ousseltia when word came that his son, Quentin—a twenty-five-year-old artillery officer, named for an uncle killed in the Great War—had been gravely wounded in a strafing near Kasserine. A Messerschmitt bullet had pierced his lung and lodged in his liver. The ambulance driver raced to three field hospitals before finding one not yet fleeing the German advance. Roosevelt wrote to his wife, Eleanor:

> On the morning of the second day he ran a temperature of 104 and they thought he was dying. They got a message through to me. I started for there after dark. I had not slept for two days and the hospital was sixty miles away, sixty miles of night driving thinking I'd find him dead.

He found him alive. Asleep on a cot in a mud-floor tent, Quentin had made the turn. "I went over and kissed him as if he were a little boy again and indeed I did feel he was our little boy," Roosevelt wrote. "I'm feeling buoyant."

Little buoyancy could be found at II Corps headquarters in the school at Le Kouif. Although Fredendall fought off despondency with occasional nips of bourbon, one officer described him sitting on the school's front steps "head in hands and giving every evidence of being both bewildered and defeated." George Marshall had once said of Fredendall, "I like that man. You can see determination all over his face." Now that face mostly showed despair; he had begun referring to his adversary as "Professor Rommel." Whistling tunelessly while staring at the map, he abruptly turned to an aide and said, "If I were back home, I'd go out and paint the garage doors. There's a lot of pleasure in painting a garage door."

Alerted to the possible abandonment of Tébessa, General Juin hurried to Le Kouif, where he found the corps commander perched on a packing crate in an empty office. Tossing his left-handed salute, Juin urged the Americans to stand fast. Surrendering Tébessa meant offering the panzers a flat, open avenue to Constantine, a strategic prize.

Fredendall shrugged. He had no reserves. His corps was reeling. He would do whatever Anderson ordered.

Juin drew himself up. "My wife and my children are in Constantine," he said in a fractured voice. "If you carry out this order, I shall remove from you the Constantine Division in order to defend Tébessa and we will get ourselves killed there."

Fredendall stirred from his crate, his lethargy momentarily dispelled. "I saw his attitude change," Juin later recounted, "and throwing his arms round my neck, he swore not to abandon Tébessa."

At least not yet. Fredendall repaired to his new bivouac, an elegant mansion owned by a Vichy mining executive. After Speedy Valley's sepulchral chill, the house seemed decadently cozy. Sitting by the oil stove in his slippers, he instructed his chief of staff, "Dabney, open up the bottle. Let's have a drink." On the evening of February 20, with Kasserine Pass gone and Professor Rommel running

amok, the 1st Division artillery chief arrived after a muddy jeep ride that left his face so spattered he appeared to be wearing a plaster mask. “Reported to Fredendall who said that he had a very important mission for me but it could wait until after dinner,” Brigadier General Clift Andrus recorded. “Dinner! Tablecloths, silver, waiters in white, beef—even ice cream.”

“I’m going to be the goat in this,” Fredendall told one of his lieutenants. That was most probable, unless he could find a substitute: Fredendall’s pale eye fell on Pinky Ward. At 3:15 P.M. on Friday, he cabled Eisenhower an “eyes only” message:

> Ward appears tired out, worried, and has informed me that to bring new tanks in would be the same as turning them over to the Germans. Under these circumstances do not think he should continue in command although he has done the best he could. Need someone with two fists immediately.

While Eisenhower pondered this unsettling request in Algiers, the Allied command structure along the Grand Dorsal grew yet more convoluted. With part of the 1st Division dispatched to Bou Chebka, twenty miles southwest of Kasserine Pass, Fredendall initially gave Terry Allen the mission of commanding a large area that included French and British units. On Saturday morning, as defenses in the pass collapsed, he ordered Robinett to take over the remnants of Stark’s force and to counterattack with CCB. Ward again was excluded from the chain of command.

Several hours later, Fredendall thought better of handing Rommel the remaining American tanks on a platter. In an impromptu conference over the hood of his staff car near Thala, he instead ordered Robinett to defend the approaches to Tébessa. But he seemed listless and defeated: “There is no use, Robbie, they have broken through and you can’t stop them,” he said, then added, “If you get away with this one, Robbie, I will make you a field marshal.”

Robinett’s defense of the western avenues would be “coordinated” by Brigadier Dunphie, who was blocking the northern approaches to Thala, even though Dunphie lacked compatible radios or any other means to communicate with the thousands of American troops scattered across nearly a thousand square miles. As one final twist in a very twisted plot, Anderson—surer with each hour that Fredendall’s generalship was unlikely to resolve this mess—assigned his own candidate, Brigadier Cameron G. G. Nicholson, to command the British, French, and American forces now assembled south of Thala.

Fredendall retired to his wainscoted dining room to fret. Anderson’s First Army headquarters was hardly more composed. “Everything was confusion there,” reported one American colonel who watched a British officer slap a hysterical comrade across the face and bark, “Get hold of yourself.” A British Guardsman captured the sentiment of every man in the Allied ranks: “the most perfect example of order, counter-order, and disorder that has happened in my experience.”

Into the muddle stepped a man orderly in appearance, thought, and deed. General Harold Alexander had at last arrived from Cairo, ready to lead all ground forces in Tunisia, as agreed at Casablanca. Designated the 18th Army Group, his new command comprised First Army in the north and Eighth Army just entering Tunisia in the south. After visiting Eisenhower in Algiers on Monday, the fifteenth—“Your mission is the early destruction of all Axis forces in Tunisia,” the commander-in-chief advised—Alexander conferred with Anderson on Thursday night and toured II Corps on Friday while his staff of seventy officers and 500 enlisted men settled in at Constantine. Officially

scheduled to take over on Saturday, February 20, Alexander found the front so disorganized that he advanced his own investiture by a day. At 7:20 P.M. on Friday night, four hours after Fredendall had asked for Ward's removal, he cabled Eisenhower, "In view of situation I have assumed command." In a note to Montgomery he confessed himself "very shocked. There has been no policy and no plan. The battle area is all mixed up with British, French, and American units."

He cut a dashing figure in his red-banded cap, with his open tunic, leather jacket, and corduroy trousers tucked into Turkish knee boots. He was lean and bronzed, with deep creases at the corners of his mouth that became furrows for the tips of his mustaches, and his eyes were crinkled from a career spent squinting into the middle distance. He was the third son of the Earl of Caldeon and had been raised in patrician privilege on an immense estate at Ulster. (Once asked to cite manly virtues, he proposed "natural good manners.") Considered "able more than clever," he had aspired to become a painter and then president of the Royal Academy. Instead, he attended Sandhurst, soon becoming the youngest lieutenant colonel in the British Army and later its youngest general. His combat record over thirty years rivaled Hector's. Rudyard Kipling wrote of him, "At the worst crises he was both inventive and cordial and…would somehow contrive to dress the affair in high comedy." When a staff officer at Dunkirk told him, "Our position is catastrophic," Alexander was said to have replied, "I'm sorry, I don't understand long words." Most recently, as Montgomery's superior, he had helped engineer the British victory at El Alamein. Suave, phlegmatic, and immaculate—"the archetypal Edwardian hero"—he was Britain's most admired soldier and Churchill's favorite general.

Some thought him stupid. "Wellington without the wit," one biographer called him. "Intellect was not his most conspicuous asset." Despite his command of French, German, Hindi, and Urdu, Brooke and Montgomery both considered him an "empty vessel." Another British officer confessed, "I cannot imagine his ever producing a plan, let alone a *good* plan." Others were charmed by his unpretentiousness—he would tap-dance in regimental talent shows—and sangfroid. Harold Macmillan likened Alexander's mess to high table at an Oxford college, where war was "politely ignored" and conversation rambled over "the campaigns of Belisarius, the advantages of classical over Gothic architecture, or the best ways to drive pheasants in flat country."

Brilliantly slow or slowly brilliant, Alexander had arrived, he was in charge, and he was appalled. To Churchill and Brooke he wrote, "Real fault has been lack of direction from above from the very beginning." He considered Anderson a "solid soldier, rather dull." But, Alexander later observed, the First Army commander "was allowing the Germans to hurry him and he didn't control his headquarters…. He had lost the initiative."

Yet it was the Yanks who alarmed him more. By misfortune, the first Americans he encountered were swaggering Anglophobes, including the mercurial General Joseph W. Stilwell in Burma and now Fredendall in Tunisia. The latter was "utterly shaken," Alexander concluded, with no idea how to redeem himself; his staff was "dithery." "The poor body has a great weakness from its illness," he had said of II Corps on February 18. The troops appeared "soft, green, and quite untrained…. They lack the will to fight." American incapacity horrified him in those first hours and days; the impression lingered to damage Allied comity in Italy, where Alexander would serve as commander-in-chief.

"My main anxiety is the poor fighting value of the Americans," he now told London. "They simply do not know their job as soldiers and this is the case from the highest to the lowest…. Perhaps the weakest link of all is the junior leader, who just does not lead, with the result that their men don't really fight." In a scathing comment to an American journalist he encapsulated this failure of young officers to look after their men: "You know, your chaps don't wear the old school tie." Unless the U.S. Army shaped up by the time an invasion of Europe was launched, he warned Brooke, it "will be quite useless and play no useful part whatsoever."

Alexander's mind lacked the subtlety to envision a day when this raw clay had grown tall or to

apprehend the many differences between British and American men-at-arms, so easily masked by their common language. Having participated in several catastrophic retreats himself, he should have recognized that defeat sometimes carried annealing and even salutary properties. A great sorting out was under way: the competent from the incompetent, the courageous from the fearful, the lucky from the unlucky. It would happen faster in the American Army than it had in the British. Alexander was not wholly wrong, but he was wrong.

Three separate actions unfolded during or just after the fall of Kasserine Pass. From the Allied perspective, one was bad and two were good, a ratio contravening the run of luck heretofore. They unfolded east to west in geographic as well as temporal sequence.

First, Rommel's northern thrust up Highway 17 with the 21st Panzer Division failed. As the panzers rolled toward Le Kef on Friday morning, February 19—this was the right wing of Rommel's double assault on Allied defenses—German intelligence concluded that all the troops straddling the road at Sbiba, twenty-five miles above Sbeïtla, were French and British. In fact, eight American infantry battalions drawn from the 34th and 1st Divisions and backed by artillery held the terrain east of the blacktop. "If they attack us in force we cannot hold, but by God we will," declared a 1st Division officer. Battered by British fire six miles south of Sbiba, truckborne grenadiers and twenty-five panzers veered eastward in an attempt to perforate the American flank. The German attack closed to within 600 yards of entrenched Yank infantry, then faltered; by midafternoon a dozen German tanks had been wrecked by artillery fire, and enemy corpses littered the desert. One GI likened the effect of 105mm shells on armor hulls to "taking shoe boxes and shoving them flat."

A renewed assault Saturday morning by forty panzers and two Wehrmacht infantry battalions on the American flank quickly collapsed. With Rommel's reluctant approval, the 21st Panzer backed off and dug in below Sbiba. In the reckoning that followed, French infantrymen seized half a dozen Arabs accused of spying or sabotage, stood them against the wall of a mosque, and dispatched them in a single smoking volley. A French captain strolled from body to slumped body administering the coup de grâce with a pistol bullet to the brain.

Checked on the right, Rommel turned his full attention to the left. The fall of Kasserine Pass suggested that the western, roundabout route through Thala was the easier way to Le Kef, and now the second action unspooled. Desperate to slow German momentum, Brigadier Dunphie ordered a small British rear guard down the Thala road toward Kasserine.

The result was foreordained, if valiant. At noon on February 20, tanks from the 8th Panzer Regiment slammed into the British two miles north of Kasserine Pass on Highway 17. For the next six hours, the Tommies yielded one untenable hill after another. "We were forced back, and on every ridge we left a few more of our tanks, derelict, perhaps burning," wrote one soldier. A correspondent described crewmen fleeing their burning hulks "like caterpillars dropping from a flaming nest. They run zig-zag, eyes staring white in smoke-blackened faces, strings of German machine gun fire lashing them as they go." The squadron commander, Major A. N. Beilby, strolled from tank to tank directing counterfire until shell fragments killed him. By six P.M., there were no tanks left to direct and every artillery officer lay dead with Beilby. Survivors scoured north "as hard as stiff legs and flapping revolvers in the leg holster would permit," chased by dusk-brightened tracers.

Rommel again held the initiative, but with it came a familiar conundrum: now what? From his command post near Kasserine, he studied the map, then motored through the pass to study the ground. He had twice divided his army, at Sbeïtla and at Kasserine. "I hoped to split the enemy forces far more than our own," he later explained. But now he lacked the strength to attack simultaneously north

toward Thala and west toward Tébessa. Thala led north to Le Kef. But he could hardly ignore CCB and the other American forces lurking somewhere west, beyond the Bahiret Foussana, perhaps waiting to counterattack to sever the Axis path of retreat through Kasserine. Despite its grievous losses, II Corps still had 150 tanks.

A reconnaissance report at 11:25 A.M. on February 21 pushed Rommel to a decision that led to the third action in this sequence, which in turn would lead to Kasserine's finale. Twenty miles west of the pass and parallel to the Algerian border, a jagged escarpment known as Djebel el Hamra ran north to south, crossed by the packed-dirt roadbed of Highway 13. Wehrmacht scouts reported that no substantial Allied forces could be found east of el Hamra; the shallow bowl of the Bahiret Foussana was empty. Without waiting for confirmation from Luftwaffe pilots that his left flank was indeed secure, Rommel ordered the 10th Panzer to continue up Highway 17 toward Thala in his main attack; the Afrika Korps would push to el Hamra and safeguard the flank by sealing the passes from Tébessa and Bou Chebka.

The scouts were wrong. Djebel el Hamra and its lesser foothills bristled with Americans, on good ground and in formidable strength. In the south, Terry Allen held the Bou Chebka Pass with the 16th Infantry. "Well, boys," Allen announced, "this is our sector and we will fight in place." To the north, on the east face of the ridge and in a thin screen across the Bahiret Foussana, Robinett commanded eight battalions, eleven artillery batteries—nearly fifty guns—and a hodgepodge of others, including Senegalese riflemen and 700 lost souls snagged in a straggler line. Thick pines and rocky redoubts provided excellent concealment along a 4,000-yard front. From his command post near Highway 13, Robinett could see twenty miles to Kasserine Pass across a foggy plain dotted with pear orchards and cactus farms. Cocksure as ever, he *knew* the enemy would come his way. "It was," Robinett later claimed, "simply written on the ground."

Anderson on this very Saturday had reported that "American fighting value was very low"—the Yank commanders, he added, were especially "frightful." Yet a new bravado animated American ranks. Allen captured the mood in a message to Bill Darby, whose Rangers guarded against enemy infiltrators in the south: "There is a hell of a mess on our front…. Can you send me one reinforced company with a hairy-chested commander with big nuts?" Darby sent Company C, whose captain presumably possessed the requisite anatomical credentials, then told his own men, "Onward we stagger. And if the tanks come, may God help the tanks."

The tanks came, but at Robinett. General Buelowius surged forward along the Hatab's south bank at two P.M. on February 21 with forty panzers followed in trace by lorried infantry. Italian troops from the 5th Bersaglieri Battalion joined the attack, recognizable in their plumed pith helmets and distinctive running march. But within an hour, the weight of massed American howitzers began to tell. Shells burst around Axis formations tacking for cover where no cover existed. German 88s answered from the riverbank but Buelowius lacked enough guns for effective counterbattery fire. By four P.M. the attackers had drawn within range of American tanks and plunging fire from antitank guns hidden in the rocks. Even for the Afrika Korps it was too galling: at six P.M. Buelowius broke off the attack, still four miles short of Djebel el Hamra. Shades in feathers and coal-scuttle helmets backed into the dusk until searching shell fire could no longer range them. Buelowius had lost ten tanks, Robinett but one.

Repulsed on the right, Rommel ordered Buelowius to make a wide envelopment to the left. He meant to flank the Americans in the south and catch them from the rear. In darkness and teeming rain, Buelowius sidled across the mud; by first light on the twenty-second, his men were not only drenched and disorganized but lost, having wandered seven miles south of Djebel el Hamra.

Undeterred, two grenadier battalions attacked at dawn where they found themselves, just above Bou Chebka Pass. By eight A.M., five American howitzers and three lesser guns had been captured,

along with thirty vehicles. The American line buckled and fell back, leaving a knobby, fog-shrouded salient known as Hill 812 covered with howling German grenadiers.

It seemed all too familiar: high hopes after a credible initial clash; an indefatigable enemy who pressed the attack; a brittle defense that fractured under stress. By chance, the Afrika Korps had struck the seam where Robinett's authority ended and Allen's began. Thirty-five miles away, the II Corps command post was feverishly packing for Constantine and Le Kef in the fear that Le Kouif would soon be overrun. Spooked by the German advances on what one Tommy dubbed Panic Sunday, officers joked about preparing their *Oflag*—prison camp—bags.

Yet something had hardened in this army. Even as violent death swept the ranks, men stood their ground. The line stiffened. The Afrika Korps was twenty-three air miles from Tébessa; it would come not an inch closer. At nine A.M. the fog lifted, exposing hundreds of grenadiers now marooned on Hill 812. Buelowius ordered two dozen panzers and the 5th Bersaglieri to push northwest at Djebel el Hamra as a diversion from his trapped infantry; the force came within two miles of the ridgeline before stalling under American fire from three sides.

"The air was full of hardware and smoke and the sounds of a real scrap," Clift Andrus later recalled. If ever a man appeared propitiously it was Andrus, the imperturbable 1st Division artillery chief known as Mr. Chips: a bemused, bespectacled figure with a pipe, a walking stick, and a small mustache.

"The most skillful and practical artillery officer I know," Allen called him, and now Andrus lived up to that praise. The Americans had many guns but no one to direct them in concert. Andrus rounded up wandering gunners and put them into the line. "Eyes at the back of their heads, whiskers, mud, and every sign of utterly exhausted men," he wrote of one battery. Told that the Americans were about to counterattack, "most of them started to cry" in sheer relief. Ax-swinging gunners felled pines on the djebel's front slope to clear fields of fire. And what fields they were. "An artilleryman's dream," Andrus reported. "The valley floor was covered with targets of every description, from tanks and eighty-eight batteries to infantry and trucks."

A single battalion, the 27th Field Artillery, fired more than 2,000 rounds, and others were nearly as prodigal. By two P.M., the milling Afrika Korps was in retreat. Soon a headlong rout of terrorized soldiers heaved eastward. Enemy dead lay like gray flagstones across the Bahiret Foussana. The 16th Infantry drove the grenadiers from Hill 812, recapturing intact every gun and vehicle lost that morning. Henry Gardiner, who again found himself in the thick of the fighting, described "one of the most exhilarating sights…. A column of prisoners came marching around a bend in the *wadi* with their hands held high, led by one of our tankers with a tommy gun."

An American soldier strolled through a makeshift POW cage filling a helmet with aluminum stars—rank insignia of the Italian private—then announced to Robinett that he had "captured a whole flock of Italian brigadier generals." Robinett plucked two from the pile for his own shoulders. He had been looking for stars since his promotion to general officer before Christmas.

"Lay Roughly on the Tanks"

As this action in the west played out, the final act in the Kasserine saga unfolded on Highway 17, where Rommel's main attack rolled toward Thala, past the wreckage of the exterminated British rear guard. Exhausted and spattered with mud, the field marshal had felt, in the past two days, moments of exhilaration that rivaled the happiness he had known as a young officer in the Great War. An aide described Rommel's arrival at the front early on Sunday, the twenty-first: "He suddenly appeared, just like the old days, among the very foremost infantry and tanks, in the middle of their attack, and had to

hit the ground just like the riflemen when the enemy's artillery opened up!"

By midafternoon all euphoria had leached away. Rommel saw that his Afrika Korps troops, long accustomed to the freewheeling combat of the open desert, had much to learn about seizing high ground and avoiding vulnerable valleys in hill country. And the 10th Panzer, now pressing up the Thala road with a spearhead of thirty tanks, twenty guns, and thirty-five infantry half-tracks, seemed sluggish. German intelligence had expected only Americans north of Kasserine Pass, but a pesky British armor force harassed the advancing German column through midday without offering decisive battle. Of Broich and the other panzer commanders Rommel would later complain, "They did not seem to realize that they were in a race with the Allied reserves." For more than four hours, the German attack crept forward, Rommel in a staff car left of the highway and Broich on the right. Arabs in wool robes with pointed cowls flitted across the hills, stripping the dead of even their socks. Bodies lay spread-eagled, shockingly white.

The British had their own problems. Brigadier Nicholson, dispatched by Anderson to oversee Dunphie and the other defenders, failed to reach Thala until 3:15 Sunday morning, after spending six hours plowing through axle-deep mud in his Humber Box. Upon arriving, he found "no full-blooded orders" from Anderson but vague, irritating instructions to "act offensively" without risking the loss of armor that "might be wanted elsewhere." Dunphie's fifty tanks were mostly obsolete Valentines, no match for the panzers. His largest infantry unit—the 2nd Battalion of the 5th Leicestershire Regiment—had just arrived from England and "had no conception of what was coming to them," Nicholson later noted. "I found it difficult to get a sense of urgency into them." Except for five U.S. tank destroyers who joined the fight, a British officer reported that he had been unable to rally American stragglers passing by "at speed" with—as a Yank officer observed—"the usual story of being the only survivor." All day long, hundreds of fleeing soldiers from Stark's wrecked command drifted through Thala yelling, "He's right behind us!" No one needed to ask who "he" was.

Absent full-blooded orders from Anderson, Nicholson issued his own to Dunphie: "You will ensure at all costs that the German armoured force on your front does not reach [Thala] before 1800 hours." Twelve miles south of Thala, Dunphie stopped backpedaling at four P.M. and dug in. A mile away, the enemy assault line massed on a ridge with a precision that, as one Tommy reported, "was beautiful to watch but very frightening."

With Rommel now in direct command, the panzers rumbled through the dismounted grenadiers, and the German line surged forward. Tank fire boomed across the hills. The outgunned Valentines, often suckered into betraying their positions with premature return fire, simply blew apart. After an hour of exceptional courage, Dunphie sounded retreat, minus fifteen tanks.

Back the British fell, scooting between cactus patches until they reached the ridge held by the Leicesters three miles south of Thala. "Machine gun fire could be seen snaking up the road straight for us," one officer recalled. Dunphie stood "erect in his scout car, calmly conducting the battle over the wireless" before following the last Valentine into the perimeter behind billows of man-made smoke. It was 6:30 P.M. Darkness and rain draped the battlefield.

Dunphie was a gunner by trade, and he belatedly realized his mistake in not positioning artillery closer to the front. He had almost no guns available. Thala was held by a weak French battalion and a few other reinforcements quartered in the local brothel, "empty but heavy with cheap scent." At an elevation of 3,300 feet, Thala had the feel of a highlands bastion, but holding it against a determined assault would be difficult with this feeble force. North of town the road straightened, the land flattened, and the route to Le Kef—forty miles away—lay undefended. "I felt strategic fear," Juin later confessed, "for if Rommel broke through, all of North Africa was doomed."

Almost on Dunphie's heels, an armored column led by a Valentine clanked toward the British perimeter on Highway 17. Hatless soldiers lay smoking on the fenders of these apparent stragglers.

The Leicesters, whom Nicholson had just berated for their half-dug foxholes and unlaid minefields, glanced up from their digging at the familiar turret silhouette. In better light they might have seen the name *Apple Sammy* stenciled on the Valentine's flank. *Apple Sammy* had been captured at Tébourba three months earlier. "Keep away from my bloody trench," a rifleman hollered at the passing tank. "You're knocking it in."

Like Greeks from a wooden horse, grenadiers spilled off the tanks and fell on the astonished defenders. Eight panzers, plus the duplicitous *Apple Sammy*, were inside the British harbor. Germans sprinted down the Leicester trench line, heaving grenades and spraying machine-pistol fire. Tank rounds destroyed the battalion signals truck, and pleas for help went out as dead air. German crews slewed their guns in a murderous crossfire. "Hands up, come out," an accented voice called in the darkness. "Surrender to the panzers." In minutes the Leicesters were undone, and 300 stunned prisoners vanished into the night.

Two thousand yards north, Dunphie's remaining tanks sheltered in a grassy hollow just below the town. Dismounted crews had settled down for supper when "German tracers began to float over our heads," wrote one soldier. "A flare shot up into the air…. Six German tanks were right upon us, greenish-yellow flame flickering from their machine gun muzzles." A fuel truck exploded to lave the hollow in light, projecting weird shadows against the ridge.

"Lay roughly on the tanks!" a troop commander ordered, and for three hours a chaotic brawl surged across the tuft grass. "It was a tank fight in the dark at twenty yards' range and under," reported Dunphie. A few intrepid Tommies slapped passing panzers with "sticky bombs," grenades covered with adhesive and fuzed for five seconds. At 9:30 a headquarters clerk scribbled in the war diary: "Situation confused." Dunphie radioed Nicholson to warn that the Leicesters had been overrun and that a like fate threatened the tanks. But when he proposed pulling back to the edge of Thala, Nicholson refused: "Hold at all costs."

At all costs they held, and the cost was dear. Dunphie's original fifty tanks had been pared to twenty-one when the last German fired a last burst at midnight before skulking off; Rommel now occupied the ridge once held by the Leicesters, who now mustered forty able-bodied men, short by 800. Dunphie ordered every cook, driver, and batman in Thala to the line. Barely a mile away, Rommel—whose losses included nine panzers—massed his remaining force of fifty tanks, 2,500 infantrymen, and thirty guns. For the balance of the night "alarms were many and firing profuse," one chronicler noted, and the British braced for the death blow, which would surely come at dawn.

* * *

Dawn came; the blow did not. Better still for the British, another providential American artilleryman showed up, this one with 2,200 men, forty-eight guns, and a killer's heart. Brigadier General Stafford Le Roy Irwin, artillery commander of the 9th Infantry Division, had covered 735 miles in a four-day motor march across the icy, rutted Atlas. Irwin's arrival in Thala at eight P.M. on Sunday night was "dramatic and effective," Dunphie later declared. "Irwin himself was a tonic. Artillery was the one thing we lacked and the one thing we wanted." For his part, Irwin judged the predicament at Thala "extremely critical."

A West Point classmate of Eisenhower's, Irwin was a tall, russet-haired cavalryman who had switched to artillery in 1917 because calibrating gunnery seemed more challenging than guessing the proper mix of hay and oats for horses. Witty and urbane, a Virginian, he was a skilled watercolorist who loved poetry almost as much as he loved massing fires. By first light on February 22—despite wretched maps, squally weather, and British misapprehension over the enemy's whereabouts—Irwin had emplaced his guns in a three-mile arc so that the first German shells of the morning were answered in kind. The lines were barely a thousand yards apart, and snipers discouraged forward

observation, so much of the American gunnery involved blindly dumping hundreds of shells on the reverse slope of the next ridge.

It served. At seven A.M. Broich phoned Rommel, who had returned to Kasserine. The panzers had planned to attack, but now Allied shells were raining down. Also, at five A.M. the British had launched an armored sally against a salient on the German right. ("I'm sorry," the British tank commander told his men, "but we've got to go out on a forlorn hope. I doubt whether any of us will come back.") The attack had been repulsed, with seven of ten British tanks destroyed, but the raid implied unexpected fortitude. A more serious counterattack could follow. Perhaps they should wait? Rommel agreed.

The field marshal had shot his bolt. Despite captured stocks, his army was low on ammunition, with but four days' rations left, and only enough fuel to travel less than two hundred miles. Arab spies and Luftwaffe reconnaissance reported Allied reinforcements headed to Thala. After Broich's call, Rommel drove to the front. He scanned the shell-plowed terrain outside Thala, then returned to his tent in a thicket between Djebel Chambi and the Hatab River. At noon, Kesselring landed at Kasserine in his little Storch and motored to the command post in Rommel's staff car.

True to character, Kesselring felt optimistic. Early in the weekend, he had feared the offensive was sputtering. But reports filtering into his headquarters near Rome the previous night seemed satisfactory, "even promising of success." True, Arnim's refusal to send all of the 10th Panzers was "a very serious failure…which could not be made good again," and Kesselring had reproached him. Yet the Allies were reeling, Kesselring believed.

Rommel wasted no time in disabusing him of this notion. In an hour-long conference frequently interrupted by a jangling telephone, he insisted on "stopping the attack and withdrawing the attack group." Rommel lashed out at Arnim, the Luftwaffe, the Italians, even the "poor combat value" of his own men. His left flank was exposed to attack from the west, where the American defense "had been very skillfully executed." The assault on Thala, rescheduled for one P.M., would be postponed again. A staff officer recorded Rommel's cooler arguments:

> It appears futile to continue the attack in view of the constant reinforcing of the hostile forces, the unfavorable weather, which renders the terrain impassable off the hard roads, and because of the increasing problems caused by the mountain terrain, which is so unsuited to the employment of armored units. All this add[s] to the low strength of our organization.

"Rommel was in a depressed mood," Kesselring observed. "I noticed in him a scarcely concealed desire to go back to his army on the southern front as soon as possible…. I thought it best to raise his self-confidence by expressing my confidence in him, citing his former accomplishments which were achieved under much more aggravating circumstances." Montgomery's army was "still far away" and no threat. "We have the initiative," Kesselring added. "Tébessa is within easy reach."

No use. The old warhorse would not answer the bugle again. He showed "nothing of his usual passionate will to command," Kesselring noted. "Rommel was physically worn out and psychologically fatigued." The Desert Fox had "undoubtedly turned into a tired old man."

Thala would prove the high-water mark of the Axis campaign in northwest Africa. Shelling by both sides continued the rest of that rainy Monday. By sunset, American gunners had only a fifteen-minute supply of 105mm ammunition left; Irwin later deemed February 22, 1943, "the toughest day [I] experienced during World War II"—strong words from a man who would see much combat in the next two years. But the tide had swung. The reprieved Tommies at Thala chattered "as if they had been enjoying a bath after a polo match," reporter A. B. Austin wrote. "Absolute Gilbert and Sullivan."

Back in Rome, Kesselring formally authorized the withdrawal. On Monday night, Axis troops left their trenches and slipped back through Kasserine Pass, unhurried and unbowed. The 21st Panzer served as a rear guard, but there was nothing to guard against. “The enemy follows only hesitantly,” the Panzer Army Africa war diary noted on February 23. “The day passes without fighting of any consequence.” Broich waited near Kasserine village until the last vehicle had rolled through a gap in a freshly laid minefield and sappers had plugged the exit with a few final Teller mines. Rommel was already speeding through Gafsa on his return to Mareth in the southeast. He took a moment to write home: “I’ve stood up well so far to the exhausting days of battle. Unfortunately we won’t be able to hold the ground we’ve gained for long.”

The enemy follows only hesitantly. On February 22, Eisenhower sent Fredendall an unctuous cable, voicing “every confidence that under your inspiring leadership current advances of the enemy will be stopped in place and…your forces will, when the proper time comes, play an effective part in driving the enemy from Tunisia.” That night the commander-in-chief followed up with a phone call. The “proper time” had come. Intercepted German radio traffic suggested a broad withdrawal. Fredendall would be “perfectly safe” in counterattacking immediately to catch Rommel in the open. Eisenhower was so certain of this that he offered to “assume full responsibility.”

Fredendall demurred. The enemy had “one more shot in his locker.” It would be wiser, he insisted, to spend another day on the defensive as a precaution. Army intelligence officers had recruited Tunisian agents to scout the enemy’s movements, only to find that “the inability of most Arabs to read or write, to count accurately over twenty-five, or to tell time” limited their espionage value. No one knew exactly where Rommel was.

Hesitation gripped both II Corps and First Army. Having been knocked about for more than a week, senior commanders wanted only to put some distance between themselves and their tormentors. General Alexander remained closeted in Constantine, trying to make sense of the morass he had inherited three days before. Little effort was made to seize the initiative.

Several more convoluted command changes further impeded Allied pursuit. Eisenhower had been mulling Fredendall’s request to relieve Ward, and was about to accede when he heard from Truscott that Ward had “brought order out of chaos” during the retreat. From Morocco, the commander-in-chief summoned Major General Ernest N. Harmon, one of Patton’s lieutenants during TORCH. In Algiers, Eisenhower told Harmon to assume command of either II Corps or 1st Armored, whichever seemed appropriate. Harmon—a burly cavalryman once described as “a cobra without the snake charmer”—snapped, “Well, make up your mind, Ike. I can’t do both.” He then went to bed only to be rousted by Eisenhower, who helped lace his boots before packing him off to the Tunisian front.

At three A.M., Tuesday, February 23, Harmon arrived at Le Kouif. He was to serve as “a senior assistant” to Fredendall, who also received a pointed message from Eisenhower: “I have no thought of your replacing Ward who, it seems to me, on two occasions at least, rendered a very fine account of himself in actual battle.” Slumped in a chair next to the stove, Fredendall scratched out a letter of credence introducing Harmon as a deputy corps commander authorized to oversee the 1st Armored Division and British forces. This made Harmon the eighth tactical commander of Allied forces in less than a week. “Here it is,” Fredendall said. “The party is yours.” Concluding that the man was drunk, Harmon stuffed the paper into his pocket and motored off to Thala in a jeep.

There he found Brigadier Nicholson little impressed by him or his letter. Nicholson politely explained that he intended “to fight this battle out” *then* Harmon could take over. “[Harmon] was a little surprised at first but soon was cooperating whole-heartedly,” Nicholson reported, adding: “We

gave them a fucking bloody nose yesterday and we'll do it again this morning." Harmon growled his approval, then drove to see Ward. "Nobody goes back from here," Harmon declared.

In a Thala cellar on the morning of February 23, a breathless young officer dashed up to Nicholson and Dunphie. "The Germans have gone!" An excited murmur rippled through the command post. Cautiously, the brigadiers drove in a scout car to the sanguinary ridge once held by the Leicesters. "We could see nothing in front of us," an officer reported, except for Arab looters. Nicholson could hardly believe his force had survived. He thought of Kipling's lines:

Man cannot tell but Allah knows
How much the other side is hurt.

Surely Rommel still held the pass with a covering force, waiting to ambush overzealous pursuers? At 11:30 A.M., Nicholson, who later chastised himself for timidity, ordered reconnaissance forward but "not unduly to hasten." With his approval, scouts waited until three P.M. before edging toward Kasserine.

Rommel had gone and his trail was stone cold, but it took more than a day for Allied troops to cross the Grand Dorsal in numbers. "Our follow-up was slow," Harmon later conceded, "and we let them get away." Ward had graciously offered Harmon his staff, then scribbled a terse note to Beetle Smith at AFHQ headquarters. He could no longer work under Fredendall. Mutual distrust had become intolerable. Dejected and silent, reduced to two staff officers and a driver, he set up a tent near Robinett's command post to await a reply from Algiers. An aide noted that Ward "feels very low and needs rest."

Light snow fell on the American and British soldiers picking their way through Kasserine Pass on the morning of February 25. The desolate landscape was "cluttered with wrecked German and American airplanes, burned out vehicles, abandoned tanks, [and] scattered shell cases," Robinett reported. Ration tins, unfinished love letters, a pair of boxing gloves: the detritus of battles lost and won. Italian prisoners in black-plumed helmets dug graves for bodies now ripe beyond recognition; an American soldier sat guard in a jeep, chewing gum and reading a Superman comic. Severe orders were issued against looting, and the throaty sound of tommy guns echoed in the snow. Tunisians ran, or fell.

Even if Allied troops had been roused to hot pursuit, Rommel's sappers discouraged audacity. All nine bridges between Sbiba and Sbeïtla had been demolished, as had thirteen others around Kasserine. More than 43,000 German mines had been planted. East of the pass, Allied "vehicles were blowing up on the minefields in all directions," said one British officer. "A most unpleasant and windy business." Battery-operated mine detectors shorted out in the damp weather, forcing engineers armed with bayonet probes to "spread out like caddies and golfers looking for a lost ball." Soldiers also watched for the telltale sign of dismembered camels, whose flat feet usually provided enough pressure to detonate the eleven pounds of TNT in a Teller mine.

A precise tally of casualties at Kasserine remains elusive, in part because of uncertainty over the French, Italian, and Tunisian tolls. American losses exceeded 6,000 of the 30,000 men engaged in the battle. Of those, half were missing. (German records, ever precise, listed 4,026 Allied soldiers of all nationalities captured.) Fredendall's corps lost 183 tanks, 104 half-tracks, more than 200 guns, and 500 jeeps and trucks. British losses were relatively light, apart from the poor Leicesters and a few dozen tanks, and the Germans suffered fewer than 1,000 casualties, including 201 dead.

Some American units were mauled nearly beyond repair, among them the 2nd and 3rd Battalions of the 1st Armored Regiment—temporarily combined to form the understrength 23rd Battalion. The 3rd Battalion of the 6th Armored Infantry, so badly carved up at Oran during Operation RESERVIST, was again gutted at Kasserine, shrinking from 750 men to 418. Half the survivors lacked shoes, like ragamuffin Valley Forge soldiers. "Our people from the very highest to the very lowest have learned that this is not a child's game," Eisenhower told Marshall.

"The proud and cocky Americans today stand humiliated by one of the greatest defeats in our history," Harry Butcher scribbled in his diary. "There is a definite hangheadedness." From Faïd Pass to Thala, the Americans had been driven back eighty-five miles in a week, farther than at the infamous "bulge" in the Belgian Ardennes nearly two years later. At least in terms of yardage lost, Kasserine may fairly be considered the worst American drubbing of the war.

Grievous as the past ten days had been, the Allies had suffered a tactical, temporary setback rather than a strategic defeat. Rommel had failed to reach the Allied supply depots, failed to force the British First Army to withdraw from northern Tunisia, failed to gut the offensive capacity of Allied forces, who would soon make good their losses. Seasoned German soldiers proved themselves wily and ruthless, and Axis commanders demonstrated the battlefield virtue of leading from the front. But the Axis high command was more riven with rivalry and inefficiencies than even its Allied counterpart—a poor standard indeed.

Both sides had violated key principles of war to the detriment of their respective causes; they had, among other errors, failed to maintain contact with a retreating foe to exploit his derangement. The Axis had made this mistake at both Sidi bou Zid and Thala. Rommel, moreover, had violated the cardinal precept of concentration by twice dividing his force and attacking at too many places at once. Arnim had been right: the anabasis in mountainous country with a modest, footsore force *was* too ambitious, particularly without Arnim's wholehearted support.

Allied failings were painfully evident, again. Portions of five American divisions had fought around Kasserine, but almost never intact. Leaders came and leaders went, sometimes changing twice a day as if washing in and out with the tide. Strangers commanded strangers. For years, Fredendall would be castigated for the poor American showing; like several of his subordinate commanders, he was overmatched, unable to make the leap from World War I's static operations to modern mobile warfare. But Robinett made a fair point after the war: that it was "dead wrong" to blame Fredendall exclusively. "Possibly," he wrote, "one would have to search all history to find a more jumbled command structure than that of the Allies in this operation."

That error could be laid at Eisenhower's door. Even as Rommel was forcing the pass on February 20, Eisenhower summoned reporters to a press conference in Algiers and took "full responsibility for the defeat"—remarks he then placed off the record. He acknowledged underestimating French vulnerability and stretching the Allied line to the breaking point. Subsequently he expressed regret at not having insisted, in November, on subordinating French troops to the Allied chain of command, and at allowing the dispersal of American forces as far south as Gafsa. Moreover, he wrote after the war, "had I been willing at the end of November to admit temporary failure and pass to the defensive, no attack against us could have achieved even temporary success."

There were other, unacknowledged failings. He had recommended—but not demanded—that Fredendall counterattack vigorously on February 22, just as he had recommended but not demanded the concentration of the 1st Armored Division in mid-February. He expressed surprise in late February that the 37mm "squirrel rifle" and 75mm half-track "Purple Heart box" proved no match for German panzers, although these deficiencies had been recognized for months. During the "wearing and anxious" week after his trip to Sidi bou Zid, he spent so much time dictating explanations to the chiefs of staff that Marshall chided him: "I am disturbed by the thought that you feel under necessity in such

a trying situation to give so much personal time to us…. You can concentrate on this battle with the feeling that it is our business to support you and not to harass you."

Certainly he had done some things well, even very well. He cannibalized the U.S. 2nd Armored and 3rd Infantry Divisions for reinforcements, and hurried the 9th Division artillery to its gallant rendezvous at Thala. He worked on rearming the French; redesigned American training methods; unleashed Alexander; overhauled his intelligence operation; and parried Churchill, who had sent an annoying message insisting that the Tunisian campaign be finished by March and the Sicily invasion launched in June. "We must be prepared for hard and bitter fighting," Eisenhower told the prime minister on February 17, "and the end may not come as soon as we hope."

He studied his mistakes—this practice was always one of Eisenhower's virtues—and absorbed the lessons for future battles in Italy and western Europe. And he steeled himself for the remote prospect that his first big battle might have been his last. To his son John, he wrote: "It is possible that a necessity might arise for my relief and consequent demotion…. It will not break my heart and it should not cause you any mental anguish…. Modern war is a very complicated business and governments are forced to treat individuals as pawns."

Eisenhower could take heart that for the first time—notably in the successful defense of Djebel el Hamra—American commanders showed some capacity for combined arms combat, the vital integration of armor, infantry, artillery, and other combat arms. That art, like fighting on the defensive and operating within an allied coalition, had been given short shrift in stateside training; soldiers were forced to learn where lessons always cost most, on the battlefield.

The coordination of ground and air forces remained dismal, however. Fratricide flourished despite standing orders not to fire at airplanes until fired upon. In three Allied fighter groups alone, friendly fire destroyed or damaged thirty-nine planes. And error cut both ways: disoriented B-17 Flying Fortresses on February 22 missed their intended targets in Kasserine Pass by ninety air miles, killing many Tunisians and battering the British airfield near Souk el Arba. Apologies were issued, along with a few thousand dollars in reparations.

Beyond the modest combined-arms showing, three bright gleams radiated from Kasserine's wreckage. First was the competence of American artillery at Sbiba, at Djebel el Hamra, and at Thala. Second was the mettle under fire displayed by various American commanders, among them Irwin, Robinett, Andrus, Gardiner, and Allen, and comparable mettle in British commanders. Third was the broad realization that even an adversary as formidable as Erwin Rommel was neither invincible nor infallible. He and his host could be beaten. This epiphany was not to be undervalued: *they could be beaten*. Amazingly, barely two months would elapse between the "hangheadness" of Kasserine and the triumph of total victory in Tunisia.

Demolitionists removed the guncotton and fuzes from the dumps at Tébessa. Exhausted men slept a sleep too deep even for nightmares. After ten days of cacophonous slaughter, an eerie silence fell over the battlefield, broken in the smallest hours of the morning by the hammer of typewriters in the adjutants' tents, where clerks labored all night to transform the holiest mysteries of sacrifice and fate into neat lists of the missing and the wounded and the dead.

Part Four

10. The World We Knew Is a Long Time Dead

Vigil in Red Oak

SOUTHWEST Iowa's second winter of war had passed, and hints of the second spring could be seen in the blooming crocuses and felt in the afternoon sun that ventured farther north each day. In Red Oak and Villisca and Clarinda, as in the rest of the country, war remained a bit abstract even as fragmentary reports of the first big American battle against the Germans began winging westward from Africa. Iowans knew the war vicariously, through newsreels and letters home, yet it remained a thing manifested more as an absence than as a presence. The junior college in Montgomery County had closed for lack of students. Weeds sprouted on the unused baseball diamond at American Legion Park. Nurses and young doctors had all gone off, and old Doc Reiley was persuaded to emerge from retirement to fill the gap. The Red Oak Taxicab Company hired female drivers for the first time. No one drove much, because even those with gasoline rationing cards were restricted to four gallons a week, except for farmers and other essential worthies, who got somewhat more.

Everyone soldiered on. In Red Oak, the Grand showed movies nearly every night and double features on Saturday. Kids swarmed to the Green Parrot downtown for sodas after school. J. C. Penney's shelves were often barren, but customers wandered in anyway, as if shopping were an act of imagination rather than of commerce. The Red Oak Stalking Tigers—no one fully appreciated the irony of that mascot, of course—prepared to play in the district basketball tourney. A student production of *Room for Ten* drew a big crowd to the school gymnasium. As planting season approached, a worrisome machinery shortage was eased by the state War Board's wise decision to increase Montgomery County's quota of plows and cultivators.

Even if the battlefront seemed far removed, patriotism ran deep. The Victory Day book drive had already collected 500 volumes, and schoolchildren in Red Oak, asked to buy $900 in war bonds to underwrite the purchase of one jeep for the Army, bought enough bonds to finance nine. Great War veterans planned an elaborate commemoration for March 9, 1943, the twenty-fifth anniversary of the day when Company M first went over the top to face German fire in 1918.

The first inkling of bad news from Tunisia came disguised as good news. The *Red Oak Express* of February 22 ran a front-page story by the Associated Press beneath the headline "Moore Leads Escape from Nazi Lines." Datelined "on the Tunisian Front," the article recounted how the former Boy Captain—"red-eyed, haggard, and weak from lack of food and water"—had led many in his battalion to safety from a hill surrounded by German soldiers. Everyone in Montgomery County agreed that in a tight spot Bob Moore was a *very* good man to have around. But few other details emerged over the next two weeks other than sketchy dispatches about a fight in a remote place called Kasserine.

The initial telegrams reached Red Oak on the evening of March 6; by midnight there were more than two dozen, nearly identical: "The Secretary of War desires me to express his regret that your son has been missing in action in North Africa since February 17." Townsmen in bib overalls or gabardine suits gathered on the broad portico of the Hotel Johnson, next to the Western Union office. Leaning against the double Ionic columns, they smoked and talked and listened as the courthouse clock on Coolbaugh Street chimed the hours.

Most next of kin were easy to find. Mae Stifle, a widow who had raised eight children, worked as a housekeeper at that very hotel. She got two telegrams within fifteen minutes telling her that two

sons, Sergeant Frank and Private Dean, were missing; in the morning, a third telegram added her son-in-law, Darrell Wolfe, to the list. “Some people don’t believe in prayer,” she said, “but I pray for my boys every day.” The Vern Bierbaum family also lost two sons, Cleo and Harold, *and* a son-in-law, *and* their son-in-law’s brother. Both Gillespie boys were missing; their father, who ran the feed store, tucked the telegrams inside the family Bible. Those who had left the county were harder to track down, like Lois Bryson, who now worked the four-to-midnight shift installing hydraulic tubing at the Martin bomber plant in Omaha. Eventually, word reached her that her husband, Fred, was also missing. He had joined Company F in Villisca when he was seventeen.

On March 11, the *Express* printed a headline no one could dispute: “SW Iowa Is Hit Hard.” The photographs of missing boys just from Red Oak filled four rows above the fold on page one. “War consciousness mounted hourly in Red Oak, stunned by the flood of telegrams this week,” the article began. The busiest man in town was a boy, sixteen-year-old Billie Smaha, who delivered wires for Western Union. “They kind of dreaded me,” Billie later told the *Saturday Evening Post*. “I never wore a Western Union hat because I thought that would scare them too much when I went up to the door.”

Wild rumors flourished. Shenandoah, Iowa, supposedly had lost 500 men—even though barely one-quarter that number were serving in North Africa. The truth was grim enough. Clarinda had lost forty-one, Atlantic forty-six, Glenwood thirty-nine, Council Bluffs thirty-six, Shenandoah twenty-three, Villisca nine. Red Oak’s toll reached forty-five, nearly a third of Company M, which altogether had lost 153 men, among them the commander and six lieutenants. Total losses for the 168th Infantry Regiment included 109 officers and 1,797 enlisted men. “There is no place to my knowledge where in this war there has been such a large group from such a comparatively small area,” an Army official told the *Council Bluffs Nonpareil*.

Everyone soldiered on, again. The Great War anniversary commemoration was canceled. When letters began arriving from prison camps, it became clear that most of those missing had, blessedly, been taken prisoner. Many ended up in Stalag III-B with French, Russian, and Dutch soldiers, while officers typically went to an *Oflag* in Silesia. “Mom and Dad, I have no clothes except shirt, pants, shoes, and field jacket, and up ’til a few days ago they hadn’t been off for a month,” Lieutenant DuaneA. Johnson of Red Oak wrote from Germany in March. “Send the food parcel first. I don’t care if it’s all chocolate.” Letters also came from those who had narrowly escaped capture or death. “I lost everything but my rifle, new fountain pen, shovel, and my life,” Sergeant Willis R. Dunn wrote his parents in Villisca. “So I’m thanking God for that.”

The Ladies’ Monday Club redoubled its book drive; collection boxes soon occupied all four corners of the town square. The VFW collected safety razors for the German camps. War Dads, an organization of the sort that in a later day would be called a support group, grew large and active. A speech by an Iowa college teacher who had been interned by the Germans for seven months while working in Egypt drew 900 people to the Methodist church on a Sunday night in mid-March; latecomers had to stand in the choir loft, behind the robed singers.

The telegrams kept coming. Billie Smaha stayed busy. *Life* magazine arrived to document Red Oak’s misfortune; the brief article included a two-page aerial photo of the town with labels denoting the houses of those missing, captured, or dead. A *New York Herald-Tribune* reporter calculated that “if New York City were to suffer losses in the same proportion in a single action, its casualty list would include more than 17,000 names.” In Red Oak, population 5,600, small plaques eventually honored the fallen at the Elks Club and the Ko-z-Aire Furnace Company, and photos of those smiling boys in smart uniforms stood on mantels and pianos all over town. At the Washington School, a teacher named Frances Worley kept an honor roll in a scrapbook; before the names of those lost she set gold stars, just like the stars she pasted on especially meritorious homework papers.

The second spring of the war came. Buds stippled the oak trees and the wild geese came back and

the creek bottoms sang with life. Grass greened between the headstones that spilled down the hillside cemetery east of town. People went about their business as before, but the war was inside them now, as it would be inside a thousand other communities before peace returned. “Red Oak came as close to any town in America to knowing what the war was all about,” wrote a local historian. Surely it was true.

“We Know There’ll Be Troubles of Every Sort”

ROMMEL’S army had slipped from Kasserine back across the central Tunisian plateau toward the Eastern Dorsal. As February yielded to March, the opposing lines took roughly the same shape they had held before the Valentine’s Day offensive knocked the Americans nearly into Algeria. The Axis territorial gain amounted to a fragile salient in lower Tunisia; it bowed as far west as Sbeïtla and Gafsa on flat, indefensible terrain that Rommel knew he could not hold against a determined attack. Commanders on both sides recognized that a final campaign in Africa would be fought on a shrinking battlefield—for now, the eastern third of Tunisia. Here, in a ragged rectangle fifty miles wide and 300 miles long, two Allied armies would confront two Axis armies in a climactic struggle for control of the continent and the southern Mediterranean.

In the north, Arnim’s Fifth Panzer Army secretly prepared to widen the bridgehead around Tunis and Bizerte by recapturing some of the territory held since early winter by Anderson’s First Army. In the south, Rommel regrouped his Panzer Army Africa and pondered how to stop Montgomery’s Eighth Army, which in the past four months had traveled more than a thousand miles from Egypt to begin pushing into Tunisia from western Libya.

And in the center, where II Corps remained under Anderson’s tactical command, the Americans buried their dead, turned their backs to Kasserine Pass, and waited to see who would lead them forward.

* * *

The Carthaginians of antiquity—notoriously poor losers—had often punished their defeated generals with crucifixion. Whether Eisenhower had this cautionary Tunisian precedent in mind is uncertain, though he was, it is true, a devoted student of the Punic Wars. In any case, to avoid an equivalent fate for himself he had begun looking for scapegoats while the ashes of Kasserine were still warm. In a message to Marshall he minimized his losses, asserting with some legitimacy that “this affair is only an incident” in the broader African campaign. Yet the reeling defeat and 6,000 American casualties sent morale plummeting throughout the theater; sixty ambulances had shuttled the evacuated wounded to hospitals from the Oran airfield. “It’s pretty discouraging,” Eisenhower’s deputy Everett Hughes wrote in his diary. “I can’t make heads or tails of the whole war. We have men but no organization. Who does what?” Censorship kept the home front ignorant of the full extent of Allied losses, but Eisenhower knew that soon enough the truth would out and alarm would spread.

First to go was his intelligence officer, Brigadier Eric E. Mockler-Ferryman, whom Eisenhower believed had relied excessively on Ultra to divine enemy intentions. The brigadier went quietly. “If a man is not wanted,” he observed, “argument won’t change the situation.” Eisenhower asked London to send him a British replacement “who has a broader insight into German mentality and method.” Lesser heads soon rolled, too, among them Stark’s. He was sent home on March 2 and would later serve with distinction in the Pacific. McQuillin’s relief came soon after Stark’s. Tunisia, as Paul Robinett observed, was fast becoming “a professional graveyard, particularly for those in the upper middle part of the chain of command.” Alexander strongly considered cashiering Anderson; unable to

persuade Montgomery to relinquish the Eighth Army chief of staff as a replacement, he instead decided to keep Anderson but to "watch him very closely."

Orlando Ward also awaited the ax. As he told his diary, "F and I do not have enough room." "F," of course, was the crux. For months Eisenhower had handled Fredendall with the tongs appropriate for a presumed Marshall protégé, even while privately voicing regret at not sending Patton to Tunisia instead. The commander-in-chief had also, inconveniently, twice written notes commending the II Corps commander for his leadership during Kasserine, and had praised him to Marshall as a "stouthearted" battle captain worthy of a third star. If, as Moltke once claimed, a general needed to lose an entire division before becoming truly experienced, then Fredendall's seasoning was well advanced.

But reports from the front could hardly be ignored. Ernie Harmon was scathing. "He's no damned good," he told Eisenhower on February 28, on his way back to Morocco. "You ought to get rid of him." Fredendall was a "common, low son-of-a-bitch," Harmon added, "a physical and moral coward." Truscott reported that II Corps was unlikely to "ever fight well under his command." Even Alexander chimed in. "I'm sure," he told Eisenhower, "you must have a better man than *that*."

A final verdict came from an officer who had just arrived in Africa, another West Point classmate from '15 sent to help however Eisenhower deemed fit. On March 5, during a break at a command conference near Tébessa, Eisenhower asked Major General Omar N. Bradley to step onto the porch of the mansion where they were meeting.

"What do you think of the command here?" Eisenhower asked, pulling furiously on a cigarette.

"It's pretty bad," Bradley replied. "I've talked to all the division commanders. To a man they've lost confidence in Fredendall as the corps commander."

The deed was done quietly, in a brief encounter at Youks-les-Bains airfield. Fredendall would receive his third star, command of a training army in Tennessee, and a hero's welcome home. Soon enough, Eisenhower would develop the capacity to cut a throat without remorse or emollient, but not yet. Fredendall had been given a soft landing, Eisenhower told Harmon, to avoid shaking public confidence in the high command, and that certainly included himself. To Marshall he explained that Fredendall "has difficulty in picking good men" and "has shown a peculiar apathy in preparing for a big push."

Fredendall stole away from Le Kouif at 3:30 A.M. on March 7, after distributing his liquor cache to the staff. Rather than tempt fate by flying to Algiers, he chose to leave in a civilian Buick in the dead of night when no enemy fighters could find him, although "there was something wrong with the shock absorbers and we bounced all the way," his aide reported. Along the road, Fredendall and his traveling party would stop for a picnic lunch of K rations and a piquant French burgundy he had been saving.

"Glory be," Ward wrote. But the most trenchant epitaph came from Beetle Smith: "He was a good colonel before the war."

Patton was hunting boar in the Moroccan outback when a dust-caked messenger on motorcycle flagged him down with orders for the front. A few hours later, he arrived at the Maison Blanche airfield, outside Algiers, where he and Eisenhower had a brief conference over the hood of a car. The commander-in-chief expected Patton to command II Corps for only three weeks or so before resuming his preparations for the invasion of Sicily. "Your personal courage is something you do not have to prove to me, and I want you as a corps commander—not as a casualty," Eisenhower lectured. "You must not retain for one instant any man in a responsible position where you have become doubtful of

his ability to do his job…. I expect you to be perfectly cold-blooded about it."

Patton had been brooding over the still uncertain fate of his son-in-law—he would personally comb Djebel Lessouda for John Waters's grave—and in any case, dispassion was hardly in his nature. He "damned the Germans so violently and emotionally that tears came to his eyes three times during the short conference," Butcher reported. Eisenhower agreed that the man hated the enemy "like the devil hates holy water."

Omar Bradley, who was to become Patton's deputy, sketched an indelible portrait of his first appearance at the Le Kouif primary school:

> With sirens shrieking Patton's arrival, a procession of armored scout cars and half-tracks wheeled into the dingy square opposite the schoolhouse headquarters of II Corps at Djebel Kouif on the late morning of March 7…. In the lead car Patton stood like a charioteer. He was scowling into the wind and his jaw strained against the web strap of a two-starred steel helmet.

"He is indeed picturesque," Ward told his diary. One captain spoke for many young officers: "Patton sure scares the shit out of me."

Both reactions pleased him, and he wasted no time leaving his bootprints on II Corps. One definition of military morale is a will to fight that is stronger than the will to live; the Americans plainly needed inspiriting. "Bedizened with stars and loaded with guns," Robinett observed, Patton "came with Marsian speech and a song of hate." Again and again he vowed, "We will kick the bastards out of Africa." For this task, he needed officers who "can sweat, get mad, and think at the same time." And he needed men with "an adequate hatred of Germans."

They soon developed a more than adequate hatred of Patton. A flurry of orders intended to stiffen discipline caused an uproar throughout the corps. Every lieutenant was now required to prominently display his gold or silver rank insignia, known as "aiming stakes" for the propensity of enemy snipers to single out recognizable officers. Military policemen, derided as Patton's Gestapo, routinely fined drivers for improper tire pressure or low oil levels. Failure to wear leggings incurred a $15 fine—"We don't even have underwear let alone puttees," one pilot wailed—and to be without a necktie cost $10. It was said that graves registration units would not bury a man killed in action unless he was properly garbed in cravat and leg wraps. Unpolished boots and unfastened chin straps, even in the latrine, also drew fines. Every evening Patton returned to the school with an armful of confiscated knit watch caps, which he detested as slovenly accoutrements of the slipshod.

Determined and energetic, he could also be boorish and abusive, incapable of distinguishing between the demands of a disciplinarian and the caprices of a bully. "Terry, where is your foxhole?" he asked Allen during a visit to the 1st Division. When Allen pointed to a slit trench outside his tent, Patton unzipped his fly and urinated in it, signaling his contempt for passive defenses. Fidgeting and yawning during a meeting at Le Kouif with twenty officers of the Big Red One, he abruptly accused them of cowardice and demanded that the "yellow-bellies…get in there and do a little fighting." When Allen's chief of staff pointed out that the concussion of artillery blasts could break the neck of a soldier whose helmet was fastened, Patton erupted in a spittle-flecked tirade, barking that "when he wanted advice from a colonel he damn well would ask for it and otherwise he damn well didn't want it." After another officer had a close brush with an enemy patrol, Patton declared, "You might have gotten killed. When I want you to get killed, I will tell you."

Nicknames stuck to him like steel to a magnet: Gorgeous George, Flash Gordon, Necktie Patton,

Old Chewing Gum. The most flattering, Old Blood and Guts, soon mutated into Blood and Bull, or Our Blood, His Guts. Some admired him as a force of nature—"smart, blasphemous, fit, and glamorous…but born in the wrong century," as one British officer put it. Most simply tried to stay out of his way, as they would shun a dangerous storm. A believer in reincarnation, he might have been an embodiment of William Tecumseh Sherman, as described by Walt Whitman: "a bit of stern open air made up in the image of a man." Bradley concluded that Patton was simply "the strangest duck I have ever known."

Morale improved, perhaps because of Patton, perhaps despite him. Beginning on March 8, II Corps was no longer part of Anderson's First Army but directly under Alexander and his 18th Army Group as part of the field marshal's reorganization. The American divisions—the 1st Armored and 1st, 9th, and 34th Infantry—coalesced in a way that had been impossible the first four months of the campaign. While forestalling any renewed German attack with thick minefields—in March, more than 12,000 antitank mines were planted every day—the divisions regrouped and trained intently for several weeks. "We've been given a wet ball on a muddy field," said Allen, who was much inclined to football metaphors. "Watch us run with it."

Ted Roosevelt recorded on March 1 that he had changed clothes for the first time since January 14. Clean pants, hot food, and timely mail did wonders for the soul. Driving from encampment to encampment in *Rough Rider*, Roosevelt shambled among the tents, shouting hail-fellow exhortations. After the men had scrubbed their filthy uniforms with gasoline and lined up for delousing, he helped pass out medals right and left, roaring approval in his foghorn voice before speeding off to another bivouac.

"I've always thought that it was nonsense to say Americans don't like medals," he wrote Eleanor. "I knew I liked them. I wanted to get them, put them on, and walk up and down in front of you and say, 'Look what a hell of a feller you've married.'"

But Roosevelt's sobriety in other letters captured the mood of many men who now understood that they were in a fight to the death for the duration. "I guess nations going to war must go through a stumbling period before they purge the incompetents," he wrote:

> I think this is a five-year war. It won't be over until another winter has passed, until we are firmly on the Continent, and until Germany is faced with still another winter…. Now we know too much. Now we know that the world we knew is a long time dead. We know there'll be troubles of every sort.

Patton had immediate troubles of an administrative sort, which would plague him and other American commanders to the end of the war. Problems with replacement soldiers sent to fill casualty-depleted ranks had been evident even before Kasserine. Now, as thousands more trundled into Tunisia, it was clear that the War Department was repeating the blunders of 1918, when the Army's personnel system had broken down completely.

Soldiers were viewed as interchangeable parts, like spark plugs or gaskets. As parts wore out or broke, new parts were shipped to keep units running close to full strength. Plausible in theory, this assembly-line model had several pernicious flaws. The urgent demand for replacements in mid-February led the Army to strip soldiers from the 3rd Infantry Division and 2nd Armored Division in Morocco. Many of those transferred were capable, but few commanders could resist the chance to dump their troublemakers and bunglers, too.

Worse yet, the War Department had assumed that airpower would so lighten the infantry's

burden that losses would be less than they had been in World War I. Remarkably, no one foresaw that riflemen would be chewed up much faster than, say, cooks or typists. Moreover, combat simply wore down units. Senior generals came to realize that divisions should not be left in the line longer than thirty to forty days without rest; to fill the ranks with inexperienced replacement soldiers who lacked emotional ties to their new comrades did nothing for combat efficiency.

These defects, and more, began to appear in Tunisia. Because of the urgent demand for combat replacements, many of the men shoved forward had not finished basic training, and many were physical or disciplinary derelicts. They were handled, Eisenhower's personnel chief admitted, like "sacks of wheat." One study estimated that 80 percent had not qualified in their basic weapons. Of 2,400 men sent to the 34th Division, an extraordinary number were overage and in poor physical shape. One batch of 250 men included 119 who were thirty-nine or older. Nineteen thousand trained U.S. armor force replacements would arrive in Africa, but the crying need for rear-echelon service units meant most became drivers, stevedores, and ammo handlers. Rather than trust the vagaries of Army personnel officers, savvy commanders began sending their agents to replacement depots to pick out new soldiers, one officer wrote, "somewhat as one would buy a horse."

No less worrisome was a surge in mental breakdowns. Every man exposed to extended combat had become "a bit windy of shellfire," in a British reporter's phrase. Before Kasserine, "psychiatric reactions" accounted for a fifth, and sometimes more than a third, of all battlefield evacuations. Now, in the spring of 1943, more than 1,700 men would be admitted to the psychiatric ward of a single hospital, the 95th General, and many thousands of others were showing symptoms of instability. Eisenhower worried in a memo to Patton that "an increasing number of these cases are now being reported."

First known as shell shock because of the Great War misapprehension that neuropsychiatric disorders derived mainly from concussions suffered in artillery barrages, the syndrome in Tunisia was renamed combat exhaustion, a term borrowed from the British. Soldiers also called it war fatigue or old sergeant syndrome. The Army's chief psychiatrist described a typical patient: "He appeared as a dejected, dirty, weary man. His facial expression was one of depression, sometimes of tearfulness. Frequently his hands were trembling or jerky." By the end of the war more than 500,000 men from the Army ground forces alone would be discharged for psychiatric reasons—this despite ruthless culling during induction physicals, when 12 percent of the 15 million draftees examined were rejected as mentally unfit. For every six men wounded, another became a neuropsychiatric casualty.

Individual cases in North Africa were often poignant, sometimes horrifying. A 1st Division soldier "beat his head against our foxhole 'til his skin on his forehead was just hanging in strands. He was foaming at the mouth like a madman." A twenty-year-old infantryman, the only survivor in a truck hit by a mortar shell, loped into the night with a pair of suspenders in search of a tree from which to hang himself. Another unhinged twenty-year-old agitatedly recounted how he had positioned the bodies of two dead soldiers, one German and the other American, as shields during an artillery barrage. Men by the hundreds, then by the thousands, had tremors or paralysis in their limbs, dysfunctional bowels, vacant stares. Some tried to scoop foxholes in their hospital cots with hands and feet, tearfully whimpering that "Herman the German" was stalking through the ward.

At first, serious cases were evacuated far from the front, often to the United States or England, where they lost touch with their units, suffered a sharp loss of self-esteem, and often exaggerated their problems. An Army study concluded that commanders fostered "an attitude closely akin to the old Puritan approach toward the venereal problem—the ostrich attitude, the 'we don't discuss it' idea, or 'it just isn't so.' Unfortunately it is very much so…. The front-line soldier wears out in combat."

Doctors soon learned to treat patients as far forward as possible. Treatments in North Africa included electroshock; large doses of barbiturates, to induce deep sleep for two to seven days; and

sodium pentothal, intended to bring repressed demons to the surface. Nearly three-quarters of treated soldiers resumed military duties in some form, but less than 2 percent returned to combat.

The lessons emerging from Tunisia were clear to Army psychiatrists: "the average soldier reached his peak effectiveness in the first ninety days of combat and was so worn out after 180 days that he was rendered useless and unable to return to military service." Another study noted that "no man is removed from combat duty until he [has] become worthless. The infantryman considers this a bitter injustice…. He can look forward only to death, mutilation, or psychiatric breakdown." After months of stress, of close calls, of witnessing the unspeakable, even the bravest men wondered, as one fighter squadron commander did, "Am I becoming uncourageous?" Modern combat could break any soldier.

That was not a conclusion acceptable to the U.S. Army, and it was certainly anathema to the new II Corps commander. Patton had little tolerance for human limits. In his cosmology, combat exhaustion was an illegitimate diagnosis for cowards to hide behind.

Visiting a field hospital near Fériana shortly after his arrival in Tunisia, Patton displayed the choler that would cost him his command a few months later, in Sicily, when he brutally slapped two hospitalized soldiers. Strolling from bed to bed, murmuring comfort, he asked one wounded soldier how he had been hurt. The man replied that he had been shot while trying to surrender.

Patton whirled away, his face contorted with disgust. "Serves him right," he said bitterly. "That's what he gets for giving up."

"One Needs Luck in War"

DAWN was just a gray rumor in the east on February 26 when the creak of panzer tracks carried across the sage grass and limestone hills to the farming village of Sidi Nsir. Midway between Mateur and Béja on Highway 11, City Sneer—as Allied troops inevitably called it—anchored the center of the British line, which extended seventy miles from Cap Serrat, on the north coast, to Bou Arada, below the Medjerda River valley.

The usual sunrise sounds of singing larks and lowing cows abruptly ceased at 6:30 A.M., when four German battalions slammed into the British defenders. Stucco walls disintegrated beneath an artillery barrage and the urgent staccato of machine-gun fire merged into a single prolonged burst. By late morning, thirty tanks, including fourteen Tigers—all commanded by Colonel Rudolph Lang, conqueror of Longstop Hill on Christmas Day—had flanked the British gunners and closed to within 600 yards. "Self and three men left," one lieutenant radioed. "It can't be much longer. Good-bye and cheerio."

Eight similar attacks had occurred across the British front in an offensive code-named OCHSENKOPF, or Ox Head. Local successes at Sidi Nsir and elsewhere notwithstanding, the assault was ill-conceived and would only hasten the Axis destiny in Tunisia. Originally designed by Arnim as a modest attack on Medjez-el-Bab, the plan blossomed under the fertilizing influence of Kesselring's optimism to become a major offensive intended to seize Béja and once again widen the Axis bridgehead around Tunis.

As commander of the new Army Group Africa, Rommel had just been given authority over both his own army and Arnim's, but he was informed of OCHSENKOPF almost as an afterthought. Foremost among its deficiencies, the offensive was uncoupled from the attack at Thala several days earlier, allowing the Allies time to regroup. Rommel was flabbergasted, and he railed against "the nincompoops at Comando Supremo." As one officer observed of both sides in the Tunisian campaign, "It was a small war with too many generals."

It was not the nincompoops who would die, of course, but Wehrmacht teenagers and fuzz-cheeked Tommies. For more than two weeks the fighting flared up and down the line in bursts of fine savagery. General Allfrey rushed reinforcements here and there across the V Corps front. By March 1, Lang had only five battleworthy panzers left, and his own soldiers were calling him Tank Killer.

The Germans fared somewhat better in the far north. Arnim personally surpervised a westward lunge by eight battalions, which swarmed out of their Jefna revetments past the curing bones of the dead left on Green and Bald Hills the previous November. Italian soldiers and German parachute engineers led by Rudolf Witzig, the hero of Green and Bald, deftly flanked the British and French at a mining hamlet named Sedjenane, which fell on March 3. After driving the unfledged 46th Division troops back ten miles, Arnim pushed them another ten by closing to within a few thousand yards of Djebel Abiod, the northern gateway to Béja. Anderson considered abandoning Medjez-el-Bab, on the assumption that the town's fall was "almost inevitable" if the enemy attack enveloped the British left. Alexander not only refused to give up Medjez but forbade further retreat.

Cruel mountain fighting in bitter weather followed. Sniper fire so devastated the ranks of British junior officers that platoon and company commanders—disdaining Patton's new rules for the Americans—removed their brass rank insignia, exchanged revolvers for rifles, tucked binoculars into their tunics, and tried to avoid any visible gesture that implied leadership acumen.

In the end Arnim was too weak and scattered to exploit his gains. The British line fell back twenty miles in the north, ten miles in the center, and very little in the south. That lost yardage would have to be won back, hill by bloody hill, before any drive on Tunis could resume. British casualties were heavy, including 2,500 men taken prisoner and sixteen tanks destroyed. But Arnim's losses were more grievous, because he could afford them less. Although he claimed his casualties numbered only about a thousand, the British counted 2,200 German prisoners, with perhaps as many more killed and wounded.

Moreover, nearly 90 percent of the panzers used in OCHSENKOPF were destroyed or disabled. The bridgehead had been extended, slightly, but the Axis line was thin and brittle. The offensive accomplished little other than to infuriate Rommel and discomfit Anderson.

"It was not a happy period," Anderson later acknowledged. "Things went wrong too often."

Rommel was still seething at the nincompoops as his scout car labored in a nimbus of golden dust up a corkscrew mountain road at two P.M. on March 5. The beautiful failure at Thala—how close they had come to real victory!—lay ten days and two hundred miles behind. Now he was back where he felt most comfortable, in the desert, with his Afrika Korps, scanning the eastern horizon for the dusty spoor of Montgomery's army. This was splendid country, a dominion of refracted light and arid space, far different from the fatherland, different even from Kasserine. He had stopped brooding long enough to admire the irrigated orchards and greening wheat fields and exclaim: "What a colony this would make for us Germans!"

From the crest of this nameless ridge, marked on the map as Hill 715, the turquoise Mediterranean shimmered twenty miles due north. Libya lay seventy miles to the east, but the British were much closer, perhaps fifteen miles, in a sinewy line that stretched north to south before Médenine, a verdant market town fed by a dozen roads from every compass point including the Saharan south. "The world could be so beautiful for all men," Rommel had written to Lu two days before. "There is so much that could be done—especially here in Africa with its wide-open spaces."

Yes, this would have made a fine colony; but the field marshal knew it was not fated, not for the Germans and certainly not for the Italians, though they coveted the land even more. He had again

urged abandoning this corner of Tunisia and the Mareth defensive line behind him, shortening the perimeter he and Arnim held from 400 miles to 100. But the nincompoops would not agree, and while they stroked their chins in Berlin and Rome, he intended to strike.

Operation CAPRI was a spoiling attack, designed to wreck Eighth Army's assembly areas and forestall the British offensive everyone knew would soon come. If CAPRI failed—and already OCHSENKOPF in the north had forced a two-day delay—"the end of the army in Africa would be close," Rommel warned. There was "no point in harboring any illusions." On the plain below, 31,000 men with 215 guns and 135 tanks—including the 10th, 15th, and 21st Panzer Divisions—jostled forward for the attack set to begin at dawn. Tank crews kicked a soccer ball around within sight of British pickets in a show of unconcern.

Concern was warranted. If "things went wrong too often" for Anderson in the north, now they went spectacularly right for Montgomery in the south. Since the capture of Tripoli on January 23, little fighting had occurred on Eighth Army's front, other than halfhearted skirmishes intended to distract Rommel during Kasserine. Deliberate at best, Montgomery had intended to take another month before forcing his way into central Tunisia with a set-piece assault on the Mareth Line.

But Ultra decrypts in late February revealed Rommel's intended attack at Médenine. In a redemption for British intelligence after the sour disappointment of Kasserine, Allied eavesdroppers soon knew the precise size, location, and timing of CAPRI. Montgomery stopped plodding and rushed his army forward to reinforce the single division exposed as his Médenine vanguard. Forewarned, he was now forearmed, with 300 British tanks, 817 artillery and antitank guns, twice Rommel's air strength, and three seasoned divisions entrenched along a twenty-five-mile front.

Thick mist lingering after a rainy night masked the panzers as they spilled from their wadis at six A.M. on March 6. British troops were just tucking into their sausages and tea when a canopy of Nebelwerfer shells screamed overhead. The German attack went badly from the beginning. Commanders in the 21st Panzer fell for the ruse of bully beef tins laid out to simulate a minefield five miles west of Médenine. Swerving left, they veered beneath the frowning British guns and offered their flanks to stabbing volleys that left a dozen tanks in flames—all within view of Rommel on his height. 15th Panzer two miles north and 10th Panzer two miles south fared no better against the bristle of antitank guns. "It is an absolute gift," Montgomery wrote, "and the man must be mad." By ten A.M. the armored attack had stalled. Surviving panzers "wandered rather vaguely," the British 201st Guards Brigade reported, looking for defilade from the steel sleeting through their ranks.

Gunfire faded to a mutter. Then a second assault at 2:30 P.M. offered 10,000 Axis infantrymen the dubious honor of a more prominent role in the attack. A Coldstream Guardsman reported:

> A great many little figures appeared over the distant crest, all in formation. With a shriek and a thud the entire corps artillery came down…. When the smoke cleared, other little figures appeared with stretchers.

One Highlanders history called it a "wonderful shoot," with field-gray troops "dropping like ninepins." Montgomery, who kept a photo of Rommel above his desk, saw little to impress him in this attack. "The Marshal has made a balls of it. I shall write letters," he sniffed, and retired to his trailer to do precisely that.

Médenine was "the first perfect battle," a British major exulted. Thirty thousand artillery and antitank shells had gutted the Afrika Korps without British tanks ever leaving the sideline. Montgomery's losses were a trifling 130. Rommel suffered 635 casualties, mostly German, and the

destruction of fifty-two tanks, more than a third of his armored force. Scots Guard patrols that night slipped across the battlefield to blow up crippled panzers before they could be recovered, leaving behind fragments "none of which was larger than a card table."

Rommel had ventured forward during the day before returning to his bivouac on Hill 715. The slaughter had been so lopsided, the battle so plainly anticipated by the British, that the field marshal suspected treachery, perhaps from the Italians, a suspicion Kesselring came to share. Neither ever imagined that the Allies were decoding his mail. "This operation was pointless from the moment it turned out that we had not taken the enemy by surprise," Rommel said. "A great gloom settled over us all."

Now came another slap, this one from the Berlin high command, which that night again rejected the field marshal's plea to radically contract the Axis line. "To withdraw both armies into one cramped bridgehead around Tunis and Bizerte would spell the beginning of the end," Hitler decreed.

If hardly unexpected, the decision was devastating. For the army group to remain in Africa was "now plain suicide," Rommel declared. By the time he worked his way down Hill 715 on March 7, he had decided the moment had come to take his long-deferred sick leave in the Austrian Alps. No one wanted him in Tunisia, certainly not those running the war at Comando Supremo. "During the drive back to headquarters," his command diary recorded, "C in C [commander-in-chief] decides to begin his health cure right now—at once." He spent a day saying goodbye to his Africans: a pale, thin figure yellowed by jaundice, his face and neck splotched with angry boils. "C in C makes emotional farewell," his aide wrote. "The whole thing stinks."

"I hadn't seen him for some weeks and was shocked at how unwell he looked," his reconnaissance commander, Hans von Luck, later recounted. "He was visibly weak…and completely worn out." Campaign maps were strewn around his trailer, memento mori of his lost cause. Rommel stood and shook hands. Tears flooded his eyes. "The tears of a great man now cast down," Luck added, "moved me as much as anything I saw in the war."

At 7:50 A.M. on March 9, he boarded a plane at Sfax for the flight to Rome. For over a month, his departure remained secret from the Allies, and they kept swatting at his ghost; but he never set foot in Africa again. "He was gradually consumed by the fire which glowed within him," wrote his chief of staff. Even Kesselring's optimism dimmed. Médenine was "the last trump in our Tunisian hand," he subsequently concluded. "We could no longer hope to keep the war out of Europe and away from Germany for another year. One needs luck in war. Rommel without doubt had been deserted by his lucky star for quite some time."

Over tea during a visit to Hitler's secret command post in the Ukraine, Rommel futilely urged the Führer to shrink the Tunisian bridgehead to a defensible inner keep. Hitler dismissed the notion with a rant. "If the German people are incapable of winning the war," the Führer declared, "then they can rot." To his young son, Rommel confided, "Sometimes you feel that he's not quite normal."

"Dear General Arnim," Rommel wrote on March 12:

> A further withdrawal of forces is not approved for the present…. I am only sorry that the Führer has refused my urgent request to be allowed to return immediately to Africa. He has ordered me to begin my course of medical treatment at once. My thoughts and concern are now as before with Africa. Long live the Führer!

He was doomed and he knew it, and so too was the unspeakable cause he had served. "Our star was in decline," Rommel later wrote. The glory was gone forever. He told his son, "I've fallen from

grace."

On Friday, March 12, as Rommel lamented his plight, Eisenhower wrote his own son at West Point: "I have observed very frequently that it is not the man who is so brilliant [who] delivers in time of stress and strain, but rather the man who can keep on going indefinitely, doing a good straightforward job."

A "good straightforward job" was now called for, and in this homely requisite the Americans found their genius. If the winter campaign in North Africa had revealed Eisenhower's infirmities, just as it revealed those of his army, spring would elicit strengths of character and competence in both the man and the host he commanded. Eisenhower had been naive, sycophantic, unsure of his judgment, insufficiently vigorous, and a more titular than actual commander. The U.S. Army had been sloppy, undisciplined, cavalier, insufficiently vigorous, and a more titular than actual army. These traits did not abruptly slough away, molting into brilliances of generalship and élan. But new martial lineaments emerged, and they became the stuff of victory and liberation.

After months of sailing with the wind in his face, Eisenhower now found a fresh breeze at his back. His health returned. Alexander and Patton shouldered many of his battlefield burdens. Axis weakness and the weight of Allied material strength became increasingly evident. The praise he craved was forthcoming—from Churchill, who publicly extolled his "selflessness of character and disdain of purely personal advancement," and from President Roosevelt, who sent word: "Tell Ike that not only I, but the whole country is proud of the job he has done. We have every confidence in his success." With his equilibrium restored and his job apparently secure, Eisenhower's leadership ripened with the season.

"I have caught up with myself and have things on a fairly even keel," he assured Marshall in early March. He sensed the power of a few fixed ideas compellingly preached, and these became tenets of the armies he commanded, even if sometimes practiced more in the breach than the observance. Foremost was Allied unity. "German propaganda is trying to convince the world that [the] British and Americans are at each other's throats in this theater," he told Alexander in a handwritten note. "We'll show them." He also radiated certitude of victory, which he saw in raw terms: good triumphing over evil after a struggle to rival the primordial brawl of angels. "We have bitter battling ahead, even in Tunisia," he wrote an old friend on March 21. "Beyond this is the more serious, long-termed prospect of getting at the guts of the enemy and tearing them out." To his brother Edgar he asserted, "We're going to clear the Axis out of Africa—and that's something!"

He was busier than ever, but more focused. "Political questions are not plaguing me as much as formerly," he told Edgar. He announced that visitors to Algiers were unwelcome unless vital to victory. "American Legion commanders, princes, and others of that stripe are nothing but a deadly bore," he wrote Marshall. "I am cutting everybody off my list [who] has not something specific to do with winning the war." He took a personal interest in fielding better mine detectors, better tank sights, even better colored smoke for battlefield signaling.

Endearingly modest, he retained the homespun authenticity that was part of his charisma; men would do much to evoke that remarkable grin. "Eisenhower's genius seems to be that of a good chairman," the reporter Philip Jordan, once a harsh critic, told his diary in the weeks after Kasserine. "I have changed my views of this man: he *has* something." To a former schoolteacher in Abilene, who had once had trouble distinguishing between the six Eisenhower boys, the commander-in-chief wrote on March 5: "I was third in line and the homeliest of the lot, if that will assist your memory." The award of his fourth star, he told his son John, "doesn't amount to a tinker's damn in the winning of

this war—and that is all that concerns me." Whatever his relationship with Kay Summersby, he clearly pined for Mamie. "I miss her so much that every letter from her is worth more than anything else to me."

More and more of his time was spent on HUSKY, the invasion of Sicily tentatively scheduled for a fair moon in mid-June, and he now looked over the horizon toward the next campaign, as a commander-in-chief must do. He formed a secret group called Force 141—the number was that of a meeting room in the Hôtel St. Georges—to draft and redraft nine separate plans for the assault. "HUSKY planning is most involved and difficult…[and] presents intricacies and difficulties that cause me a lot of headaches," he told Marshall. He scrutinized lessons from TORCH regarding landing craft, shipping schedules, paratrooper operations, and a hundred other elements.

With one eye on Sicily, he kept the other on Tunisia. Perhaps his chief contribution in the spring campaign was to ensure that the matériel needed to finish the job was at hand. After the war a belief would take root that the successes of the American Army were attributable to overwhelming material superiority—brute strength—while setbacks could be chalked up to poor generalship. But modern war was a clash of systems: political, economic, and military. The engine of an enemy's destruction could be built only by effectively integrating forces that ranged from industrial capacity to national character to educational systems that produced men able to organize global war.

"The battle," Rommel famously observed, "is fought and decided by the quartermasters before the shooting begins." The shooting had begun months before in northwest Africa, but now the quartermasters truly came into their own. The prodigies of American industrial muscle and organizational acumen began to tell. In Oran, engineers built an assembly plant near the port and taught local workers in English, French, and Spanish how to put together a jeep from a box of parts in nine minutes. That plant turned out more than 20,000 vehicles. Another new factory nearby assembled 1,200 railcars, which were among 4,500 cars and 250 locomotives ultimately added to North African rolling stock.

In late January, Eisenhower had pleaded with Washington for more trucks. Less than three weeks later, a special convoy of twenty ships sailed from Norfolk, New York, and Baltimore with 5,000 two-and-a-half-ton trucks, 2,000 cargo trailers, 400 dump trucks, 80 fighter planes, and, for ballast, 12,000 tons of coal, 16,000 tons of flour, 9,000 tons of sugar, 1,000 tons of soap, and 4,000 submachine guns, all of which arrived in Africa on March 6. "It was," an Army account noted with justifiable pride, "a brilliant performance."

In World War I, more than half of all supplies for American forces were obtained abroad, including nearly all artillery and airplanes. In this war, almost everything would be shipped from the United States, including immense tonnages sent to the Russians, British, French, and other allies. The demands of modern combat were unprecedented. Although a latter-day infantry division was half the size of its Great War predecessor, it typically used more than twice as much ammunition—111 tons on an average fighting day. In Africa, total supply requirements amounted to thirteen tons per soldier each month.

Can do. From late February to late March, 130 ships sailed from the United States for Africa with 84,000 soldiers, 24,000 vehicles, and a million tons of cargo. Although the U.S. II Corps lost more armor at Kasserine than the Germans had massed at the beginning of the battle, those losses were replaced immediately. Other matériel appeared just as fast, including 500 miles of extra communications wire shipped to the front from Algiers less than a day after it was requested. When Patton requested—no, demanded—new shoes for his entire corps, 80,000 pairs arrived almost overnight. So much ammunition arrived in Tunisia that it was stacked in pyramids and thatched with branches to simulate an Arab village.

The Americans' "genius lay in creating resources rather than in using them economically," a

British study observed astutely. Room was found in cargo holds for countless crates of Coca-Cola, to the disbelief of British logisticians. A train supposedly hauling rations to Béja for 50,000 men was found upon arrival to carry one sack of flour, a case of grapefruit juice, a boxcar of crackers, and sixteen boxcars of peanut butter. Truck chassis and truck cabs were loaded on different ships and dispatched to different ports if not different continents; so were artillery projectiles and artillery charges, radios and radio batteries, and many other components whose utility is rarely improved by divorce. Quays became so cluttered with arriving cargo that ships could not even load ballast for the return trip home and began carrying it with them on the outbound voyage. Inventories were confused beyond computation: not until the summer of 1944 would the Army be able to tally with some confidence precisely what had been shipped to North Africa.

"The American Army does not solve its problems," one general noted, "it overwhelms them." There was prodigal in economy—of time, of motion, of *stuff*—but beyond the extravagance lay a brisk ability to get the job done. After Kasserine, American aviation engineers built five new airfields around Sbeïtla—in seventy-two hours. More than one hundred fields in all would be built during the Tunisian campaign. The enemy would not be "solved" in Tunisia. He would be overwhelmed.

The German military had pioneered modern military logistics, but as the war entered its forty-third month Wehrmacht victualers could not keep pace with the Allies on all fronts simultaneously. With so much effort devoted to the Eastern Front, and with the overmatched German navy occupied elsewhere, supply lines to North Africa depended heavily on the Italian fleet.

That was a flimsy reed. One-third of the Italian merchant fleet had been interned when Rome entered the war; by September 1942, half of the remainder was at the bottom of various seas. Then things got worse. From the beginning of TORCH to May 1943, the Italians would lose 243 ships and boats on the Tunisian run—most to Allied air attack—with another 242 damaged. The Sicilian Channel was described by one German officer as a "roaring furnace," and to Italian sailors it became "the death route," the most dangerous sea passage in the world. Italian captains often feigned engine trouble to avoid it; the skipper of one transport carrying 600 mules for the Wehrmacht's 334th Division headed out three times, turned back three times, and never did reach Africa.

Ships not yet sunk were often immobilized for lack of fuel. Allied bombers battered Italian shipyards so relentlessly that at any given moment two-thirds of all escort vessels were unfit for service. Enthusiasm for "the Germans' war" dwindled with each new casualty list, and Italians increasingly worried over the dolorous prospect of defending their homeland.

As spring advanced, nights grew shorter, offering less cover to those sneaking across the Mediterranean. The heavily armed, shallow-draft vessels known as Siebel ferries gave some relief, and ninety had braved the furnace by late January. But German logisticians calculated that they needed four times that number, and steel shortages kept the ferry fleet small. Before his departure, Rommel warned that "to create the build-up necessary for a defense against a major attack" in Africa would require shipping 140,000 tons of supplies each month; that was double the amount received in January and February combined, even before Allied interdiction intensified. By contrast, the Allies in March moved 220,000 tons just through the ports around Oran.

Other woes also plagued German logisticians. The relentless Allied air raids so unnerved Arab dockworkers that stevedores had to be imported from Hamburg. The ports being damaged, more and more supplies had to be hauled by a fleet of 200 Ju-52 transport planes, but each plane carried less than two tons. Trains used to move matériel within Tunisia required coal imported from Europe; as supplies dwindled, crews turned to local lignite, which greatly reduced locomotive efficiency. When

even lignite grew scarce, the only alternative was a feeble mixture of oil cakes and sediment from the olive harvest. Cheap Tunisian wine was distilled into a thin fuel.

These tribulations stirred mild interest in the German high command and at Comando Supremo, where, as one account noted, "paper divisions had the strength of real ones,…ships and convoys were never sunk, and…armies, at least on paper, were always up to strength." Even as the Allies crumpled at Kasserine, an inspection team from Berlin reported that if Axis ships kept sinking at the current rate none would remain afloat by early summer. Alarms from Africa grew shrill. Arnim warned that "if no supplies reach us, all will be up in Tunisia by 1 July." The Axis bridgehead, he added, was becoming "a fortress without ammunition and rations."

In Berlin and Rome promises were issued and broken, re-issued and re-broken. Without stripping the other battlefronts or resurrecting the Italian navy, little could be done. Even less *was* done. "Hitler wanted to be stronger than mere facts, to bend them to his will," Kesselring's chief of staff observed. "All attempts to make him see reason only sent him into a rage."

"The Devil Is Come Down"

THE soft whir of a film projector silenced the British officers in Montgomery's mess. Setting down their tea mugs, the men pivoted their canvas chairs toward an army blanket hung as a makeshift screen. The familiar supper smell of bully beef and biscuits was overpowered by the stink of sweat-stained khaki and ripe cardigans. Brilliant white flashes limned the jagged rim of the wadi sheltering the command post, and the grumble of artillery carried on the evening airs beneath a waxing moon.

Then the movie began. Artillery booms and flashes on the screen mingled with the real thing until they were almost indistinguishable: a celluloid depiction of the battle of El Alamein five months earlier was superimposed on tonight's opening barrage of Eighth Army's assault against the Mareth Line. But it was the film that held the men rapt. Churchill himself had sent this print of *Desert Victory,* a sixty-five-minute documentary that had become a worldwide propaganda sensation in the two weeks since its London premiere. Montgomery had seen the movie already, on March 16, but now, four nights later, he seemed no less entranced as he watched again, "a wee bugger in a black beret"—as a Scottish soldier described him—reliving the greatest triumph of British arms since Waterloo. His vulpine face, whitened with reflected images from the screen, hardly moved except for faint twitches of his thin black mustache.

There was Rommel, seen in captured German footage, sporting his leather duster and goggles. Then Monty himself, that "intensely compacted hank of steel wire," in George Bernard Shaw's arch phrase. Tankers stacked their shells, medics unfolded their stretchers. Then: sappers wriggle forward to snip the wire, and gun chiefs squint at their watches before shouting the command: *Fire!* The terrible cannonade turns night to noon. Infantrymen in baggy shorts surge forward, their rifles held at port arms. Bayonets thrust. Pipes keen. Then it's over, except for the final flickering frames of dead Germans blackening in the sun and POWs scuffing toward their cages as Eighth Army pushes west. The Union Jack flaps over Tobruk on November 13, then Benghazi a week later, then Tripoli on January 23—way stations to Médenine and the current line at Mareth. "Pursuit," the narrator asserts, "was relentless."

The leader slapped round and round on the spinning reel as the officers shambled back to their bivouacs. They had a battle to fight, not just one to relive, and so far it was not going especially well. Montgomery stood and stretched to his full five foot seven—perhaps a bit taller in chukka boots—before returning to his caravan. He loved the film. "It is first class," he wrote Alexander. As one reporter noted, "He was thoroughly enjoying this conqueror business."

Bernard Law Montgomery was a bishop's son who had passed a "lonely and loveless" childhood in remote Tasmania, dreaming of greatness and believing himself born to conquer. Near the photo of Rommel above his desk was a copy of Drake's prayer before the attack on Cádiz in 1587, entreating God for "the true glory." There lay Montgomery's quest: the true glory. He was ascetic and fussy, a teetotaling, Bible-reading maverick who cited Cromwell and Moses among his favorite great captains and who had opened a commanders' seminar on El Alamein a few weeks earlier by forbidding not only smoking but coughing. (Churchill, upon hearing Montgomery boast that abstinence made him "100 percent fit," replied that he both drank and smoked and was "*200* percent fit.") Hardened in the trenches—he had been badly wounded at Ypres—he was hardened more by the early death of a wife he adored. "One only loves once," he told Alexander, "and now it is finished."

A line from the Book of Job was among his favorites: "Yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward." He was a master of organization and training, of the set battle, of the theatrics of command. "Kill Germans, even padres—one per week and two on Sundays," he told his soldiers. Not a man among the 200,000 in Eighth Army doubted that he was their leader, or that he would be stingy in spending their lives. That was something. A majority of his forty-three infantry battalions came from Commonwealth or allied armies, and he had enough political moxie to avoid prodigality with other nations' troops. After taking command in Egypt in mid-August 1942 under Alexander's indulgent supervision, Montgomery had whipped Rommel first at Alam Halfa, then a second, decisive time at El Alamein. That British attack on October 23, with more than a thousand tanks, cracked the much weaker Axis defenders across a forty-mile front. "The sheer weight of British resources made up for all blunders," one account noted. Twelve days later, Rommel was in the full retreat that had led to southern Tunisia. Until Alamein, the British Army had been mostly winless; his victory in Egypt gave new life to Churchill's government and to empire, at a cost of 13,560 British casualties but with more than twice as many exacted from his enemies. Church bells had pealed in Britain for the first time in three years. Fan letters arrived at Montgomery's bivouac by the thousands, including some marriage proposals, and soldiers rushed to glimpse his passing car as if he were a film star, which now he was. "We all trust him to win," one brigadier said. As a redeeming virtue, that too was something.

And yet. Sparks flew up around Montgomery. He was puerile, petty, and egocentric, bereft of irony, humility, and a sense of proportion. It would not suffice for him to succeed; others must fail. "If he admitted to an error, it was always minor, and served, like a touch of black in a color scheme, to throw up his general infallibility," the historian Correlli Barnett would write after the war. Acknowledging the "chaos of his temperament," his biographer Ronald Lewin described

> a kindliness and intermittent humanity marred by ruthlessness, intolerance, and sheer lack of empathy; a marvelous capacity for ignoring the inessential, combined with a purblind insensitivity about the obvious; a deep but unsophisticated Christianity; a panache, a burning ambition, above all an individuality—such were the gifts which both good and bad fairies brought to Montgomery's cradle.

He disdained the French—"quite useless except to guard aerodromes"—and especially the Americans, to whom he would be miserably yoked for the duration of the war. Montgomery dismissed Eisenhower, whom he had met in Britain just long enough to rebuke for lighting a cigarette, in four words: "Good chap, no soldier!" After their second meeting, soon to occur near Mareth, he would embroider his assessment of the commander-in-chief in a letter to Brooke: "He knows nothing whatever about how to make war or to fight battles; he should be kept right away from all that

business if we want to win this war." Before ever seeing the U.S. Army, he proclaimed that "the real trouble with the Americans is that the soldiers won't fight. They haven't got the light of battle in their eyes."

Montgomery was perhaps most controversial among his own countrymen. He deemed Anderson "quite unfit to command an army." First Army as a whole was worthless. "The party in Tunisia is a complete dog's-breakfast," he declared, "and there is an absence of good chaps over there." He quipped that he intended to "drive the Germans and the First Army back into the sea." A senior British general considered him "a thoroughly disloyal subordinate."

Swaggering into Tunisia, Montgomery and his army were also thoroughly overconfident. He envisioned a grand sweep to Tunis, with more laurels and church bells awaiting him. "We will roll up the whole show from the south," he told Alexander. Churchill tartly noted: "Indomitable in retreat, invincible in advance, insufferable in victory." Yet the army lumbered like "a dray horse on a polo field," in Correlli Barnett's phrase, despite an enthusiasm for the amphetamine benzedrine, which was issued in tens of thousands of tablets "to all Eighth Army personnel" on Montgomery's order.

Contrary to the *Desert Victory* mythology, pursuit after Alamein was hardly "relentless." Rommel had escaped with the core of his army despite a fifteenfold British advantage in tanks, an artillery superiority of twelve to one, and an intimate knowledge of Axis weakness thanks to Ultra and other intelligence. Eighth Army had hugged the ancient Pirate Coast across Libya much closer than it hugged the retreating Axis. That lollygagging had allowed Rommel time to drub the Americans at Kasserine, return to Médenine for a drubbing of his own, then slip away again. "Once Monty had his reputation," charged the British air marshal Arthur Coningham, "he would never risk it again."

Now another chance to bag the enemy army obtained, thanks to a stand-or-die order from the Axis high command.

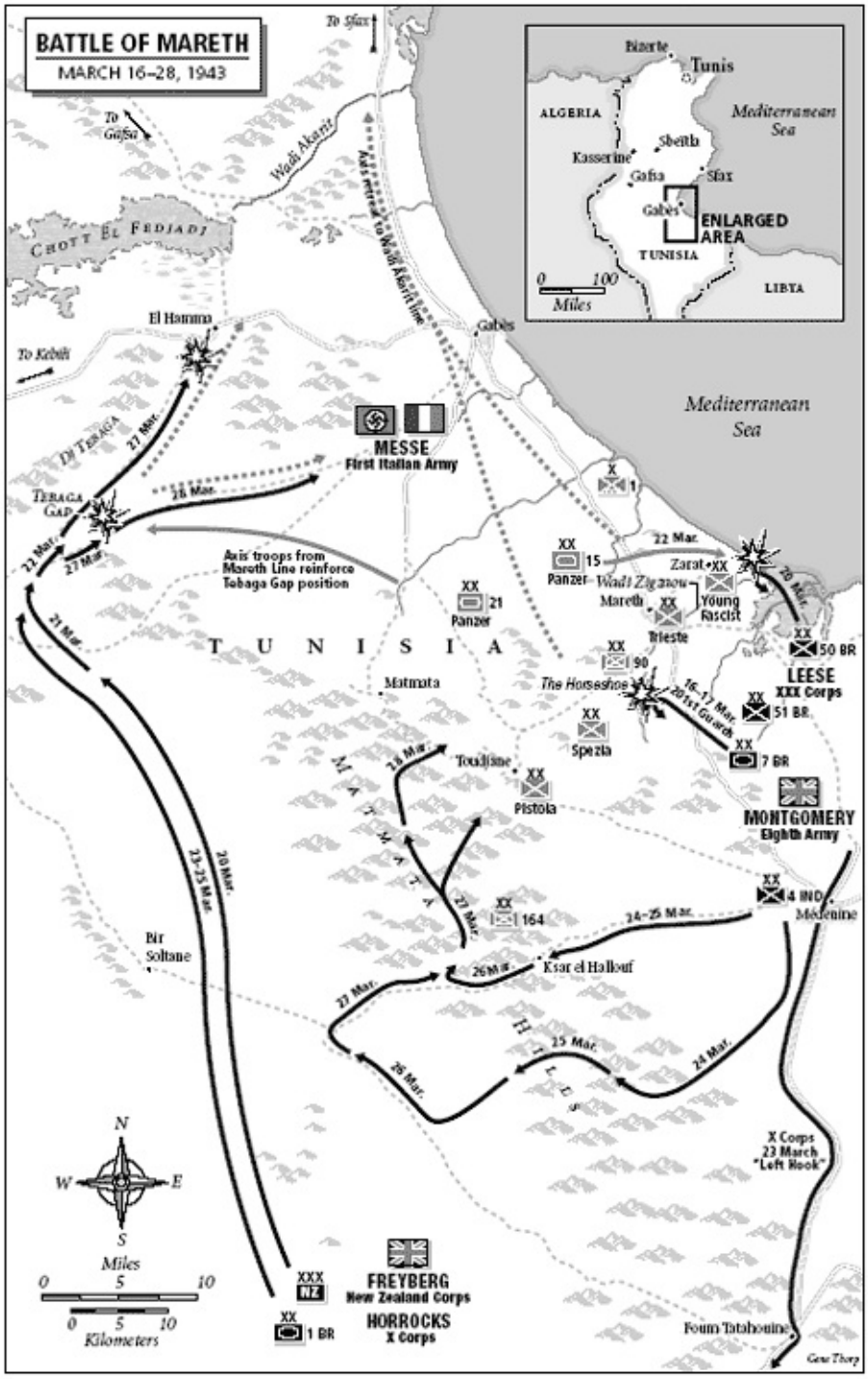
This time the last ditch was to be dug at Mareth, a line of fortifications stretching twenty-two miles between the Mediterranean and the rugged Matmata Hills in the south. For centuries, the narrow coastal gap had been the main portal into southern Tunisia for trans-Saharan caravans carrying slaves and ivory. It was said that traveling merchants seized by Berber highwaymen were forced to drink vats of hot water to flush out any gold they had swallowed.

Although Hitler had vacillated before ordering Mareth held, Kesselring—ignoring Rommel's skepticism—considered the position a suitable place to begin converting Tunisia into "one vast fortress." A retreat farther up the Tunisian coast, toward Gabès or Sfax, might allow the merger of Alexander's two armies; it would also shorten Allied bombing runs to Tunis and Bizerte. Under orders issued by Comando Supremo on March 17, Mareth was "to be defended to the last." With Rommel gone to Europe, Arnim would command the Axis army group that comprised his own Fifth Panzer Army in the north and Panzer Army Africa, renamed First Italian Army, in the south. The latter included remnants of the Afrika Korps among its 50,000 Germans and 35,000 Italians, and was commanded by General Giovanni Messe, who for the past two years had led the Italian expeditionary corps in Russia.

Built by the French in the 1930s to thwart Italian aggression from the east, the Mareth Line by an odd turn was now garrisoned by twenty-two Italian battalions backed and flanked—"corseted"—by ten German infantry battalions and the 15th Panzer Division with thirty-two functioning tanks. Wadis were scarped into antitank ditches—more than a hundred feet wide and twenty feet deep in places. Thick plaits of barbed wire screened the front, which was four miles deep and seeded with 170,000 mines. Twenty-five decrepit French blockhouses marked the line, some with concrete walls ten feet

thick. The Axis flank to the west beyond the hills was protected by *chotts*—desert salt lakes—and was marked on French maps as *terrain chaotique.*

These engineering nuances were known to the Allies, of course. Anglo-American intelligence possessed not only the Mareth blueprints but also the former French commander, who, Beetle Smith reported, was indulged in Algiers with six aides—"one for himself and five for his wife. The five were always borrowing ham and bacon and sugar for Madame." On March 12, Alexander offered his assessment of enemy intentions at Mareth in a lilting if ambiguous message drawn from the twelfth chapter of Revelation: "The devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time."



Montgomery knew his Bible and he believed he also knew his enemy. Eighth Army outnumbered the 85,000-man First Italian Army by more than two to one. The disparity in heavy weapons was even

more lopsided, including a five-to-one tank advantage, 743 to 142. With a sense of infallibility stoked by the rout at Médenine, Montgomery considered the Italians simply too weak to withstand his horde, corseting be damned. He dispatched his New Zealand Corps, with roughly one-quarter of his combat force, on a looping expedition to the west, where by a series of secret night marches they were to negotiate the *terrain chaotique* before falling on the enemy's rear with 26,000 men and 150 tanks, wreaking havoc and despair. But the main blow, code-named PUGILIST GALLOP, would be a frontal attack by his XXX Corps just a few miles from the coast on a pinched front of 1,200 yards; once a hole was torn in the enemy line, the X Corps would plunge through in an ecstasy of exploitation. "When I give a party, it is a good party," Montgomery assured his men on attack eve. "And this is going to be a good party."

The party had begun badly. In preliminary jostling intended to improve British positions four nights before the main attack, two Guards battalions on the night of March 16 struck an enemy salient ten miles from the coast, on the road from Médenine to Mareth. The attackers included the 6th Grenadier Guards and the 3rd Coldstreams, newly arrived from Syria with heavy Hebron coats and tasseled fly switches. Their objective, a curvy cluster of hills rising 600 feet above the plain and known as the Horseshoe, was said to be "lightly held" by "one or two isolated machine gun posts."

In fact, it was defended by 6,500 stone-cold killers from the German 90th Light Division and was part of a four-mile front bristling with more than fifty guns. Two grenadier battalions infested the Horseshoe proper, and Axis engineers had made good use of the three months allowed them to improve the Mareth defenses. After a British artillery barrage of 24,000 shells that did little but irk the defenders, the moonlit Guardsmen surged forward with much hoarse whispering and nervous nibbling of cookies stuffed in their pockets. Within minutes they were mired in unsuspected minefields of unprecedented density. German parachute flares floated over the line like tiny suns, exposing the men to a hellish crossfire. After some nasty bayonet work in the bottom of a wadi, the Guardsmen fell back, leaving the Horseshoe littered with bloody Hebron coats and fly switches that would switch no more. "It was my first contact with sudden death, and I couldn't credit my senses," one survivor reported. A German officer cadged cigarettes from British prisoners in exchange for cold coffee and black bread. "For you the war is over," he told them, "but I must go on."

The Coldstreams suffered 159 casualties, the Grenadiers 363, including twenty-seven of thirty-four officers. "Well I am still alive and that is more than I dared hope twelve hours ago," the Coldstream padre wrote. "Our attack was a complete failure." It was, one of Montgomery's lieutenants admitted, "the most damnable thing." Enemy casualties were fewer than 200. Burial squads trying to retrieve sixty-nine British bodies from one especially morbid acre found that they first had to remove more than 700 mines.

A lesser man might have reconsidered his scheme for a frontal attack against such formidable defenses. Not Montgomery. Unfazed, he proclaimed that these preliminary operations "as a whole were a great success." Distracted with planning for Sicily, he seemed so disengaged from PUGILIST GALLOP that Major General J. S. "Crasher" Nichols, commander of the division ordered to spearhead the attack, was "left largely to his own devices," according to an official British account of the battle. The result was a valorous attack of regrettable ineptitude using a solitary infantry brigade reinforced by a solitary regiment of Valentine tanks, most armed with the impotent 2-pounder popgun.

Of such battles are myths made and empires lost. As Montgomery and his officers watched their movie on March 20, 300 guns from the Royal Artillery unleashed 36,000 rounds. Most fell on the Young Fascist Division investing the point of attack, eight miles north of the earlier Guards foray and within smell of the briny Mediterranean. Infantrymen capered forward in the bright moonlight "as if they were going to a picnic," one witness reported. An officer holding a hurricane lamp led minesweeping Scorpion tanks through choking dust toward the Wadi Zigzaou. They found a steep-

banked freshet with water eight feet deep in places and protected by a parallel antitank ditch fanged with concrete dragons' teeth.

The medieval flavor of this battlefield was reinforced by the appearance of "thug patrols," British squads carrying scaling ladders, which they laid over the antitank ditch for riflemen to scoot across into the labyrinth of trenches and breastworks on the far side. Valentine crews at midnight dumped into the wadi dozens of fascines, dense bundles of sticks intended to give purchase to the tank tracks. Other Tommies trotted forward with tape to mark paths through the mine belts, or formed human ladders for their comrades to surmount the wadi banks.

So far, so good. Then the lead Valentine foundered in the mucky Zigzaou, blocking the only vehicle crossing. The tanks' hot exhaust ignited the fascines; soon roaring bonfires added their illumination to the Very lights and dusty moonbeams. Four tanks managed to negotiate the wadi on a hastily built bypass, but a fifth stalled, blocking the gap cut in a minefield.

By first light on March 21, portions of four infantry battalions had gained a shallow bridgehead: a mile wide and half a mile deep. But with aircraft hampered by foul weather, even 300 guns could not, as one general had advised, "pound the objectives to powder and render the defenders imbecile." Italian gunnery intensified in daylight, enfilading the wadi with sheets of fire. German grenadiers and artillery soon reinforced the Young Fascists. Casualties soared. Tommies spent the day trying to winkle defenders out of their pillboxes and waiting for darkness so the Valentines could again force a passage across the wadi. British engineers managed to build only one of three planned crossings over the Zigzaou. "Soon a vague feeling spread from soldier to soldier that something is wrong," one witness reported, "that someone is making a hash of things."

In the small hours of March 22, forty-two Valentines were able to cross the wadi, but their tracks chewed up the delicate causeway and no antitank guns or other vehicles could follow. Thick overcast limited air support, and a cloudburst swelled the Zigzaou, further undoing the engineers' handiwork. Ammo carriers plodded forward with their heavy green boxes, and litter bearers shuttled to and from the rear without ever bothering to fold their stretchers. "My operations progressing well," Montgomery cabled Alexander at 11:45 A.M. on the twenty-second. "Suggest you announce that my operations are proceeding satisfactorily and according to plan."

One hour and fifty-five minutes after this inanity went out, the 7,000-man 15th Panzer Division counterattacked in three columns from an assembly area seven miles northwest of Wadi Zigzaou. Thirty tanks and two infantry battalions slammed into the bridgehead, gripping the British in such an intimate embrace that despite fairing weather Allied pilots hesitated to fire for fear of killing their own. Panzers methodically obliterated one strong point after another, grinding in the slit trenches. Soon thirty-five Valentines were reduced to smoking hulks. The Zigzaou's seething ravine became an abattoir, with bodies beached on the mud or floating heavily in the stream. As shrapnel frothed the water around them, bare-chested Sikh sappers toiled to repair the causeway with steel mesh and duckboards amid the improbable battle cry of "More fascines!"

"Crowds of men wounded and unwounded flitted like wraiths through the haze," the correspondent Jack Belden wrote. "Some crawled. Some stumbled. Some marched erect." *Most*, in fact, crawled, often toward the rear on hands and knees in single file across fifty yards of steel-swept no-man's-land. Snatches of incongruous conversation drifted above the shell fire. "Organization," a voice called in the gloaming. "That's the trouble."

By nightfall the bridgehead was all but gone. The 50th Division's 151st Brigade alone had 600 casualties. A drift to the rear continued. Someone *had* made a hash of things.

Montgomery disliked being awakened even for good news and not since Alamein had aides dared disturb his repose. But there was no sugaring this pill. At two A.M. on Tuesday, March 23, he was roused with word that his XXX Corps commander, General Oliver W. H. Leese, needed to see him. The huge, toothy Leese met Montgomery in the latter's cramped map lorry, ten miles southeast of the battlefield. The 50th Division had pulled nearly all surviving troops back across the Zigzaou, Leese reported. A follow-on British thrust had been canceled. Casualties were heavy. The attack had failed.

Montgomery kept his composure until Leese left with orders to return in the morning. The Eighth Army chief of staff, Brigadier Francis "Freddie" de Guingand, found his commander tousled and stunned amid the tacked-up maps, his normally impassive countenance now dissolved with worry. For the first time in ten months, Eighth Army was withdrawing. The infernal rumble of artillery rattled the lorry—"a whole night being shelled like hell," De Guingand later recalled. In a small voice Montgomery asked, "What am I to do, Freddie?"

The answer lay on the map, and within two hours Montgomery had found it, along with his composure. The Matmata Hills—a "jagged purple coxcomb" drenched with the scent of wildflowers, as one soldier wrote—extended at a right angle from the Mareth Line, roughly paralleling the Mediterranean coast for a hundred miles. Only the narrow Tebaga Gap pierced the range, fifty crow-flying miles west of Mareth, and only through this pass could the Axis defenses be outflanked. It was in that direction that Montgomery had dispatched his New Zealand Corps more than a week earlier with orders to turn the enemy line. The circuitous 200-mile expedition took the Kiwis past the arid land of the Troglodytes, an ancient people who lived like moles in subterranean hovels and whose strange language Herodotus had likened to the cry of a bat. The cavalcade also drove through a locust plague of biblical intensity: millions of insects borne on a hot, southwesterly wind pelted windshields and tank turrets. But by midafternoon on March 21, the corps vanguard had pressed into Tebaga Gap.

Alerted by Luftwaffe reconnaissance, General Messe and his lieutenants knew of this flanking peril; alerted by Ultra, the British knew they knew. Wehrmacht legions sidled westward, first the 164th Division, then eventually the 21st and 15th Panzer Divisions. A promising Kiwi attack on the night of the twenty-first took 850 prisoners at a cost of only sixty-five casualties. But then lethargy and caution, those handmaidens of battlefield stalemate, prevented quick exploitation before Axis reinforcements arrived in force. A golden chance to fall on the enemy rear was lost.

No matter. Montgomery had regained his vim. At 4:30 A.M. on March 23, he alerted the New Zealand Corps to a complete change of plans. Rather than serve as a sideshow, the Kiwis would deliver the main blow. Three divisions under General Leese would remain on the coast to occupy enemy defenders at Mareth. But reinforcements would add weight to the New Zealand attack, and Lieutenant General Brian Horrocks, who had waited in vain with his X Corps to crash through a Leese-made hole at Mareth, would assume command of this new, left-hook assault, code-named SUPERCHARGE II. "Am sending Horrocks to take charge," Montgomery added in his predawn message. "Am sure you will understand."

One man who did not understand was the New Zealanders' legendary commander, Lieutenant General Bernard C. Freyberg. English-born but raised in New Zealand, Freyberg had been a dentist before finding his true calling as warrior of Homeric strength and courage. Known as Tiny to his troops, he had a skull the size of a medicine ball, with a pushbroom mustache and legs that extended like sycamore trunks from his khaki shorts. In the Great War, he had won the Victoria Cross on the Somme, served as a pallbearer for his great friend Rupert Brooke, and emerged so seamed by shrapnel that when Churchill once persuaded him to display his wounds the count reached twenty-seven. More were to come. Oarsman, boxer, swimmer of the English Channel, he had been medically retired for "aortic incompetence" in the 1930s before being summoned back to uniform. No greater heart beat in British battle dress. Churchill a month earlier had proclaimed Freyberg "the salamander of the British

empire," an accolade that raised Kiwi hackles—"Wha' in 'ell's a 'sallymander'?"—until the happy news spread that the creature mythically could pass through fire unharmed. "Simple as a child and as cunning as a Maori dog," Freyberg was both superstitious—he refused, for example, to look at a new moon through glass—and literate. In his raspy voice he enjoyed reciting Mrs. Bennet's gleeful prattle in *Pride and Prejudice* upon learning that her daughter Lizzy is to marry the rich Mr. Darcy: "Ten thousand a year! Oh, Lord! What will become of me? I shall go distracted!"

The Salamander was displeased at being supplanted by Horrocks, who was six years younger as well as junior in grade. Freyberg seemed "grim, firm, and not at all forthcoming," the British official history recorded, while Horrocks "felt embarrassed and was annoyed too." Montgomery sought to make amends for his offense by sending each man a bottle of brandy, while De Guingand addressed all messages to "my dear Generals" and jokingly referred to them as "Hindenburg and Ludendorff."

Montgomery set aside thoughts of Tunis and Sicily long enough to concoct a plan worthy of his reputation. Insisting that SUPERCHARGE II go forward as quickly as possible, he also proposed an unusual late-afternoon attack out of the southwest: at that hour, the sinking sun would blind Axis defenders. After a frantically busy night of creeping forward and digging in, by dawn on March 26 some 40,000 attackers and 250 tanks lay hidden near an old Roman wall that stretched four miles across Tebaga Gap. From their camouflaged holes, the men watched the sun march across the African sky until it was directly behind them. Officers played chess in their slit trenches to while away the hours.

Then, at 3:30 P.M., low waves of British and American bombers attacked Axis targets marked with red and blue artillery smoke shells. Thirty minutes later, the Royal Artillery erupted in a thundering cannonade as a providential sandstorm further blinded the defenders. At precisely 4:15 P.M. the first tanks surged from their revetments, with shrieking Maori riflemen clinging to their hulls. One Kiwi commander recounted:

> The infantry climbed out of their pits—where there had been nothing visible there were now hundreds of men who shook out into long lines and followed on five hundred yards behind the tanks. At 4:23 P.M. the barrage lifted a hundred yards—an extraordinary level line of bursting shells—tanks and infantry closed to it, and the assault was on.

Through the gap they poured, the forward edge of the advancing ranks marked with swirling orange smoke for the benefit of Allied pilots. "Speed up, straight through, no halting," officers called. Two German battalions buckled and collapsed. On one particularly bloody hill, a brigadier reported "dead and mangled Germans everywhere, more than I had seen in a small area since the Somme in 1916." British tank commanders heaved grenades from their open hatches and Maoris pelted the fleeing enemy troops with stones when their ammunition ran out. To the east, Gurkhas from the 4th Indian Division went baying into battle "not unlike hounds finding the scent."

By nightfall, the attack had penetrated four miles into the pass. Tanks "trundled as snails feeling their way" in the darkness until midnight, when the rising moon emerged from the clouds to reveal the extraordinary spectacle of British and German forces hurrying side by side toward the vital road junction of El Hamma at the head of Tebaga Gap.

It was a race the Germans won, if only temporarily. In the early morning of March 27 an improvised antitank screen of eleven guns—as crudely effective as a dropped portcullis—delayed the British for more than a day three miles south of El Hamma. That was long enough. By the time the blockade was flanked, General Messe had adroitly pulled back his forces from both Mareth and

Tebaga Gap toward another fortified gap at Wadi Akarit, sixty miles north. “Like a black snake squirming over the ground we could see the lorries and guns of the German tail making their escape,” a disappointed British soldier reported. “Once again…a clever escape.”

Montgomery had won a battle but not a resounding victory, and certainly not the war. Three German divisions, with the help of Italian cannon fodder, had thwarted three British corps for a fortnight. True, the price was dear, and this Axis army could hardly afford heavy casualties. Seven thousand Axis prisoners were taken in the Mareth actions, a third of them German; the cost to Eighth Army totaled 4,000, including 600 casualties in the breakthrough at Tebaga Gap. After the battle a single British private was seen leading several hundred Italian prisoners, who chattered like parrots; asked if he needed help escorting them to their cages, the young soldier answered, “Oh, Lord, no! They trust me.”

“It was the most enjoyable battle I have ever fought,” Montgomery exulted. Perhaps so, although local legend attributed the severe five-year drought that began in 1943 to Montgomery’s imprecations on the land. Yet Eighth Army had forced the outer gate to begin its inexorable march up Tunisia’s east coast toward Tunis. That was plain, and every sensible German and Italian officer knew that the two Axis armies now faced mortal peril from the two Allied armies.

Yet Eighth Army still seemed to lack an instinct for the jugular. In boxing terms, it was a poor finisher. General Freyberg ordered his advance squadrons to bypass Gabès on the morning of March 29 and give chase on the coastal road—ordered this only to learn that at that very moment the spearhead commander was accepting the keys to the city from the Gabès mayor. The 4th Indian Division, already delayed a critical twelve hours by a horrendous traffic jam, was forced to wait at Gabès while the 51st Highlanders donned their kilts for a proper march-through with pipers. Again pursuit languished. “The enemy does not follow,” the 90th Light Division war diary noted. The retreating Axis soldiers had time to pilfer tables, mirrors, women’s dresses, even pianos. The British had to settle for six captured railcars full of German sausage.

Some of Montgomery’s admirers considered his mid-battle switch from a frontal assault to the sweeping left hook among the boldest decisions in his glorious career. Yet a more imaginative plan at the outset, enforced by a more attentive commander, might have made Mareth the decisive battle it could have been. “We never lost the initiative, and we made the enemy dance to our tune the whole time,” Montgomery claimed on March 31. That assertion was questionable. He had violated his own wise precept “to concentrate all your forces and give a mighty crack.” He also had underestimated the resourcefulness of his enemy; the technical requirements of fighting in hill country; and the difficulty of crossing a stoutly defended watercourse, the Zigzaou. That boded ill for Eighth Army after years in the desert: the army and its commander would encounter more hills in northern Tunisia and *many* more in Italy, along with innumerable rivers. Major General Francis Tuker, the 4th Indian Division commander, concluded, “There was, in Eighth Army, an apparent lack of purpose at this time.”

In the months after Mareth, Montgomery acknowledged that the failure of his coastal attack had required him to recast his entire plan. There was no shame in deft improvisation, to be sure. But soon he was asserting that the left wing had always been designated to deliver the fatal blow. By the end of the war he even seemed to believe it, having perhaps persuaded himself through repetition. Perhaps the high bar of infallibility demanded no miscues, no false starts, no desperate two A.M. wailing about what to do now. As they cleared Gabès for the long, last march toward Tunis, his men gathered themselves for the sort of war—one with mountains and rivers and allies—that would confront them for the duration.

11. Over the Top

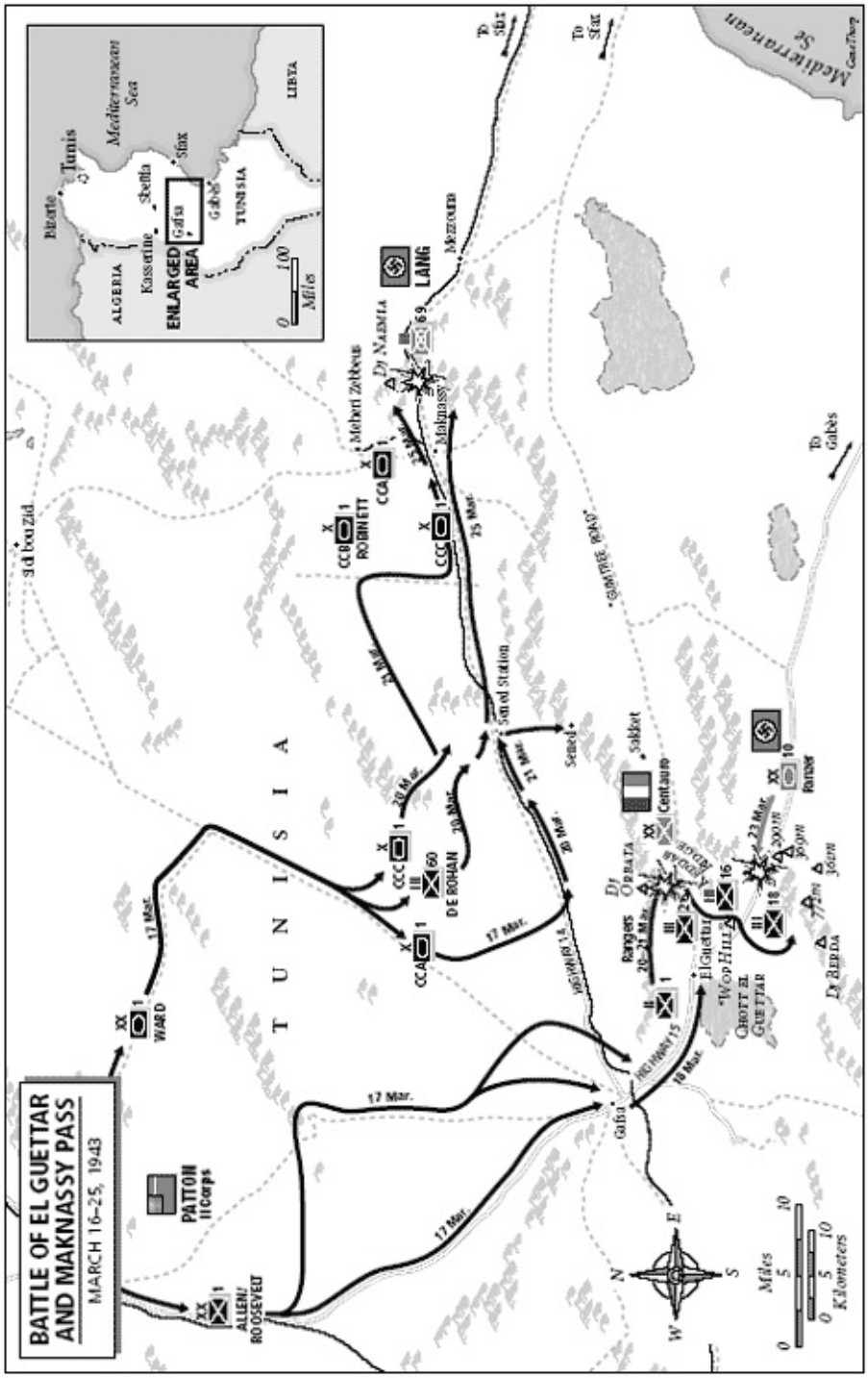
"Give Them Some Steel!"

An old Arab song warned:

Gafsa is miserable,
Its water is blood,
Its air is poison.
You may live there a hundred years
Without making a friend.

Miserable it was, a flyspecked phosphate camp of 10,000 souls. Jugurtha, who led the Numidian revolt against Rome in the second century B.C., once hid his treasury here because the town was so remote. After changing hands four times in the past three months, Gafsa had become even more wretched; the budding groves of pomegranates and apricots could hardly redeem the misery of war. As Montgomery prepared to give battle 120 miles southeast at Mareth, General Alexander had ordered the Americans to liberate Gafsa yet again. The attack was code-named Operation WOP, in homage to the 7,000 Centauro Division soldiers occupying the town and nearby hills. GIs composed their own tribute, a ribald ditty titled "The Third Time We Took Gafsa."

If seizing Gafsa seemed insufficiently ambitious for Patton's II Corps, which had swelled to 88,473 men—precisely the size of Sherman's army in Carolina at the end of the Civil War—the modesty of the assignment reflected Alexander's disdain for American fighting prowess. Alexander had two strategic options. He could use II Corps and Anderson's First Army to drive a wedge between the Axis forces across the Eastern Dorsal, isolating Arnim's army in the north from the First Italian Army in the south; each would in turn be ground between the Allied millstones. Or, he could squeeze Axis troops into a shrinking bridgehead around Tunis, with Montgomery's Eighth Army crushing the enemy to pulp.



Alexander chose the latter course. The inexperienced Americans, he believed, could not withstand the panzer counterattacks sure to follow any attempt to split the bridgehead. “I do *not* want the Americans getting in the way,” Montgomery privately told Alexander. Instead, he added, the cousins should “get the road ready for me to use” by lifting mines and fixing potholes.

Montgomery was insufferable, as usual, but Alexander’s decision was defensible in the wake of Kasserine: the memory of terrified Yanks scorching up the Thala road remained vivid. With Eisenhower’s concurrence, he twice warned Patton to avoid “pitched, indecisive battles” where “we might get into trouble.” Alexander considered Patton “a dashing steed,” but he did not want him dashing into Montgomery’s path. Patton would be kept on a tighter rein than Montgomery and even Anderson. Allen’s 1st Division was ordered to “assist the advance of the British Eighth Army from the south” by building a supply dump in Gafsa and protecting Montgomery’s left flank as he drove toward Sfax and then Tunis. Only scouts would venture southeast of Gafsa toward Gabès, although if things went well Ward’s 1st Armored Division might later push on due east through Sened Station to

Maknassy. Of Patton's four divisions, the greenest pair—the 34th and 9th—would remain in reserve.

Patton was incensed at being relegated to a weak supporting role, but he swallowed his pride and prepared to attack. Word of his third star had arrived on March 12. "I am a lieutenant general," he told his diary. "Now I want, and will get, four stars." A day later, as if recalculating the azimuth of his character, he added, "I am just the same since I am a lieutenant general." No man felt a more vivid kinship with the great captains of yore, and Patton now likened the Gafsa offensive to Stonewall Jackson's flank attack in support of Longstreet at the Second Battle of Manassas in 1862. Tromping about in high brown boots and a fleece-lined coat, he told his commanders he wanted "to see more dead bodies, American as well as German." To his troops he declaimed:

> Fortunately for our fame as soldiers, our enemy is worthy of us. The German is a war-trained veteran—confident, brave, and ruthless. We are brave. We are better-equipped, better fed, and in the place of his blood-glutted Woten, we have with us the God of Our Fathers Known of Old…. If we die killing, well and good, but if we fight hard enough, viciously enough, we will kill and live. Live to return to our family and our girl as conquering heroes—men of Mars.

He was rolling now. On March 16 Patton summoned all staff officers to his dank command post in a shot-up Fériana hotel. With a scowl made even fiercer by the cold sore erupting on his upper lip, he announced: "Gentlemen, tomorrow we attack. If we are not victorious, let no one come back alive." He excused himself, then retired to pray. To Bea he wrote, "I am always a little short of breath before a match."

That night, military policemen wielding flashlights hooded with red cellophane waved the convoys down rain-slick Highway 15 on the forty-five-mile approach march to Gafsa. The floor of each vehicle was sandbagged, to absorb mine blasts. Arab tents on the hillsides glittered like cobwebs in the dim moonlight. "The hardest thing a general has to do," Patton told his diary, "is to wait for the battle to start after all the orders are given." At eleven P.M. he heard the rumble of artillery. "Well, the battle is on," he scribbled. "I am taking off my shoes to go to bed."

There was no battle, although the American press in its eagerness to forget Kasserine would tout Operation WOP as if it *were* Second Manassas. Twelve hundred Italians and a German reconnaissance battalion slipped away to the east at dawn, unmolested by Ward's CCA, which was delayed by heavy rain and failed to sever the escape road to Sened Station as planned. Ted Roosevelt waited on a low ridge while bombers plastered Gafsa and scouts drove sheep over the road to test for mines. After hours of listening to confused voices crackle from the radio, Roosevelt impatiently bolted forward. *Rough Rider* led a convoy of jeeps—"like a small flotilla of ships bumping through the wadis," one witness wrote—into Gafsa to find the enemy gone. By 12:30 P.M. the town was declared secure.

"The Dagoes beat it," Patton wrote. He and Allen, who wore riding breeches and a field jacket, drove down from Fériana to find only stunned civilians emerging from their cellars. An old woman in black wailed on a broken balcony, her grief sweeping across the ruined town. A month of Axis occupation and the morning's bombardment had finished the destruction begun by American demolitionists during the Kasserine retreat. Italian and Arab pillagers had wrecked nearly every house belonging to Gafsa's 500 French residents and 800 Jews—smashing furniture, tearing doors from their hinges, and stealing rugs, faucets, and bathtubs. Cattle and camels had been driven off; not for months had date caravans arrived in the *fondouk*, and the grain market in the Halle aux Grains stood forlornly empty. Items not stolen or smashed had been thrown down cisterns, including family photo albums.

After the previous Axis occupation, French troops had shot Arab looters and left their bodies in the square; now they began rounding up the usual suspects again.

Within hours, the Americans had once more made the town theirs. Chaplains celebrated a mass to honor St. Patrick's holy day. Later in the week, Patton claimed as his headquarters the yellow brick gendarmerie with its blue tile floor. In an abandoned mine shaft, soldiers on patrol discovered ore cars, which they rode down the tracks like a roller coaster, shrieking in merriment. Madame LaZonga and her "daughters" soon returned from Tébessa to reopen the bordello, contributing to venereal disease rates in Tunisia that had reached 34 cases per 1,000 white soldiers and a staggering 451 per 1,000 black soldiers. Patton ordered the brothel off-limits to U.S. units, but French colonial troops offered to rent their helmets and tunics as disguises. The II Corps provost marshal and intelligence chief both reported that when asked by a sentry if he was out of uniform, one patron in a kepi answered, "No, suh, ah sure isn't. I'se a Moroccan."

Patton knew the value of publicity, and he wasted no time wooing the correspondents who trailed him to Gafsa. Charming and voluble, he hosted press dinners featuring Viennese steak and good coffee; each hack received a dessert pack of cigarettes and a roll of Life Savers. A radio report broadcast to the United States just before midnight on March 17 told listeners: "If any American officer ever had the will to win, that man is Lieutenant General George S. Patton. He certainly won the first round today…. Apparently the Nazis saw him coming and ran."

But even Patton could hardly persuade himself that this was the campaign of a Stonewall Jackson. "The great and famous battle of Gafsa has been fought and won," he sarcastically informed his diary. To reporters he said, "I'd feel happier if I knew where the Germans were. As long as I know where they are I don't mind how hard they fight." Already frustration had set in. On the evening of March 17 he called Terry Allen and snapped, "You should have kept going until you found somebody to fight."

On the nineteenth, as Montgomery prepared to attack Mareth, Alexander modified his orders to the Americans. Patton was to extend his two-pronged offensive to the east. After seizing Sened Station, Ward's tanks and an infantry regiment were to press on twenty miles to Maknassy, then dispatch raiders to shoot up a Luftwaffe airfield across the Eastern Dorsal at Mezzouna. Farther south, Allen's Big Red One would edge into the hills beyond Gafsa. Darby's 1st Ranger Battalion had already captured El Guettar, a palmy oasis ten miles southeast of Gafsa on Highway 15. Italian troops melted into the rugged djebels along a gravel track dubbed Gumtree Road, which ultimately led a hundred miles to Sfax.

No one who met him ever doubted that Bill Darby was born to command other men in the dark of night. He exuded certainty, one officer said, "that he could lead anyone into combat and bring them back safely." Handsome and good-humored, he often joked that he hailed from an Arkansas family so poor that his father had slopped the children at a hog trough. Except for minor missions at Arzew in November and at Sened in February, his battalion had seen little fighting, and many bored Rangers had transferred to conventional units for fear the war was passing them by. Some had sold their British mountain boots in Algeria to pay for wine or harlots. Now they would regret it, because Terry Allen had a dark-of-night mission for them. After falling back from Gafsa, several thousand Italians had occupied an impregnable defile in the hills east of El Guettar. A frontal assault by the Big Red One down Gumtree Road would cost hundreds of casualties, and American units veering southeast on the paved road to Gabès would also expose a flank to enemy artillery from the same defile. Isn't there some way, Allen had asked Darby, to loop behind them without attacking into the teeth of Italian

defenses?

On the evening of March 20, a serpentine column of 500 Rangers and seventy mortarmen veered northeast off Highway 15 three miles outside El Guettar. They had taped their dog tags to prevent clinking and blackened their skin with dirt and spit. Up the scree they tramped, stumbling over unseen obstacles on an unblazed trail. More than a thousand boots scraped the rock with a soft hiss that one soldier likened to "the sighing of the sea."

For ten miles they snaked over the fissured shoulder of Djebel Orbata, a 3,700-foot bluff looming above Gumtree Road. They crossed flumes and saddles; to scale the sandstone cliffs, they clasped wrists to form human chains. Their hands were bloodied, their fatigues shredded. At one A.M., the moon rose. Among those struggling to keep up was a bald, middle-aged socialite named Ralph M. Ingersoll, who had been managing editor of *Fortune* and *The New Yorker,* and then general manager of Time, Inc. Now he was just another footsore engineer lieutenant.

> No one will ever believe how beautiful it was on that march after the moon came out [he wrote]…. The deep valleys, the jagged peaks, the play of moonlight and shadow in the gorges, the delicate translucent puffs of clouds that drifted slowly across the edge of the moon as it rose higher and arched across the sky—all these were themes in a symphony in gray and silver tones…. Going over the saddle of a hill, you could see the line of men for several hundred yards ahead, winding down the hillside, figures in soft silver armor.

By first light on the twenty-first, Ingersoll and the mortarmen had fallen behind; the night seemed less enchanting after more sweaty miles lugging the heavy tubes. But the Rangers were where they wanted to be: a thousand yards above Gumtree Road, overlooking the sleeping Centauro encampment. The Italians in the narrow gorge had left their flank unguarded. Some Rangers dozed while awaiting the attack order, and when Darby woke them they "scrambled to their feet…rubbing fists in their eyes like sleepy children." He studied the tents and trenchworks below, then announced, "Okay, men, let's have a shoot." The Rangers fixed bayonets and scuttled down the hill. "You wait and see," another soldier murmured, "they won't bring no prisoners back."

The brisk bugle notes of "Charge" echoed along the sierra, now aglow with the ferrous tints of dawn. Morning shadows limned the valley with blue piping. "Give them some steel!" Darby cried. The Rangers clattered forward in a whooping semicircle. Bullets scythed the Italian officers' mess, set for a breakfast no one would eat. Soldiers in their underwear poured from the tents, flushed by grenades. "Nice shooting," Darby called over the radio. "We need a little cold steel over there on the hill mass to the south…. They are making a nuisance of themselves up there." Ingersoll arrived in time to hear mortar rounds belch from their tubes. Rangers kneeling behind the rocks reminded him of soldiers in a Civil War print shooting along "a tumbledown stone fence in Virginia instead of Tunisia."

Along the valley's north wall, white flags began to flap. Prisoners *were* taken, and an Italian-speaking Ranger chaplain persuaded more to surrender. Blue smoke draped the valley, thick with "odors of hot guns and dust stirred from the muzzle blasts," one Ranger reported. Dead Italians littered the camp, their waxy faces frozen in surprise. A few German artillery rounds replied, but by noon the fight was over. The delayed arrival of the heavy mortars had allowed some Italians to escape up the road, but many others, in ragged overcoats patched with coarse twine, were captured. Between the Rangers and Allen's troops, now pressing up Gumtree Road, the prisoner haul exceeded a thousand.

Kitchen trucks drove up with a barrel of hot stew, which the men ladled into their canteen cups or

helmets. By four P.M., the Rangers were back in their bivouac. Allen's three infantry regiments continued forward along a fifteen-mile crescent southeast of El Guettar before digging in for the night.

"Few Germans in front of II Corps," Patton's intelligence officer, Monk Dickson, reported. "Rommel [*sic*] probably will attack us with whatever he has left after dealing with Eighth Army. Probably not earlier than 24 March."

In five days, the Americans had covered seventy-five miles, taking Gafsa, El Guettar, and Sened Station, while reclaiming more than 2,000 square miles of territory—at a cost of fifty-seven battle casualties. "It's all going like maneuvers," Terry Allen mused. "It can't be right."

Ted Roosevelt woke on Tuesday, March 23, to the harsh cough of machine-gun fire. Flipping the blanket from his bedroll, he sat up with the creaky deliberation of a fifty-six-year-old man nursing a bum knee, arthritic joints, and a fibrillating heart. He had kept his boots on for the scant warmth they offered. For months he had been miserably cold, "the cold of the desert," he called it. To Eleanor he had written three days earlier: "There's but one thought I keep to me: Aren't we too old to be called on to grapple with the enemy? Should not flaming youth leap into the breach—shouldering us aside—so that we can sit in the sun?"

Leaning on a cane, he stumped up the ridge with his gamecock hobble. He could tell by the high rate of fire that the machine guns were German; their sound now mingled with the answering chatter from American weapons. A sentry barked the password challenge—"Three?"—and was answered with the countersign: "Strikes!" Moonlight coated the landscape in quicksilver, and fog drifted across the desert pan below. But a rosy glow in the east showed that dawn was coming fast. Gun flashes rippled like heat lightning. Roosevelt found the 18th Infantry Regiment's command post on Hill 336—"Wop Hill"—and lowered himself into a chest-deep slit trench.

"The battlefield lay at my feet, a circular plain about seven miles in diameter," he would write Eleanor two days later. "I could see it all." The American line formed a fifteen-mile fishhook. The 1st Division's three regiments—16,000 men—occupied Keddab Ridge from north to south. The 26th Infantry held the north flank near Gumtree Road, on Roosevelt's left. Part of the 16th Infantry and a battalion from the 18th Infantry held the center. A few hundred yards to his right, the ridge petered out in a narrow valley bisected by Highway 15, which ran from El Guettar eight miles in the rear past the American line and on toward Gabès over the horizon. Across the highway to the south, the land lifted again and the American line resumed. Only a few hours earlier, Roosevelt had dispatched two battalions from the 18th Infantry to extend the line onto the lower slopes of 3,000-foot Djebel Berda. On ground so rugged that guns had to be winched into position, the battalions tied in with Darby's Rangers, whose entrenchments swung to the west and provided the long American shank with its barbed hook.

The chink of tools caught Roosevelt's attention. Soldiers were furiously hacking slit trenches out of the rocky ground, regardless of the ants and scorpions infesting the ridgeline. Small white-petaled daisies covered the slope, straining toward the rising sun. The Big Red One had planned to attack this morning, under yet another change of orders from Alexander. Eighth Army's difficulties at Mareth had caused Montgomery to reconsider his contempt for the Americans. Just three days before, he had dismissed the Yanks in his diary as "complete amateurs." Now he needed their help.

Patton was asked to threaten the Axis flank by attacking down Highway 15 toward Gabès. During the night, American artillery had moved forward to provide covering fire for Allen's infantry even as intelligence reports warned that panzers were moving toward II Corps for a possible spoiling attack. From the swelling thunder of guns and the shells now snapping overhead, Roosevelt could guess that

the enemy had stolen a march and struck first. Under orders from Kesselring, who recognized that an American thrust down the Gabès highway would trap the First Italian Army at Mareth, Arnim dispatched the strongest of his three armored divisions—the storied 10th Panzer—to counterattack before Patton moved.

A voice carried up Hill 336. "Here they come!" Roosevelt peered into the dust and glare, his weak eyes watering at the strain. The terrain along the Gabès road was brutally open, offering little cover other than tuft grass and a few olive trees. Then suddenly, as if materializing from the dust itself, the panzers appeared: a fleet in rectangular formation bulling up the highway. Hundreds of Wehrmacht infantrymen clattered from trucks behind the tanks, then trotted forward with their rifles at port arms. To one officer the apparition resembled "a huge iron fort moving down the valley."

Sheaves of orange fire leaped from the front edge of the formation. "The enemy tanks numbered in three digits," one sergeant later recalled, "but no one had the heart to count them." Roosevelt had the heart, fibrillating or not: on his right flank, before smoke obscured the enemy echelons, he counted twenty-four panzers breaking toward the gap traced by Highway 15. There were, in fact, more, although the entire 10th Panzer was down to fifty-seven tanks and a comparable number of armored cars and half-tracks. Two other armored prongs veered toward the American left, followed by grenadiers and a flatbed Volkswagen hauling extra ammunition. Bellowing encouragement above the battle din, Roosevelt ordered another tank destroyer battalion forward from Gafsa and then radioed commands to his artillerymen. Waves of gull-winged Stukas attacked the ridge, swooping so low that officers emptied their pistols skyward before diving for cover. "I felt I could reach up my hand and grasp them," Roosevelt later told Eleanor. The panzers churned out banks of white smoke to hide themselves and the grenadiers. Soon even the sun vanished. "The plain," Roosevelt reported, "became a smoky, dusty dream."

On the American left flank, smoke and dust were the least of it. By eight A.M., two U.S. artillery battalions—the 32nd and the 5th—were in mortal peril after being caught in the exposed forward positions they had occupied in anticipation of attacking rather than being attacked. "Many human silhouettes coming over a ridge in front," one platoon leader reported. For reasons uncertain—simple confusion was always possible—the II Corps staff had also ordered the 1st Division to cancel plans for stacking extra ammunition with the guns; true to character, the division mostly ignored the corps order, but shells ran short anyway. Gunners sloshed cans of water to cool their glowing barrels while others struggled from the rear with ninety-six-pound rounds on their shoulders. Darting among shallow folds on the battlefield, German soldiers barked, "*Hitler kommt!* Surrender!" Artillerymen fired a few final point-blank salvos, spiked their guns with grenades, and fought in retreat as riflemen.

Two infantry battalions to the left of Roosevelt's command post also fared poorly. Panzers slammed into the 3rd Battalions of both the 18th and 16th Infantry Regiments, grinding slit trenches beneath their tracks. Both units gave ground and retreated across Keddab Ridge before stiffening at a broad wadi behind the American line; the hand-to-hand fighting was as brutal as that on Longstop Hill three months earlier. One company—K of the 18th—kept the grenadiers at bay with synchronized showers of hand grenades and shouts of "Come on, you Hun bastards!" By late morning, the company had tossed 1,300 grenades and suffered more than sixty casualties. In a small oasis near the wadi, Terry Allen—hair disarranged, necktie long ripped off—summoned reinforcements from Gafsa and supplies from as far away as Tébessa. As the sound of German tank fire drew near, a staff officer proposed moving the division command post. "I will like hell pull out," Allen answered, "and I'll shoot the first bastard who does."

Desperate as the fight was along Keddab Ridge, it was the southern German thrust down Highway 15 that most imperiled the 1st Division. Not far from Roosevelt's perch, the 601st Tank Destroyer Battalion anchored the segment of American line overlooking the road. Thirty panzers struck so

quickly that one company buckled and fell back with heavy losses while another, also mauled, fought until its ammunition racks were empty. German tanks poured into the gap and had nearly broken through to turn the American flank when Company A opened fire at 2,200 yards; the 75mm volley staggered the panzers, which veered south only to mire in boggy ground and a minefield along a dry lake bed. Fire intensified from both the tank destroyers and Allen's artillery. With each hit, the men on the ridgeline roared their approval, none louder than leather-lunged Roosevelt. By midmorning the panzers had seen enough of the gap the Americans now called Death Valley. "They hesitated, turned around, and retreated," Roosevelt reported. "The men around me burst into cheers."

Twenty-four of thirty-six guns from the 601st were lost. Collectively, the battalion had fired nearly 3,000 75mm shells and almost 50,000 machine-gun rounds. The unit commander, to whom Patton had sent word that "I expect him to die if there is an attack," survived to notify Allen that his battalion no longer existed. Lost, too, were seven new M-10 guns from the 899th Tank Destroyer Battalion, which rushed into battle from Gafsa only to be ambushed on the valley floor at ten A.M. ("Gallant but green," Roosevelt commented after watching the sally.) Yet the 10th Panzer had been cut up even worse. American artillery, tank destroyers, and mines knocked out thirty-seven enemy tanks; some were towed away by German salvage teams, but others burned furiously. The enemy retreated eastward to regroup. American soldiers huzzahed themselves hoarse.

The first act was over, but the Germans never settled for simple one-act dramas. Allen and Roosevelt tidied up the line. Wounded men thrashed on their stretchers. More guns hurried forward. Nineteen U.S. jeeps, harried by Stukas and long-range artillery, sped to the rear for more ammunition; thirteen made it back, wallowing like overloaded scows beneath crates of bullets and shells.

With sirens screaming from his motorcycle escort, Patton drove up from Fériana—not before taking time to berate a soldier for being ill-shaven and legging-less, although he had just left the line to fetch more ammunition. Patton had wondered where the Germans were. Now he knew. "I want to fight the champ," he said. "If you lose, you've lost to the champ and it's no disgrace. If you win, you're the new champ."

At three P.M., a British radio intercept team working with II Corps deciphered a transmission from a 10th Panzer reconnaissance unit. Six German battalions would renew the attack at four P.M. At 3:45 another intercepted message warned: *"Angriff bis 1640 verschoben."* The attack had been postponed until 4:40 to allow German artillery to reposition. Patton deemed the intelligence urgent enough to warn his subordinates in uncoded messages of the imminent assault and then the brief delay. At 4:15 Allen ordered his signalers to broadcast a message over a 10th Panzer radio frequency: "What the hell are you guys waiting for? We have been ready since four P.M. Signed, First Division." Patton, who had arrived at the division's command post, shook his head. "Terry, when are you going to learn to take this damned war seriously?"

Patton's uncoded warnings and Allen's taunt alerted the Germans to their security lapses, and 10th Panzer soon changed its codes. "We couldn't read German mail for quite a long time after that," Allen's intelligence officer later acknowledged. The British were furious at the American indiscretion, but for now the Yanks stood ready. At 4:45 two grenadier battalions, a motorcycle battalion, an artillery battalion, and two panzer battalions with some fifty tanks appeared on the lip of Highway 15, just over two miles from Keddab Ridge. Patton and Allen moved up to join Roosevelt in his slit trench on Hill 336, as if, one officer suggested, watching "an opera from a balcony seat."

This time the panzers hung back, milling in a miasma of brown dust beyond range of the tank destroyers. A. J. Liebling likened the tanks' balky advance to "diffident fat boys coming across the

floor at a party to ask for the next dance, stopping at the slightest excuse, going back and then coming on again." The German grenadiers showed no such hesitation: straight for the American line they marched. The crackle of small arms and the deeper boom of heavy guns grew in fury. "The men walked upright, moved slowly, and made no attempt at concealment or maneuver," one battalion commander later reported. "We cut them down at fifteen hundred yards. It was like mowing hay."

American gunners for the first time had experimented with ricochet fire—deliberately skittering their shells across the ground through enemy formations, with devastating results. Now they used a "scissors and search" pattern: some tubes adjusted their fire from longer ranges to shorter, others reversed the pattern. They swept the battlefield with steel as multiple sprinklers water a garden. Darby watched from Djebel Berda in the south as American time-fuze artillery shells—set to burst a few feet above the ground—rained on the enemy formations. "Eerie black smoke of the time shells showed that they were bursting above the heads of the Germans," he wrote. "There was no running, just a relentless forward lurching of bodies."

The fight descended into something between war and manslaughter. Roosevelt, who had ordered the time-fuze barrage, thought the battle "seemed unreal." Gaps appeared in the grenadier ranks. The faces and uniforms of those still standing turned brown with grit as if the doomed men had already begun returning, earth to earth, dust to dust. Roosevelt later wrote:

> Just in front of me were four hundred men, a German unit. We took them under fire and they went to ground behind some sand dunes. The artillery went after them with time shells, air burst. In no time they were up running to the rear. Black bursts over their head, khaki figures reeling and falling.

Enemy soldiers bunched behind one hill in such numbers that the formation seemed to spread like a shadow. Then Allied artillery found the reverse slope. "The battalion broke from cover and started to run for another wadi in the rear," reported Clift Andrus. "But none ever reached it." At 6:45 P.M. an 18th Infantry observation post reported: "Our artillery crucified them." Shells fell at seven-yard intervals across the retreating shot-torn ranks. "My God," Patton murmured to Roosevelt, "it seems a crime to murder good infantry like that."

Survivors rejoined the panzers to withdraw eastward in the haze and long shadows. How many men the Germans lost remains uncertain, but the 10th Panzer Division, already badly reduced before the battle, was essentially halved again. An Ultra message on March 25 listed twenty-six serviceable tanks in a unit that now was a panzer division in name only. Allen's losses for the week totaled 417, half of them on March 23, and two dozen guns. The American Army had won a signal victory, defeating a veteran German armored division that had terrorized opponents in Poland, France, Russia, and Tunisia. "The first solid, indisputable defeat we inflicted on the German army in the war," Omar Bradley called it. True, El Guettar had been a defensive battle, fought from entrenchments without the brio of the armored sweep Patton so longed to lead. True, too, poor habits persisted—of security, indiscipline, and that annoying tendency to charge into enemy kill sacks. Yet the 1st Division had demonstrated agility—quickly shifting from thrust to parry in the face of the German spoiling attack—as well as fortitude and stunning firepower. "The Hun will soon learn to dislike that outfit," Eisenhower predicted in a congratulatory message.

Ted Roosevelt, who embodied the division's temperament for better and for worse, was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross. "I never expect to see anything like this again, a battle played at my feet," he wrote Eleanor. But he did, fifteen months later, at a place called Utah Beach, where he would

win the Medal of Honor for the same cool leadership he had demonstrated on Keddab Ridge.

But the last word goes to a young soldier killed in the final exchanges at El Guettar. His unfinished letter home, found next to his body, began: “Well, folks, we stopped the best they had.”

“Search Your Soul”

FORTY miles northeast, a battle of comparable intensity and consequence was brewing as the left tine of Patton’s two-pronged offensive sent Axis troops reeling across the Eastern Dorsal.

Orlando Ward’s attack had begun well enough, despite a gully-washing flash flood that swept away tents and rifles on a three-foot wall of water. With more than 20,000 troops—the 60th Infantry Regiment had joined Ward’s 1st Armored Division—he also commanded 277 tanks, nearly half of them Shermans. Sened Station fell on March 21, soon followed by the nearby hilltop hamlet of Sened, where a garrison of 542 Italians defied a “surrender or be annihilated” ultimatum until the first cannonade provoked a frantic wagging of white flags. At dawn on March 22, scouts discovered that Maknassy, twenty miles east, had been abandoned. Ward’s troops began pouring into the town later that morning.

Then he stopped, and in that decision lay deep trouble. Under Alexander’s March 19 plan, Ward was to occupy Maknassy and remain there except for launching Operation BUSTER, a battalion-sized tank raid on the German airfield at Mezzouna, fifteen miles east on the road to Sfax. As he drove down Highway 14 into Maknassy that Monday morning, the twenty-second, Ward considered his options. Irrigation had converted the desert here into a vast citrus and olive orchard. Maknassy was a pleasing farm center, with date palms and shuttered shops lining a single paved street 300 yards long. Five miles east of town, the groves ended and the flat terrain rose abruptly to a snaggle-toothed ridgeline several hundred feet high; beyond this modest escarpment lay Mezzouna and the open coastal plain.

A French liaison officer had urged Ward to grab the heights quickly or risk “very serious and costly fighting.” But little intelligence was available. Ward did not know that only a few Italian companies held the Highway 14 gap, or that German reinforcements were hurrying forward. With orders anchoring him in Maknassy, he felt little incentive to seize the high ground or risk pointless casualties; only thirty-one Americans had been killed or wounded in getting this far. Just the day before, Patton had urged Ward “to use more drive” and to personally hug the front lines. Although fuming in his diary that “Ward simply dawdled all day” in occupying Maknassy, Patton chose not to go forward himself. Rather, he sent a staff officer, who concurred in Ward’s decision to fully assemble his forces before moving on the hills. Ward collected field glasses from staff officers and distributed them among his tank commanders. It was the sort of gesture at which he excelled.

Ward also had other worries. The 60th Infantry, on loan from the 9th Infantry Division, had not distinguished itself. The regiment seemed sluggish, and there had been friction with Ward’s tankers. Colonel Frederick J. de Rohan, the regimental commander, was dueling with his executive officer for the unit’s loyalty. “The regiment was divided right down the middle,” one officer later recalled. Some officers had the gall to sign a petition requesting De Rohan’s removal. Moreover, a War Department inspector reported that malaria had plagued the regiment since the landings at Port Lyautey, with 468 cases tallied and insufficient stocks of quinine to treat them.

Then there was the Robinett problem. In the month since Kasserine, Ward’s trust in his CCB commander had evaporated. “Robby has let his ambition run away with him and is cutting my throat,” Ward wrote his wife in late February. Even Robinett’s staff officers considered him disloyal for his habit of disparaging Ward and undermining him with the II Corps staff; one officer pronounced

Robinett "a little dictator." Ward lamented the "consummate conceit and selfishness" of a man who had become "a terrible thorn in my side." He seethed, but confrontation was not his way. He also recognized that whatever demons of ambition possessed Robinett, he was among the most tactically competent tank officers in the U.S. Army. "Robinett personification of 'I,'" Ward confided to his diary on March 9. "He is most difficult, but able." Eisenhower, too, had taken notice. In a "Dear Pink" letter to Ward on March 12, the commander-in-chief cited reports that "Robinett was exceedingly difficult to handle. Don't ever be afraid to use the iron inside the glove, if it has to be done." Eisenhower had his own grievance to nurse: Robinett's critique of the Army's deficiencies, written privately to Marshall after the Tébourba debacle in December, had finally reached Algiers. Now the commander-in-chief, too, was seething, perhaps because the criticisms were legitimate even if the out-of-channels tattling was not. In a note to Marshall, Eisenhower called Robinett "a puzzling man." Notwithstanding Robinett's combat record, the best of any frontline commander, he added: "I will never recommend him for promotion until he learns to control his tongue. He seems intelligent but entirely without judgment, except in a tactical sense."

Finally, Ward had his Patton problem. "George Patton is taking over with a vim," Ward had written Eisenhower. "Personally, I am a new man." That enthusiasm was not reciprocated by the new corps commander, who told his diary, a week after replacing Fredendall, that "1st Armored is timid." On March 18, he wrote Bea, ominously, "I may have to relieve a general." Ward's finer qualities—professionalism, penetrating intelligence, decency—impressed Patton not at all. "Ward has not done well," he scribbled after Maknassy fell. "No drive." Patton became increasingly shrill, demanding that Ward "get up off his ass."

In a phone call one evening the corps commander grew incensed when Ward mentioned his good fortune in losing no officers in combat that day. "Goddammit, Ward, that's not fortunate. That's bad for the morale of the enlisted men," Patton snapped. "I want you to get more officers killed."

Ward was dumbfounded. "Are you serious?"

"Yes, goddammit, I'm serious. I want you to put some officers out as observers well up front and keep them there until a couple get killed."

Characteristically, Ward looked for a silver lining. In his diary on March 22 he wrote: "Patton impatient but fair."

Alexander's new orders to II Corps on March 22—the revision that prompted Terry Allen's plan to attack from El Guettar, preempted when 10th Panzer attacked him first—set in train an ordeal no soldier in Old Ironsides could have foreseen. To further threaten the Axis flank, 1st Armored was directed to continue eastward. Having just chosen not to seize the Maknassy heights, Ward received instructions from Patton to capture the hills that very night. Patton made clear that this was the opportunity every true swashbuckler craved: a chance to rampage through the enemy rear with 300 tanks.

At 11:30 P.M., after a thirty-minute bombardment by three dozen guns, two infantry battalions broke cover from the orchards east of Maknassy and scuttled across half a mile of moonlit grassland. By 3:30 on Tuesday morning, one battalion—the 1st of the 6th Armored Infantry—had seized its hilltop objective against feeble opposition. The other battalion—the 3rd of the 60th Infantry—was stopped cold. Mines and machine-gun fire pinned the men to the exposed slopes of Djebel Naemia, an L-shaped ridge overlooking Highway 14 in the throat of the pass. Shortly after sunrise, the battalion commander warned Ward that he faced at least an entrenched enemy battalion.

He was actually facing only eighty German infantrymen—the remnants of Rommel's former

Begleitkompanie, his personal bodyguard—and a few engineers. With primitive ferocity that dispirited an American force ten times their size, the Germans pelted their attackers with bullets, stones, and a cascade of dislodged boulders. A single 88mm gun was used both to repel the attackers and to dissuade Italians trying to surrender. At noon Ward renewed the attack, this time with tanks. Four Shermans impaled themselves on mines, but American momentum nearly carried the pass until another steel-and-stone counterattack threw the Yanks back.

Having forfeited surprise and audacity at the outset, Ward then compounded his tactical sins: he failed to strike with sufficient strength. This was poor tank country—the broken ground of the hills funneled armor into the vulnerable roadbed, and the rocky terrain made tanks throw their tracks. But Ward had used only two of his six infantry battalions in the initial assault. With every hour, the defenders grew stronger. Now the Americans faced none other than Colonel Rudolf Lang, who had been personally ordered by Arnim to take command on the Maknassy heights. Eager to avenge his failed attack on Béja during OCHSENKOPF, Lang arrived Tuesday morning to find Italian soldiers scampering to the rear. After ordering the 88mm crew to "use all means…to prevent even one single additional man or vehicle from moving toward the east," Lang—soaked in sweat, eyes glowing with anticipated glory—loped into the pass to rally a defense that was soon celebrated in Wehrmacht lore as a German Thermopylae.

Eight Tigers helped. *Gefreiter*s cheered as the monstrous tanks lumbered up the highway from Mezzouna. Long-range artillery also arrived, along with nineteen smaller panzers and portions of two grenadier battalions. Soon Lang had 350 German defenders to face a reinforced armored division. As for his timorous allies, he later reported: "Although they were strong in numbers it was no longer possible to depend upon the Italian troops. Those who did not run away as soon as the enemy attacked, surrendered."

A third American attack, at dusk on the twenty-third, failed with heavy losses, including the 3rd Battalion commander, who was shot in the leg. That night German flares drenched the slopes with cold light; at each new starburst a thousand men fell flat as one, moving no more than marble men would move until the magnesium hissed out. Red and orange tracers poked the terrain from every angle like heated needles, and snipers sidled through the shadows. Luftwaffe pilots dropped strings of butterfly bombs, antipersonnel explosives with yellow wings that revolved to arm the detonator. They "floated to earth like colored lanterns strung in a row," one soldier noted. "It was beautiful and uncomfortable."

Ward attacked again at seven o'clock Wednesday morning with eight battalions, including tanks. Enemy pickets let the American scouts close to within twenty yards before cutting them down with grenades that ignited the tuft grass. Some fled the fire, while others tried to smother the flames with field jackets and were shot dead. Leaving his command post three miles west of Maknassy, Ward worked his way under artillery fire to the narrow-gauge rail tracks that snaked along Highway 14 at the base of Djebel Naemia. Men by the hundreds crouched in culverts or ditches, or straggled through the orchards.

He worked the lines, rallying his troops. "Come on! Come on! It's not hurting you!" he cried. "We've got to make that rise in the ground directly to the front." Some followed; most did not. Mortar and machine-gun fire soon drove every man to ground again. Mines stopped an American tank attack on the right flank. A more sweeping envelopment—also on the right, where Ward thought he saw sufficient defilade to shield his Shermans from German antitank fire—failed, too. There was no defilade, only counterattacking panzers. Repeated attacks by four U.S. infantry battalions gained hardly an inch.

Casualties piled up by the score, then by the hundreds. Apathy stole over the battlefield, and no amount of hectoring could budge the men from their burrows. In a captured enemy diary, U.S.

intelligence officers found an entry that spoke for both sides:

> Here one can find out what it means to spend a whole day with one's nose in the dust. This is a miserable place; not a tree, not a shrub around; just a little grass, and the rest is sand, stone, and lime…. We are grimy from head to foot.

A 1st Armored supply officer observed: "This here is a shootin' gallery, and we is the ducks." Nonplussed, Ward watched the fighting from a sheltered hillock near the highway before returning to his command post early in the afternoon.

Patton had again spent the day with Allen's division, reveling in its repulse of the panzers at El Guettar. Upon returning to his own command post, still in the dank Fériana schoolhouse, he wolfed down his supper and started a letter to Bea. At seven P.M., a staff officer, Lieutenant Colonel Russell F. Akers, brought the latest reports from Maknassy. In forty-eight hours Ward had made no progress. "What's wrong with that goddam 1st Armored Division?" Patton fumed. Akers suggested, somewhat unjustly, that the stalemate reflected Ward's tendency to lurk fifteen miles behind the front lines. Patton picked up a field phone. "Get me General Ward," he snapped, then slammed down the receiver and returned to his letter. The phone rang with Ward on the line.

"Pink, you got that hill yet?" Patton listened for less than ten seconds before interrupting. "I don't want any goddam excuses. I want you to get out there and get that hill. You lead the attack personally. Don't come back 'til you've got it." He again slammed down the receiver.

Before going to bed, Patton wrote in his diary: "Now my conscience hurts me for fear I have ordered him to his death."

Ward stood with the pallid dignity of a man consigned to the gallows. He eased a helmet over the remaining strands of his once-red hair, picked up a carbine, and at eight P.M. headed back toward Djebel Naemia.

He stopped first at the 6th Infantry command post, in a malodorous tent tucked into the trees east of Maknassy. There on a litter he saw Lieutenant Colonel William B. Kern, the regiment's 1st Battalion commander, who had fought so ably from Oran to Kasserine; a machine-gun bullet had destroyed his right eye. Dusted with sulfa powder and sedated with morphine, Kern was bound for a field hospital in the rear. Ward patted his shoulder and pressed on.

More than 2,000 men in three 6th Infantry battalions were to attack shortly after midnight. To catch the enemy off guard, no advance artillery barrage would be fired. Ward moved to the front of the 2nd Battalion, clutching his carbine as the troops stifled their surprise at seeing a major general take the point. At 12:30 on Thursday morning, March 25, the column set off for Djebel Naemia, a hulking black presence to the northeast. Twelve hundred yards from the ridge, the column divided, with one company angling left and two others, led by Ward, skirting the right flank. Rifle fire chattered from the redoubt ahead. Ward paused to harangue a faltering sergeant. "Sergeant, could you go back home and face your mother, sweetheart, and friends, and tell them that you did your duty to your country and your comrades, and look them in the eye? No, you couldn't," Ward said. "The thing for you to do is to move forward." The sergeant moved forward.

But not far. German crossfire sent the battalion scurrying for cover. Ward ran with eight men across the first and then the second of three knolls on Djebel Naemia's south face. His carbine jammed and he tossed it aside. "Damn it, men," he yelled to the cowering figures behind him. "You're

not going to let a 51-year-old man run your tongues out? Let's get up that hill." Ward's aide, Captain Ernest C. Hatfield, wondered whether the general was deliberately seeking martyrdom.

The third knoll was too much. "The machine gun fire was terrific and was grazing the ground about twenty inches high while other machine guns were firing about forty inches off the ground," Hatfield later reported. A bullet slammed into the leg of a dispatch runner lying between Ward and Hatfield. A shell fragment clipped the corner of Ward's eye and the bridge of his nose. Blood quickly masked his face, spreading in a crimson bib down the front of his fatigues.

By first light, the attack had stalled. A few men reached Naemia's crest; German mortars drove them off. Ward crawled down the hill at seven A.M. to direct tank fire at German strong points, but an hour later the exhausted battalions pulled back and dug in a thousand yards from the ridge. Wounded soldiers flooded the aid stations. Ward ordered the attack suspended, then rode to Maknassy in an ambulance with a boy who had lost a foot and another who was missing half his face.

Robinett and Omar Bradley were at the division command post when Ward arrived at eleven A.M. His appearance shocked them. Dried blood and sulfa powder caked his face. Scratches and purple bruises covered his legs and hands. A machine-gun bullet had traced a line across the back of his field jacket "as if he had been swiped with a red-hot poker," Robinett observed. While a doctor patched the eye wound, Hatfield brought a cup of tea from the field kitchen. Asked how he felt, Ward replied, "Damned inadequate."

In Fériana later that day, Patton read the latest dispatches from the fighting front before sitting down to scribble another letter home. In his jagged, canted hand he told Bea, "I think I have made a man of Ward."

Two days later, on the twenty-seventh, Patton appeared at the division command post to pin a Silver Star on Ward's chest. The corps commander was "calm, pleasant, and logical," Ward noted in his diary. But in a scathing private meeting before the ceremony, Patton accused Ward of indolence and excessive dependence on his staff. "I have little confidence in Ward or in the 1st Armored Division," Patton wrote in his diary the next day. "Ward lacks force. The division has lost its nerve and is jumpy. I fear that all our troops want to fight without getting killed."

The stalemate east of Maknassy showed no sign of breaking, particularly after Patton shifted some tanks from Old Ironsides to Terry Allen's force in the south. In a message to the division, Ward decried "skulking and straggling…. Search your soul," he urged, "and make the enemy pay with his life for threatening the life of our country."

Yet his own days in Tunisia were numbered. By early April, the division's losses since the recapture of Sened Station would reach 304 killed in action, 1,265 wounded, 116 missing, and forty tanks destroyed—with little to show for them but Patton's ingratitude. Although the division would claim 2,000 enemy killed or wounded, and another 960 captured—plus another 2,000 captured by the 1st Armored troops attached to Allen—those figures were certainly inflated. Eisenhower wrote Marshall that Ward "has not been fully able to recover from initial shocks and exhibit the necessary sturdiness of purpose." He lacked "the necessary veneer of callousness."

There was truth in that. Ward had a delicacy ill-suited to a job requiring iron resolve and lead-from-the-front vigor. Even Colonel Lang, watching the Americans from the other side of Djebel Naemia, had been surprised by their timid initial approach to the Maknassy heights; a more forceful attack, he concluded, could have shortened the Tunisian campaign by weeks. In his view, the Americans appeared reluctant to risk heavy casualties in a decisive battle, preferring to crush their foes with material superiority even if that meant extending the fight. There was truth in that

assessment too.

A letter from Alexander to Patton on April 1 sealed Ward's fate. "With some diffidence," the army group commander had concluded that "Ward is not the best man to command the American 1st Armored Division." (Alexander was less diffident in a private note to Brooke, pronouncing Ward "quite useless.") Patton immediately asked Eisenhower to recall Ernie Harmon, who had returned to Morocco after his brief duty with II Corps at Kasserine. Averse to direct confrontations with his peers, Patton delegated the hatchet work to Omar Bradley. "Look, Brad, you're a friend of Pink Ward's," he said over breakfast. "Go up there and tell him why I've got to let him go."

A few hours later Bradley arrived at Ward's command post in the Maknassy orchard. He had been a year junior to Ward at West Point and in the same cadet company; he believed the firing unjust. In concocting a plan designed mainly to accommodate Montgomery, then changing it repeatedly, Alexander had hardly demonstrated brilliance. As for Patton, he had provided more snarling criticism than useful tactical advice or infantry reinforcements. Ward had been unlucky, Bradley believed. But luck in war was a general's one indispensable virtue.

In his tent, Ward greeted Bradley with a serene smile, as if expecting the news. Patton had decided to make a change, Bradley said without mentioning Alexander's letter. There would surely be important work for Ward at home or in another theater. Harmon would arrive within a day to take over. Nearly in tears, Bradley shook hands and hurried back to Fériana. Ward said little.

"Bradley gave me order for my relief," he wrote in his diary. "He much upset, more than I." In a handwritten note to the division he announced: "The undersigned hereby relinquishes command of this splendid division to Major General Harmon. I beg you to render unto him the splendid support and loyalty that you have given me."

Harmon would arrive on April 5, strafed en route by Messerschmitts and then by Patton, who, upon being asked whether he wanted Harmon to attack or defend, roared in reply, "What have you come here for, asking me a lot of goddamned stupid questions? Get the hell out of here and get on with what I told you to do, or I'll send you back to Morocco!" Ward waited in Maknassy with his bag and his bedroll. He saluted his successor and said, "The party is all yours, Harmon."

If outwardly gracious, Ward churned inside. He resented the British, Fredendall, Eisenhower, and Patton, whom he considered overrated as a tank commander. Had things gone better in Tunisia, he believed he might have been chief of staff someday. Other indignities would nettle him in coming days. Robinett sent a generous if hypocritical farewell message offering "my deepest gratitude to you for your many tolerances" and admitting, "Frankly, I am tired and need a change of pasture." Eisenhower in Algiers was pleasant even while telling Ward he was "not mean enough." Mark Clark privately tried to prevent Ward from receiving the Distinguished Service Cross for his valor on Djebel Naemia. A board reviewing the case concluded that "the facts do not warrant the award of the DSC"—beyond the less exalted Silver Star already awarded—and, Clark wrote Eisenhower, "I concur in that recommendation." Ward received the DSC anyway.

Ward was a good soldier—his conscience, as he so often said, was clear—and he accepted all slights with equanimity. "My record, I am afraid, has dubbed me stupid and brave," he confided to a friend. "It probably takes a stupid man to get himself into such fixes." By mid-April he would be home in Denver. There was indeed important work for him, first as commander of the Army's tank destroyer and field artillery schools, and then as commander of another armored division, which would seize Munich in April 1945. In the American Army few relieved commanders got a second chance to lead men in combat; Ward was an exception because he was exceptional. But first he had to do penance for his virtues as well as his sins.

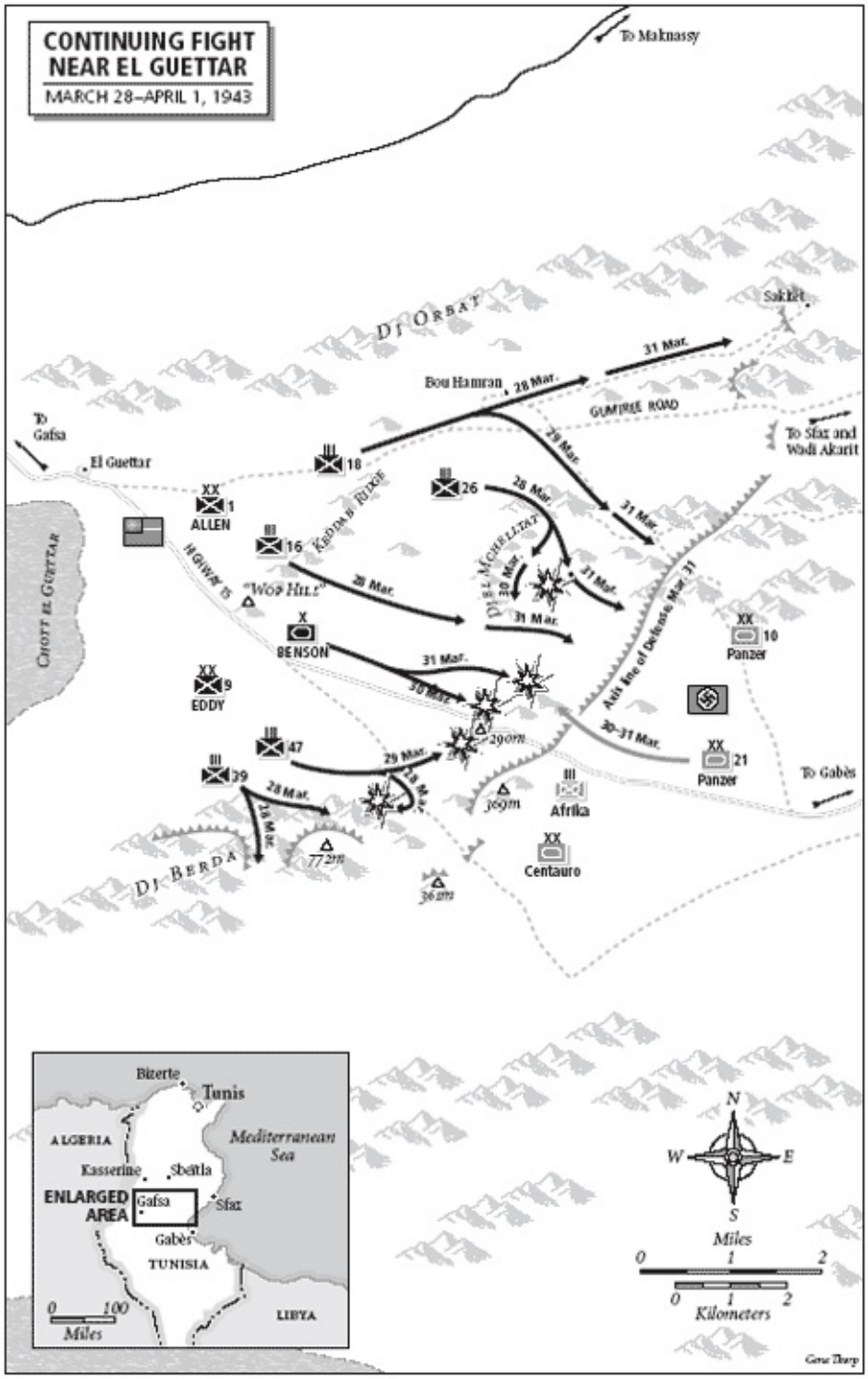
"Ward was too sensitive, both to criticism from his immediate superior and to the loss of his friends and subordinates on the battlefield," Eisenhower wrote Marshall. "In all else he seems tops."

Night Closes Down

WITH the Americans unable to reach the enemy's rear through the Maknassy heights, Alexander revised his orders to Patton for a third time. At noon on March 25—as Ward was having his bloody eye doctored and Montgomery prepared to launch his left hook at Mareth—II Corps was told to shift the weight of its attack to the south. The 9th Infantry Division would join Allen's 1st Division in cutting a hole through enemy defenses southeast of El Guettar so that tanks drawn from Ward's 1st Armored could lunge down Highway 15 toward Gabès. The offensive was designed to harass German forces facing Montgomery by again threatening to split the Axis armies and trap the Mareth defenders from behind.

As ordered by Patton, Allen shortly before midnight on the twenty-fifth pulled Darby's Rangers and two battalions of the 18th Infantry Regiment off Djebel Berda on the extreme southern flank of the American line. They were happy to leave: a frenzied German counterattack the previous evening had driven them back 2,000 yards. The Rangers returned to Gafsa to loll in the hot springs and play volleyball; the 18th Infantry looped north to Gumtree Road and now anchored the left flank of Allen's division, which occupied a nine-mile front north of Highway 15. The 9th Division shuffled forward to take the positions south of the highway vacated by Darby and the 18th.

If any gods were watching from their djebel eyries and saw disaster brewing, they declined to intervene on behalf of the mortals in olive drab. Patton's plan, concocted in response to Alexander's hasty change of orders, was badly flawed. German infiltrators now occupied the highest ground on Djebel Berda, including a key promontory designated Hill 772; they could see virtually every American movement. Instead of first securing this pinnacle and the connecting ridges, the Americans chose to skirt them in a hell-for-leather attack by the two infantry divisions on either side of Highway 15.



Moreover, the 9th Division was short-handed, ill-informed, and poorly equipped for the battle ahead. Of the division's three infantry regiments, one—the 60th—had been diverted to Ward's quixotic fight at Maknassy and another—the 39th—had spent most of the past five months on guard duty in Algeria. Delays in moving forward postponed the attack a day, until Sunday, March 28; as always, the Germans used the extra time wisely. The 9th Division's bespectacled commander, Major General Manton S. Eddy, whose domed forehead and chin wattles gave him the mien of a "big galoot who looks like a country school teacher," was in fact energetic and imaginative; to encourage military discipline, he had once issued a three-day pass to a private for saluting an empty staff car. But his troops had neither heavy artillery, nor armored bulldozers, nor sufficient compasses, nor experience in attacking fortified ramparts.

An intelligence estimate based on reports from departing 1st Division officers posited that the ground was "but lightly held by the Germans," or by Italians who would quail at the sight of American bayonets. That was wrong. Poor maps, based on 1903 French survey sheets, implied that the

topography ahead was mostly flat. That, too, was wrong. Though badly reduced in the failed March 23 attack, the 10th Panzer and Italian Centauro Divisions had regrouped, and now had the benefit of fighting defensively in a badlands terrain of box canyons and knife-blade ridges. Particular care was lavished on fortifying Hill 369. A steep massif two miles south of the highway; it rose 500 feet above the desert, with a greater presence than its modest height suggested. For a command post, German engineers excavated five dugouts from the solid rock; each was ten feet square and roofed with tile and dirt. Machine guns occupied three forty-foot knolls north of the hill facing the road, while infantrymen infested trenches carved from the talus. Ten 75mm antitank guns were sited around the hill, backed by three even deadlier 100mm guns spaced 100 yards apart. After dark, Wehrmacht trucks drove forward with cans of muscatel for the defenders.

Hill 369 prevented all travel down Highway 15, and it was the 9th Division's objective. Uncoiling from wadis at the base of Djebel Berda, a column of four U.S. battalions marched east at 3:30 A.M. on March 28. A medical officer described dawn "lighting up the opposite mountain range in gold and purple and black, with a brilliant blue sky." That was the last pretty thing many of those men saw. At 5:35 A.M. Germans firing pistol flares and machine guns ambushed the 2nd Battalion of the 47th Infantry, which had unwittingly veered south into a hilly labyrinth. Within fifteen minutes Company E alone, on the point, lost 179 men. Surrendering officers tied handkerchefs to their carbine muzzles. Those who continued to fight, died. "The last I saw of him," a lieutenant later reported of one rifleman, "he was laying on the ground holding his intestines in both hands." Troops in field gray rounded up 242 prisoners, including the battalion commander, eight other officers, and Eisenhower's junior aide, who had been sent to the front for seasoning. An American patrol later found only stiffened bodies and a sweet stench rising from the crepuscular wadis. Shaking his fist and pulling on his pipe, the 47th Infantry commander stalked through his command post, muttering, "You sons of bitches. You sons of bitches."

Worse yet, another battalion had also wandered off course and was so thoroughly lost that not a word was heard from it for thirty-six hours. The two remaining battalions in the assault attacked what they presumed was Hill 369 but was in fact Hill 290, a lesser eminence a mile closer to the highway and not shown on the map. The hill held, and German artillery, guided to the centimeter by observers on Djebel Berda, combed the wadis with fire. Men burrowed into any depression they could find, urinating in canteen cups and defecating in helmets. The wounded pleaded for help, mimicked by English-speaking Germans trying to lure medics into the open. One soldier later wrote in his diary: "Just lay in my hole and beat the dirt with my fists."

Alexander visited II Corps and professed satisfaction despite all this. Patton's fury, however, knew no bounds. He gave Eddy a tongue-lashing that stunned the division commander. "In all my career I've never been talked to as Patton talked to me this morning," he told one of his colonels. "I may be relieved of command." Eddy kept his job but was shaken enough to throw good money after bad. He ordered a single battalion, the 2nd of the 39th Infantry, to advance down Highway 15 and take Hill 369 in a dawn assault.

Off they went again, this time in trucks, somehow persuaded that the Germans were weary from a long day of winning and that only Italian stragglers waited to be routed. With a slamming of tailgates and rattling of equipment, the men clambered from the trucks at first light on March 30, only to again mistake unmapped Hill 290 for Hill 369. A single star shell inaugurated the enemy ambuscade, followed by the usual machine-gun hellfire. The battalion broke. Most fled back down the asphalt highway; others not dead or captured hid until darkness let them slip away the next night.

North of Highway 15, things had hardly gone better for Allen's 1st Division. The 18th Infantry advanced several miles down Gumtree Road on the left flank, but otherwise all progress was measured in yards or inches. The wedge of land between Gumtree and the highway was soon stained white with

artillery splashes and trussed in endless skeins of Signal Corps wire. The 26th Infantry surgeon's diary for March 29 reported: "Snipers and machine gunners had every wadi covered and our casualties were terrific until everybody decided to hole up until dark…. We baked in the hot sun from 11:30 A.M. until dark." Daylight evacuations were fatal, and the wounded bled to death or died of shock waiting for nightfall.

Darkness brought its own misery. "You fight all day here in the desert and what's the end of it?" one GI wrote. "Night just closes down over you and chokes you." A dispatch from the 26th Infantry reduced the battle to four words: "This place is hell." A two-battalion attack by the 16th Infantry, abutting the 9th Division, went nowhere and cost 105 casualties in ten minutes. One officer reported that Allen "fussed and fumed, lit one cigarette after another, [and] was beside himself." Some even said his stutter returned.

Late on March 29, Alexander revised the American attack plan a fourth time: an armored spearhead drawn from the 1st Armored Division was to bull through the enemy defenses down Highway 15. Given Axis fortifications, this scheme had little chance of success, and it is uncertain how much time Alexander had taken to study the ground. His order included precise instructions on how to deploy the American battalions. Patton replied with a huffy message to army group headquarters:

> I feel that I must respectfully call General Alexander's attention to the fact that in the United States Army we tell officers what to do, not how to do it, that to do otherwise suggests lack of confidence in the officer…. I feel that for the honor and prestige of the U.S. Army I must protest.

With Patton's protest delivered and his honor redeemed, the attack went forward at noon on March 30 with seven battalions under Colonel Clarence C. Benson, who until that morning had never met several of his subordinate commanders. "From a hundred wadis and ditches tanks began to debouch onto the center of the valley," the correspondent Alan Moorehead wrote, "…as though one was looking at a battle fleet steaming into action over a green, flat sea—a wonderful sight." Whip antennae swayed to the rhythm of the pitching tanks. Dark ranks of infantrymen rose from their holes to trail the Shermans. After a 5,000-yard running start on a half-mile front, Benson's juggernaut ran into a minefield and then blistering fire from German guns in a feral patch the Americans now called the Hot Corner. Puffing on his corncob pipe 300 yards back, Benson soon realized that the enemy had been reinforced, first with Afrika Korps grenadiers and then with the 21st Panzer Division.

"I saw tanks hit by shells burst into flames," correspondent John D'Arcy-Dawson reported. "The turret was thrown back and small figures leaped to the ground, running between falling shells toward jeeps which bounded forward to pick them up." Moorehead added: "Ambulances began to stream back from the other direction. Over everything sounded the same quick staccato coughing of the guns." With five tanks in flames, Benson retreated. Trying to chivvy the enemy from their works, he warned, was "like digging potatoes."

At 12:30 the next afternoon, Benson Force tried again, but made just modest headway before the fuming guns drove them back minus another eight tanks. Grim councils of war followed. "We seem to be stuck everywhere," Patton told his diary on March 31.

The Axis line drew back two miles in the north and a mile in the south, then held fast. A two-battalion attack on Hill 772—belatedly recognized as the battlefield linchpin—failed, with grievous losses. "Nasty grim mountain fighting," Patton told Eisenhower. On April Fool's Day, Alexander

ordered another change—his fifth—reinstating the original plan for two infantry divisions to pry open a gap for the tanks. Weary dogfaces continued to gnaw at the djebels but to little profit. The 9th Division log for April 2 acknowledged: “No movement of any importance during the day.”

Tens of thousands of mortar and artillery rounds fell on both sides. The 9th Division would expend more than a million rounds of rifle and machine-gun ammunition at El Guettar. The 47th Infantry added another seventy-five stretcher bearers to the regiment’s original sixteen; the 39th Infantry added sixty. Even the squeal of ambulance brakes at night drew fire. The dead were stacked like sawed logs in a truckbed and hauled to Gafsa for burial.

In little more than a week of fighting, the 9th Division suffered 1,812 casualties—more than 10 percent of the division. Five of six battalion commanders were lost. Casualties in the 47th Infantry alone totaled 868, more than a quarter of the regiment. Eddy later considered El Guettar the division’s toughest battle of World War II, not to be eclipsed by combat in Sicily and Normandy. The 1st Division’s losses approached 1,300. Stanhope Mason, the Big Red One’s operations officer and eventual chief of staff, also deemed El Guettar the “most severe battle of the three years of warfare,” a remarkable assessment for a division whose destiny led to such killing fields as Sicily, Normandy, and Aachen.

The stuck-everywhere period lasted a week. Nearly every man now felt the deep weariness that Ernie Pyle called “cell-by-cell exhaustion.” II Corps had done what was asked, luring two panzer divisions and more away from Eighth Army’s front. Montgomery had broken through at Mareth, captured Gabès, and now besieged the enemy at Wadi Akarit on the coast, due east of the Americans. But that was cold comfort. As hopes faded for a breakthrough to the sea, a peevish frustration took hold—“everybody ordering everybody else,” as one major put it. Ted Roosevelt wrote Eleanor: “We let the opportunity get away.”

Patton took it badly. His choler turned to rage on Thursday morning, April 1, when his favorite aide, Captain Richard N. Jenson, died in an air raid while visiting Benson’s command post, four miles east of El Guettar. Eight Stukas attacked out of the sun, killing three men, wounding Brigadier Dunphie—the British hero of Thala—and just missing Bradley with a bomb that detonated fifteen feet from his slit trench. The concussion killed Jenson instantly. “Every bone in his body was broken and the skin wasn’t scratched,” one officer reported.

Patton stood on the portico of the Gafsa gendarmerie as Jenson’s body arrived in the rear seat of a jeep. He drove immediately to the town cemetery, where twenty other dead boys lay wrapped in mattress covers awaiting burial. New crosses and Stars of David were stacked in a nearby tent. Tears coursing down his cheeks, Patton uncovered Jenson’s face, kissed him on the forehead, and snipped a lock of hair, which he saved for the dead man’s mother. After kneeling to pray, Patton rose and without a word drove back to his office.

“Forward troops have been continuously bombed all morning,” he wrote an hour later in a scathing report to the Allied high command. “Total lack of air cover for our units has allowed German air force to operate almost at will.”

At 10:45 P.M. Thursday, the New Zealander who commanded the Allied tactical air forces, Air Vice Marshal Arthur Coningham, replied in a message so widely distributed that even the Pentagon historian’s office received a copy. Patton’s complaint was “inaccurate and exaggerated,” a “false cry of wolf,” the waspish Coningham wrote. Noting that 353 Allied fighters had flown on April 1—more than two-thirds of them over II Corps—he added that Patton’s message “was first assumed to be seasonal 1st April joke…. It can only be assumed that 2nd Corps personnel concerned are not

battleworthy in terms of present operations."

Coningham's condescension and conclusions were offensive; his facts, however, were fundamentally sound. By no longer attempting to provide a permanent air umbrella over Allied troops, British and American squadrons could now concentrate on Axis airfields, shipping, and other rear-echelon targets, where the havoc they wrought was vast but mostly invisible to the ground forces. The number of Luftwaffe sorties had peaked at 370 on February 24, dwindling since then to fewer than seventy-five a day. The slow, vulnerable Stuka was nearly extinct and was making its final battlefield appearances.

None of that mattered to Patton, whose convulsive fury at the insult tripped alarm bells in Algiers. At Eisenhower's insistence, Coningham issued a twenty-seven-word retraction, notifying all the original recipients that his message was "to be withdrawn and cancelled." At noon on April 3, the two most senior Allied airmen in North Africa, Air Marshal Sir Arthur W. Tedder and Lieutenant General Carl Spaatz, arrived in Gafsa on an appeasement mission. Patton had just finished pounding the desk in outrage when three Focke-Wulf fighters roared over Gafsa at 200 feet, spitting bright yellow needles from their wings. After strafing the streets, the planes returned for a final bombing run, during which a melon-sized fragment blew through the conference room where the generals were now sprawled on the floor. Plaster tumbled from the walls as Patton dashed outside to empty his revolvers at the fleeing bandits. Dusting himself off, Tedder asked how such a flamboyant demonstration had been arranged. "I'll be damned if I know," Patton replied, "but if I could find the sonsabitches who flew those planes, I'd mail each one of them a medal."

Coningham arrived the next day on his own peace sortie. The helmeted Patton sat behind his desk, stern as a hanging judge. Voices were raised, fists thumped. "Pardon my shouting," Patton shouted, "but I too have pride and will not stand for having Americans called cowards…. If I had said half what you said, I would now be a colonel and on my way home."

Coningham subsequently issued an effusive apology. Patton responded with a gallant message, telling the New Zealander, "To me you exemplify in their most perfect form all the characteristics of the fighting gentleman." Still he stewed. Singling out two particularly irritating British units, he told his diary, "I hope the Boches beat the complete life out of the 128th Brigade and 6th Armored Division. I am fed up with being treated like a moron by the British…. Ike must go."

How intense his animus had become that he could, however fleetingly, wish in a single breath for the destruction of his closest allies and the downfall of his closest friend.

If choler infected the American camp, so did an even deeper and darker emotion. Ernie Pyle now noticed in the troops "the casual and workshop manner in which they talked about killing. They had made the psychological transition from their normal belief that taking human life was sinful, over to a new professional outlook where killing was a craft." The American combat soldier had finally learned to hate.

> His blood was up. He was fighting for his life, and killing then for him was as much a profession as writing was for me. He wanted to kill individually or in vast numbers…. The front-line soldier wanted [the war] to be terminated by the physical process of his destroying enough Germans to end it. He was truly at war. The rest of us, no matter how hard we worked, were not.

What Rommel called *Krieg ohne Hass,* war without hate, had prevailed in the desert for more than two years. If more myth than battlefield reality—no armies bent on mutual annihilation can avoid malice—a perverse chivalry *had* obtained, producing "a clean, straight, dispassionate war with no Gestapo, no politics, no persecuted civilians, no ruined homes," as one correspondent romanticized it. The British in 1942 even felt obliged to institute hate training by stressing enemy brutality and spattering slaughterhouse blood around assault training courses.

The Americans were less imaginative but just as ineffective. Various exhortations had touted the virtue of antipathy. "You are going to get killing mad eventually—why not now?" Lieutenant General Lesley J. McNair, chief of Army ground forces, had urged in a national radio address in November. A training memorandum from AFHQ in Algiers urged commanders to "teach their men to hate the enemy—to want to kill by any means." Patton told his corps in mid-March, "We must be eager to kill."

But the infliction of nearly 6,000 casualties in three weeks—including 845 dead—did what no speechifying could do. "Perhaps these American troops will suddenly get their blood up and find their feet," Alexander wrote Brooke on April 3. "I say 'perhaps' because, unlike us, they are a mercurial people and are either up or down."

The blood *was* up in these mercurial people. They were further inflamed by wide-eyed atrocity tales of Germans bayoneting prisoners. At El Guettar "we really learned to hate," a sergeant in the 26th Infantry later wrote. "The hatred for the Krauts carried through to the rest of the Tunisian campaign, Sicily, France, Belgium, through Germany, into the Harz mountains, and Czechoslovakia." An officer in the 6th Infantry concluded, "A soldier is not effective until he has learned to hate. When he lives for one thing, to kill the enemy, he becomes of value."

"They lost too many friends," Pyle observed with his usual penetrating simplicity. "Soon it was killing that animated them."

A very thin membrane separates the sanctioned rancor of war from sheer barbarism, and in North Africa shooting at Arabs became a sport in some units. Troops convinced themselves that the natives were either in cahoots with the enemy or subhuman; they were called wogs—the slang came from the British, who rated Tunisian Arabs a "serious menace"—and they lived in "woggeries."

"We became ruthless with the Arab," a 1st Division soldier wrote. "If we found them where they were not to be, they were open game, much as rabbits in the States during hunting season." Another soldier explained: "Here Arabs live all over. Some we shoot on sight, some we search, and some we make a deal with to buy eggs and chickens." Soldiers boasted of using natives for marksmanship practice, daring one another to shoot an Arab coming over a hill like a target in an arcade. Others fired at camels to see the riders bucked off, or shot at the feet of Arab children "to watch them dance in fear," as one 34th Division soldier recounted.

At a training camp in Algeria, sentries were told they could fire on anyone "dressed in white and not promptly responding to the password." Natives suspected of espionage or sabotage were usually turned over to the French for summary justice, but not always. "We made them dig their graves," one 1st Division soldier reported. "We lined them up and shot them." British commandos near Green Hill in the north burned woggeries whose inhabitants were suspected of aiding the Germans. "It is not pleasant to stand round blazing huts while women and children scream outside," one witness acknowledged.

After Kasserine, during a move from Sbiba toward Fondouk, "I saw men from another outfit shoot Arabs just to watch them jump and fall," Edward Boehm later recounted. Boehm was a lieutenant from Montana, with Battery C of the 185th Field Artillery. "I could hear them yell and laugh each time and there was nothing I could do about it…. I saw them do it, like you're shooting gophers. I could hear them: 'Wow, I got one!' Those guys were murderers."

Such atrocities were committed by a very small percentage of American troops, but provost marshal and judge advocate files reflected a disturbing indiscipline. When a truck convoy bound for II Corps with replacement troops stopped for lunch in Affreville, Algeria, some soldiers got drunk on local wine and started firing at Arabs along Highway 4. One private shot dead a man on his donkey, wounded a second, and then killed another before boasting that he "got three out of five Arabs." Given a dishonorable discharge, he was sentenced to twenty years at hard labor.

But other crimes went unavenged. On March 31, Giraud sent Eisenhower a letter citing incidents "in which U.S. and British troops have molested, assaulted, and killed natives." Several weeks later, a secret AFHQ memorandum reported that Giraud's chief of staff "again called our attention to a situation which has come up repeatedly in the past month. This is the continuing cases of rape in the forward areas…against Arab women." Another internal AFHQ memo regarding "crimes committed by American troops in the forward areas" reported that an additional military police battalion had been dispatched to keep order.

Some of the most appalling incidents involved depredations in the northern Algerian village of Le Tarf, seven miles from the Tunisian border. In mid-April, drunken troops from an American engineering company reportedly terrorized Le Tarf for two days. Witness statements in a French investigative document sent to AFHQ recounted gang rapes of six Arab women, all of them named, including a thirty-year-old suffering from typhus, a forty-five-year-old widow, a fifty-year-old, and a fifty-five-year-old and her daughter-in-law. A fifteen-year-old and a forty-year-old widowed mother reported escaping after a chase by predatory soldiers. Several Arab men alleged being beaten with rifle butts and fists.

"The people of the district, European as well as native, are now living in fear of the daily occurrences caused by the troops," a local official wrote. A French investigator reported visiting the American company, which had bivouacked two miles up the road; he was assured that the unit in question was not involved. If American authorities examined the French allegations—and AFHQ files indicate that at least a preliminary investigation was launched—their findings have vanished. During World War II, 140 U.S. soldiers were executed for murder and rape, but if justice was meted out for the ravaging of Le Tarf, the records remain silent.

"I Had a Plan…Now I Have None"

TED Roosevelt was among the first to sense the enemy's withdrawal. "It has a soft feel up and down the front this morning," he wrote on Tuesday, April 6. At Wadi Akarit, fifty miles east of the 1st and 9th Division front, Eighth Army had attacked the new Axis line with a tank advantage of 462 to 25. The "apocalyptic hurricane of steel and fire," as General Messe described the British assault, took more than 5,000 Italian prisoners, so many as to constitute a nuisance; they were used as footstools by Tommies scrambling out of the antitank ditches. Messe told Arnim he could hold until Wednesday night, but only by flinging "the last man into the furnace." Instead, most of the surviving troops—including nearly every German—slipped away to the north after dark on Tuesday, while those facing the Americans also fell back before their escape route was severed. *Non è stata una bella battaglia,* Messe lamented: this was not a good battle.

It was not especially good for the British, either. Eighth Army suffered 600 dead and 2,000 wounded, yet still failed to annihilate the enemy or prevent his flight. On Tuesday night, Alexander issued his sixth and final change of orders to the Americans: II Corps was to attack in the morning without regard to armor losses, in a last attempt to ram the Axis flank. On a paper scrap torn from a notebook, Patton scratched a message in his runic cursive for Colonel Benson: "Attack and destroy the

enemy; act aggressively. GSP, Jr."

They swung at air. As the enemy melted away, Hill 772 and Djebel Berda finally fell. So did Hill 369, after a ferocious U.S. artillery bombardment. Soon the desert along Highway 15 was covered with "American tanks, half-tracks, mobile guns, jeeps, [and] trucks, surging eastward in line abreast like a Spanish fleet, with pennants and flags flying." A thousand prisoners were seized, bringing the total captured by II Corps at El Guettar to 4,700. But only one in ten was German, and the bulk of the enemy army was only a dusty pall on the northeast horizon. In his diary Patton wrote: "*Sic Transit Gloria Mundi*."

The Maknassy heights also fell, finally, and American pursuers had a bit more luck near Mezzouna and along Gumtree Road. Colonel Lang got away, but a half-dozen U.S. tanks raked a German rearguard convoy, and marauding Allied fighter-bombers tormented the retreating columns. Among those caught in the open was the 10th Panzer Division operations officer, Colonel Claus von Stauffenberg, a tall, brilliant aristocrat who during duty in the Soviet Union was so alienated by German barbarism that after arriving in Africa in February he had quietly begun agitating for a military coup to oust Hitler. On Wednesday afternoon, fighters strafed Count Stauffenberg's staff car with 20mm cannon fire. Gravely wounded, he was rushed to a field hospital in Sfax, where his right hand was amputated at the wrist and tossed into the garbage still wearing a ring; surgeons also removed his left eye and took two shattered fingers from his left hand. Evacuated to Italy, Stauffenberg was placed on a hospital train bound for Munich. His long recuperation gave him time to concoct the bomb plot that nearly killed Hitler on July 20, 1944.

Within an hour or two of Stauffenberg's wounding, American scouts and British Eighth Army troops spied one another across the desert for the first time. "Hello, Limeys!" the Yanks shouted, notwithstanding that the troops so hallooed were Indian. No matter: the army of the west and the army of the east had joined, despite a five-month Axis campaign to keep them apart. As other British and American troops met, they seemed unlikely kinsmen. Two weeks at El Guettar had reduced the Americans' uniforms to tatters and the men wearing them to scarecrows. Two years in Africa had made the bleached and bronzed British resemble "Ay-rabs in jeeps," as the Yanks called them, garbed in a heterogeneous array of khaki shorts, short-sleeve blouses or bare backs, and headgear that ranged from berets to burnooses.

That first meeting produced handshakes and broad grins but few memorable utterances. "This is certainly a pleasant surprise," a British sergeant said amiably. To which Private Perry Searcy of Kentucky replied, "Well, it's good to see somebody besides a Nazi."

The cousins were together, and no enemy would sunder them again.

Eisenhower was jubilant. "We are at last operating on a single battle line and have placed the enemy in a position that, to say the least, is highly embarrassing for him," he wrote to his son, John. "I have been aiming for this for a long time and, frankly, I must say that I experience a definite feeling of happiness and delight."

Success in Tunisia reinforced Eisenhower's conviction in the righteousness of the Allied cause, a theme he articulated most ardently to his closest correspondents with robust, primitive patriotism. "My single passion is to do my full duty in helping to smash the disciples of Hitler," he told John. Although his men fought—as all men at arms fight—primarily for one another, Eisenhower saw other, "priceless things for which we are fighting."

It seems to me [he wrote in early April] that in no other war in history has the issue

been so distinctly drawn between the forces of arbitrary oppression on the one side and, on the other, those conceptions of individual liberty, freedom, and dignity, under which we have been raised in our great Democracy…. I do have the feeling of a crusader in this war.

He was just as fervent in championing Allied unity, which he considered the keystone of imminent victory in Tunisia and the eventual larger victory beyond. "We are establishing a pattern for complete unity in Allied effort—ground, air, navy—that will stand the Allied nations in good stead throughout the remainder of this war," he wrote to General A.D. Surles at the War Department. Again and again he reiterated "my policy of refusing to permit any criticism couched along nationalistic lines."

Enforcing this policy was not easy. Proximity to the British had only deepened the latent Anglophobia of many American generals—Patton, Clark, and Bradley among them. If the British were more circumspect in their disdain, the Yanks suspected with good cause that they were being patronized. "The only way in which we can get things really tidied up," Air Marshal Tedder wrote on March 26, "is by showing the Americans the right way to do things and letting them see where they are wrong." Alexander concurred, telling Montgomery three days later: "I have taken infinite trouble with them—and mind you one has to deal very carefully with them because they are not one of us…. I have grave doubts that these soldiers are really doing their duty as we understand it."

Even Eisenhower had to swallow hard. On March 30 he flew to the Eighth Army command post south of Gabès to confer with Montgomery. Both men followed their public display of conviviality with private binges of character assassination. "His high-pitched accent and loud talking would drive me mad," Montgomery complained to Alexander. "I should say he was good probably on the political line; but he obviously knows nothing whatever about fighting." For his part, Eisenhower warned Marshall that Montgomery "will never willingly make a single move until he is absolutely certain of success." The hostility—and it had just begun—was aggravated by Montgomery's juvenile demand that he be sent an American B-17 Flying Fortress for his personal use: he had occupied Sfax ahead of schedule and thus won a gentleman's wager with Beetle Smith. "Montgomery to Eisenhower. Entered Sfax 0830 this morning. Please send Fortress," he cabled on April 10. The plane was sent (it would crash three months later), but the commander-in-chief seethed. "Goddam it, I can deal with anybody except that son of a bitch," he complained. Montgomery was "a thorn in my side, a thorn in my side."

As if to compensate for such forbidden sentiments, Eisenhower proselytized like a man possessed by the true faith. "Every subordinate throughout the hierarchy of command will execute the orders he receives without even pausing to consider whether that order emanated from a British or American source," he decreed. In a conference with Alexander and Patton, he confided that he did not think of himself "as an American but as an ally." Patton told his diary, "Ike is more British than the British."

Yet in his ecumenical zeal, Eisenhower neglected the role his countrymen were to play in the last act of the Tunisian drama. II Corps officers had long speculated that the British intended to have Anderson's First Army capture Bizerte and Montgomery's Eighth Army capture Tunis. Those suspicions were confirmed when Alexander's staff unveiled a plan for the endgame that excluded II Corps except for the 9th Division, on the assumption that it would be too hard to supply British and American forces simultaneously around the shrinking Axis bridgehead. "Both Patton and I were speechless with rage," Bradley later wrote. "But since we were under strict orders from Ike to do what Alexander told us to do, we raised no objections."

Incapable of holding his tongue for long, Patton sent Bradley to Algiers in late March for a private talk with his old West Point classmate. Eisenhower seemed unaware of the British plan and, in Bradley's view, not terribly interested. Bradley offered several arguments: that leaving three

experienced American divisions on the sidelines was tactically foolish; that seconding the 9th Division meant returning to the bad habit of mixing national units; that the United States and its army had earned the right to be in on the kill.

"This war's going to last a long time, Ike. There'll be a lot more Americans in it before we're through," Bradley added. "Until you give us the chance to show what we can do in a sector of our own, with an objective of our own, under our own command, you'll never know how good or bad we really are."

Eisenhower nodded and studied the wall map in his St. Georges office. That afternoon he cabled Alexander, urging "a real effort to use the II U.S. Corps right up to the bitter end of the campaign." Over the next two weeks a new plan evolved in which part of the American force—but not the 1st Division, and only half of 1st Armored—would capture Bizerte. Demonstrating his skills as a staff courtier, Eisenhower deftly took credit for the revision. Alexander's original plan "seemed to me a bit on the slow, methodical side," he wrote Marshall, "and, in addition, appeared to contemplate the eventual pinching out of the U.S. II Corps…. Alexander sees eye to eye with me."

To Patton on April 5, Eisenhower wrote: "General Alexander has told me that your corps is *not* to be pinched out of the coming campaign."

Well laid though the plans were, they would not survive contact with the enemy. The greatest threat yet to Eisenhower's vision of Allied comity had begun to unfold in a dusty village called Fondouk.

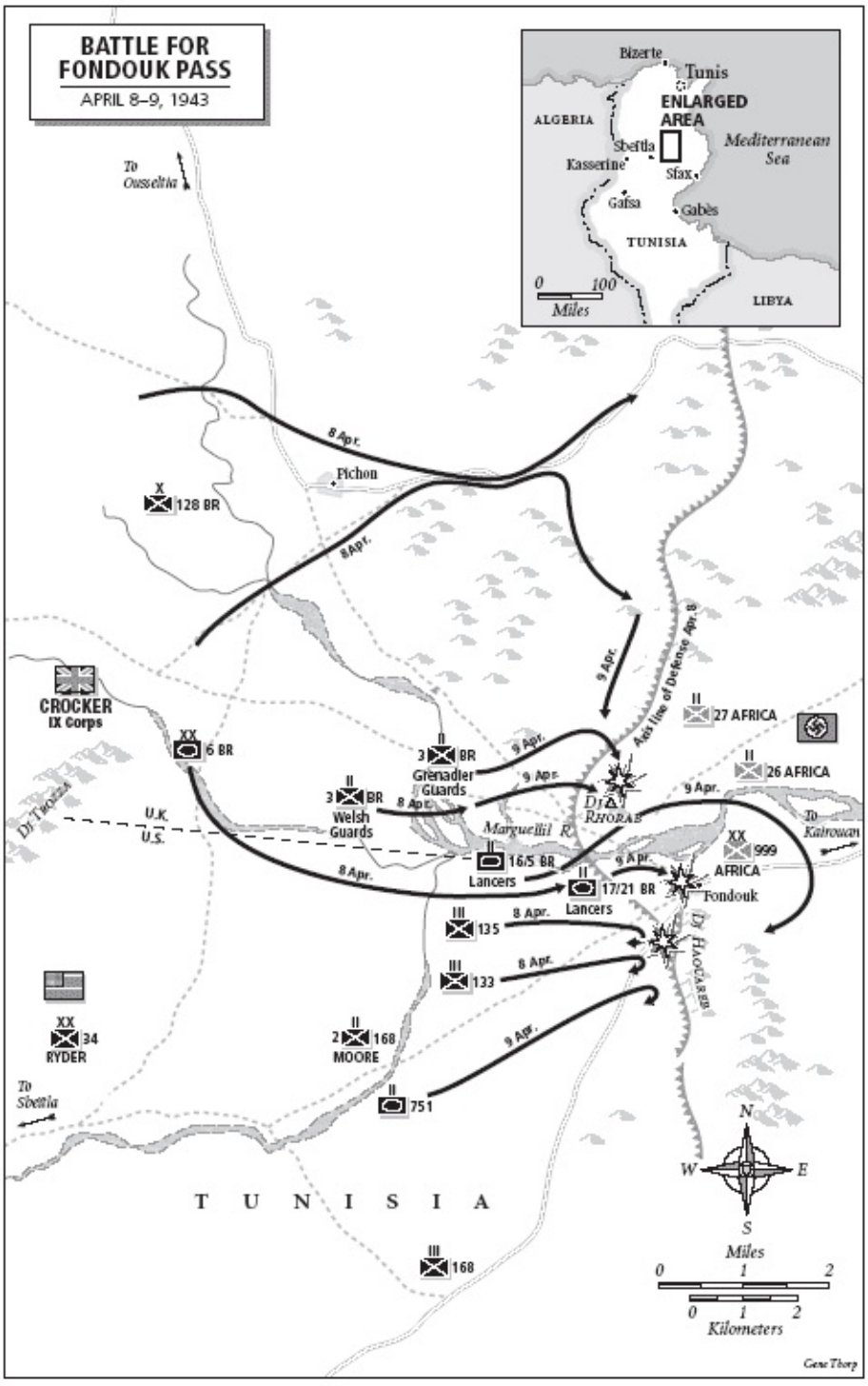
One final chance remained to intercept the fugitive remnant of General Messe's army before it reached the sanctuary of the Tunis defenses.

Midway between El Guettar and Tunis, the Marguellil River threaded a narrow pass through the Eastern Dorsal where Fondouk—a few adobe hovels and a mosque—straddled Highway 3 as it sliced toward Kairouan twenty miles to the northeast. Less than a thousand yards wide, the defile was bracketed on the north by a stony pinnacle named Djebel Rhorab and on the south by an equally stony escarpment named Djebel Haouareb. The shallow river wandered in muddy braids through the pass within the steep-banked wadi it had worn. Prickly pear and drooping olives dappled the 300-foot hills; so, in the splendor of a North African April, did marigolds, and crimson poppies like blood pooling on the rocks.

Germans infested these slopes, and had for months. They had blasted gun positions from the shale and built bivouac dens in the cliffs, appointed with stoves, beds, and occasional crucifixes. Gunners registered their artillery on the open approaches from the west and calibrated their mortars on all the dead spaces below the ridges. Fields of fire were nearly perfect. The defenders included two battalions of the 999th Africa Division, whose ranks were filled with court-martialed soldiers considered "suitable for rehabilitation" by fire. Many were convicted black marketeers, demoted officers, or *Schwarzschlächter*, "black butchers," who had illegally slaughtered livestock for food. Forbidden to wear national emblems, they sported no breast or cap eagles, no cockades or collar patches, no belt buckle insignia of *"Gott Mit Uns."* Discounting the formidable rehabilitative powers of German sergeants, British intelligence considered the units inferior.

This was a mistake, as American troops could attest. One halfhearted effort had already been made in late March to force Fondouk Pass. In harmony with the II Corps demonstrations at Maknassy and El Guettar, which were intended to siphon Axis forces from Montgomery's front, Patton on March 25 had ordered the 34th Infantry Division to "go out in that area and make a lot of noise, but don't try to capture anything." The division's three infantry regiments—the 168th, 133rd, and 135th—had

finally been reunited, and a homebody strain of Iowa and Minnesota still ran through them. But rough handling at Kasserine left residual scars both physical and psychic. In a March 11 message to his officers, Major General Ryder, the tall Kansan who commanded the 34th, decried “this military creeping paralysis present in our division” and the want of “offensive spirit.”



The first foray at Fondouk had proved Ryder’s point. Moving forward on a night so impenetrable —“dark as a stack of black cats,” one soldier said—that a guide with a lit cigarette walked ten feet in front of each vehicle, the division attacked with four battalions on a 3,000-yard front at six A.M. on March 27. By midafternoon, after struggling uphill beneath the frowning guns, the assault stalled 500 yards short of Djebel Haouareb. German machine guns roared through the next night, spitting lime-green tracers so thick that soldiers claimed to have read a newspaper by the light. A renewed attack on the morning of the twenty-eighth collapsed, as did various infantry maneuvers over the next three

days. At the 15th Evacuation Hospital near Sbeïtla, every square inch of the admissions tent, four ward tents, both surgical tents, and the evacuation tent was covered with bleeding boys from Fondouk, and nurses turned away more ambulances. As Patton had requested, the division made a lot of noise and captured nothing, at a cost of 527 casualties. Most losses fell on the star-crossed 168th Infantry, just replenished after the Sidi bou Zid debacle. Now its ranks needed filling again.

Belatedly, Alexander realized that only a much bigger force could crack the Fondouk gap. Caution and conventionality—jabs, short hooks, and frontal assaults—had characterized the six weeks of his generalship in Tunisia. Nearly 90,000 Americans had been used to peck at the Eastern Dorsal in three different spots, while a comparable force in Anderson's First Army had mostly sat on its haunches for the past month. Just as Colonel Lang had concluded that a more forceful American attack at Maknassy heights would have unhinged the defenders there, so senior Axis commanders came to believe that the African campaign could have ended a month sooner had Alexander struck a quicker, bolder blow at Fondouk.

Now he tried to make amends. The 34th Division would join with the British IX Corps and French troops, more than tripling the Fondouk force. Infantrymen would prise open the gap along the Marguellil River, allowing the British 6th Armoured Division to sweep onto the coastal plain toward Kairouan. Messe's army, fleeing Montgomery and Patton in the south, was to be intercepted and destroyed before it merged with Arnim's Fifth Panzer Army in the north.

At eleven A.M. on Tuesday, April 6, trailing a banner of dust, Lieutenant General John Crocker arrived at Ryder's camouflaged tent in an orchard nine miles southeast of Fondouk. The British corps commander had arrived in Africa a few weeks earlier with a reputation that had grown steadily since his capable command of a tank brigade in France in 1940. Direct and sane, Crocker nevertheless harbored prejudices against the Americans. Some were trivial: he was credited with a caustic bon mot—"How green is our ally"—and he disliked the common Yank habits of eating only with a fork and smoking at table. More important, he considered U.S. forces so weighted with equipment that it "handicapped their strategic mobility." American officers tended to be "very ignorant and the staff had little idea of how to operate forces." Americans also seemed given to fantasy, retrospectively elevating the Kasserine debacle into a victory. To his wife a few weeks earlier, Crocker had written that in dealing with Americans "it is necessary to watch your step and wrap anything that one has to say which is the least critical or which savours of advice in the most tactful language." They were "a queer lot with many nice ones…. So far as soldiering is concerned, believe me, the British have nothing at all to learn from them."

It was regrettable that Crocker thought so, because his plan for Fondouk was flawed. Earlier in the week, he had proposed seizing Djebel Rhorab in the north with the British 128th Infantry Brigade, while Ryder's men attacked in the south toward Djebel Haouareb, scene of their recent repulse. Now, however, fifteen officers in Ryder's stuffy tent huddled around a large map mounted on plywood—colored paper squares represented the various battalions—to find that Crocker had amended the scheme in hopes of accelerating the armored push toward Kairouan. Djebel Rhorab was only weakly held, Crocker asserted, so British infantrymen would initially swing farther north, "denying" the hill to the enemy but not actually occupying it until the American attack was well under way. American artillery could blanket the hill with smoke shells, but not with high explosives lest they hit the arriving British troops.

Ryder was stunned. Just a week earlier, his division had been blistered with fire from Rhorab, which jutted to within 500 yards of Crocker's proposed avenue for the American attack. Surely the Germans had since reinforced an already formidable position. "I had a plan based on our conference of a few days ago," Ryder replied evenly, "but now I have none." He pointed out the vulnerability of his troops, which would face galling fire from both north and east. Crocker waved away these objections.

Speed and maneuver would overwhelm the thin defenses. Ryder stared at Crocker with pursed lips, then shrugged. Eisenhower's orders seemed clear enough: subordinates were to salute and carry on, disregarding nationality.

Now another officer spoke up, *en français*. General Louis-Marie Koeltz, commander of the French XIX Corps, knew this ground from personal heartache. The Germans had routed his troops here in January to capture the high ground they now occupied. In his sky-blue uniform and gold-spackled red kepi, Koeltz pointed out that the American approaches were "entirely flat and completely exposed except for a row of cacti." His own reconnaissance showed that a frontal attack would fail. Blue eyes flashing, tidy mustache twitching in his ruddy face, Koeltz added, "We could take out Djebel Rhorab from the north, because in this region the infantry could be supported by tanks." The rolling terrain and dense olive groves there would offer attackers more cover than the naked ground approaching Djebel Haouareb.

Crocker listened politely, then reaffirmed his plan. "My intervention had no effect," Koeltz later said. "Having to express myself in French, I may not have been well understood."

It went badly, of course. Fatalism settled over the 34th Division, which collectively bought $26 million in life insurance that spring, mostly on the eve of the Fondouk offensive. Chaplains stayed busy hearing confessions or ministering to the doubtful. A head count at church services one Sunday in April tallied almost 7,000 worshippers, nearly half the division. In a handwritten note, Alexander told Eisenhower that troops in the 34th Division "seem reasonably confident about tomorrow's operation, and I do hope it will go well." To Brooke, however, he pronounced them "soft, green, and quite untrained…. Is it surprising then that they lack the will to fight?"

As the 135th Infantry commander later conceded, no officer in the division favored this attack, "but no one was saying so to the others." British planning was derided as "brittle and axiomatic… inflexible." Ryder had been wary of the British since the invasion of Algiers and now, unjustly, he believed that they "wished to win the war with American troops and matériel." At Fondouk, that meant expending the 34th Division so the 6th Armoured could bust through to Kairouan unscathed.

Perhaps, Ryder mused, the division could tiptoe past Djebel Rhorab before dawn. He successfully petitioned Crocker for permission to advance his attack from 5:30 A.M. on April 8 to three A.M. His men laced toilet paper in their helmet nets so they might see one another in the dark, while rehearsing the challenge—"Grocery?"—and countersign—"Store." They picked at a final meal of hardtack and "thousand-bone" oxtail soup, then nibbled the single slice of white bread served each man for dessert. At eight P.M. on Wednesday night, the regiments packed into trucks for assembly areas west of Fondouk. A half-ton truck for carrying out the dead trailed the convoy, bold white letters on its side proclaiming: "The Stuka Valley Hearse—Death Rides with Us."

At 2:30, in a shallow wadi, each rifleman dumped his overcoat and collected two extra bandoliers of ammunition. Colonel Ray C. Fountain, a former federal bankruptcy referee in Des Moines who now commanded the 133rd Infantry, informed his officers: "I have been told that there will be tremendous aerial bombing support which will flatten everything—something we haven't seen to date."

There would be no bombing, tremendous or otherwise. Poor communications and confusion over the new attack time led to cancellation of the air strikes. As the two assault regiments pressed forward on a two-mile front, a battalion on the far left got lost in the darkness, veered into the river bottoms, and so completely undid Ryder's timing that not until 5:30, the original H-hour, did the assault begin in earnest.

They found themselves in the beaten zone almost immediately. "A wave of flying dust and steel

and lead was always before us," one soldier recalled. Daylight revealed 6,000 American infantrymen creeping through tuft grass too short to hide a cat. "We were like a pea on a plate," a sergeant reported. At 7:30, as plunging fire from Rhorab on the left and Haouareb straight ahead intensified, orders came to pull back 2,000 yards for another bombing raid that never materialized. By the time the troops moved forward again the Germans had their range. Gales of artillery swept the field; machine-gun rounds snipped the long-stemmed poppies, and antitank shells ricocheted end over end through the cactus like a buzzsaw. "We continued to move forward toward the enemy, standing erect like the British regulars charging up Bunker Hill," a young officer wrote.

Not for long. By noon all forward movement had stopped, 700 yards from Djebel Haoureb. Frantic men scraped at the dirt with bayonets and mess-kit lids, then lay motionless except to flick away the hot shell fragments burning through their twill uniforms. "The mere raising of an eyebrow attracted enemy fire," one sergeant in the 135th Infantry reported.

It never got better, not for two days. Tanks rumbled up in the early afternoon to inspirit the infantrymen, but instead attracted more fire. Within minutes four Shermans were flaming and the rest pulled back. Renewed attack orders at three P.M. went unheeded; the men "did little more than look up…and dig a little deeper," a lieutenant noted. Fifteen more tanks arrived at five P.M., but no rifleman would follow them, and soon another half-dozen burning hulls brightened the valley's long shadows.

General Crocker was fixated on when to unleash the 6th Armoured Division toward Kairouan, and he persuaded himself that perhaps Djebel Rhorab had been neutralized or even abandoned. It had not. By midafternoon, enemy skirmishers halted British infantrymen more than a mile from the crest. Throughout the next day—April 9—a Guards battalion fought a ferocious "boulder-to-boulder" battle that left every officer in two British companies dead or wounded. At 3:30 P.M., thirty-four hours after the Allied attack began, Djebel Rhorab fell. More than one hundred German prisoners were captured, but a like number escaped. The Welsh Guards' losses alone totaled 114, a hefty price for a hill considered inconsequential.

A hard night for Ryder's men had been succeeded by another hard day. "The hill looked bigger than ever," a lieutenant in the 133rd Infantry wrote of Djebel Haouareb. In the American ranks, "not a soul could be seen moving." Troops went to ground and would not rise except to skulk rearward on various pretexts. "There was no cover or concealment," a company commander in the 135th Infantry reported. "Mortar and artillery fire was so heavy that the dust cloud formed by the shell fragments looked like a smoke screen." Three American tank attacks outran all artillery and infantry cover, and were forced to beat a quick retreat. One battalion commander asked to be arrested rather than press the fight another hour; his request was granted. Acts of valor were as conspicuous for their singularity as for their gallantry. "We are going to get on top of that mountain and brew tea on the backs of those dead Germans," one private bellowed. His platoon leader replied, "Private, you are now a sergeant. Let's go."

They went—but there would be no tea-brewing, not yet. Alexander himself broke the impasse by ordering Crocker to crash the pass with an armored spearhead, the faltering Americans be damned. Word filtered down the ranks that the "gap must be forced…like a covey of partridges flying over the guns." "Goodbye," one squadron commander told a comrade. "I shall never see you again. We shall all be killed."

Not all, but enough, including the prescient commander. No sooner had the 17th/21st Lancers pressed forward a few hundred yards—the unit's heritage included an alarmingly similar charge at Balaklava in 1854—than the lead Sherman radioed: "There's a hell of a minefield in front. It looks about three hundred yards deep. Shall I go on?" The reply came immediately: "Go on. Go on at all costs." Mines ripped the front ranks, and fifteen German antitank guns took most of the rest. Crews spilling from their flaming turrets were machine-gunned before they touched the ground. Thirty-two

tanks were lost. Two surviving Shermans clattered to the rear with dazed Tommies clinging to the hulls. Some men were burned so badly that their smoldering battle dress set fire to blankets in the armored carriers hauling them to an aid station.

Foolhardy or not—tank men would debate the matter for years—the audacious assault won through. Another squadron, the 16th/5th Lancers, followed on, veering to the left along a narrow, navigable lane that angled into the Marguellil wadi. “The tank rocked like a tug in the high sea,” a British captain wrote. “On we went, engines revving, Browning rattling, guns crashing, being flung backwards and forwards and from side to side.” Bulling through the fenny bottoms, the tanks began to emerge late Friday afternoon more than a mile beyond Fondouk village. American infantrymen trailing far behind on the southern slopes were amazed to see the Tommies pause to build tea-brewing fires in the lee of their Shermans even while shrapnel rattled off the hulls. The unhinged enemy—seven Axis battalions eventually fought at Fondouk, including the rehabilitated though much reduced convicts—slipped away at dusk through the wheat and wildflowers. Others remained at their guns, stone dead and half-buried in spent brass. “Their faces were as smooth and white as marble statues,” one Yank lieutenant recalled.

Once again, the breakthrough came too late. The retreating Italians in Messe’s army had tramped past Kairouan on the night of April 8–9, silhouetted against the domes and minarets. Feeling little pressure from Montgomery or Patton, the Germans trundled through the next night, looting local hotels of linen, cutlery, and mattresses as they went. After learning that remnants of the 10th and 21st Panzer Divisions lurked somewhere ahead, Crocker chose to lay up for the night rather than push into the coastal plain in darkness. By ten o’clock on Saturday morning, April 10, more than a hundred British Shermans had cleared Fondouk Pass to grab 650 prisoners and destroy fourteen enemy tanks. But the bulk of the enemy army escaped to the north in another of those tawny dust clouds that receded just beyond artillery range.

That evening Kairouan fell, and Allied troops marched through the five gates piercing her crenellated walls. “Lovely fluted domes looked like white velvet on a scarlet carpet, so thick were the poppies in the fields beneath them,” wrote the correspondent Philip Jordan. A British sergeant offered a less romantic view of the city, though it dated to A.D. 671 and was considered the fourth holiest in all Islam: “To us it looked just the usual wog town.” Arabs stared impassively from shops in the labyrinthine souk, but French children handed sprays of pink mimosa to the liberators, and Jews wept with joy at being told they could remove their yellow stars. Tommies pinned the discarded stars to their own caps or handed out matches so the Jews could burn them.

Burial details combed the Fondouk battlefield to collect the dead before looters stripped them; grave robbers had become so bold that chaplains carried carbines. The British had lost thirty-nine tanks and an uncertain number of men in addition to the Welsh Guard casualties on Djebel Rhorab. “Always that terrible, torpid stench of burned flesh,” wrote the Reverend G. P. Druitt, chaplain of the 16th/5th Lancers. He had just removed a charred corpse from a wrecked Sherman. “It seems to hang in one’s nostrils for days.”

American losses in the past three days totaled 439, including more than one hundred killed in action. Wrapped in white mattress covers, the dead were lined up for trucking to another new cemetery. “It is only by the grace of God that I am here to write this today,” a soldier in the 135th Infantry told his parents in Minnesota. In the evacuation hospital, surgeons worked all night, steam rising from each incision in the cold air. The stoicism of British tankers particularly impressed the medicos. “You couldn’t make them complain even when you had to strip the burned skin off their hands and faces,” the 109th Medical Battalion reported. Among the wounded Americans was Robert Moore, commander of the 2nd Battalion of the 168th Infantry, who had been tossed from a slit trench by the German bomb that killed his radio operator. Temporarily blind and deaf, Moore was evacuated

to the rear where a soldier who had known him in Villisca described him a week later as "still very dazed and shaky…a sad and worried man. He spoke several times of his wife Dorothy and of daughter Nancy and wondered if he would ever see them again."

A great opportunity had been lost. Messe's troops closed on the Tunis bridgehead at Enfidaville, forty miles south of the capital and the most formidable position occupied by the Axis since the loss of El Alamein five months earlier. Now the Tunisian campaign would become a siege. How long it would last was anyone's guess, and the setting wanted only battering rams and boiling oil dumped from the ramparts to complete the medieval ambiance. Fondouk had been an ugly battle for the Allies, particularly after the frustrations of Mareth, Médenine, El Guettar, Maknassy, and Wadi Akarit. Alexander's strategy had been plodding, Crocker's tactics impoverished, American battleworthiness suspect. A bad plan was badly executed, and the long stern chase up the Tunisian littoral had come up short despite the capture of 6,000 Germans and 22,000 Italians in the past month.

Yes, a great opportunity had been lost, but there was always time for recriminations. Crocker fired first. In an ill-advised philippic to a group of officers visiting from Algiers on Sunday morning, April 11, he declared that "all commanders from Major General Ryder downwards in the 34th U.S. Division were too far in the rear of the troops they commanded" and that leadership "by junior officers was very weak indeed." Holding the 34th wholly responsible for the failures at Fondouk, he recommended it be withdrawn from combat duty for retraining in the rear "under British guidance." One of the visiting American generals, Harold R. Bull, was so alarmed at Crocker's "severe and caustic" comments that he immediately flew back to Algiers to warn Eisenhower.

Worse yet, Crocker or someone close to him had fed similar remarks to four war correspondents. Dispatches soon published in the United States suggested that "Rommel" had again made fools of the Allies. *Time* magazine reported in its April 19 issue that Fondouk was "downright embarrassing" for the Americans and had "afforded a sharp comparison between British and U.S. troops…. All day the British worked their way efficiently along the ridges; all day the U.S. troops tentatively approached but never stormed the first of their heights."

Ryder declined to rise to the bait, saying only, "The British were damn good." But bad feelings percolated through all ranks. Crocker's battle plan was likened to the Light Brigade's charge or the costly British frontal assault against General Andrew Jackson at New Orleans in January 1815. "I do not believe the British know any more about how to fight an armored division or how it should be organized than we do," said Ernie Harmon, the new commander of the 1st Armored Division. Chaplain Druitt of the 16th/5th Lancers evinced little Christian charity in telling his diary that the Yanks "have failed to take their objective as usual…. It is infuriating. We're missing the bus completely owing to the American failure." A British gunner passing an American convoy flipped an obscene gesture and barked, "Going to fuck up another front, I suppose?" And Tommies at mess sang a new ditty:

Our cousins regret they're unable to stay
For the Germans are giving them hell.

Eisenhower was both depressed and angry. The undeniable defects in American combat skills, while hardly as irredeemable as British caricatures suggested, left him feeling as low as "whale tracks at the bottom of the sea," Patton reported. The failure of military censors to suppress the damaging reports in *Time* and elsewhere so infuriated the commander-in-chief that he briefly advocated sacking

his censorship chief. But he took no action against Crocker. To Patton and Bradley, he wondered aloud whether his orders to American commanders to accommodate the British "had been taken so literally that they had been too meek in acquiescing without argument to orders from above, which they felt involved use of poor tactics." Ryder's supposed "soft-heartedness" in refusing to cashier incompetent subordinates also bewildered him. And Eisenhower was not above a little petty spite. "Ike says Alex isn't as good as he thinks he is," his deputy Everett Hughes wrote in his diary. "He is up against some real fighting now."

There was irony in all this carping, visible only from the high ground of history. On average nearly a thousand Axis prisoners were tramping into Anglo-American cages every day. Allied forces were about to secure their fifth great battlefield conquest in a year, with a triumph that would join Midway, El Alamein, Guadalcanal, and Stalingrad as a milepost on the road to victory. More than 200,000 Axis troops were now penned like sheep in a Tunisian fold measuring roughly fifty by eighty miles, just large enough to bury two enemy armies. An entire continent would soon be reclaimed and an entire sea, the Mediterranean, converted into an Anglo-American lake. If American troops still seemed callow at times, one need only consider how far they had come since the bumblings of TORCH and imagine how far they would go once the greatest industrial power on earth had fully flung itself into total war.

That Eisenhower felt dispirited simply affirmed Wellington's maxim that "nothing except a battle lost can be half so melancholy as a battle won." To Marshall, he wrote: "I realize that the seeds of discord between ourselves and our British allies were sown, on our side, as far back as when we read our little red school history books." There was sense in that, just as there was in Eisenhower's prediction that "this war is not going to be won until we are in the heart of Europe." Between now and then, however many months or years it took, the task of keeping the Allied coalition unified in pursuit of a common goal would remain among the great military challenges of modern history. Chauvinism, vainglory, frustration, and grief—all these were centrifugal forces, pushing the alliance apart. As Eisenhower had only begun to appreciate, unity required perpetual vigilance and the skills of a master diplomat.

As for the troops at Fondouk, they glanced at the windrows of corpses in their white shrouds and looked away. Yesterday had never happened. There was only tomorrow, and the killing required tomorrow in order to reach the next day. Sergeant Samuel Allen, Jr., a former college student who had led his own swing band in the palmy days of peace, tried to explain in a letter home the flinty nihilism that made young men at war seem so old when they contemplated the dead.

"We have found that it is best to forget about those friends, not to talk about them," he wrote. "They don't even exist."

12. The Inner Keep

Hell's Corner

One hundred thousand strong, the Americans pounded north on four trunk roads beginning Sunday, April 11, as the Allies maneuvered to attack the Tunisian bridgehead. Dust whitened the convoys, giving the troops a spectral pallor despite their sunburns and the grit that blackened every frayed collar. They needed haircuts and shaves and baths, but more than anything they needed rest. The veterans—and most of them now qualified—possessed what Lincoln had inelegantly called "the tired spot that can't be got at." Ernie Pyle, who was with them as usual, wrote: "They were dead weary, as a person could tell even when looking at them from behind. Every line and sag of their bodies spoke their inhuman exhaustion…. They were young men, but the grime and whiskers and exhaustion made them look middle-aged." A sergeant wrote to his family in Iowa: "It'll soon be five months that a pup tent has been our home. Five months since I've even so much as sat at a table while eating."

North they pounded for 150 miles, another vehicle roaring by every thirty-seven seconds around the clock, precisely as planned, 30,000 vehicles all told, on highways that had carried Carthaginian elephants, Roman chariots, and Byzantine chargers. The desert fell behind. Once again, they were back in the northern hills where many had fought in November and December. The mid-April wheat was thigh high. Rock roses and ladies' fingers bloomed along the roads, and poppies spread like flame on the slopes in "hilarious, shouting bands of color." Gorgeous banks of blue convolvulus resembled wood smoke in the middle distance, or, to the jaded eye, a foaming mortar barrage. Hawthorne budded. Apples blossomed. The songs of cuckoos spilled from the thickets.

God's bounty meant nothing to these men. Beneath the vernal landscape every soldier now saw topography, just as a pathologist can see the skull beneath a scalp. A streambed was not a streambed but defilade; pastures were not pastures but exposed fields of fire. Laurel thickets became ambush sites, and every grove of cork trees might hide a German 88. No soldier could look at this corrupted terrain without feeling that it had become sinister and deeply personal.

Not even a Tunisian spring could hide the battle scars. Refugees trudged on the road shoulders, floured by the dust of the passing trucks. Only rubble remained where for centuries there had been towns with names like Sidi bou Zid and Sbeïtla and Medjez-el-Bab. Once-pretty Béja, with its rambling walls and hilltop Byzantine towers, was posted with yellow signs warning all pilgrims of typhus.

To Béja they were headed, or near it, as part of the grand scheme for the coup de grâce devised by Eisenhower and Alexander. The plan went like this: More than 300,000 Allied troops in some twenty divisions, with 1,400 tanks and as many artillery tubes, would attack in three main groups along a 140-mile arc that extended from Enfidaville south of Tunis to the Mediterranean coast west of Bizerte. Montgomery's Eighth Army would strike from the south with six divisions, angling for the capital while also preventing the Axis from converting Cap Bon—a large, stony peninsula east of Tunis—into an African Bataan that could hold out for months. From the southwest, roughly parallel to the Medjerda River valley, Anderson's First Army would attack toward Tunis with six British and three French divisions. And on the far left flank of the Allied line, the Americans would drive on Bizerte from the west with four U.S. divisions and three French battalions known collectively as the Corps Franc d'Afrique. "We have got them just where we want them," Alexander told his men, "with their

backs to the wall."

Getting the Allied divisions where *they* were wanted had required settling several fraternal squabbles. Influenced by Crocker, Alexander had intended to banish the U.S. 34th Division from the line for extensive retraining even as he acceded to Eisenhower's request that II Corps participate in the kill. He also was reluctant to commit all of the 1st Armored Division, "owning to its present low state of morale and training." Also, Allen's 1st Infantry Division was to withdraw to prepare for HUSKY, the invasion of Sicily.

Patton howled. The Americans now had 467,000 troops in northwest Africa, more than 60 percent of the Anglo-American army. Most were earmarked for HUSKY or were part of the immense Yankee logistical apparatus. But Alexander proposed taking the Tunisian laurels with a force almost wholly British. "Frankly, I am not happy," Patton wrote Alexander on April 11. If the U.S. Army appeared to be "acting in a minor role, the repercussions might be unfortunate." A day later he wrote again, proposing that the 34th Division be kept with II Corps to "restore its soul" and warning that because it was a National Guard unit "its activities assume local interest of great political significance." In other words: congressmen from Iowa and Minnesota would react poorly to any humiliation of their boys by British officers. At Patton's request, Bradley carried this second letter to Alexander's headquarters in Haïdra. "Give me the division," Bradley told the field marshal, "and I'll promise you they'll take and hold their very first objective."

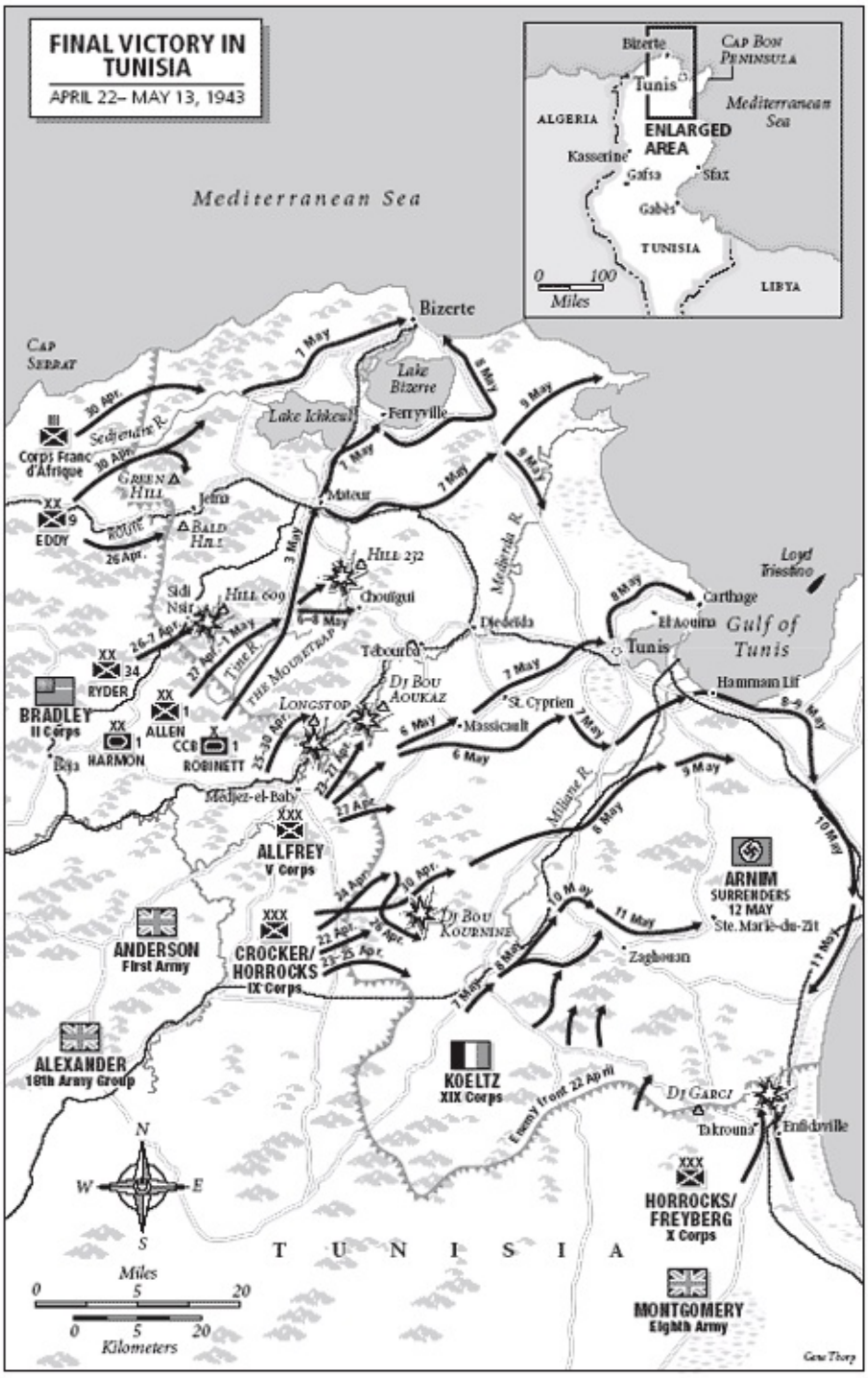
Intrigued, Alexander brushed off his staff's objections and told Bradley, "Take them, they're yours." After further negotiation, all four American divisions in II Corps were to be included in the attack: American logisticians had demonstrated that they could supply U.S. troops without disrupting the British lines to Anderson's army, in part by using 5,000 trucks to stock dumps near Béja and by hiring *balancelles*—fishing smacks—to ship ammunition from Bône. Patton had also objected to again subsuming II Corps into Anderson's command after it had been reporting directly to Alexander for more than a month. Anderson did little to woo back the estranged Yanks when, upon reviewing their plans for capturing Bizerte, he flicked his swagger stick at the map and said, "Just a childish fancy, just a childish fancy." ("I'll make that son of a bitch eat those words," Ernie Harmon later vowed; Patton informed his diary, "I would rather be commanded by an Arab.") Again Alexander acquiesced, authorizing the II Corps commander to appeal any disagreeable order from Anderson directly to Alexander. Running counter to the usual rigidity of combat etiquette, this arrangement was not merely unorthodox but even improper.

So the Yanks were coming, lots of them, although British troops still constituted nearly two-thirds of Alexander's army group. If in his quest to transcend chauvinism Eisenhower remained aloof from issues of national honor, Marshall did not. Citing a "marked fall in prestige of American troops," he warned Eisenhower on April 14, "Please watch this very closely." The need to prove that U.S. troops were the battlefield equals of any—a compulsion dating to World War I—remained a powerful force in the American military psyche.

The actors had taken their positions. Now the curtain was set to rise for the last time in Africa. Two brawny Allied armies would attack two eviscerated Axis armies, with the British angling from the south and southwest, and the Americans driving from the west.

On April 18, II Corps officially relieved British troops around Béja. But when the U.S. command post went up in tents on a farm two miles northwest of town, one man was conspicuously absent: G. S. Patton, Jr. As Eisenhower had long intended, Patton had quietly surrendered the corps command in order to complete preparations for Sicily, now less than three months away. In forty-three days he had

become a national hero, fought the best German tank forces to a draw, and gone far toward building a reputation as "our greatest fighting general," in Franklin Roosevelt's phrase. Yet—as perhaps even he realized—his tenure had been checkered at best. For all Patton's melodramatics, his influence on the esprit and discipline of II Corps was marginal. Even when allowances are made for the restrictions imposed by Alexander, he had demonstrated little tactical flair at El Guettar, Maknassy, or the first Fondouk. Sweeping envelopments by rampaging tanks, he was discovering, were nearly as rare in this war as they had been in the last.



Despite Eisenhower's praise for "the outstanding example of leadership you have given us all," Patton would leave Tunisia with his thirst for glory unslaked. His frustration can be seen in his orders to inflate the estimates of damage inflicted on Axis forces by II Corps: padding the body count, this would be called in a later war. According to three accounts left by senior staff officers, Patton

disputed the initial assessments of enemy losses. “It wasn’t ‘colorful’ enough—didn’t make the operation look big enough,” Lieutenant Colonel Russell F. Akers, Jr., the corps assistant operations officer, privately told Bradley’s aide after the war. “Result: we doubled figures on equipment damaged, destroyed, or captured intact.” Patton’s chief intelligence officer, Monk Dickson, recorded the following conversation in mid-April:

Patton: Your estimates of enemy killed and wounded are absurd. We handed them ten times that many casualties.
Dickson: Sir, we counted all their graves that we could find, interrogated both medical and combat people, and checked their rolls…. Experienced soldiers are hard to kill.
Patton: Add another cipher to both totals.
Dickson: Sir, I can not conscientiously do it.

The II Corps after-action report sent to Algiers asserted that 800 German graves had been counted on the road from Gafsa to Gabès. Enemy equipment that II Corps claimed was destroyed on the ground and from the air between March 15 and April 10 included 128 tanks, 850 other vehicles, and 300 artillery tubes and machine guns—numbers that are certainly inflated, whether or not at Patton’s behest. Because the final report was still in preparation when Patton left, Akers added, the departing commander “gave me his signature on a piece of paper, which I traced onto the stencil when it had been cut.”

As he left Gafsa, Patton picked a bouquet of nasturtiums and laid them on Dick Jenson’s grave. Nearly 800 other American boys were buried there with the young captain. He wept at the sight, never bad behavior in a general. His final diary entry before he left Tunisia was vintage Patton:

> As I gain in experience I do not think more of myself but less of others. Men, even so-called great men, are wonderfully weak and timid. They are too damned polite. War is very simple, direct, and ruthless. It takes a simple, direct, and ruthless man to wage war.

On Thursday morning, April 22, Patton’s successor arrived by jeep on the crest of a leafy hill outside Béja. He was a bespectacled six-footer, with a high, convex forehead and thin hair that had been graying since his cadet days. Now he was fifty, just. The jut of his jaw was often mistaken for a sign of pugnacity; in fact, a boyhood skating accident had shattered his teeth and left him with a lifelong reluctance to smile for photographers lest they make, as he put it, a “permanent record of that jumbled mess.” He wore a tatty field jacket and canvas leggings, making him “the least dressed-up commander of an American army in the field since Zachary Taylor, who wore a straw hat,” one witness observed. Unscrolling the map of northern Tunisia that he carried under his arm, he clipped it to an easel, then turned to the small band of correspondents who had come to take his measure and hear his plan.

Omar Nelson Bradley had moved to center stage; there he would remain for the duration and beyond. He descended from hardscrabble Missouri farmers and one itinerant schoolteacher, his father. Eisenhower had contributed a generous accolade for his classmate’s yearbook entry at West Point: “True merit is like a river, the deeper it is, the less noise it makes.” Like Patton, Bradley could be simple, direct, and ruthless, but the similarities ended there. Profanity offended him and he had never even tasted alcohol until the age of thirty-three; his teetotaling wife, Mary, flew into a rage at the

spectacle of intoxication—hardly rare on Army posts. His cultivated image of homespun humility—he was "the G.I. General"—was not so much wrong as incomplete; he also possessed an intolerant rectitude and a capacity for dissimulation that in lesser men might devolve into deceit. Hunting was his great passion—when he was stationed at Fort Benning he often tramped into the Georgia swamp before breakfast to shoot the heads off water moccasins; in Tunisia he settled for rocks tossed into the air by his aides. He had a born infantryman's feel for terrain, with a detailed mental map of every significant swale and ridge from Béja to Bizerte. Of the fifty-nine members of the West Point class of 1915 who became generals—'15 was "the class that stars fell on"—Bradley had been first to win the rank. Arabs, assuming that "Omar" was a Muslim name, were pleased that one of their own had achieved such stature in the American Army. Patton wryly complained that Bradley was simply "too damned sound."

With map unfurled on the easel and pointer in hand, Bradley quickly explained the impending campaign in his flat, sodbuster twang. "He laid down his schedule with no more panache than a teacher outlining the curriculum for the new semester," recalled A.J. Liebling, among those squatting at his feet. Mateur was the key to Bizerte. The 9th Division would take the far left flank along the sea—skirting Green and Bald Hills, where the British had found so much trouble. The other two U.S. infantry divisions—the 1st and 34th—would attack farther south, through Sidi Nsir and the hill country below it. The 1st Armored Division would exploit any breakthrough onto the coastal plain leading to Bizerte.

Bradley neglected to mention that his first act as corps commander—even before he repealed Patton's necktie directive—had been to disobey a direct order from Eisenhower. In a patronizing "Dear Brad" message on April 16, the commander-in-chief noted that "the southern portion of your sector appears to be reasonably suited for tank employment and it is in that area that you will be expected to make your main effort." This proposed route, through the narrow Tine River valley, was such an obvious German ambush site that II Corps had dubbed it the Mousetrap. Certain that such an attack invited disaster, Bradley simply ignored the proposal and ordered his commanders to avoid the Mousetrap. He likened the job ahead to "hunting wild goats." By hugging the high ground—"djebel hopping," he called it—troops were to avoid the vulnerable bottlenecks that had cost so many lives in the past five months. The attack would take time; there were many djebels to hop and many goats to hunt. Axis sappers had spent months fortifying the hills with pneumatic drills, concrete, countless mines, and six artillery battalions. In the II Corps sector, the enemy now mustered an estimated 12,000 infantry troops, and that number would more than triple in the next two weeks.

Bradley took a few questions, climbed back into his jeep, and vanished down the hill. Reduced to half a page with a single map, his battle concept was sent to the British V Corps, which abutted the American zone on the south. General Allfrey studied it and then shook his head. "This chap Bradley," he was reported as saying, "obviously knows nothing about commanding a corps."

Although the endgame was just beginning on the ground, it had been under way for weeks in the air. Overwhelming Allied air superiority might be hard to see from the bottom of a slit trench at Béja, but it was all too visible to the Axis wretches caught in Allied bombsights. Thousands of tons of high explosives had been dropped on ports, airfields, and marshaling yards across northeast Tunisia, Sicily, and southern Italy, with thousands more to come. Bizerte had been hit so hard that not a single structure in the city was habitable. "We attacked Bizerte with the intention of blotting it off the map," said one Army Air Forces general. That was not boast but fact. Raids on Tunis concentrated on docks and airfields, but the pummeling still killed 752 civilians and wounded more than a thousand; pinpoint

accuracy was out of reach for B-17s flying at 23,000 feet through flak so heavy the route became known, bitterly, as the Milk Run. A single raid on Palermo blew up an ammunition ship, sank seven other freighters, and generated waves powerful enough to toss two coastal lighters onto the quay; the port was immobilized for weeks. In another raid, three Italian destroyers ferrying a panzer battalion to Tunisia were sunk. Six men survived to tell the tale.

Allied minelayers north and east of Tunisia became so proficient that Axis vessels were forced to cross the Sicilian Straits through a single swept channel a mile wide and forty miles long. Ultra eavesdropping revealed ship manifests and sailing times in such detail that Allied targeteers could select their prey on the basis of which cargo they most wished to see on the Mediterranean floor any given day. A solitary, pathetic scow carrying fuel or tank shells might draw fifty attacking planes. American aircrews calculated that on average twenty-eight tons of bombs sufficed to sink a midsized merchantman; a typical formation of eighteen Flying Fortresses dropped twice that tonnage, and crews came off the target singing “It’s Better to Give Than to Receive” over their intercoms. In March alone, more than three dozen Axis ships had been sunk on the Tunisian run, and with them nearly half the military cargo and fuel intended for Arnim’s forces.

Consequently, Kesselring turned to air transport more and more. By early April, 200 or more flights a day—organized in wave-skimming convoys called *Pulks*—carried men and matériel to Africa. The Allies responded, beginning on April 5, with Operation FLAX, a series of ruthless fighter sweeps and bombing raids. On their first FLAX mission, U.S. pilots bushwacked fifty Ju-52 transports and their escorts; in what was described as a “general air mêlée,” seventeen German aircraft were shot down at a cost of two American planes. Bombers also dropped nearly 11,000 twenty-pound fragmentation bombs on targets in Bizerte and Italy. By day’s end, Luftwaffe losses reached thirty planes in the air and many more on the ground.

Worse was to come. On April 18, Palm Sunday, four squadrons of the American 57th Fighter Group—the Black Scorpions, the Fighting Cocks, the Exterminators, and the Yellow Diamonds—joined a Spitfire squadron over Cap Bon for the final patrol of the day. Sixty fighters were “spaced up into the sky like a flight of stairs, each line of four planes abreast making a step,” according to a contemporary account by Richard Thruelsen and Elliott Arnold. “The bottom of this flight was at four thousand feet. The Spits, at the top, were at fifteen thousand feet.” Purple shadows were stretching across Cap Bon when the pilots suddenly spotted several V-formations of Ju-52s and six-engine Me-323s six miles off the coast. “They were flying the most beautiful formation I’ve ever seen,” one pilot said later. “It seemed like a shame to break it up.”

Splitting into pairs, the marauders attacked from the right rear, quickly disarranging the perfect Vs and picking off the stragglers. A pilot described his first victim: “A short burst left his port engine burning. The flame trailed the whole length of the plane. The center or nose engine was also on fire.” Blazing planes cartwheeled into the violet water or crashed on the Tunisian beach. “The sea turned red and a great circle of debris bobbed in an oily scum,” a witness reported. “From the beaches rose the tall black columns of a dozen funeral pyres.”

Thirty-eight Luftwaffe planes were destroyed. Twenty more were shot down the next morning, then another thirty-nine on April 22, including many carrying cargoes of fuel that burned like winged hellfire during the languid, corkscrew descent into the Mediterranean. In less than three weeks, FLAX destroyed 432 Axis aircraft at a cost of thirty-five Allied planes; the losses included more than half the German air transport fleet. A flyboy cockiness invested Allied airfields. “If Kesselring goes on making mistakes like this, we’re not going to get much of a reputation,” Air Marshal Tedder observed. At Göring’s insistence, Axis flights took place only in darkness; with spring days ever longer, there were only about sixty sorties each night to bring Arnim supplies and reinforcements.

Although a quarter-million Axis men crowded the bridgehead, only one-third of them were

genuine combat troops. Most others were noncombatants from the Italian logistical tail that had been organized for an army with pretensions to a vast colonial empire, or rear-echelon soldiers from divisions destroyed in Rommel's long retreat across Africa's northern rim. Reduced to fewer than a hundred guns, the Italian army "was in agony," one general observed. Arab black-marketeers did a brisk business in safe-conduct passes sold to Italians keen on slipping across no-man's-land. Allied pilots and artillerymen papered the Axis ranks with propaganda sheets encouraging defection and dissent; these were the initial barrages of nearly 4 billion leaflets—equivalent to 4,000 truckloads—that would be printed in the Mediterranean in the next two years.

Axis reserves were still ferried to Tunis at a rate of about 2,000 men each day, but most frontline units were beyond reconstitution. The 15th and 21st Panzer Divisions had roughly 5,600 men each, while the 90th Light Africa was down to 6,000 and the 164th Light Africa numbered only 3,000. The Italian Centauro and Spezia Divisions had been obliterated, and three others had been reduced, collectively, to eleven scarecrow battalions. General Messe warned that "the repulse of a large-scale enemy attack is impossible with the amount of ammunition on hand." By late April, a Luftwaffe anti-aircraft unit had trouble scrounging the thirty-five gallons of fuel a day it needed for its radar sets. A German staff officer noted that "an armored division without petrol is little better than a heap of scrap iron" an armored division without tanks was even less. The Axis armor fleet numbered fewer than 150 tanks, barely a tenth the Allied force. The 15th Panzer had four tanks fit for battle. Arnim rejected several counterattack proposals as pointless "butting at the mountains." When a senior officer visiting from Berlin accused Army Group Africa of "squinting over its shoulder," Arnim tartly replied that he was "squinting for ships."

As early as December, the German high command had discreetly considered what transport would be needed for a complete evacuation of the Tunisian bridgehead, but those contingency plans had been shelved in light of Kesselring's unflagging optimism. When Kesselring later proposed a "comb-out" of extraneous personnel, Hitler refused on grounds that selective evacuation would hurt morale. Although Allied intelligence estimated that in early April the Axis could still remove 37,000 men a day from Tunisia, not until mid-month did a limited, belated evacuation begin of the *mangiatori*—"useless mouths." Mouths unfortunate enough to be considered essential got little to eat: an Italian soldier's diary indicated that his daily ration comprised half a mess tin of cold rice, a couple of potatoes, and a slice and a half of bread.

If his virtual abandonment of the African army seems daft in hindsight, Hitler as usual could spin a logically coherent strand within the larger web of his lunacy. On April 8, he and Mussolini met in a castle near Salzburg to conspire. Il Duce's former strut was gone. Every Allied step closer to Tunis was a step closer to Rome. Naples and other cities in the south were being pummeled from the air. Strikes and peace demonstrations racked Turin and Milan. Depressed and feeble, Mussolini renewed his plea for a separate peace between Berlin and Moscow; the Axis could then turn full force toward the Mediterranean, holding Tunisia while falling on the enemy rear through Spain and Spanish Morocco.

Hitler dismissed this scheme. Of Mussolini's proposals, only standing fast in Tunisia interested him. After the disaster at Stalingrad, recent German successes in the Kharkov counteroffensive—three Soviet armies had been obliterated in less than a month—had revived the Führer's craving for complete victory over the hated Russians. As long as the Anglo-Americans concentrated their strength on the periphery of the Axis empire, they could not attempt major operations elsewhere. Tunisia, he told Mussolini, was shielding Italy and the rest of southern Europe. The Führer also recognized that the final loss of North Africa would further undermine Mussolini at home, perhaps fatally, imperiling both the defense of the Italian homeland and the Axis itself. Tunisia must be defended to the last ditch.

Il Duce's backbone was stiffened by Hitler's rhetoric. He agreed that the bridgehead should hold "at all costs"—that portentous phrase used so glibly by those far removed from the firing line. "Everything can happen if we persist," he told Kesselring in Rome on April 12, "and therefore we shall hold." The next day—Tuesday, the thirteenth—Arnim was told there would be no mass evacuation.

Appalled at what he called "this liquidation," Arnim later acknowledged "the greatest desire to call it quits and to ask to be relieved." Instead, he saluted the order, began cobbling together infantry battalions from his cooks and clerks, and turned to the task of digging that last ditch.

Hammering Home the Cork

As the Allied armies converged on the bridgehead, their engagements increasingly occurred simultaneously. For narrative simplicity, they may be considered one at a time, beginning with Eighth Army in the south.

Montgomery's horde swaggered toward Tunis as cocksure as a street fighter eager to put an opponent on the pavement one last time. Tommies sorted through booty abandoned by retreating Axis troops, including American swimsuits captured at Kasserine and a box of Italian regimental silverware left on the road like an oblation. A cool swank pervaded the ranks and even the muddle-headed cries of *"Vivent les Américains!"* from liberated villagers failed to prick the high spirits of an army that had its quarry's scent.

Montgomery had known since April 11 that Alexander intended First Army to make the main Allied thrust toward Tunis. Gentler terrain clearly favored an armored blow from the southwest rather than due south, where the coastal plain narrowed to a funnel barely a mile wide and frowned upon by hills that were high, steep, and twenty miles deep—"bald rock faces, gullies, and abominations," as the official British history put it. This Montgomery could accept; he had urged Alexander to "concentrate all your strength" for *"an almighty crack"* in one spot, and as requested he donated his own 1st Armoured Division and an armored car regiment to First Army toward that end.

But Montgomery was not a man to relinquish laurels easily, particularly to those he considered his military inferiors, which included virtually everyone. "It would be all right if Anderson was any good, as he could do it all," he wrote in his diary on April 12. "But he is no good." To Alexander on April 16 he cabled: "All my troops are in first-class form and want to be in the final Dunkirk." Although, under Alexander's plan, Eighth Army was to contribute little more than a hearty feint, Montgomery still hoped to beat Anderson to the Tunisian capital by "gate crashing" the Axis bridgehead with a four-division assault on the rocky massif above Enfidaville.

It is axiomatic in mountain warfare that the second-highest crest is often worthless ground, but Eighth Army now launched a campaign to capture a chain of second-highest hills. After years in the desert, the abrupt change in topography was pleasing to the eye—for 1,800 miles these men had dreamed of green hills and wildflowers—but tactically confusing. Montgomery's increasing reliance on brute force played badly here: even overwhelming firepower had a limited effect on sloping, fissured terrain that sheltered defenders and swallowed vast tonnages of bombs and artillery shells. Eighth Army units were badly understrength after the travails of the past year, and up to one-quarter of the remaining infantrymen would be needed to haul ammunition over ground often too rugged even for mules.

Such handicaps seemed manageable to the British, because their intelligence had concluded that the Enfidaville fortifications were lightly held, with six or eight demoralized German battalions and some hapless Italians supposedly facing the X Corps sector. (Soon that estimate of enemy forces

would triple.) But Montgomery was convinced he could "bounce the enemy out of Enfidaville," just as he believed he had little to learn from the amateurs in First Army and II Corps, despite their six-month apprenticeship in Tunisian hill fighting. Now arrogance and error would reap the usual dividends.

Even the second-highest crests had substantial foothills that served as watchtowers shielding the inner keep. Among these, three miles west of Enfidaville, was Takrouna, a 600-foot limestone knob crowned with a domed mosque, an old Berber fort, and adobe houses on three levels. General Messe himself took a hand in arranging its defenses, manned by 300 Italian infantry troops. "In an endeavor to rouse the spirit of emulation," Messe later explained, "I included a platoon of Germans in the garrison." Freyberg's New Zealanders—specifically, the Maori tribesmen of his 28th Battalion—attacked this "rotting stalagmite" just before midnight on Monday, April 19. For two days, the battle scorched Takrouna's pale faces, up and down rough-hewn steps, through secret tunnels, and in and out of one blood-spattered room after another.

Reinforcements hurried forward on both sides. By Wednesday morning, there was "never a moment that the top of Takrouna was not half-hidden by shellbursts [and] tracer shells streaking in a slight arc across the valley and ricocheting crazily among the houses," one commander later wrote. Italian troops shinnying up a rope tossed grenades into a makeshift Maori dressing station full of wounded soldiers, prompting reprisals that included chasing enemy soldiers over the precipice at bayonet point and tossing two prisoners after them. "One of those grim moments," an official New Zealand account conceded, "when all control is lost."

"Sergeants were promoting themselves to platoon sergeants, corporals to sergeants, and so on. In many cases they were no sooner promoted than they were wounded," a battalion commander, wounded himself, later recalled. Harrowing fire reduced two Maori companies to fewer than twenty men each, and nine of twelve company commanders in the attack were killed or wounded. Takrouna finally fell—General Horrocks considered it "the most gallant feat of arms I witnessed in the course of the war"—but at a Pyrrhic price. Kiwi losses amounted to 459 men, including 34 officers. More than seven hundred prisoners were captured, three-quarters of them Italian.

But that was it: this far and no farther. A simultaneous attack by the 4th Indian Division against Djebel Garci, five miles to the west, captured a few tactically insignificant acres at a loss of another 500 men. Both valor and bloodlust equaled those on Takrouna. A Gurkha platoon commander, who had suffered a dozen wounds to his head alone, played dead before rejoining his men in the dark to renew the attack. "My hands being cut about and bloody," he recounted, "I had to ask one of my platoon to take my pistol out of my holster and to put it in my hand." Gurkhas—short, swarthy Nepalese warriors said to tire only when strolling across flat ground—reportedly took no prisoners, delighted in decapitating enemies with their long, curved *kukri* blades, and calculated Axis losses by the number of enemy wristwatches adorning Gurkha arms at the end of any fight. But they met their match on Garci, where knives and stones supplemented rifles and artillery. "In the darkness men grappled and slew each other," an Indian witness reported. "Every gain drew a counterattack from desperate men pledged to hold the heights at all costs."

For the first time, the enemy seemed willing en masse to fight to the last cartridge. A new, homicidal desperation fired the battlefield, stoked by the savage intimacy of boulder-to-boulder combat and the Axis recognition that the next step back would put them in the sea. Men grew gray for lack of sleep. Stretcher bearers stumbled up and stumbled back, their legs rubbery and palms blistered raw. By April 22, Axis shelling seemed heavier than ever and the Tommies lay low all day to "wait for the enemy to get over his ill temper," one commander said. A Scots officer reported that his Highlanders had stopped carrying bagpipes into battle because the pipers were invariably hit and pipes themselves had grown too dear, at £80 a set. News of Eighth Army's difficulties elicited an

uncharitable schadenfreude in the Allied ranks. “Let’s radio Monty,” Bradley quipped, “and see if he wants us to send him a few American advisers to show his desert fighters how to get through those hills.”

Weary and distracted by preparations for HUSKY, Montgomery now threatened to make a bad situation worse with an abrupt change of plans. If his men could not force their way through the hills, he would fling them up the narrow coastal road in an effort to reach Bou Ficha and then Tunis. After issuing orders to suspend the mountain attacks and prepare for a frontal assault up Highway 1, Montgomery flew to Cairo for three more days of Sicily planning. He returned on Easter Monday, the twenty-sixth, with a raging case of tonsillitis, to find his subordinates—particularly the division commanders Bernard Freyberg and Francis Tuker—in surly rebellion at a plan that appeared to put the army commander’s personal ambition ahead of tactical prudence. Irritated and feverish, Montgomery took to his caravan bed. “The big issues are so vital that we have got to force this through here,” he croaked. Horrocks threw up his hands in exasperation. “Of course we can break through,” he snapped before storming from the trailer. “But there won’t be much left of your fine Eighth Army when we have done it.” Montgomery just grunted as the door slammed.

Even the most irresistible force occasionally encounters an immovable object, and for Montgomery Enfidaville was that object. After years of fighting and the months-long tramp across Africa, Eighth Army had “rather a sad and stale air,” a British intelligence officer later wrote. Montgomery and his staff “appeared to have lost interest. They never liked mountains.” A positioning attack to seize a ridgeline between Takrouna and the coast road foreshadowed the calamity to come if Montgomery persisted with his plan. The green 56th Division entered the line on April 26 after a grueling 3,300-mile overland trip from Iraq, and immediately suffered a battalion commander killed and the division commander badly wounded. The spooked survivors stampeded as if they meant to run all the way back to Kirkuk. “As they went up the slope I saw them waver, turn, and retreat,” an artillery officer later recalled. “It was only the second time I had seen our infantry running; the first was at Mareth…. It reminded me of the infantry in open order advancing on the first day of the Somme.”

Another Somme was the last thing the British Army needed, and to his credit Montgomery recognized the futility of persisting with this approach. “Am not, repeat *not* happy about present plan for finishing off this business,” he cabled Alexander at six P.M. on April 29. “Can you possibly come and see me tomorrow?” He was ready to let Anderson carry the fight by transferring two more divisions to First Army; the move would eliminate Eighth Army from the race for Tunis and essentially end its role in the African campaign. Such was war. Glory would have to be won in other fights on other fields. While waiting for Alexander to arrive, Montgomery dashed off a private note to Brooke in London. “I could almost burst into tears at the tragedy of the whole thing,” he wrote. “I have no doubt we shall put it right in the end, but we have lost a great opportunity, and we have lost a lot of good chaps.

“I sometimes feel,” he added, “I am beginning to need a short rest.”

As usual in Tunisia, Montgomery’s criticism was less a meditation on his own army’s performance than a churlish broadside at Anderson and First Army. He dismissed Anderson’s plan for capturing Tunis as “a partridge drive” with “all the seeds of failure.” Rather than concentrating that almighty crack at a single vulnerable point in the enemy’s thin line, First Army was dispersing its power in multiple attacks across a forty-mile front. If the French in the south and Americans in the north were included, that frontage stretched to ninety miles.

The merit of Montgomery's appraisal soon became clear, which of course afforded him satisfaction in direct proportion to Anderson's misery. The latter's plan had little nuance. Among other failings, he had inadequately exploited Allied airpower: having planned haphazardly, he frittered away his overwhelming strength in seventy different air attacks on forty-four separate targets. Yet with three armored and ten infantry divisions at his disposal, Anderson came to the reasonable conclusion that the fuel-starved Germans would be unable to parry multiple thrusts.

Operation VULCAN was just that: multiple thrusts. First, the IX Corps of General Crocker—fresh from the Fondouk unpleasantness—would attack on the British right to draw enemy forces from Allfrey's V Corps on the left. Then, sixteen hours later, Allfrey would thunder toward Tunis down the Medjerda valley, where Anderson rightly believed "the enemy's vitals" could be found. Finally, a day later, the Americans on the far left flank would begin their surge toward Bizerte, although they were not expected to actually reach it. Even less was expected from the French XIX Corps, wedged between the British First and Eighth Armies as a sop to Allied unity. Anderson intended to destroy Arnim's Fifth Panzer Army before wheeling south to take the First Italian troops from the rear as they faced Montgomery. The offensive was to last nine days. "We are going to annihilate finally the armies of von Arnim and Rommel—all of us together," he told his troops, still flailing at the Desert Fox's long shadow.

Kenneth Anderson was incapable of making a plan without diffidence—that "queer thing human nature" kept intruding—and VULCAN was no exception. "The plan's all right, but will the troops fight?" he asked General Evelegh. The 78th Division commander, whose men had been fighting and dying since those first grim weeks in November, hardly knew how to answer. At length he replied stiffly, "One can only plan in the expectation that they will."

The Germans struck first, as they so often did, with a spoiling attack code-named FLIEDERBLÜTE—Lilac Blossom—and timed by Kesselring for the night of April 20 as a birthday tribute to Hitler. Five battalions from the Hermann Göring Division, first formed as a state police unit in 1933, attacked south of Medjez-el-Bab with tanks from the 10th Panzer. Singing as they advanced, the enemy nevertheless achieved enough surprise that one British artillery officer in his tent, annoyed at the racket, hollered, "Go away, James, and stop making so much noise." But dawn exposed the attackers to galling machine-gun and artillery fire that tore great gaps in their ranks. By nightfall on the twenty-first, the line had been restored, with 450 Germans captured and thirty-three panzers destroyed. British losses were modest, and Anderson's timetable for VULCAN was undisturbed but for a four-hour delay in a single division.

Crocker launched his corps with a great belching of guns at 3:40 A.M. on Thursday, the twenty-second. By late the next day—Good Friday—he had shoved the 6th Armoured Division into the breach, punching ten miles through the German line and rousing hopes of a rampage to the sea. But the attack stalled. Murderous antitank fire and Wehrmacht counterattacks at a scabrous hill called Djebel Bou Kournine led to stalemate. The British 1st Armoured Division ended up almost where it had started, and other advances were limited to a few hard miles. A Tommy at Bou Kournine wrote:

> Men have begun drifting back in small groups, most of them badly shaken. They talk of crawling up sheer precipices to find every level expanse swept by machine gun fire; of wounded rolling all the way to the bottom; of tripwire mines and boobytraps on handgrip ledges; of areas automatically illuminated on approach by flares and bulbs, immediately drawing fire; of premature rifle shots from stumbling men, supposed to have given the game away; and of walls and caves and all sorts of cunning defensive devices on the summit, piled round the dead of previous assaults.

On April 26, Anderson ordered IX Corps to halt the futile, costly attack. Search parties scuffed through the ripening wheat at night, feeling with their feet for corpses; they soon stopped, having discovered that German sappers often mined fallow fields and then sowed grain so that the new crop would camouflage their handiwork. Wounded men filled the aid stations, their faces blued by starlight and shock. General Crocker joined them the next day, after being struck in the chest by debris from a new British antitank weapon; eager to show his troops that the gadget could penetrate a captured Tiger, he had instead set fire to a grainfield and put himself in the hospital. There he would remain for the rest of the campaign.

So it was up to Allfrey and V Corps. As planned, on the night of April 21 three battalions from Medjez-el-Bab had crept through the barley and olives to a staging area north of the Medjerda. They went to ground before dawn in gullies near the hamlet of Chassart Teffaha. Each man lay motionless in the scorching sun all the next day, alone with his thoughts and a clear view of the objective looming two miles to the northeast: Longstop Hill. As in late December, Longstop barred all traffic through the Medjerda valley and would have to be captured before any tank column could push up Highway 50 to Tébourba and Tunis beyond. Unredeemed even by April marigolds and gauzy sunlight, the double-peaked hill seemed more sinister than ever. Skeletons in moldering uniforms sat in the crevices where they had died during the Christmas battles, as if, one British general later wrote, "the ghosts of good soldiers gathered to watch."

Allfrey's attack opened at eight P.M. on the twenty-second, with a cannonade answered weirdly by a spring storm that whipped through from the north in a spectacular lightning display. Four hundred tubes roared from gun pits around Medjez, and the infantrymen rose from their holes to scramble up the lower slopes. "The flashes of those guns, we hoped, were visible in Tunis as a sign of the wrath to come," BBC correspondent Howard Marshall reported. "Stripped to the waist, the gunners kept up their stream of fire while our infantry advanced close behind the barrage." The imperturbable Alexander was among those watching through field glasses from a Medjerda meadow, "like a crowd of spectators watching climbers on the face of the Eiger." Magnesium flares and artillery detonations illuminated tiny dots ascending the slope, followed at a distance by the slightly larger dots that were pack mules. These periodically broke in terror for the bottom: "fractious, four-legged children of Satan," a soldier-turned-muleteer called them.

Good Friday dawned with the attack behind schedule and the assault battalions exposed. A reporter in Medjez noted that "the whole ridge seemed on fire." Djebel el Ahmera—the western peak of the double-crested pinnacle belatedly discovered at Christmas—was to be seized by the 8th Battalion of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders on the theory that the Scots would find inspiration in terrain so like home. Instead, German gunners shortly after noon caught the command group in an open field, and their barrage slaughtered the battalion staff and its pipe major.

Heatstroke felled many of those the German shells missed. Soon half the battalion was down. The other half was exhausted, but enraged after a Wehrmacht prisoner whipped out a concealed machine pistol and gunned down several Jocks before being riddled with bullets himself. For the next several days, few prisoners were taken. "The Argylls had been roused to a state of berserk fury," observed Major J. T. McK. Anderson, who would win the Victoria Cross for his heroics at Longstop. "We just had a hate—at the Germans, the hill, and everything." Major Anderson's bayonet charge with thirty howling comrades finally captured el Ahmera; with the piper dead, the men settled for a windy harmonica player. But Longstop's second crest—Djebel el Rhar, every bit as recalcitrant as it had been in December—fell only on Easter Monday, after British tanks crawled toward the summit. "The hill was an infernal sight, smoking and reeking," a reporter wrote. Three hundred grenadiers were permitted to surrender, their Zeiss binoculars and tins of beef tongue immediately seized as spoils of war.

Longstop had fallen, this time for good, but V Corps was running out of steam as surely as IX Corps had in the south. The Argylls had been reduced by two-thirds. More than five hundred men of the British 1st Infantry Division were killed, or wounded, or went missing in a Good Friday assault along the right bank of the Medjerda, and 329 more were lost the next day in just two battalions. Twenty-nine of forty-five tanks reinforcing the infantrymen were destroyed or damaged; they were among 252 British tanks the Germans claimed in the last ten days of April.

Nowhere in Africa was the fighting more ferocious than on Djebel Bou Aoukaz—the Bou—a 700-foot hogback ridge four miles from Longstop and across the Medjerda. Three Guards battalions attacked the Bou and its spurs for more than a week while the Germans "threw everything but their cap badges at us." Day after day the rush of artillery and the cackle of machine guns rocked the hill; soldiers lay at night in their slit trenches with their pathetic parapets, hand-built of scree, inhaling the "pungent scent of rosemary and evergreen torn by shell splinters and freshened by the rain." When grenade supplies ran out the Tommies tossed rocks at the enemy, "just to keep them on the move." Bodies in the Bou's ripening fields were marked with rifles stuck bayonet-first in the ground, with a soupbowl helmet hung from the butt; the grave-diggers sent to collect the fallen one night reported that a hay field had sprouted "a forest of rifles." By the end of April, the 1st Irish Guards had been reduced to eighty men including a stretcher bearer who would eventually lose his wounded leg to a surgeon's knife but for now hobbled up and back, declaring, "I have no time for the gangrene." The 5th Grenadier Guards suffered almost 300 casualties in holding one ridge, including thirteen of sixteen officers, under shelling of such intensity that one lieutenant was reduced to observing: "There is no doubt about it: they are very keen to get this hill."

The hill remained in British hands, but the rest of the bridgehead still belonged to the enemy. By April 29, both Alexander and Anderson recognized that the V Corps offensive had stalled. Allfrey had advanced six miles in an arc on either side of the Medjerda, roughly the same distance gained by Crocker's corps, but he was still twenty-five miles from Tunis. The next day—Friday, the thirtieth—Anderson told Eisenhower that First Army in the past week had suffered 3,500 casualties, including roughly 900 killed. VULCAN had cost one man for every three yards gained. Many companies were reduced to fewer than two dozen soldiers of all ranks.

If British losses were heavy, so were German and Italian, and there was always consolation in that. Arnim now had sixty-nine functioning panzers in all of Africa. His reserves consisted of a single depleted tank battalion.

But still there was no Allied breakthrough, only heartache and death. Anderson rejected a truce proposal from the Hermann Göring Division to collect the dead, and at night the chinking of shovels from surreptitious burial details could be heard across the fields and orchards of the no-man's-land. A British chaplain who found a long-dead Guardsman near the Bou later described trying to inter the man quickly before dawn. "One arm was sticking straight up," the chaplain wrote. "We couldn't get it in the shallow grave. Every time we forced it down, it jumped up again, a gleaming white hand in the darkness.

"It is terribly hard to break a dead man's arm."

"Count Your Children Now, Adolf!"

WITH both British armies brought to a standstill, the final drive in the Tunisian campaign may fairly be said to have begun with the Americans. Omar Bradley's initial assault in the north was no less frustrating than those of the British—and certainly no more valorous. But once started the attack was never stopped, even when daily progress was measured in inches, and the drive that began Good

Friday can be seen as a continuous, two-week victory march to the sea that finally brought the U.S. Army battle honors fairly won.

"We are sitting in an old busted farmhouse, writing by candlelight," Terry Allen wrote Mary Fran on April 22. His black hair tousled, cigarette dangling from his lips, he wore the same frayed green shirt and trousers he had worn at Gafsa and El Guettar, now so mended by his orderly that the ensemble looked more like a quilt than a uniform. The aluminum stars on his shoulders were still those plucked from an Italian private two months ago. Even candlelight could not soften the tension in Allen's face or erase the crow's-feet etched deeper than ever around his eyes. Having turned fifty-five on April 1, he looked older. He had been to mass to pray for himself and his men, including those whom he inevitably had ordered to their deaths. "I'm hoping and praying that my scheme of maneuver is OK," he wrote. "The strain is rather tough and I'll be glad when this mess is over."

The guns finished his thought. Searing white flashes leaped from the pits and rippled along the ridgelines like heat lightning. The barrage, A. B. Austin wrote, "[filled] the hollows with light. It was if the hill waves really were pitching and rolling." A single 105mm howitzer firing at its maximum rate could lob 4,000 pounds of shells in an hour over a 43,000-square-yard area; American gunners now massed more than 300 guns, spitting eleven tons of steel each minute. The shells were fitted with new radar sensors that made the rounds detonate forty feet or so above the target, for optimal killing dispersion. After every concentration the gunners whooped, "Count your children now, Adolf!"

The infantry surged forward in Friday's first light, "a long, slow line of dark-helmeted forms silhouetted in the flash," Ernie Pyle wrote. As Eddy's 9th Division swept across a broad, twenty-eight-mile front on the left flank, Bradley threw the heft of his attack against the right with the 34th and 1st Infantry Divisions and the 6th Armored Infantry Regiment forming a thirteen-mile crescent on a northeasterly vector. The Big Red One shook out three regiments abreast, each with a two-mile frontage, lurching toward hills designated only by their height in meters, plucked from a map—350, 407, 400, 469, 575, 394, 346, 444. Ten enemy battalions awaited the assault, backed by Tigers. Guns boomed, mortars crumped, great gouts of orange and red streaked the hilltops, and smoke lay in dirty banks across the battlefield.

Within two hours they were in trouble if not in perdition itself, and Allen's prayers appeared to have gone unheard. Hill 350, looming above the southwest entrance to the Mousetrap, proved especially grievous for the 2nd Battalion of the 18th Infantry, which suffered 224 casualties on Good Friday alone. Her sister battalion, the 3rd, tallied another 138 assaulting Hill 407 two miles to the north; the commander wept at his losses. In the division center, artillery fell short for a long hour, inadvertently killing or wounding seventy men in the 16th Infantry. Soldiers found every slope seeded with antipersonnel mines, many of the kind known as Castrators or Bouncing Bettys because they sprang belt-high before detonating. In one company of the 26th Infantry, all the officers and the first sergeant were killed or wounded. A soldier in the 26th, hearing agonized shrieks from a wounded comrade, later reported: "I rolled over to him and he looked at me and pleaded, 'Help me. Please shoot me.'" The boy soon died, unassisted.

Into this maelstrom on Friday morning rode a short, sharp-featured visitor from Washington who promptly concluded that the troops lacked the requisite passion for closing with the enemy. Lieutenant General Lesley J. McNair had come to Tunisia to assess American battleworthiness, for which he was responsible as commander of U.S. Army ground forces. Unsociable, enigmatic, and half-deaf, a blue-eyed Scot from Minnesota, McNair had been the youngest American general in France in 1917. An artillerist and accomplished mathematician who carried a slide rule as other men carried pipes or Bibles, he liked to describe himself as a simple "pick-and-shovel man," but one associate likened him to "a Presbyterian pulpit speaker—all irony and intellect." "You may do the wrong thing," McNair often advised, "but do *something*."

Now McNair did something, and it was indeed the wrong thing. Arriving at Allen's "old busted farmhouse" at five A.M., he strode past the steaming manure pile in the courtyard, gulped down a cup of coffee, then argued bitterly with Ted Roosevelt—who showed up in *Rough Rider*—over the prudence of a three-star general's continuing closer to the battlefront. Undeterred, McNair eluded the officer assigned to escort him and pressed forward in a jeep with a large three-star placard on the bumper, bouncing toward the sound of the guns. After sweeping through the 26th Infantry on the left flank, he sped south to the 16th Infantry, grousing that "nowhere did I find anything other than 100 percent lethargy. There was not a bit of fight in the entire outfit."

McNair grew more liverish that afternoon, when he found much of the 2nd Battalion pinned down behind a hill and soldiers braying at him to "get the jeep the hell out of the area." Muttering at this "sorry picture of a fighting outfit" and ignoring more advice to stay back, McNair climbed the ridgeline to an artillery observation post, where he opened a large map to study the terrain. A dozen German shells landed harmlessly behind him before the thirteenth burst with a fierce crack on the crest, killing a company first sergeant. One steel fragment sliced through the rear lip of McNair's helmet, slowing enough so that it lodged in his skull instead of penetrating his brain; another gouged an eight-inch gash in his neck and shoulder, severing an artery. As blood soaked his open map, McNair observed, "I miscalculated my defilade." Rushed by jeep to the division clearing station for treatment with plasma and sulfa—the general grumbled when a surgeon scissored away his $16 tailored shirt—he was then hauled by Dodge ambulance over a camel track to an evacuation hospital north of Béja. Bradley soon appeared to pin a Purple Heart—accidentally upside down—on McNair's pajamas. Flown to a hospital in Oran before evacuation to Washington, McNair continued to complain that "American soldiers are not fighting."

That was untrue—a damned lie, really. Some 500 U.S. soldiers would be killed in Tunisia during Easter week, with another 2,000 wounded; no Pentagon calumny could diminish their sacrifice. While Allen's men struggled in the south to advance a few thousand yards a day, on the left flank General Eddy's 23,000 troops—his own 9th Division and 4,000 from the Corps Franc d'Afrique—pushed forward in vegetation so dense the men often had to crawl.

The 47th Infantry bulled through the sword grass along Highway 7 until Green and Bald Hills loomed into view. Charred wreckage from the three failed British attacks on the Jefna fortifications littered the roadbed and lower slopes. Rather than launch yet another frontal assault, the 47th began to gnaw at the German fringes on the morning of the twenty-third, demonstrating and distracting while her two sister regiments looped north to outflank the enemy in terrain long considered impassable.

Impassable it proved to be, at least at first. Division von Manteuffel—5,000 Axis soldiers in nine battalions—held the twenty-mile front between Jefna and the sea in fortifications so deep that some bunkers required ladders to enter. The 39th Infantry's attack north of Highway 7 started poorly when a German patrol bushwacked and captured 150 men, including the regimental commander, Colonel J. Trimble Brown. Less than an hour later, an intrepid captain, who had seen Brown and his band led away after surrendering their rings and watches, counterattacked with Company G, killing or wounding forty-five Germans, freeing the prisoners, and saving the day if not Colonel Brown's battle plans, which unfortunately disappeared with the fleeing enemy. Shortly before midnight Eddy relieved Brown, who collected his bag and bedroll before heading to the rear.

So it went day after day. Savage fighting raged across more nameless hills—432, 438, 513, 382—at such close quarters that soldiers struggled to stay awake for fear their snores would attract grenades. Peaks were captured and lost, captured again and lost again. Fog hugged the hollows, making them even more opaque and sinister. One officer likened the terrain to "being led into a dark theater after the movie had started." American gunners shattered enemy counterattacks with barrages of white phosphorus shells dumped so near to friendly lines that GIs stumbled out of the smoke with chemical

specks burning holes in their uniforms. Muezzins' calls to prayer from hilltop mosques drew gunfire from skittish troops convinced that the criers were signaling the Germans. Taking no chances, U.S. counterintelligence agents created a zone "free from Arabs" by forcibly evacuating a 400-square-mile swath east of Béja. Eddy's victualers procured 350 mules and fifty tons of fodder to haul supplies where no jeep could travel, and each pack train returned with dead boys trussed over the saddles.

The enemy held fast to Green and Bald, but north of Highway 7 the line slowly bent back. By April 27, the 39th Infantry was two miles north of Green Hill and threatening to envelope the entire Jefna redoubt. The 60th Infantry—though still licking its wounds from Maknassy a month earlier—pressed even farther east on the other side of the Sedjenane River; by month's end the regiment would cover twelve miles, almost half the distance to Bizerte. The Corps Franc d'Afrique edged along the coast with three battalions of men considered too politically volatile for the main French army; among the commanders were a reputed Spanish admiral, a Jewish doctor, and an anti-Vichy colonel who had been jailed in Morocco for helping Patton during TORCH. But most colorful by far was a company of *goums,* Moroccan tribesmen in filthy robes and sandals cut from old tires. As conventional soldiers the "goons"—as the Americans inevitably called them—were hopeless, routinely raiding Arab villages and carrying off native women. Still, they had their uses, particularly when word spread among the enemy that *goums* received a bounty for every ear collected, reportedly flicking them onto the paymaster's table as if counting off ten-franc notes. Many an Axis corporal slept with his cap pulled low. Silently the *goums* returned from their midnight raids with sandbags full of what may have been dried figs, though GIs eager to trade for souvenirs preferred to believe they were Axis ears.

"One more hill!" the American officers told their men each morning, always with the ironic inflection required when comrades lie to one another. Every captured pinnacle brought better artillery observation and thus a better opportunity to pulverize the next ridge with well-aimed fire. The infantry—having learned the hard lessons of El Guettar and Maknassy—maneuvered around the flanks to force the enemy back yet again.

"One more hill!" It was not true, not yet, but every man could sense truth beneath the fiction.

No hill loomed larger than the flattop called Djebel Tahent locally but better known to the Americans as Hill 609. Arnim's troops had retreated half a dozen miles across the II Corps front only to dig in deeper than ever, and by Monday, April 26, Bradley recognized that 609 was the linchpin of Axis defenses. Three miles northeast of Sidi Nsir on the American right, 609 dominated the countryside by virtue of its height and location: almost two thousand feet above sea level, it frowned down on all direct approaches from Béja to Mateur. A desolate mesa 800 yards long and 500 yards wide crowned the hill, which was dramatically faced with fifty-foot limestone cliffs on the south and east. From the summit, a man with a telescope could pick out individual house windows in Mateur twelve miles away and the hazy smudge of Bizerte another twenty miles beyond.

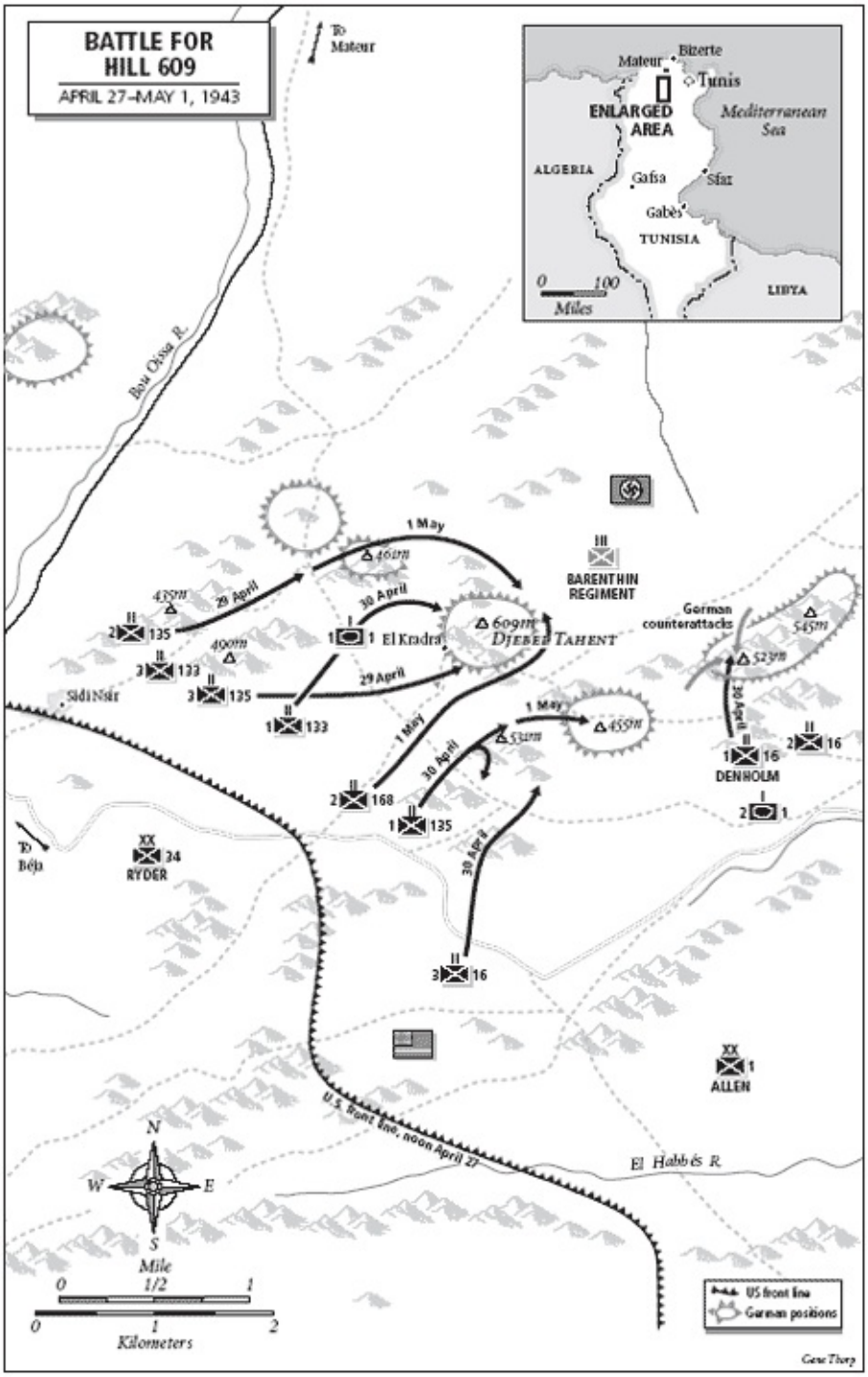
Except for a small olive grove 500 yards from the southern slope, the terrain offered little cover to attackers, while the limestone palisades provided countless knobs and crevices to hide defenders. Storks nested in fissures that formed natural chimneys up the cliff walls; machine guns now nested in scree at the base. Wind tossed the yellowing wheat on the lower slopes, making the hill undulate like a great breathing thing. Neighboring heights—461, 490, 531, 455—provided intertwined fields of fire manned largely by Barenthin Regiment soldiers drawn from the Wehrmacht's parachute and glider schools, who, in Alexander's assessment, were "perhaps the best German troops in Africa."

Anderson proposed simply ignoring the hill. In a phone call to Bradley's Béja command post on Tuesday morning, the British commander advised: "Never mind the enemy opposing you at Sidi Nsir.

When you have him on a hilltop, try always to get around him. I don't want you only to push the enemy back, but to get behind him and capture him before he can establish a bridgehead around Bizerte." Almost as an afterthought, Anderson requested the transfer of an American infantry regiment to reinforce the stalled First Army farther south.

Bradley was appalled, and privately concluded that Anderson was "in far over his head as an army commander." In a hastily arranged rendezvous that afternoon at Allen's battered farmhouse, Bradley clipped his map to an easel and explained to Anderson why 609 could not be wished away. The Big Red One had made enough progress to have an exposed left flank just a couple of miles southwest of the hill, from where German gunners had now begun to flay Allen's troops with fire. The 1st Division was more than two thousand men understrength, including a shortfall of sixty officers; new lieutenants received a fifteen-minute orientation lecture, then were shoved straight into the line. Allen lacked the muscle to bull ahead against the five enemy battalions on his front without risking a catastrophic counterattack from Hill 609 that would roll up his left wing. Furthermore, bypassing the hill meant returning to the vulnerable valleys and again drawing fire from every hilltop *Gefreiter* with a mortar tube. "All this depends upon our taking Hill 609," Bradley concluded.

Allen nodded vigorously, head swiveling to keep the cigarette smoke from his eyes. Anderson squinted at the map for a long minute, then also nodded. As for the loan of an infantry regiment, Bradley refused. "We'd like to help you, but you're asking me to do something I will not agree to without direct orders from Ike." To his staff he added, "This campaign is too important to the prestige of the American Army to take such risks." Eisenhower soon concurred, telling his corps commander, "Stand your ground, Brad."



To seize the hill, Bradley turned to troops whose self-esteem and reputation may have been the lowest in the U.S. Army. Since the fiasco at Fondouk three weeks earlier, the 34th Division had spent every day in intense remedial training, practicing night attacks, tank-infantry tactics, and—led by the division commander, Charles Ryder—marching fifty yards behind rolling artillery barrages. Now Bradley told Ryder: “Get me that hill and you’ll break up the enemy’s defenses clear across our front. Take it and no one will ever again doubt the toughness of your division.”

Nine battalions from the 34th swept toward Sidi Nsir along a 6,000-yard front on April 27. A mendacious German deserter had claimed that Hill 609 was held by only a war-worn rear guard, which could be overrun by a determined platoon of fifty men. “There was excitement in the air and the tone was for an immediate attack,” one captain later recalled. But Ryder recognized that what he called the “checkerboard of interlocking defenses” required that his men reduce the adjacent hills before attacking 609 itself.

Troops picked at their C rations, filled their canteens, and smoked last cigarettes. At dusk, each

soldier tied a white cloth to the back of his helmet so the man behind could follow him in the dark. Engineers marked paths through enemy minefields with white tape or rocks wrapped in toilet paper. Every few minutes, platoon leaders huddled under their blankets with red-lensed flashlights to check their compasses. “For the love of heaven and hell,” a company commander’s voice called in the darkness, “get going.” As they edged into the killing zone, the ripping-canvas sound of a German machine gun split the night, joined by a second and a third. “Our men were crouched gray shapes, running, falling flat, firing, running again,” one witness reported. Mortar rounds burst in the saddles between the hills, and yellow flares blossomed overhead. The men again fell flat, still as death except for the writhing wounded. Mines and booby traps detonated with a short, flat pop; more men writhed. “We lay there awaiting dawn, listening to the cries of a wounded man about a hundred yards down the side slope,” a soldier later recalled. “[He] weakened and finally became silent.”

Two attacks failed with heavy casualties, but by midday on Wednesday, April 28, Hills 435 and 490 had fallen between Sidi Nsir and 609. Four German counterattacks were repulsed. All day the valleys rumbled with artillery fire; the crack of shells splitting rock carried from the hilltops. Hundreds of men fell sick in apparent reaction to Atabrine, a synthetic antimalaria drug dubbed “yellow magic” and recently distributed in lieu of quinine, the world supply of which Japan controlled almost exclusively. Many would have preferred malaria. Weak and nauseated, they vomited down the front of their uniforms and fouled their trousers with uncontrollable diarrhea before rising on command in Thursday’s wee hours to stumble forward again.

Fog muffled every footstep as the 3rd Battalion of the 135th Infantry advanced 2,000 yards from Hill 490 to El Kradra, an Arab hamlet beneath the south wall of 609. Watching at first light, Drew Middleton reported that he could trace “the path of these soldiers through the wheat just as you would follow the path of Pickett’s charge through the summer wheat at Gettysburg.” But an attack against Hill 531 on the right was thrown back—the defenders wired together bundles of “potato masher” grenades and dropped them on GIs scaling the escarpment—and delays on the other flank left the battalion at El Kradra vulnerable to a German counterattack. Muzzle flashes erupted across the face of 609 like “tiny sparks, and the wind brought us the angry chatter of a machine gun,” Middleton noted. In disarray, the battalion retreated 400 yards from the village to shelter in the olives. Fleas from the village huts so tormented some men that they stripped to their shoes, helmets, and ammunition belts, then dunked their infested uniforms in gasoline. Hundreds of shells crashed across the crest of Hill 609—“it resembles an erupting volcano,” one soldier said—but the Germans held fast and the American momentum ebbed.

Ryder’s troubles at 609 had increasingly discomfited Terry Allen, who complained that his 16th Infantry was catching “unshirted hell” in artillery and mortar salvoes fired from the hill. At two P.M. on April 28, he had ordered all three 1st Division regiments to halt until the 34th Division could better protect his left flank. In a querulous phone call to Ryder, Allen asked how much longer the 34th needed to capture Hill 606.

“Don’t you mean Hill 609?” Ryder replied.

“No, I mean Hill 606. My division artillery has put enough fire on that hill to knock it down three meters.”

Another morning of inactivity on Thursday was more than Allen could bear. The corps’ casualties in the offensive now exceeded 2,400 men, and nearly half of those came in the Big Red One; while enemy losses were uncertain, only 400 prisoners had been captured since Good Friday. The 34th Division had been reduced to firing white phosphorus shells into the bunchgrass around 609 so that sharpshooters could pick off Germans flushed by the flames. Convinced that his own division’s fortunes were being dragged down by Ryder’s failure, Allen on Thursday stopped pacing long enough to order the 16th Infantry forward again. The unit was to seize Hill 523, another fortified butte a mile

due east of 609. Allen proceeded despite trenchant protests from the regimental commander, Colonel George A. Taylor, who considered the attack rash.

Impatience cost Allen dearly. In a moonless drizzle shortly after midnight on Friday, April 30, the 1st Battalion of the 16th Infantry crossed a wheat field from the south, climbed Hill 523, and by 4:45 A.M. had captured eleven Germans while killing or routing several dozen more. But dawn brought a quick reversal: in the gray light, figures in coal-scuttle helmets darted through a nearby earthquake fissure to surround the hill. The subsequent mêlée with Barenthin Regiment troops was "more like a street fight than a battle at any distance," one survivor reported. "We couldn't call for artillery because the forces were so close." The brawl, he added, disintegrated into "fist fights, coupled with grenades."

When the crack of artillery finally carried to Colonel Taylor's command post, a clerk noted in his log that "the sound is sweet to our ears"—then realized that those were German guns. Ted Roosevelt ordered a tank company up the hill, but mines and 47mm fire destroyed three Shermans in a narrow draw—the lead tank took more than two dozen hits—and others were repulsed short of the crest. Through breaks in the smoke, the bitter end could be seen from a nearby observation post, which at noon reported to Taylor: "The Heinies are all over that hill." By 12:30 the Germans had marched away more than 150 prisoners, including the battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel Charles J. Denholm; another hundred dead and wounded Americans were left behind. In the next twenty-four hours, Hill 523 was to change hands three more times.

Hill 609 would change hands only once, finally. Despite skepticism from his armor commanders—"No one in his right mind would consider putting tanks in mountains," one colonel warned—Bradley persuaded Ryder to order seventeen Shermans up the west slope at dawn on April 30. Clouds of infantrymen trailed behind, often grabbing the skirt of a tank with one hand while firing their rifles with the other. "God bless all of you," a company commander from the 133rd Infantry told his men. "We must succeed or die trying." Some did die: Private First Class Edward S. Kopsa of Grundy Center, Iowa, fell with a shell wound so gaping that his heart could be seen beating. "Tell my mother," Kopsa said, and the beating stopped. But within two hours, the tanks had covered almost a mile, machine guns rattling and main guns roaring. The reek of gunpowder saturated air that was already full of primitive shrieks and cries for help. By midafternoon, American soldiers had scrambled up a goat trail to gain the summit, where they winkled the defenders from their breastworks. Additional battalions enveloped the hill from both flanks, and among the first reinforcements to top the crest were Iowans from the 2nd Battalion of the 168th Infantry, including Company F of Villisca and Company E of Shenandoah. Feeble German counterattacks on May Day were shattered with artillery and automatic-weapons fire, and all along the line scouts reported enemy forces retreating or surrendering.

"Jerries approach our troops, some run, some fall on their faces, most of them are weary, haggard, wild-eyed, terrified men who swing arms above heads," the 16th Infantry reported. "A panorama of defeat, as vehicles, mules, and men walk toward the [GIs] with white flags fluttering." Others feigned surrender with white-flag ruses—Staff Sergeant Clarence T. Storm, whose wife worked in the Villisca five-and-dime, was among those killed by such treachery—and the GIs' disdain for the enemy grew murderous. "For twenty-four hours," Bradley noted, "few prisoners came in from the 34th Division's front."

The summit of 609 resembled hell's half-acre, a fire-scoured wasteland of spent brass, bloody bandages, and, oddly, family photos, as if those about to die had pulled them from their wallets for a last farewell. The dead Germans in their rock redoubts reminded one soldier of Civil War photos showing bloated corpses along the rail fences at Antietam. The tabletop "was literally covered with bodies," another wrote. "The stench was terrible." Although the hill was "pitted with shell craters,

thick as currants in cake," few holes were deeper than six inches: solid rock underlay the thin soil. After futilely trying to bury the dead in these shallow craters, GIs tossed them into earthquake rifts and a bulldozer plowed them over. "Those who went through it," wrote Ernie Pyle, "would seriously doubt that war could be any worse than those two weeks of mountain fighting."

The 34th Division had redeemed itself, although such fine notions seemed vacant in the immediate aftermath. Ryder put his losses at 324 men. The American dead were hauled from the hill in truck beds. "All you could see," an artilleryman later remembered, "was their shoes hanging off the tail gate." Across the valley, a staff officer in the 16th Infantry summoned a lieutenant preparing to lead a patrol back up Hill 523. "I don't believe I would take any prisoners on 523."

"No," the lieutenant agreed, "no prisoners will be taken."

But except for dead men and Colonel Denholm's map, the hill was empty. The enemy was gone. As Bradley had foreseen, the capture of Hill 609 unhinged enemy defenses across the entire front, from the Mediterranean to the Mousetrap. American troops bayed in pursuit. A reporter watching from 609 wrote, "At our feet every road was thronged with troops, guns, and supplies, pouring northward."

Outside Béja, Bradley sat on a metal stool in his tent, reading dispatches. He studied the map on the easel, now crisscrossed with blue and red crayon marks showing an enemy in full retreat and pursuers close behind. He was in good humor, chuckling often and, as his aide later recounted, "smoothing the sparse gray hair on his head and thinking aloud." Fresh reports arrived from the 9th Division in the north, the 34th and 1st in the south, and the 1st Armored Division, preparing to blow down the Tine valley on two mine-cleared routes named Broadway and Riley Street. The enemy appeared to be falling back as much as fifteen miles to the far side of Mateur. When another dispatch noted signs of a possible counterattack, Bradley nodded.

"Let 'em come," he said. "We want to kill Germans."

Mateur fell on May 3, three days ahead of Alexander's estimate. The 91st Reconnaissance Battalion entered the deserted town from the south and west at 11:30 A.M. just as German demolitionists blew up the last bridge across the Tine to the east; by early evening, Army engineers had a new span in place. A dozen roads and rail lines converged at Mateur, and its capture ended any Axis hope of concentrating against the British, who were still struggling in the Medjerda valley twenty miles to the south.

The land here flattened out before rising again in a final set of foothills that cradled two large lakes between Mateur and Bizerte. Swallows scissored the brilliant air, rich with the odors of manure and fresh-cut hay, and poplars marched along the road shoulders in perfect ranks. In a white manor house flanked by cypresses, troops found a biography of Bismarck open on the desk; soon they surmised that the mansion for months had served as General Hasso von Manteuffel's division headquarters. American scouts sat on a knoll overlooking the Tine, singing "Moonlight on the River Colorado." Others got drunk in a Mateur wine cellar, and the 1st Armored commander ordered them shot at sunset. "General," a staff colonel urged him, "I think we ought to let the men live until sunrise. It's customary." General Harmon reluctantly agreed, and on reflection commuted the sentence. Wounded Americans and captured Germans shared a farmhouse aid station near Mateur, "smoking, cursing, or grimacing." A GI who arrived by ambulance with a bullet in his lung gestured at a column of prisoners and murmured, "Tell the sons of bitches to go to hell."

Many thousands had retreated to the last bastion, the Lake Ichkeul hills. American gunners, wearing Barbasol shave cream as sunblock and head nets against the swarming flies, plastered them

with artillery that ignited the dry grass. “Arab shacks and straw burned with great fury, sending clouds of smoke into the air,” an officer noted. A company of Shermans from the 13th Armored Regiment was sent to overrun trenches sheltering a German rear guard. “Some of the enemy were buried alive when the side of the trenches collapsed under the weight of the medium tanks,” another officer reported. “Others were mowed down by the tankers’ machine guns.” Commanders urged them forward. “Here is our chance,” Eddy told the 9th Division. “Don’t let it slip away—push on!” Harmon ordered his tank crews to drive “like shit through a tin goose.”

The 1st Armored Division had been held on a very short leash for weeks, and its hour was about to arrive. The terrain now favored a pursuit by Old Ironsides’ 200 tanks, and Alexander scheduled the final assault on Bizerte for May 6, at the same time as a massive attack by First Army to break through to Tunis. Once again, though, the German defenses looked formidable, with antitank gunners on the approaches to Bizerte said to be “dug in to their eyebrows.” Hamilton Howze, who had returned to a line unit after Ward’s departure, later wrote: “In the time of waiting I confess I found out what fear is: it is a monkey’s paw that squeezes your liver in a heavy grip.” On a visit to Harmon’s command post southwest of Mateur, Bradley stood in a grainfield scanning the countryside. “Can you do it?” he asked Harmon.

“Yes, but it’s going to be expensive,” Harmon replied. “I’d guess fifty tanks to finish the job.”

“Go ahead. It’ll cost us less in the long run if we cut him to pieces quickly.”

Yet Harmon nursed his own doubts. If the 34th Division had been the Army’s most troubled combat unit before the victory at Hill 609, Old Ironsides after Kasserine and Maknassy was a close second. Harmon had spent his month in command trying to rebuild what he deemed “a crybaby outfit,” still fractured by divided loyalties to Ward and Robinett and “honeycombed with dissension.” But he had alienated many with his brusque approach, exemplified by a memo in mid-April that castigated the division for “lack of discipline, lack of system, and a general sloppy appearance.” And at dusk on April 13 he had summoned every officer to the slopes of Djebel Lessouda, where the charred wreckage from Sidi bou Zid lay scattered in the shadows. Harmon delivered a shrill rebuke, which, in Robinett’s description, “damned all past performance of duty, sparing none.” He concluded with a raspy warning: “The division will get to Mateur, but maybe you won’t.” Some men had the temerity to boo; most trudged off in dejection. “His speech was not very well received,” a lieutenant later wrote. “We all went to bed that night very much hurt.”

Now they had reached Mateur; but the biggest prize still lay ahead, in Bizerte. On May 5 Harmon drove to Robinett’s headquarters and led the CCB commander into an open field for a private conversation. With his massive skull and barrel chest, Harmon towered over his pint-sized subordinate. “Will the damned tanks fight?” he demanded.

“Damned right they will fight, as some are doing now,” Robinett snapped. “They have always fought and will fight again.” Never content to leave well enough alone, he then berated Harmon for questioning “the courage of these men.” Harmon turned on his heel and returned to his jeep, while a furious Robinett tromped back to the tent and composed a message to all ranks: “Towards the rear anonymous individuals have said that we are ‘not battle worthy.’ This insult to our glorious dead and to you, the courageous living, shall not be forgotten nor left uncontested.”

After that unpromising prelude, Harmon held a final planning conference for his lieutenants at the division command post a few hours later. The attack was set for first light the next morning, Thursday, May 6, with CCB in the vanguard. But Robinett’s behavior during the past month continued to gnaw at Harmon. Robinett “seems to think only in terms of defense and is definitely casualty

conscious," Harmon privately informed the War Department. "I do not feel that he has the qualities of leadership that are necessary in an armored division." Six months of combat had worn him down. As he watched Robinett drive away from the conference toward his own command post, Harmon muttered to himself: "Hell, that fellow isn't going to fight for me tomorrow." The judgment was harsh and probably wrong, but Harmon's mind was made up. Summoning his driver, he raced after Robinett to relieve him of command.

Harmon had nearly overtaken the jeep on the poplar-shaded road when the rush of German artillery split the air. A shell exploded a few feet behind Robinett, shredding his left leg and flinging him and his driver from their seats. More rounds crashed through the trees as soldiers appeared from the CCB encampment and bundled their wounded commander into an ambulance, which zigzagged through shell fire to the camouflaged command tent around the next bend.

Minutes later, Harmon pushed aside the canvas flaps and walked in "looking hard as rock." A glance at the mangled leg told Harmon that Robinett's war was over. Robinett looked up with glassy eyes. He had already relinquished command of CCB to Colonel Benson. In an hour he would be driven to the field hospital in Béja, vomiting in agony; a regimental band waited to serenade him with "The Missouri Waltz." A flight to Algeria and evacuation to the United States would be followed by many months of medical rehabilitation and a lasting hitch in his bantam strut.

"You are about to win a great victory," Robinett told Harmon thickly before stretcher bearers carried him to the ambulance, "and I only regret that I cannot be present to share the battle with my men."

Harmon shook his head. "Poor bastard," he muttered, then turned and strode from the tent.

Tunisgrad

THE most intense artillery barrage ever seen in Africa erupted in gusts of white flame at three A.M. on May 6. More than 400 Royal Artillery guns cut loose simultaneously on targets along Highway 5, five miles south of the Medjerda River. Here First Army had concentrated for the great lunge on Tunis, now code-named Operation STRIKE. "The muzzle flashes lit up the gun pits with a dancing yellow light, and the shells, tearing overhead at a rate of five or six hundred a minute, burst a few seconds later on the opposite slope like the flowering of a field of ruby tulips," a young officer wrote.

Determined to bury the enemy beneath "stunning weights of metal," gunners plotted one shell for every six feet of enemy frontage. (At El Alamein, the figure had been one shell for every thirty feet.) Shells shrieked "over our heads in an endless stream, so close, it seemed that you could almost strike a match on them," a witness declared. After half an hour the barrage lifted momentarily, then fell with redoubled vigor, marching eastward by 100 yards every three minutes. Seventy-two suspected enemy artillery batteries that had been pinpointed by gun flashes or aerial surveillance received lavish attention: each hostile battery was hammered on three occasions with two-minute concentrations by as many as thirty-two guns. The effect was "a roof of shells…destroying every living thing that moves." More than a few inanimate targets were also destroyed, including, as a scout sorrowfully reported, an oak vat containing 8,000 gallons of red Tunisian wine.

Behind the guns at 5:40 A.M. came the planes, again with a bombardment unprecedented on the continent. More than 2,000 Allied sorties would be flown this Thursday, beating a path from Medjez-el-Bab to Tunis. Fighters and bombers so thick they eclipsed the rising sun concentrated on a four-mile square around Massicault and St. Cyprien along Highway 5. Insult followed injury: clouds of propaganda pamphlets warned enemy survivors that they had been duped by "Rommel" and left to die alone in Africa.

Well before dawn, the infantry had surged forward on a 3,000-yard front, guided by a Bofors gun that fired three red tracers on a fixed line every five minutes. At Alexander's insistence, First Army had been reinforced with two divisions and a Guards brigade from Montgomery's horde. They had arrived more than 30,000 strong from Enfidaville over the past few days, fire-blackened tea tins banging against their yellow fenders; although headlights were authorized for the move, after years of blackout not one vehicle in five had working bulbs. No fraternal love was lost between the mountain tribe and the desert tribe—the two British armies were "as different as chalk from cheese," General Horrocks conceded—and Tommies in the 78th Division went so far as to paint signs on their vehicles: "We have no connection with the Eighth Army." But the added weight lent irresistible momentum to Anderson's attack, and by daybreak the British 4th Division and the 4th Indian Division had pried a gap two miles wide through enemy defenses.

Four tank battalions rushed through. Defenders not killed by artillery or air attack died at their posts or broke for the rear, tossing aside their rifles as they ran. Despite advance knowledge from intercepted radio messages about where the British would likely attack, Arnim was powerless; the Fifth Panzer Army had been reduced to fewer than seventy tanks, little ammunition, and even less fuel. By eleven A.M., British armor had penetrated 5,000 yards beyond the gap, with light losses. Anderson initially had proposed having his tankers linger to mop up stragglers, but Alexander overruled him. The tanks were to "drive with all speed and energy on Tunis," Alexander ordered. "The rapier," he later explained, "was to be thrust into the heart."

"The whole valley before us became a heaving sea of flame," wrote the American journalist John MacVane. "Over a dozen roads and trails, plumes of floury dust rose from the columns of vehicles." The stink of cordite and crushed wheat was nauseating enough to bring some men to their knees. Through "a thick pall of smoke and dust resembling ground mist," drivers bumped along in second gear, navigating by compass heading. The correspondent Alan Moorehead described seeing Alexander racing forward "at almost reckless speed, both his hands tight on the wheel and his face whitened like a baker's boy with white dust."

Allied eavesdroppers intercepted German radio messages sending medics into the line as riflemen; the walking wounded soon were ordered to join them. Another message, from Arnim's quartermaster, requested that no more ammunition be dispatched from Italy because there was no fuel with which to distribute it in Africa. A third message reported that the 15th Panzer Division had been "laid low…. Its bulk must be considered as annihilated." As German resistance disintegrated, the British vanguard was urged to press on with a prearranged code word: "Butter." Soon radios across the front were chirping: "Butter, butter, butter." By dusk, two armored divisions had reached Massicault, eight miles beyond the infantry and a day's march from Tunis. On a hilltop west of the capital a British colonel reported, "I can see the lily-white walls of that blasted city."

Eighteen Royal Navy destroyers patrolled the Sicilian Straits to prevent any last-moment Axis decampment. The ships' superstructures had been painted an unmistakable royal red after three accidental bombings by overzealous Allied planes. All waters within five miles of the Tunisian coast were declared a free-fire zone, and Eisenhower's naval chief soon reduced his order of the day to seven words: "Sink, burn, and destroy. Let nothing pass."

The righteous wrath of such orders fell heavily on 464 American and British prisoners-of-war embarked on the freighter *Loyd Triestino* for passage to Italian stockades. Marched through the wrecked docks of Tunis on the night of May 5, each man before boarding received a quarter-loaf of sour bread, a tablespoon of canned meat, eight prunes, and a scoop of Red Cross macaroni. Among the

Yanks were Lieutenant Colonel Denholm and the 150 men from the 16th Infantry who had been captured on Hill 523. German guards confiscated the prisoners' cash—always tendering a proper receipt in return—and limited their interrogations to wistful queries about whether captured Axis troops were being sent to camps in Canada or the United States. The 3,000-ton scow cast off at five A.M. on May 6, slowly steaming from a harbor so crowded with the protruding masts of sunken ships that one prisoner thought it looked "almost like a forest."

Three hours later the first Allied planes attacked, sinking a destroyer escort and driving *Triestino* to a cove sheltered by cliffs on Cap Bon's northwest shore. Terrified prisoners cowered in the dank hold as near misses opened seams in the hull and cannon fire riddled the upper decks. German anti-aircraft crews answered, and after a second attack blue smoke draped the listing vessel. Suffering from dysentery and limited to three filthy heads on the exposed weather deck, the men ripped up planks in the hold so they could defecate into the bilge. "The air," Denholm later reported, "was very bad."

With his ship slowly sinking, the Italian captain hauled anchor and wallowed back toward Tunis early on May 7. A third Allied attack put a bomb into the forecastle; it was a dud. More marauders swarmed above the ship as she neared Tunis harbor, with each near miss bringing frenzied shouts from the soldiers locked in the hold. "The ship seemed to jump out of the water, then settle back with a kind of quiver, which wasn't good," a lieutenant later recalled. "Not one of us doubted the transport was going to sink. We began beating the cage and yelling to be released." A fourth attack was too much for the thirty Italian crewmen, who "went completely to pieces," cut away the lifeboats, and—"hopping around like fleas"—dove into the water after them. The crewless captain steered for La Goulette, a fishing village below Carthage, and beached the *Triestino* on an even keel several hundred yards from shore. He and the German gunners freed the howling prisoners and then rowed off in the remaining lifeboat.

At least half a dozen more attacks occurred through the long afternoon. Only poor marksmanship and extraordinary good fortune spared the ship: more than one hundred bombs fell and every one missed except the dud. Tommies struck the Italian flag and Denholm's men laid out large red crosses on the weather deck with upholstery ripped from the ship's saloon. Pilots either failed to see the warnings or considered them a ruse; the attacks continued, forcing the men back into the fetid hold. A crude raft was launched toward La Goulette, but the wind blew it seaward. That night several Tommies swam ashore seeking help, and an intrepid Frenchman in a motorboat carried a plea to approaching Allied forces to stop the attacks. At last *Triestino*'s ordeal was over. Denholm reported more than four thousand cannon and machine-gun holes in her hull. Miraculously, only one man had been killed, three wounded.

* * *

Harmon's 1st Armored surged east in a light rain on the late afternoon of May 6. CCA angled toward Ferryville on the southwest shore of Lake Bizerte, while CCB sliced due east to control the roads between Bizerte and Tunis. German antitank guns were rooted out one by one; having predicted the loss of fifty tanks, Harmon in the event lost forty-seven. North of the two lakes, Eddy's 9th Division clattered down Highway 11 with orders from Bradley to "get the hell into Bizerte" and prevent sabotage of the port.

By Friday morning the enemy was reeling, leaving a wake of incinerated vehicles and charred German corpses. The reporter A. B. Austin recorded that "the women of Tindja and Ferryville were loading their perambulators with the bright, brassy German shell-cases. Flower vases? Umbrella stands?" A U.S. tank commander rumbled into Ferryville playing the *William Tell* Overture on his ocarina over the radio network. Cheering crowds waved tricolors at both the passing Shermans and Harold V. Boyle of the Associated Press, who stood in a jeep, waving and declaiming: "Vote for Boyle

/ Son of toil / Honest Hal / The Ay-rab's pal!" More cheers followed, and the slogan "Vote for Boyle!" became a standard greeting from the curbside throngs to baffled troops trailing the vanguard. Also puzzling was an enigmatic graffito soldiers began noticing on walls and road signs. Of uncertain origin, as ambiguous as it was ubiquitous, the phrase would follow them to the heart of Germany two years later. It read: "Kilroy was here."

With the 9th Division headed for Bizerte and 1st Armored tanks effectively cutting the Axis bridgehead in half, the Big Red One had little to do in the Tine River valley eight miles south of Mateur, and there lay trouble. Terry Allen was a fighting man with a compulsion to fight; inactivity was his bane. Ordered by Bradley to hold in place and prevent a counterattack by the Barenthin Regiment across the Tine, Allen on the night of May 5 concocted a plan to root enemy troops from the hills east of the river. His 18th Infantry Regiment commander opposed the scheme; so did Ted Roosevelt and several senior staff officers who argued at eleven P.M. that if left unmolested the Barenthin troops would feign a counterattack and withdraw east to flatter terrain. Allen wavered, prayed over the matter, and at midnight ordered the attack forward.

At 4:20 A.M. on May 6, the 18th Infantry surged from the Tine across Highway 55 and up the grain-gilded slope marked on Army maps as Hill 232. By 5:30 a flanking battalion was lost in the dark and several assault companies had been pinned down by scything machine-gun and mortar fire. "Bullets were singing all around now," Private Max B. Siegel of the 3rd Battalion told his diary. "Our boys were not doing so good. Many were hit and calling for medics…. I seen a few boys running back. I tried to keep low." Engineers finished bridging the Tine at seven A.M. but the span collapsed with a great crack after only four tanks had crossed. The 3rd Battalion commander stumbled back with fewer than three dozen shocked, silent men. Others lay motionless in the wheat until nightfall, to avoid drawing artillery fire. By four P.M. all battalions and tanks had splashed back across the Tine. Losses in the 18th Infantry totaled 282 men. The Barenthin slipped away in the night.

Allen was chastened, and even loyalists doubted his judgment. "My bloody foolish commander," complained Lieutenant Colonel John T. Corley, who in a storied combat career would win the Distinguished Service Cross twice and the Silver Star eight times. "We got the shit beat out of us…. It's the vanity of the commander. He wanted to be in on the kill."

Early on Friday afternoon, Bradley and Eisenhower arrived in the leafy glen west of the Tine where the 1st Division had moved its headquarters. A warm drizzle slicked the roads, and camouflage netting billowed in the breeze. A shot-up farmhouse across the swale had served as a German supply dump, and the yard was strewn with gray tunics and Afrika Korps sun helmets. This was Eisenhower's third trip to the front since the Good Friday offensive began, and Harry Butcher thought he resembled "a hen setting on a batch of eggs…wondering if they will ever break the shell." He had approved the final plan for Sicily on May 3, and now awaited concurrence from the combined chiefs in London and Washington. With more time to devote to the endgame in Tunisia, he had seen a great deal that was heartening. "We are learning something every day," he wrote a friend, "and in general do not make the same mistakes twice." While admitting to Marshall only the slightest need for rest—"When this affair is all cleared up, I am going to take a twenty-four-hour leave where no one in the world will be able to reach me"—to Butcher he proposed getting "good and drunk when Tunisia is in the bag."

In truth he was sleeping badly, often waking at four A.M. to pace and fret, puffing through a pack of cigarettes before breakfast. Although victory in Africa approached, there was still much to unsettle a commander. "The fighting since April 23 has had a definite influence on our thinking and calculations," he wrote Marshall. "Even the Italian, defending mountainous country, is very difficult

to drive out, and the German is a real problem." The portents were unmistakable, for Sicily and whatever battlefields lay beyond. "The Tunisian fight appears to offer a good indication of what we can expect when we meet the German in defensive positions," Eisenhower added, "especially where the terrain is favorable to him."

But only to his closest confidants did Eisenhower acknowledge the deeper impact of his extended stay at the front. Here, where the consequences of combat were most vivid, the weight of command felt heaviest. To his brother Arthur he wrote of visiting "the desperately wounded" and of seeing "bodies rotting on the ground and smell[ing] the stench of decaying human flesh." He had ordered so many men to their deaths, thousands upon thousands, with many thousands yet to die. He sought refuge in duty and *pro patria* resolve, as commanders must. "Far above my hatred of war is the determination to smash every enemy of my country, especially Hitler and the Japs," he told Arthur. He also immersed himself in nitty-gritty decisions concerning supply and personnel, as if his own willful intercession in minutiae could hurry the war to its end. That very week, he had proposed the Army quartermaster design a better winter uniform of "very rough wool, because such material does not show the dirt." To Marshall on Wednesday he noted, "We have discovered that our older men—that is the 50- to 55-year-old fellow—does not wear out *physically* as quickly as might be imagined."

Now the fifty-five-year-old Terry Allen stumbled from his tent, where he had been roused from a dead sleep on the ground. He looked not only worn out but catatonic, and he spoke in monosyllables. His eyes were glazed, his hair mussed. As Eisenhower and Bradley slipped on their reading glasses to study the map, Allen tersely described the previous night's attack on Hill 232. Casualties were high. Some companies were hardly bigger than platoons. His men were tired after months of combat.

Eisenhower peered over his spectacles. The British, he pointed out, had chased Rommel across the desert for several months from El Alamein to the Mareth Line, with little water or rest. They, he added, had "taken it." Allen replied irrelevantly that his unit in the Great War had attacked every day for weeks. The conference ended. Allen tossed a weary salute as the two generals left. "How much better it would have been if Allen had been thoroughly cheerful, buoyant, and aggressive," Butcher scribbled in his diary.

Eisenhower shrugged off the unfortunate encounter. "I found the II Corps in wonderful spirit. The 1st Division has suffered a great deal of attrition," he wrote Marshall a few hours later. But Bradley seethed. The attack on Hill 232 was "a foolish one and undertaken without authorization," he later declared. While Allen was among the Army's most competent leaders—Alexander would go so far as to tell Drew Middleton he "was the finest division commander he had encountered in two wars"—Bradley found him "the most difficult man with whom I have ever had to work," an incorrigible rebel "fiercely antagonistic to any echelon above that of division." He was disturbed by Allen's truculent independence and the Big Red One's self-absorption—the "Holy First," some called it—particularly because the 1st Division was expected to play a pivotal role in Sicily.

For his part, Allen privately considered Bradley "a phony Abraham Lincoln." Two men could hardly have been more dissimilar: the abstemious, restrained, cerebral corps commander and the carousing, emotional, impetuous division commander. But Bradley had both the rank and the commander-in-chief's ear—Eisenhower had just recommended him for a third star—and this boded ill for Allen. "From that point forward," Bradley later wrote of the Tine River debacle, "Terry was a marked man in my book."

As Eisenhower and Bradley drove back to the new II Corps headquarters below Hill 609, Lieutenant Colonel Charley P. Eastburn radioed the 9th Division command post. "Believe road to

Bizerte wide open," said Eastburn, commander of the 894th Tank Destroyer Battalion. "Request permission to proceed and occupy the town." The reply from Eddy came swiftly: "Go ahead. Good luck." Mustering three companies, including more than a dozen tanks, Eastburn forded a creek past a demolished bridge, then wheeled back onto Highway 11. Shortly before four P.M. the cavalcade rattled past the stone gateposts at Bizerte's western edge.

They entered a dead city. The ancient port of 70,000 souls lay empty, gutted by more than two dozen 4,000-pound bombs and many tons of lesser explosives. "Bizerte was the most completely wrecked place I had ever seen," Ernie Pyle wrote. Italianate houses lay disemboweled, their porticos smashed. Charred palm trunks, stripped of fronds, lined the corniche. Shops had been bombed and then looted, and a stench of rot and plaster dust hung in the rain. The town had been without running water for three months. Typhus was here and cholera threatened.

Warehouses and shipyards lay in rubble. Bombs had wrenched a 100- ton crane from its foundation, tossing it across a dry dock. All that remained of a large Catholic church was three scorched walls and debris heaped in the nave. "You walked through the great stone front door, right out under the open sky again," a soldier recalled. To escape the bombing, German soldiers had retired months before to tents west of town; in recent days, they had returned to blow up the remaining docks, power plants, and even fishing smacks that Allied bombers missed.

As Colonel Eastburn paused in the downtown shambles to ask a drunk Frenchman for directions to city hall, machine-gun bullets abruptly ricocheted off the pavement and 88mm shells cracked overhead. Muzzle flashes from German rearguard troops winked in the rubble 500 yards across a shipping channel originally dug by Phoenician colonists to connect the salt lagoon of Lake Bizerte with the Mediterranean.

Eastburn's Shermans returned fire with a smoky roar; other gunners hammered away at the Wehrmacht snipers infesting rooftops and a steeple. More Frenchmen popped from their cellars to toast the liberators with upraised wine bottles, huzzahing each tank volley even as slabs of stucco sheared from the walls and sniper bullets pinged about. "Quite ridiculous," a British liaison officer muttered. "Quite ridiculous." In the Café de la Paix, a soldier banged out "It's a Long Way to Tipperary" on a tuneless upright despite the bark of a Sherman main gun down the street. "Everybody was standing up straight at attention, partly humming, partly singing because nobody knew all the words," according to one account. "This café was part of another planet."

By dawn, the last Germans had died or fled. The Corps Franc d'Afrique was trucked forward to Bizerte for the honor of formally capturing the town. Behind the French procession, American soldiers followed in a jeep, with a busty mannequin liberated from a lingerie shop. The men belted out a new barracks ballad that eventually would reach two hundred stanzas, all of them salacious:

Dirty Gertie from Bizerte,
Hid a mousetrap 'neath her skirtie,
Made her boyfriend's finger hurtie…

A few miles to the east, scouts reported "hundreds of vehicles being burned on the flats, while overhead the sky was brilliant with tracer ammo being fired in anticipation of surrender." Harmon's Shermans rolled to the edge of the Gulf of Tunis, took aim at a few Germans trying to escape by barge or skiff, and blew them out of the water. The end was near.

Tunis fell at 3:30 P.M. on May 7, almost as Eastburn entered Bizerte. The Derbyshire Yeomanry and 11th Hussars, drawn respectively from the First and Eighth Armies, raced into the city so fast that Royal Air Force fighters mistook the vanguard for fleeing Germans and attacked three times. Snipers fought a bitter delaying action downtown, puncturing the tires on British armored scout cars; reduced to their rims, the vehicles rattled across the cobblestones in a blaze of sparks. Unlike Bizerte, much of Tunis beyond the wrecked port remained unscathed and many of the city's 180,000 residents had remained through the occupation. Delirious French throngs now capered through the rainy capital, tossing flower garlands at the liberators or spraying them with scent from atomizer bottles. French vigilantes chased departing Germans with muskets and horse pistols, singing the "Marseillaise."

"The streets were full of civilian traffic. Astonished Germans were seen on the pavements, walking out with their girlfriends," a Rifle Brigade commander later wrote. "The populace was screaming itself hoarse in true French style…. To the enormous amusement of the battalion, I was embraced from behind by a highly colored French female of ample proportions and acquiescent tendencies." Tommies found Wehrmacht officers drinking schnapps at the Majestic Hotel bar or awaiting shaves from an Arab barber. Muffled explosions rumbled from garages along Rue el Jebbar as Germans grenaded their cars; others roared through the streets like gangsters on the lam with tires squealing and guns blazing. "Get out your weapons, boys," one sergeant ordered. "Jerry's still obstinate." Tracers crisscrossed the boulevards, and Shermans fired point-blank at suspected redoubts. Hussars reported capturing the city's collaborationist governor, "complete with Buick and girlfriend," and above the roar of one firefight a Cockney voice bellowed, "Stop that shooting, you bloody fools. It's one of ours."

East of the city, near the white chapel where St. Louis had died of plague while leading the last Crusade in 1270, columns of black smoke billowed from burning fuel dumps. Wehrmacht soldiers spiked their big guns and piled small arms to be crushed by panzer tracks. At El Aouina airfield the only thing still functioning was a windsock.

Into the city came "endless streams of lorries pouring ahead three abreast, full of exuberant troops…. Men were singing and shouting." General Barré, the first French general to fire on the Germans in Tunisia, was given the honor of marching into the capital at the head of his troops. Logisticians and camp followers trailed closely: vengeful Frenchmen, jubilant Jews, souvenir hunters, quartermasters reserving the best buildings for their bosses, and journalists who enraged Anderson by describing the capture of Tunis as a "left hook by Eighth Army." "Cannot this pernicious rivalry be stopped?" he cabled Eisenhower. "We are all one army and working for one cause." ("God," Everett Hughes told his diary, "I wish we could forget our egos for a while.")

Ten teams from a counterintelligence unit known as S Force also swept through town carrying a list of 130 targets, including the suspected Gestapo and SS headquarters at, respectively, 168 and 172 Avenue de Paris, and a house on Rue Abdelhouab used to train Arab saboteurs. Also warranted for arrest were scores of civilians, whose descriptions and purported offenses were equally vague: "Scarzini, Italian dentist," on Avenue Bab Djedid, for instance, and "Ramdam, a Tunisian egg merchant," in La Goulette.

For months, Eisenhower had worried that Axis troops would convert the Cap Bon peninsula into a diehard redoubt. But once Bizerte and Tunis fell, fuel shortages and Allied alacrity prevented Arnim from regrouping. Bradley's soldiers cut the last Bizerte-Tunis road at daylight on May 9, effectively ending American combat operations in Tunisia. Now there was nothing to do but smoke out renegades and escort prisoners to their cages. German officers under a flag of truce asked Harmon for terms; in

reply, he quoted Grant at Fort Donelson: “Unconditional surrender. We propose to move immediately upon your works.” For good measure he added, “We will kill all who try to get away.”

Few tried. Soon every American truck and jeep sported a German helmet as a hood ornament. “Winning in battle is like winning at poker or catching lots of fish,” Pyle wrote. “It’s damned pleasant and it sets a man up.”

II Corps casualties in the preceding two weeks had exceeded 4,400, nearly half falling on Allen’s 1st Division. Enemy dead in the final fortnight were estimated at 3,000 in the American sector, with another 41,000 captured. Booty included 30,000 small arms—almost enough to corduroy the roads, as Sheridan had done with Confederate muskets near Appomattox. The wheezy declamations that commanders had issued earlier in the campaign now yielded to eloquent brevity; Bradley’s two-word cable to Eisenhower on May 9 read simply: “Mission accomplished.”

For the British farther south, the end was less tidy, although the Axis troops still holding the Enfidaville line lacked enough gasoline to fall back forty miles on Cap Bon unless they abandoned their heavy weapons. Kesselring at his headquarters in Rome ordered U-boats to haul fuel and matériel to Tunisia—each could carry twenty tons—but only one reached the African coast, where the skipper failed to find a suitable beach for his cargo of ammunition. On the night of May 8, German commanders signaled Axis ships lying offshore to jettison their fuel barrels, wanly hoping that a few would drift to shore on the tide. An announcement from Berlin that remaining Axis troops “will be withdrawn in small boats” brought derisive hoots from the German and Allied camps alike. Alexander’s intelligence officer repeated Churchill’s bon mot of 1940, when a German invasion of England had been expected: “We are waiting, so are the fishes.”

The jig was up. The Fifth Panzer Army, which had occupied the northern swath of bridgehead from Tunis to Bizerte, recorded a last entry in its war diary at 3:23 P.M. on May 8: “The mass of our tanks and artillery is destroyed. No ammunition, no fuel left. Intention: fight to the last round…. In loyal performance of duty, the last fighters of the Fifth Panzer Army greet the homeland and our Führer. Long live Germany.” The 90th Light Division ordered troops to smash all equipment, including wristwatches.

At Hammam Lif, a coastal resort ten miles southeast of Tunis, British tanks and infantrymen with fixed bayonets swept through six parallel streets on May 9, cleaning out snipers. The fighting surged up and down staircases and across rose gardens in the milky dawn. More than a dozen tanks outflanked the enemy with a bold sally along the strand, “kicking up waves like a steamboat as they circled through the water,” one journalist reported. Two other squadrons bulled through town, turrets swiveling from side to side, as Arab mourners in a funeral cortège scattered into the alleys and giddy Frenchmen sprang from their cellars to offer the Tommies wine and pastry. In the blue-and-white summer palace of the bey of Tunis, a British lieutenant found the assembled Tunisian cabinet in the wrecked throne room. The bey soon emerged from an inner chamber and, with the sangfroid of a host welcoming guests to tea, politely inquired after the health of the British king and his queen. Perfectly well, thank you, the lieutenant assured him, then ordered the bey arrested for collaboration. Much keening was heard from the royal concubines, but his bodyguards, resplendent in scarlet and black, surrendered their weapons without protest and then looted the palace.

Like Terry Allen on the Tine, Montgomery had found consignment to the periphery a deeply frustrating fate. On the night of May 10 he launched his 56th Division against Zaghouan, twenty miles northwest of Enfidaville; the attack cost nearly 400 British casualties, a setback as unfortunate as it was unnecessary. On Tuesday the eleventh, Cap Bon was cleared, and Axis resistance dwindled to isolated pockets in the tortured hills above Enfidaville. In a dozen liberated towns, jubilant French civilians unfurled their tricolors and draped the Tommies with honeysuckle. On May 12, for the first time since November, soldiers were allowed to build campfires; Sherwood Rangers celebrated with

victory cocktails made of equal parts gin, wine, whiskey, and condensed milk. “Looking back on the last six months,” a captain wrote to his father, “it seems as if one has been holding one’s breath, and you have just let it go for the first time.” A Grenadier Guard on the evening of May 12 described “the plain dotted with points of light, each reflecting dimly the shape of a Sherman tank; the tramp of feet as the Germans marched away to imprisonment; the sea shining in the moonlight; and the hills resounding as the Germans who were still at liberty fired their remaining ammo dumps.”

On Cap Bon, Anderson turned to General Horrocks and said, “I have waited a long, long time for this.”

The prisoners came by the hundreds, then the thousands, then the tens of thousands; eventually there were more than 200,000, waving white flags made of mosquito netting or their underwear. They came in neat columns of field gray, singing “Lili Marlene” with that annoying German trick of clipping the last note of each line. They came as a bedraggled mob of *mangiatori*, singing sad Neapolitan ballads, or in sauntering platoons of Italian paratroopers, overcoats draped on their shoulders like the jackets of boulevardiers on the Via Veneto. They came in dun-colored Afrika Korps trucks with palm tree insignia stenciled on the tailgates; or in alcohol-burning buses piled high with baggage and pet dogs; or in chauffeured Mercedes sedans, colonels and generals dressed in gorgeous uniforms with Iron Crosses at their throats and boots so beautifully buffed that, one GI said, “you would have thought the bastards were going to a wedding.”

“Germans were everywhere,” Ernie Pyle reported. “It made me a little light-headed.” Many surrendering soldiers were light-headed, too: with drink. A Derbyshire Yeomanry patrol on May 9 reported: “Found nineteen German officers dining off champagne. Champagne rather dry.” Others groveled, waving handkerchiefs and sweetly yoo-hooing, “British Tommy! British Tommy!” Lacking a sword to present in surrender, a military hospital commander handed his captors a case of dental instruments. As Barenthins and Manteuffels and Hermann Görings shuffled to their cages, GI guards issued orders in a hybrid tongue of English and Yiddish, then sang their own song:

Are ve not der Supermen?
Ya, ve iss der Supermen, super-dooper Supermen…

A few escaped, in dinghies or by lashing themselves to the undercarriages of the last overloaded Axis planes to leave. Ultra eventually disclosed that only 632 men were evacuated in the final days; Allied sailors netted another 700 at sea, including a German platoon that had cut down telegraph poles “on which,” a Grenadier Guards account noted, “they sat astride and began to paddle hopefully” toward Italy. Stragglers from the 15th Panzer Division across the Medjerda River were persuaded to surrender by a couple of well-placed warning shots; finding the water too deep to wade, the men were ferried into custody on the dray horses of Arab farmers, who charged the Germans fifty francs per trip.

Into the stockades they swarmed—“the *Herrenvolk* like chickens in a yard,” A. D. Divine wrote. To each new batch of prisoners, General Koeltz, the French corps commander, proclaimed, “The anguished of yesterday salute the vanquished of today!” Among the booty seized by King’s Dragoon Guards were instruments from the 21st Panzer Division band, including a piano with all but two of its eighty-eight keys intact. German musicians serenaded the camps with “Roll Out the Barrel,” and Wehrmacht officers organized songfests and soccer leagues and vaudeville troupes with costumes improvised from camouflage netting.

As recently as May 5, Eisenhower had assured Marshall that "the Axis cannot have more than a total of 150,000 men in Tunisia." That was wrong by nearly half; the surrendering host included acres of rear-echelon troops and Italian colonial officials. Within a week the prison population would grow to 225,000 and beyond, stuffed into camps built to hold 70,000. For reasons ranging from shipping shortfalls to poor delousing facilities on the piers of New York, the Allied system for transporting prisoners to Algeria and Morocco, and then to Britain or the United States, had showed signs of strain even before Tunis collapsed. Now things got much worse.

Carefully calibrated guard-to-prisoner ratios—one for every twenty Italians and three for every twenty Germans—were immediately scrapped; even so, the hordes eventually required 8,600 guards, equivalent to half a division. Prisoners were shoehorned into boxcars without latrines or sufficient water for the tortuous trip across Africa. One GI described Italian troops in trucks "packed together like sardines, urinating and vomiting." Liberty ships became prison barges, with life rafts improvised from empty oil drums, but many prisoners were also crammed onto Algerian coasters, where they were tormented by thieving Senegalese guards and overwatched by French officers who nibbled chocolate on the bridge and tossed morsels to the lunging men below.

For some, that was the least of it. U.S. Army provost marshals documented at least twenty-one Axis prisoners shot dead in the summer of 1943, some by American guards, others by French colonial guards; some accidentally, others trying to escape, and a few under circumstances never adequately explained. An Army investigation of mistreatment in French camps also documented Italian prisoners forced to work fourteen-hour days as railroad laborers. Among other allegations: "constant threat of attempted sodomy by Arab guards" "no blankets for three months…forty men without shoes for three months…eleven men in a cell with one window. Arabs and children spat through the window and threw stones." Italian prisoners who managed to escape "prefer anything, even death, to being returned to the French," the investigators added. "At Camp #131, when 58 prisoners were ordered returned to the care of the French, men groveled on the ground, begging that Americans intercede and refuse their return. One asked to be shot. Finally had to be forced into French buses." A British general also observed French jailors "using their prisoners to clear minefields, while we consider it contrary to international law. They don't worry too much about feeding them either."

Neither starvation, nor mine-clearing, nor spittle, nor sodomy would befall the Axis generals, only the ignominy of defeat in a bad cause. In late April and early May, certain senior officers had conveniently fallen ill with maladies that required their return to Germany for treatment; among the invalids were division commanders Friedrich Weber and Hasso von Manteuffel. A few were also ordered home or otherwise escaped. But the Allies bagged more than a dozen generals. Four from the Wehrmacht and two from the Luftwaffe surrendered to II Corps. They were fed C rations and beans on May 10 before being ushered into Bradley's intelligence tent—known as the Playhouse—where Monk Dickson plied them with whiskey and cigars during a long chat around a plywood mapboard. The commander of the 15th Panzer reportedly wept as he observed, "The Americans have fought like sportsmen."

The biggest fish were caught farther south. At 11:15 A.M. on May 12, Mussolini authorized the capitulation of the First Italian Army. He offered Giovanni Messe the consolation of promotion to field marshal, then added in a message: "As the aims of your resistance can be considered achieved, your Excellency is free to accept an honorable surrender." Dickering followed, with white-flag emissaries dispatched to coax terms from the British, who offered the choice of unconditional surrender or annihilation. Ten minutes before the British deadline, Messe struck his colors. Taken into

custody, he complained bitterly about the small size of his prison-camp tent. One witness described him slumped in the back seat of a staff car, "heavy and stern. He had tried standing up in his car and saluting as his captured countrymen marched past, but soon got tired and sat down again and let the endless stream of Italian soldiers go their way without a nod of recognition."

With fuel scavenged from a barrel found washed up on the beach, Arnim and his coterie had retreated to remote Ste.-Marie-du-Zit, twenty miles north of Enfidaville, where they camped with General Hans Cramer and the remnants of the Afrika Korps. Hitler's orders to "fight to the last bullet" had provoked animated theological discussions. "What does the last bullet mean in a modern war?" Arnim asked his staff. As Gurkha riflemen swarmed over the next hill on May 12, Arnim decided it meant the last tank shell, which had long been expended. White flags sprouted across the encampment. Cramer sent a final radio message informing Berlin that the Afrika Korps "has fought itself to the condition where it can fight no more." Arnim personally put a torch to Rommel's trailer, which the Desert Fox had bequeathed him in April, and dispatched a bullet-headed colonel to find the British headquarters.

He soon returned with Generals Allfrey and Tuker—commanding, respectively, the British V Corps and 4th Indian Division—in his staff car. Hundreds of Wehrmacht soldiers stared impassively, their heads swiveling as the British commanders climbed from the car and walked through the camp. In a narrow ravine, Arnim and Cramer stood erect outside the last intact Afrika Korps caravan, still camouflaged with artfully arranged branches. Both German generals wore long-waisted tunics with green breeches, high-peaked caps, and polished riding boots. Especially compared to Tuker—who sported threadbare drill trousers and scuffed desert boots, and who impishly introduced himself as "General von Tucher"—Arnim looked as if he had "turned out for a Potsdam parade, spotless and immaculate," one witness said.

Declining to use his capable English, Arnim spoke French to inform the British that he "could not alter Hitler's orders" by surrendering all remaining forces in North Africa. Allfrey brusquely promised to "blow them off the map," and gave Arnim fifteen minutes to pack for prison. All personal weapons were to be surrendered immediately. "He took this badly," Allfrey later recalled, "pulling out his automatic and throwing it down in a temper." Tuker cheerfully demanded his pocket knife, which Arnim, now "very red in the face," tossed on a table with a clatter. As his staff officers formed ranks at a right angle to the caravan, Arnim delivered a brief speech, his voice cracking, then walked down the formation to offer handshakes and *Heil*s.

"He then got in his car and stood up in front, saluting his men as he was driven off," Allfrey recalled. "I did not like the man…and was glad to see his back." Down the valley the car sped with a British escort before turning onto the Tunis road, past the charred ruins of a once-mighty army and the tramping columns of prisoners, who tossed stiff-armed salutes and chanted, "Von Arnim! Von Arnim!" He was flown to Algiers and a camp erected on a muddy soccer field. Eisenhower snubbed Arnim by refusing him an audience, thus establishing a precedent of not speaking to a German general until the final surrender at Reims two years later. A British lieutenant colonel commandeered Arnim's limousine—a Steyer Daimler said to have twenty-eight forward and six reverse gears—while the surviving trailer was shipped to India for display as a curiosity during charity fund-raisers. As for Arnim, a GI bard composed a quatrain that perfectly captured the scorn Allied soldiers now felt for their conquered foe:

Jürgen T. von Arnim wore an iron-plated monocle
But he could not see behind him—now wasn't that ironicle?
He fought a rear-guard action and he did it very bitterly

With booby traps and Teller mines and gallant sons of Iterly.

His petulant refusal to surrender the final forces mattered little; the Axis army had imploded. At 1:16 P.M. on Thursday, May 13, Alexander sent Churchill a message of singular grace: “Sir, it is my duty to report that the Tunisian campaign is over. All enemy resistance has ceased. We are masters of the North African shores.”

EPILOGUE

ROSES perfumed the morning air in Tunis on Thursday, May 20, 1943. A brilliant sun climbed through a cloudless sky, and shadows melted to narrow black stains on the pavement. By eleven A.M., the temperature in the shade was ninety-two degrees—"too damn hot to cuss," one soldier wrote—but crowds six deep lined Avenue Maréchal Gallieni and the broad, palmy Avenue Jules Ferry for the victory parade that would end the North African campaign. Children squirmed to the front or shinnied up trees. Sidewalk vendors peddled little French, British, and American flags. An anticipatory hum ran through the throng "like a jolly football crowd," Harold Macmillan told his diary. "Every street was packed; every window in every house was packed; every roof was packed."

Shortly before noon, the massed pipes and drums of the Scottish regiments hove into view with a great wheezing of bags and swishing of tartans. In stately half step the pipers advanced to the still empty reviewing stand, then wheeled in a countermarch to take positions across the boulevard, skirling for all they were worth. The clack of hobnails on pavement followed, and an honor guard of immensely tall Grenadier Guards marched into position with, an American officer reported, "the same precision and utter indifference as to what was going on around them as they used to show while changing the guard at Buckingham Palace." Heat soon began to thin the Grenadier ranks as those weak with dysentery dropped to one knee or abruptly heeled over. The regimental sergeant major "used all his cunning to remove each sick man in turn without any spectator becoming aware of it," the Guards historians noted.

A convoy of limousines and open sedans pulled up to the reviewing platform. In riding breeches and knee boots, clutching a swagger stick, his arms akimbo, Eisenhower took his place in the front row next to the immaculately vacuous General Giraud. The commander-in-chief's principal lieutenants—Cunningham, Alexander, Tedder, Anderson—arrayed themselves behind him. Macmillan and Robert Murphy occupied a final rank, beaming and waving in their tropical suits like civil servants on holiday. Lesser lights filled lesser platforms on the flanks. Bradley and Patton were relegated to a peripheral bleacher crowded with minor French bureaucrats; Patton sourly noted that he was assigned a spot next to a "very large French ecclesiastic with a purple sash around his middle, which was probably necessary to support his well-developed stomach and also act as a background for a tremendous cross with an amethyst in it."

At noon, the crowd's mood darkened momentarily when booming gunfire was mistaken for an air raid, but the cannonade simply signaled the start of the parade. Redoubled cheers greeted the Foreign Legion band, which tramped past in white hats and red epaulets, playing a suitably martial march, and the appearance of a color guard triggered an ecstasy of saluting across the reviewing stands. General Juin followed at the head of the French troops, a contingent deliberately inflated to impress Arabs and other suspected disloyalists. For more than an hour they marched past ten abreast, a vivid comic-opera procession of képis and berets, turbans and peaked caps, scarlet pantaloons and wasp-waisted blue tunics. Crimson-cloaked spahis stood in the stirrups of their white chargers, saluting with upraised sabers. Algerians and Moroccans and Senegalese *tirailleurs* padded past, some shod and some not. Behind them came shambling, bearded *goums* in striped robes—their leather pouches provoked nudges from GIs determined to believe that each sack held a cache of enemy ears—and high-stepping Legionnaires whose ranks were full of blond Germans and Poles.

After the French came the Americans. A band crashed through "The Stars and Stripes Forever,"

and the 34th Division's 135th Infantry Regiment—chosen for their valor at Hill 609 to represent all American infantrymen—swept past, rubber-soled shoes clapping softly on the pavement. The men had burned their vermin-infested combat uniforms and now wore new, olive-drab wool blouses, buttoned at the collar with the sleeves rolled down. Steel helmets half hid their faces. General Harmon thought the troops shuffled like "Arkansas backwoodsmen," and Patton complained that "our men do not put up a good show in reviews. I think that we still lack pride in being soldiers, and we must develop it." Thousands of spectators disagreed. From the sidewalks and the balconies came shrieks of *"Vive l'Amérique!"* and young men dashed into the street to pump the hands of their liberators.

Then pipers, again. The faint strains of "Flowers of the Forest" trailed the last Americans, and the British wheeled into view, almost 14,000 men arrayed nine abreast and led by General Evelegh. Each marcher had received instructions as meticulous as a battle plan, including the commandment: "Brasses will be polished." They were gleaming. The men wore shorts and knee socks, with berets or forage caps, and their blouses were open at the throat and rolled to the elbow to give an effect of sinewy limbs and tanned faces. Macmillan beamed at the "swinging striding outstepping men," and an American colonel admitted that "the British made much the better show." On they came, nine by nine by nine, Maoris and Aussies and Sikhs and Coldstreams, a precise twenty yards separating each contingent. Commanders snapped a smart "eyes-right" salute as they clapped past the main reviewing stand, and great flocks of Spitfires and Flying Fortresses roared overhead, wagging their wings in homage.

The parade straggled to a merciful finish with yet another refrain of "Glory of the Trumpets" and Sherman tanks clanking behind the British infantry. As the last gun tubes and limbers passed the reviewing stands, hoarse spectators shinnied down from the trees and emptied the balconies. Hundreds of Italian prisoners-of-war who had been paroled to watch the parade—cheering each new formation with manic enthusiasm—complained bitterly as guards herded them back behind barbed wire. Eisenhower and his lieutenants climbed into their cars for the short trip to the resident-general's mansion, where Juin would host a luncheon for seventy people sitting at one long table; afterward, they would meet the new bey, uncle of the ousted collaborator, in a ceremony described by Harry Butcher as "complete with gold throne, eunuchs, and native Tunisian troops." Patton and Bradley, still miffed at their exclusion from the main reviewing stand, headed back to Algeria to resume training for Sicily. The parade, Patton grumbled, had been "a goddamned waste of time."

Even after two and a half hours in the molten sun Eisenhower showed no sign of wilting. A reporter described him as "lean, bronzed, and loose-limbed. He was happy as a schoolboy…taking the salutes as the units passed. When the parade drew to an end he smoked, laughed, and joked with the various leaders."

In truth, he had been peevish and distracted, notwithstanding the gleeful announcement from his West Point classmates that they were renaming him Ikus Africanus. "All the shouting about the Tunisian campaign leaves me utterly cold," he confided to Marshall. The concept of a victory parade appalled him, and he had tried without success to convert the event into a sober commemoration of the dead. He still slept badly. If he seemed jolly, jolliness was among the many masks the commander-in-chief had learned to wear.

No soldier in Africa had changed more—grown more—than Eisenhower. He continued to pose as a small-town Kansan, insisting that he was "too simple-minded to be an intriguer or [to] attempt to be clever," and he retained the winning traits of authenticity, vigor, and integrity. He had displayed admirable grace and character under crushing strain. But he was hardly artless. Naïveté provided a

convenient screen for a man who was complex, shrewd, and sometimes Machiavellian. The Darlan affair had taught him the need to obscure his own agency in certain events even as he shouldered responsibility for them. The failings of Fredendall and other deficient commanders had taught him to be tougher, even ruthless, with subordinates. And he had learned the hardest lesson of all: that for an army to win at war, young men must die.

"One of the fascinations of the war was to see how Americans developed their great men so quickly," a British general later observed. None more than Eisenhower. In the fall of 1942, the general continued, he had been "a well-trained and loyal subordinate" to his more experienced British colleagues. Now he was a commander. His son, John, later wrote: "Before he left for Europe in 1942, I knew him as an aggressive, intelligent personality." North Africa transformed him "from a mere person to a personage…full of authority, and truly in command."

Even as victory was claimed and commemorated, a few loose ends remained to tie up.

The tiny Mediterranean island of La Galite was liberated by a battle flotilla sailing from Bône; a British naval officer reported that a shipboard ceremony with the islanders was repeatedly interrupted "by the need to salvage firstly the delegates' hats, which they kept throwing into the air and the wind blew into the sea, and secondly the mayor, who fell overboard." Allied salvage crews combed Tunisia for scrap and abandoned Axis matériel, but reported finding "not a great deal of value. Most of the weapons have been effectively rendered useless." Mine-clearing occupied thousands of engineers, and mines would continue killing civilians and soldiers, including Colonel Richard R. Arnold, Kay Summersby's fiancé. Arnold died in an explosion at Sedjenane on June 6. Sixty years later, Tunisian authorities were still digging up an average of fifty unexploded bombs, shells, and mines every month.

The French high command wasted no time embarking on what the OSS secretly described as "a ruthless campaign against Moslems and, to a lesser extent, Italians" in Tunisia. The six-month Axis occupation had won widespread Arab allegiance with effective propaganda, anti-Semitic edicts, and economic measures, including some land redistribution and a doubling of wages, paid with stolen Bank of France notes. In retribution for suspected Arab perfidy during the occupation, "a general reign of terror was instituted, in which arbitrary arrests and torture of Moslems became frequent occurrences," the OSS disclosed. Detention camps on the island of Djerba allegedly held 3,000 Arabs, with beatings, killings, and mass executions reported; gendarmes and other rogue officials were "running amuck in the interior and…beating and imprisoning personal enemies." Among other reparations, French officials demanded 25 million francs from Arabs in Sidi bou Zid to compensate French farmers whose land had been plundered. Such actions were contrary to united nations ideals, the OSS observed, and served "to discredit not only the French authorities but U.S. and British prestige as well."

Preoccupied with the imminent invasion of Sicily, Eisenhower and his lieutenants paid little attention, and most Allied troops could not have cared less. Recuperation before the next campaign absorbed every man, and the days were spent sleeping, fishing with hand grenades in Lake Bizerte, and, soon, training. Among some, a powerful nostalgia took root. Even discerning men like Spaatz and Tedder soon romanticized northwest Africa as war at its best: a facile, unencumbered campaign of human proportions fought by a doughty band of brothers.

Gimlet-eyed GIs and Tommies had no such illusions. Irony and cynicism infested the ranks. "I am Jesus' little lamb," soldiers told one another, "yes, by Jesus Christ I am." Ernie Pyle had already seen enough misery to ask darkly, "When you figure how many boys are going to get killed, what's the use anyway?" However realistic they were about war, the troops nurtured other fantasies, including

the conviction that many units had done their bit and would now go home. “Dame Rumor with her thousand tongues is running wild through all the camps in Africa,” one soldier warned. The arrival of many new troops in Tunisia fed the belief that veterans would at least get home leave. Among the newcomers was the 3rd Infantry Division, now commanded by Lucian Truscott; the division’s ranks included a baby-faced farm boy from Texas with a fifth-grade education, an addiction to dice, and an affection for the Army because “they let you sleep until 5:30.” Private First Class Audie L. Murphy, not yet nineteen and weighing in at 110 pounds, would become the most decorated American combat soldier in history, but not even the appearance of his like would free most troops from compulsory service for the duration.

Charles Ryder was so alarmed at his men’s self-delusion that he assembled all officers and sergeants on a hill near Mateur in mid-May, and told them:

> There are many rumors out there that the 34th Division [troops have] fought their battles, done their time, and are going back to the States. But, gentlemen, I am here to tell you today that the 34th Division will not go back until the war is over…. As this war goes on it will get progressively worse and there will be progressively harder objectives to take, and more casualties as the German lines tighten. We shall fight in Europe, and we shall find that in comparison, the Tunisian campaign was but a maneuver with live ammunition.

It was the truth, and the truth hurt enough for one soldier to quip, “Ol’ General Ryder’s so homely that probably his wife doesn’t care whether he gets back or not.”

Most of their leaders, too, would go on to the Italian campaigns, or northern France, or both. They included Eisenhower, Bradley, Patton, Clark, Alexander, and Montgomery; they would face, again, Kesselring and Rommel. For some, however, the end in Africa effectively ended their hour on the stage. Among them was Anderson, who graciously wrote Eisenhower on May 12: “It will ever remain one of the proudest memories of my life, whatever the future may hold in store, that I have been so intimately connected with the U.S. Army.” The future held little for Anderson. Vilified beyond redemption by Montgomery and others, he returned to a knighthood in England but was stripped of his army command before Normandy. He ended his career as a postwar governor of Gibraltar.

Among those who did go home was Robert Moore, hardly recognizable as the erstwhile Boy Captain since his wounding at Fondouk. Moore’s orders assigned him to training duty in Georgia. Of the men in Company F, whom he had led out of Villisca two years earlier, “there sure are not many of us left,” he wrote his family on May 12. “Not more than seven or eight of the original outfit. It will be a happy day when I see you all, won’t it?”

July 15, 1943, was happy indeed. Moore stepped from the Burlington No. 6 in Villisca at 9:30 A.M., clutching the camel-hide briefcase his men had given him as a farewell gift. Into his arms leaped his seven-year-old daughter, Nancy; a newspaper photographer captured the moment in a picture that would win the Pulitzer Prize. Fire bells rang to announce the homecoming and American flags lined Third Avenue in front of the family drugstore. Bob Moore was to serve honorably for the rest of the war and beyond, remaining in the Iowa National Guard until retiring as a brigadier general in 1964, a year before the drugstore closed. When he died in 1991, the mourners at his funeral sang “The Battle Hymn of the Republic” and told stories about how young Bob had once led his battalion to safety through German lines during the battle of Kasserine Pass. The message board outside the Presbyterian church read simply: “Old soldiers never die.”

Young ones do, and in North Africa they had died by the thousands. Allied casualties in TORCH and the subsequent Tunisian campaign exceeded 70,000; if laid head to toe they would have stretched eighty miles, from the Algerian border to Tunis. The toll included 38,000 British—two-thirds in First Army and one-third in Eighth Army—of whom more than 6,200 were killed in action and 10,600 were missing or captured. French casualties exceeded 19,400, half of whom were dead or missing. When French Algerian units returned to their hometowns beginning in mid-May, the troops lined the main streets for a roll call. Each man answered until the name of a dead comrade was called. Then, reporter John D'Arcy-Dawson wrote, a deep voice replied, *"Mort!"* The drums rolled, while the spectators removed their hats, and the women bowed and crossed themselves.

To more than a thousand American casualties in TORCH were added 18,221 more from mid-November to mid-May. These included 2,715 killed in action, nearly 9,000 wounded, and more than 6,500 missing. As always, infantrymen took the brunt. (Although infantry units accounted for 14 percent of the U.S. Army's overseas strength in the war, they suffered 70 percent of the casualties.) The 34th Division alone sustained more than 4,000 dead, wounded, and missing—one-quarter of Ryder's force—and Allen's 1st Division suffered nearly as many.

Some units were simply shattered. The 1st Battalion of the 6th Armored Infantry, which arrived for TORCH with 734 men, incurred 455 casualties in the next six months, or 62 percent. The battalion's A Company had four commanders in that half year, an indication of how the campaign devoured junior officers. Leadership losses also decimated British ranks: of six battalion commanders involved in the first dash to Tunis in November, the last still in command was killed by one of the final shells fired in May. Similarly, the 8th Argylls had suffered forty-nine officer casualties since landing at Bougie, 150 percent of the battalion's officer allotment.

Axis casualties remain uncertain. Confusion on both sides of the line in the campaign's final month resulted in contradictory tallies of prisoners captured, graves counted, and wounded soldiers treated. The German dead in Tunisia have been estimated at more than 8,500, with 3,700 Italians also killed. Combat wounded typically outnumber the dead by a factor of three or four, so an additional 40,000 to 50,000 Axis wounded can be surmised.

Ambiguity also shrouded the number of German and Italian prisoners of war. Allied records in late May listed 238,243 unwounded prisoners in custody, including nearly 102,000 Germans. Arnim thought the total prisoner count closer to 300,000—he, of course, among them—while Rommel's former chief of staff put the German figure alone at roughly 166,000. A quarter million appears to be a reasonable estimate of those captured. Goebbels privately called the fall of North Africa a "second Stalingrad," telling his diary, "Our losses there are enormous." True enough, although half as many German divisions were destroyed as at Stalingrad, and prison camps in Tunisia bulged with rear-echelon dregs.

Yet for one side the campaign had ended in humiliation and disaster; for the other, in triumph and hosannahs. Whatever the precise tally of Axis casualties, the number of enemy armies obliterated was certain—two—and so was the number of enemy soldiers still fighting in North Africa: zero.

At a price of 70,000 casualties "one continent had been redeemed," in Churchill's phrase. But more than territory could be claimed. The gains were most profound for the Americans, in their first campaign against the Wehrmacht. Four U.S. divisions now had combat experience in five variants of Euro-Mediterranean warfare: expeditionary, amphibious, mountain, desert, and urban. Troops had learned the importance of terrain, of combined arms, of aggressive patrolling, of stealth, of massed

armor. They now knew what it was like to be bombed, shelled, and machine-gunned, and to fight on. They provided Eisenhower with a blooded hundred thousand, “high-grade stock from which we must breed with the utmost rapidity,” as one general urged.

Still, they had far to go. Truscott worried at “too much satisfaction with a mediocre performance,” and a tendency by some commanders to gloss over deficiencies. Bradley believed the campaign “showed American soldiers unwilling to close with the enemy—that was his greatest worry,” reported Truscott, who added, “Why not at least be honest with ourselves?” Some lessons—such as the critical choreography between tankers and riflemen—were soon forgotten and would have to be relearned for the usual fee in blood. North Africa, the historian Eric Larrabee once noted, provided “a place to be lousy in, somewhere to let the gift for combat and command be discovered.”

It was also a place where many things that flowered later in the war first germinated. Some were soul-stirring, such as the return of France to the confederation of democracies. Some were distressing: the anglophobia of Bradley, Patton, and others; Alexander’s contempt for American martial skills; and various feuds, tiffs, and spats. More profound was a subtle shift in the balance of power within the Anglo-American alliance; the United States was dominant now, by virtue of power and heft, with consequences that would extend not only beyond the war but beyond the century.

It was the discovery of those “gifts for combat and command” that remains most beguiling sixty years later. “There are three things that make a man fight,” Ryder observed. “One is pride in himself, another is pride in his organization, and the third is hate. The 34th has all of them.” A terrible beauty, then, born in Africa. Most Yanks had arrived in Morocco and Algeria convinced that they were fighting someone else’s war; now they were fully vested, with a stake of their own. Drew Middleton noted that after Tunisia “the war has become a grudge fight, a personal matter.”

Many felt a new clarity about the war and about themselves. “There’s nothing over here to fog your vision of right and wrong,” an Iowa boy wrote his parents. A corporal in the 13th Armored Regiment, formerly a haberdasher in New York, told his girlfriend: “In years to come, after it is all a distant memory, I’ll be able to hold my head as high as the next man’s and my eyes level.” And they were incorrigibly optimistic. “We didn’t know how to think about losing,” wrote one soldier, a former shoe salesman. “We didn’t have the temper of mind which encompassed the loss of the war.” A British major who had accompanied the Yanks since their first landings in Morocco concluded that the Americans “are unlike anyone else in the speed with which they put things right, if and when they are ordered, persuaded, or led to do so.”

Africa provided affirmations of duty, of camaraderie, and of survival, even if articulated in the sarcastic idiom of the dogface. “I am not willing to die,” a sergeant wrote his sister. “Dead, I would be of no further use to the government.” Yet sometimes the cynicism sloughed away, revealing what every man was really fighting for: the right to go home. One soldier wrote: “We all feel we’ve got something to fight for and something to live for, and we go along every day with the hope and the prayer on our lips that we can soon be on our journey home.”

Africa was the first step on that long journey. “There was, for the first time in the war, a real lifting of spirits,” Churchill later wrote. Less than a year earlier, the Axis had been advancing inexorably on all fronts; Rommel’s drive into Egypt had filled the Cairo rail stations with refugees while panicky British diplomats burned documents in their gardens. Now only in the U-boat campaign did the Axis retain anything like a sustained offensive, and that was waning: the first Allied convoy to complete passage of the Mediterranean since 1941 left Gibraltar on May 17 and reached Alexandria without loss nine days later.

Hitler had lost the strategic initiative, forever. Even Kesselring sensed an insuperable momentum in the Allied camp. “It was in Tunisia,” he later observed, “that the superiority of your air force first became evident.” A Swiss newspaper reported that in Berlin people were “walking around as though

hit in the head." The blow was more painful in Italy, which had lost its colonies and its self-delusions. As Allied bombing intensified, the Fascists seemed increasingly impotent. A German general in Rome reported in May that "in Europe there is at present only one Italian armored battalion, equipped with totally obsolete French tanks, ready for action in Sicily…. If the enemy has an initial success, the fatalism so prevalent at present will lead to the most disquieting results." Mussolini was said to be so unnerved that he could eat only milk and rice.

Yet Tunis—like Stalingrad, El Alamein, Midway, and Guadalcanal—lay on the outer rim of the Axis empire. In the winter of 1942–43, the Germans had transferred seventeen divisions from western Europe to the Eastern Front, an act suggesting that the campaign in North Africa had done little to influence the titanic struggle waged by the Russians (although the Mediterranean action proved a serious drain on the German air force). Hitler would assert in early July that the battle in Tunisia had "succeeded in postponing the invasion of Europe by six months," while also keeping Italy in the Axis camp and forestalling a sudden Allied thrust over the Alps through the Brenner Pass.

As the historian Michael Howard has noted, the Führer overestimated Allied capabilities: not even Patton dreamed of driving the length of Italy to abruptly appear in Munich. But the campaign *had* bought the Axis some time by keeping the Mediterranean closed an extra half year; by straining Allied shipping and constraining strategic planning; by sucking Allied troops and supplies into the Mediterranean and away from any cross-Channel expedition; and, most ominously, by giving Kesselring months to begin reinforcing the Reich's southern flank.

The protracted campaign in Tunisia certainly delayed other European operations, beginning with HUSKY. There was nothing for it but to soldier on. "War is a burden to be carried on a steep and bloody road," Marshall observed, "and only strong nerves and determined spirits can endure to the end."

And what if Tunis had fallen in that first heady rush in November? The invasion of Sicily and then the Italian mainland would likely have been accelerated by months, perhaps allowing the capture of Rome in 1943. But Allied shipping and airpower limitations make it hard to conclude that D-day at Normandy could have been mounted much earlier than June 6, 1944—or rather, mounted successfully.

It remains far from clear that such an acceleration, even if possible, would have been prudent. If TORCH provided one benefit above others, it was to save Washington and London from a disastrously premature landing in northern Europe. Given the dozens of Wehrmacht divisions waiting behind the Atlantic Wall, France would have been a poor place to be lousy in. TORCH had been a great risk—"the purest gamble America and Britain undertook during the war," the official U.S. Army Air Forces history concluded—but it deferred the even greater gamble of a cross-Channel invasion until the odds improved.

For now, the victors celebrated their victory. For the Anglo-Americans, Churchill wrote Eisenhower, the triumph was "an augury full of hope for the future of the world. Long may they march together, striking down the tyrants and oppressors of mankind."

Many shared his sentiment. "Together we had all faced death on a number of occasions and this experience had created between us a bond which could never be taken away," a British captain in the 78th Division wrote. "We had gone to the brink and come back."

Among those who had not come back was a young American stretcher bearer, Caleb Milne, who was killed by a mortar round on May 11 while giving first aid to a wounded soldier. In a final, prescient letter to his mother, Milne described the Tunisian campaign as

a vivid, wonderful world so full of winter and spring, warm rain and cold snow, adventures

and contentments, good things and bad. How often you will have me near you when wood smoke drifts across the wind, or the first tulips arrive, or the sky darkens in a summer storm…. Think of me today, and in the days to come, as I am thinking of you *this minute*, not gone or alone or dead, but part of the earth beneath you, part of the air around you, part of the heart that must not be lonely.

Kilroy had been here, and now he prepared to move on. Beyond Tunis harbor, just over the horizon, another continent waited.

Unless otherwise noted, all photographs are from *U.S. Army Signal Corps archives*.



The commander-in-chief of Allied forces in North Africa, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, photographed in Algiers in early 1943



Rear Admiral H. Kent Hewitt, commander of Task Force 34, during the American invasion of Morocco in November 1942. At fifty-five, with a high, bookish forehead and mild demeanor, Hewitt was nevertheless a formidable fighting admiral.



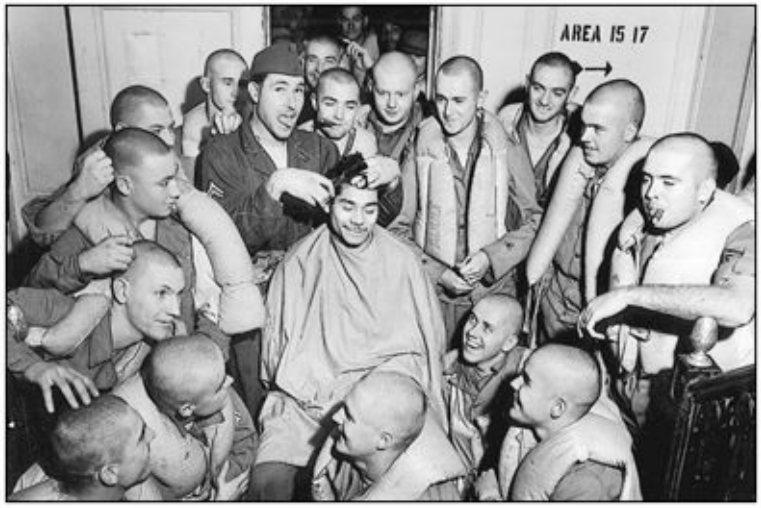
Lieutenant General Kenneth A. N. Anderson, commander of the British First Army, in northern Tunisia. A sardonic subordinate nicknamed him “Sunshine,” while his American code name was “Grouch”; fluent in French and Italian, he could be silent in any language. (*Imperial War Museum*)



General Henri Giraud inspects spahi cavalrymen and colonial riflemen in Algiers. Intrepid and brave, with a knack for escaping from German prisons, he also possessed what one Frenchman described as the uncomprehending eyes of a porcelain cat.



Lieutenant Colonel Robert R. Moore, a druggist from Villisca, Iowa, rose from the “Boy Captain” of his National Guard company to command the 2nd Battalion of the 168th Infantry Regiment during the German counteroffensive east of Kasserine Pass. (*Courtesy of the Moore family*)



Four days before the American landings in Morocco, Signal Corps soldiers aboard ship initiate another member into the Bald-Head Club. All troops were also ordered to shower before the invasion to lessen the chance of wounds becoming infected.



Men from the 1st Ranger Battalion review a map of Arzew aboard ship, November 7, 1942, hours before they captured the Algerian harbor at the beginning of the TORCH invasion.



The harsh sound of steel on whetstones could be heard throughout the convoys as soldiers put an edge on their bayonets and trench knives during the passage to Morocco and Algeria. This photograph was taken on November 7, 1942, invasion eve.



American troops landing at Fedala, Morocco, on Sunday, November 8, 1942. After what local residents described as the calmest day in decades, the Atlantic surf soon turned ferocious.



Major General Terry de la Mesa Allen, commander of the 1st Infantry Division, with French officers on the Tunisian front in early 1943. With the bowed stride of a horseman who had been saddle-hardened as a child, Allen was, an aide later observed, “the fightingest man I ever met.”



Brigadier General Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., assistant commander of the 1st Infantry Division, seen here at the Tunisian front. An accomplished author, diplomat, businessman, and soldier, he was erudite and valorous; but in tattered fatigues and wool cap he could be mistaken for a battalion cook.



Robert Murphy, the senior American diplomat in Algiers, and General Alphonse Juin, commander of French ground forces in North Africa, seen here after the armistice between Vichy troops and the Allies. Murphy is wearing his new Distinguished Service Medal, awarded for his part in Operation TORCH.



Two soldiers guard a broached landing craft on the Moroccan coast in the early hours of the American invasion. Despite uncommonly calm seas, hundreds of landing craft and lighters were lost in Morocco and Algeria during the operation.



Lieutenant Colonel William O. Darby, commander of the 1st Ranger Battalion, outside Arzew, Algeria. No one who met him ever doubted that he was born to lead other men in the dark of night.



The 1st Ranger Battalion captures a French coastal gun at Arzew, east of Oran, in the early hours of November 8, 1942.



Two Ranger corporals, Robert Bevin and Earl Drost, both from Iowa, cover a French gun battery above Arzew harbor in Algeria on November 8.



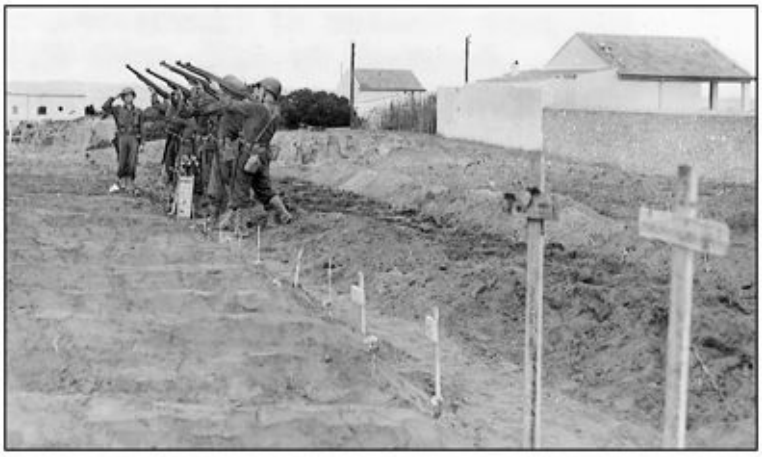
Oran harbor. In Operation RESERVIST, the British cutters *Walney* and *Hartland* carried hundreds of American soldiers into the teeth of French defenses before dawn on November 8. The port entrance is visible in the upper center of this photograph, taken six months later.



Major General Lloyd R. Fredendall, who later commanded the U.S. II Corps in Tunisia, pins a Purple Heart on correspondent Leo “Bill” Disher. The reporter survived twenty-five wounds—eleven from gunshots and fourteen from shell fragments—during Operation RESERVIST, and later composed a brilliant account of the debacle.



The widow and son of Lieutenant Colonel George F. Marshall receive his posthumous Distinguished Service Cross in a Pentagon ceremony. The senior American commander during Operation RESERVIST, Marshall was last seen on the bow of the British cutter *Walney*, throwing hand grenades at a French destroyer.



Burying U.S. soldiers killed in action in early December 1942. This temporary cemetery was at Les Andalouses, near Algiers.



The mouth of the Sebou River, opening onto the Atlantic, as seen from the north wall of the old fortress dubbed the Kasbah. On the road to Port Lyautey, seen passing beneath the fort, Colonel Demas T. Craw was killed in a French ambush. (*Collection of the author*)



After three days of shelling and dive bombing by U.S. Navy planes, the Kasbah lies in ruins. The U.S. Army, which suffered more than three hundred casualties in the attack on Mehdia and Port Lyautey, conceded that “the final assault had touches of *Beau Geste*.”



Brigadier General Lucian K. Truscott, Jr., commanded the attack force that invaded Mehdia in northern Morocco and later ran General Eisenhower’s forward headquarters during the battle for Tunisia. Chesty and slightly stooped, he had protruding gray eyes, a moon face, and a voice as raspy as a wood file.



Admiral Jean Darlan (*left*), commander of the Vichy French armed forces, shares a cup of coffee in Algiers on November 22, 1942, with Lieutenant General Mark W. Clark after the formal signing of a controversial armistice between Allied and Vichy forces in North Africa. A photograph of Marshal Pétain looks over Clark’s shoulder.



Darlan shaking hands with Major General Charles W. Ryder, commander of the U.S. 34th Infantry Division, during a ceremony in Algiers on December 1, 1942. Between them in the background is Brigadier General Lyman L. Lemnitzer, a staff officer who later became chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff.



Correspondent Ernie Pyle, slender as a thread at one hundred pounds and given to drink and melancholy, arrived in North Africa with a typewriter to educate America about the war. Here he is seen with wounded soldiers at a hospital near St. Cloud, Algeria, in early December 1942.



General Auguste Paul Noguès (*left*), the French resident-general of Morocco, and Major General George S. Patton, Jr., at a parade in Rabat after the armistice between Allied and Vichy forces. Noguès, a slippery equivocator known to the Allies as “No-Yes,” had led French resistance to the American invasion in three days of bloody fighting.



Field Marshal Albert Kesselring was given a “free hand” by Hitler in repelling the Allied invasion of North Africa. Known as Smiling Albert for his toothy grin and unquenchable optimism, he had orchestrated the terror bombings of Warsaw, Coventry, and many cities in between.



Major General Jimmy Doolittle, commander of U.S. air forces in North Africa and winner of the Congressional Medal of Honor for his raid on Japan in April 1942. Seen here in a Spitfire cockpit before a reconnaissance flight from Algiers on December 21, 1942, Doolittle initially was disliked by Eisenhower, who also resented the amount of time he spent flying.



A few of the eight thousand mourners who filed past Admiral Darlan’s bier on Christmas Day, 1942, a day after his assassination. “Not a tear was shed,” one correspondent wrote. Darlan’s naval cap is perched on the casket.



Picking through the wreckage of an American B-17 Flying Fortress destroyed in a Luftwaffe raid on an Algerian airfield, January 9, 1943. Costly German raids forced all B-17s westward to safer fields near Oran, which meant a twelve hundred–mile roundtrip bombing run to Tunis.



The 1st Ranger Battalion marching over hilly Algerian terrain in late January 1943, shortly before the raid against an Italian outpost at Sened Station in southern Tunisia.



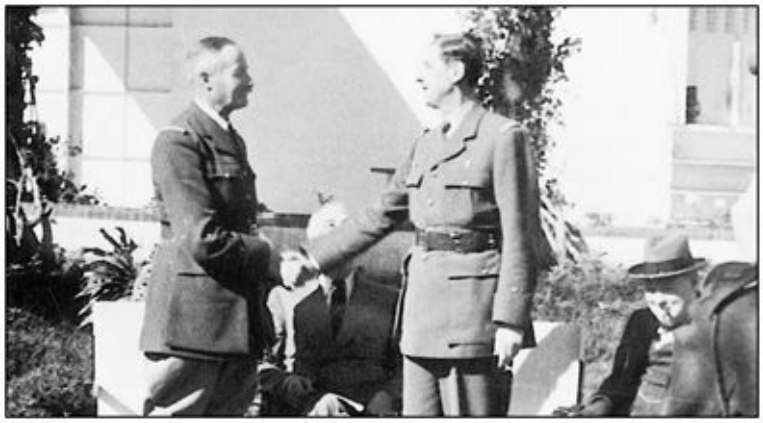
An American tank crew from the 2nd Battalion of the 1st Armored Regiment, in Tunisia, February 1943. At more than ten feet tall, the M-3 General Lee “looked like a damned cathedral coming down the road,” one tanker complained.



The Anglo-American combined chiefs of staff in the Anfa Hotel conference room outside Casablanca, January 1943. Visible from the left are the American chiefs: Admiral Ernest J. King, General George C. Marshall, and General H. H. “Hap” Arnold. On the far right is Field Marshall John Dill, the senior British officer in Washington, and then the British chiefs: Air Marshal Charles F. A. Portal; General Sir Alan Brooke, chief of the Imperial General Staff; Admiral Dudley Pound; and Vice Admiral Louis Mountbatten, commander of British combined operations.



President Roosevelt inspects U.S. troops during the Casablanca Conference, January 21, 1943. Lieutenant General Mark W. Clark is in the rear seat of the jeep, which is followed by Secret Service agents. “They are a bunch of cheap detectives,” Patton complained of the agents, “always smelling of drink.”



The handshake seen round the world: on January 24, 1943, at the end of the Casablanca Conference, General Henri Giraud (*left*) and General Charles de Gaulle, who detested each other, pose for the cameras at the insistence of Roosevelt, partly obscured between them, and to the amusement of Prime Minister Winston S. Churchill.



Correspondents and photographers gather on the lawn outside Villa Dar es Saada on January 24, 1943, to hear Roosevelt and Churchill discuss the Casablanca Conference, which had just ended. The president, to Churchill’s surprise, has just announced that “unconditional surrender” by the Axis powers was the only acceptable way to end the war.



Earl Van Derreer, a technical sergeant from California with the U.S. 14th Fighter Group, in his burrow at Youks les Bains, Algeria, in January 1943



Colonel Paul McD. Robinett, seated, during passage to Northern Ireland in May 1942. Commander of the 13th Armored Regiment and later, as a brigadier general, of Combat Command B of the 1st Armored Division, Robinett was five feet four inches tall, with a cavalry strut and impressive tactical skills; he also “annoyed everyone” with his fussy and divisive arrogance.



Major General Orlando Ward, commander of the U.S. 1st Armored Division, in Northern Ireland shortly before leaving for North Africa. Known as “Pinky” for his once reddish hair, he was capable, ambitious, highly sensitive, and deeply suspicious of the British. (*Courtesy of the Ward family*)



A dead German soldier after the battle for Sened Station in southern Tunisia, in early February 1943



Crewmen with an American anti-tank gun watch for attacking German tanks near Sidi bou Zid, February 14, 1943, in the early hours of the Axis counteroffensive that led to Kasserine Pass.



An American tank crosses a wadi outside Sidi bou Zid on the morning of February 14, hours before the Germans completed their double envelopment of the town.



The wreckage of an American P-38 fighter near Sidi bou Zid. In the distance looms Djebel Lessouda, where John Waters was captured and Robert Moore escaped with part of his battalion.



Three battered GIs return to American lines after being trapped behind German positions for three days near Sidi bou Zid.



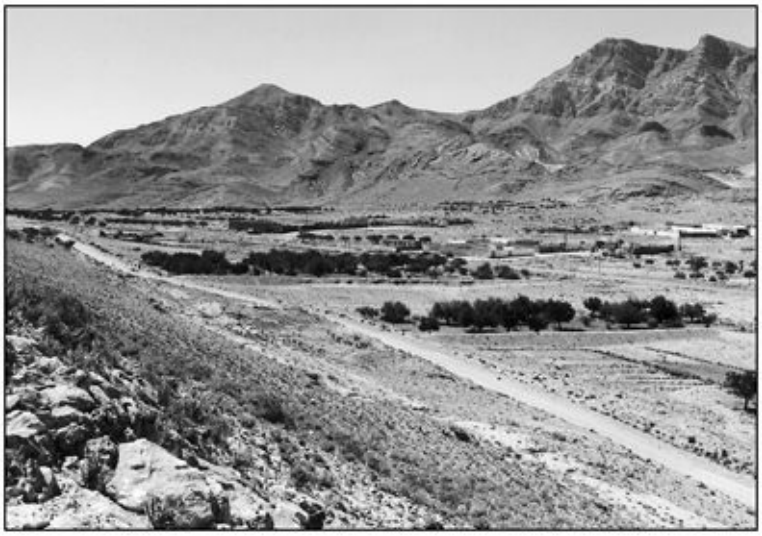
Soldiers from the 2nd Battalion of the 16th Infantry Regiment—part of Terry Allen’s 1st Division—head east through Kasserine Pass on February 26, 1943, after Rommel’s withdrawal.



Major General Ernest N. Harmon, sent by Eisenhower to Tunisia during the Kasserine Pass debacle, returned six weeks later to command the 1st Armored Division. Blunt and barrel-chested, he once was described as “a cobra without the snake charmer.”



American combat engineers search for mines at the Kasserine train station, February 26, 1943. Rommel’s withdrawing soldiers planted more than 43,000 mines, forcing American troops to “spread out like caddies and golfers looking for a lost ball.”



Across Gumtree Road lies Djebel Orbata, where Darby led his Rangers across the hills east of El Guettar to fall on the Italians from the rear on March 20–21, 1943. (*Collection of the author*)



On March 16, 1943, on the eve of the II Corps attack on Gafsa, Eisenhower pins a third star on a buoyant Patton to mark his promotion to lieutnant general. One officer said of the new II Corps commander, “Bedizened with stars and loaded with guns, he came with Marsian speech and a song of hate.”



Field Marshal Harold Alexander (*left*), commander of the new 18th Army Group, with Eisenhower (*center*) and Patton during their first collective meeting, in Fériana, on March 17, 1943, the day the American attack began on Gafsa and El Guettar



Lieutenant General Lesley J. McNair (*center*), commander of U.S. Army Ground Forces, at the Tunisian front on April 22, 1943, the day before he was badly wounded by a German shell.



Major General Walter B. “Beetle” Smith, Eisenhower’s capable if irascible chief of staff, in his Algiers office, March 1943



British troops storming a position during an apparent training exercise in Tunisia



British Eighth Army soldiers moving toward the Mareth Line in southern Tunisia, March 24, 1943



An American tank destroyer battalion on reconnaissance at El Guettar on March 23, 1943, during the spoiling attack by the German 10th Panzer Division



The bodies of American soldiers killed in action brought down from the hills of northern Tunisia by mule, April 25, 1943



American artillery detonates around attacking German tanks of the 10th Panzer Division near El Guettar on April 23, 1943. After hours of savage fighting, Ted Roosevelt reported that the enemy “hesitated, turned around, and retreated. The men around me burst into cheers.”



Hill 609, as soldiers from the 34th Infantry Division saw it in their approach from the west. Wind tossed the yellowing wheat on the lower slopes, making the hill undulate like a great breathing thing. (*Collection of the author*)



General Bernard L. Montgomery salutes the cheering throng in Sousse after the port town was liberated in April 1943. Once described by George Bernard Shaw as “that intensely compacted hank of steel wire,” Montgomery provoked Eisenhower to complain, “I can deal with anybody except that son of a bitch.”



Field Marshal Erwin Rommel (*third from left*) and his staff in Tunisia in early 1943, from captured German photo negatives. “Rommel, Rommel, Rommel!” Churchill had exclaimed. “What else matters but beating him?”



Major General Omar N. Bradley shortly before leaving for Africa, where he eventually succeeded Patton as commander of the U.S. II Corps. A prim, severe Missourian who was described as “the least dressed-up commander of an American army in the field since Zachary Taylor,” he likened rooting Axis troops from the Tunisian hills to “hunting wild goats.”



Italian prisoners captured by the 9th Infantry Division along the north coast of Tunisia, May 1, 1943



Soldiers from the 60th Infantry Regiment of the 9th Division, in the hills outside Bizerte on May 7, 1943, the day the port fell



Lieutenant Colonel Charles J. Denholm, commander of the 1st Battalion of the 16th Infantry, on May 8, 1943, hours after he and other soldiers captured at hill 523 were freed from an Italian prison ship that had been repeatedly attacked by unwitting Allied planes in the Gulf of Tunis



Major General Manton S. Eddy (*left*), commander of the 9th Infantry Division, and his assistant commander, Brigadier General Daniel A. Stroh, in Bizerte on May 9, 1943



American troops along the Bizerte corniche shortly after the port fell. The town had been without running water for three months; typhus was present and cholera threatened.



French civilians greet Allied troops with victory signs on May 10, 1943, shortly after the fall of Tunis.



An aerial view of Bizerte, taken on May 10, 1943. After seven months of bombing, not a single building was habitable. “Bizerte was the most completely wrecked place I had ever seen,” Ernie Pyle reported.



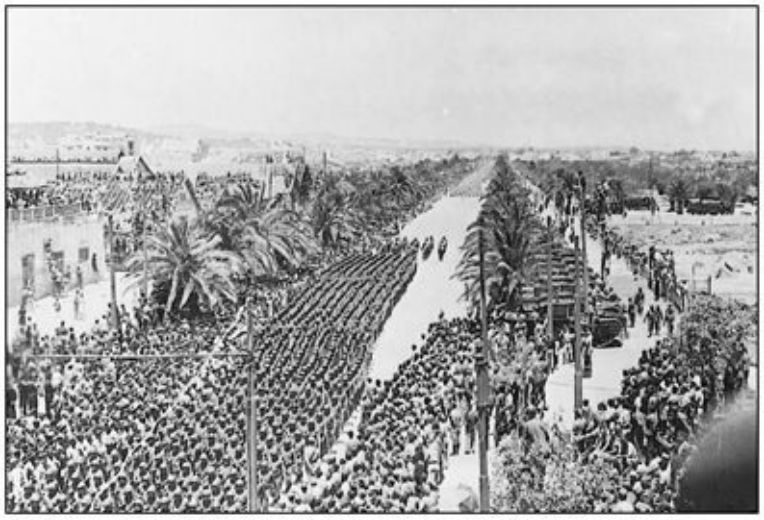
A captured German soldier from the Hermann Göring Division fills out paperwork in a temporary Moroccan prison camp before being shipped to the United States or Britain.



General Louis-Marie Koeltz, commander of the French XIX Corps, presents the Croix de Guerre to Terry Allen (*center*) and Ted Roosevelt for their valor in the Tunisian campaign.



General Hans-Jürgen von Arnim, commander of Axis forces in North Africa, on May 15, 1943, three days after his capture and shortly before being flown to a prison in England. Behind him is General Hans Cramer, commander of the German Afrika Korps.



American soldiers from the 34th Infantry Division march through Tunis in the victory parade on May 20, 1943. Patton complained that “our men do not put up a good show in reviews”; thousands of spectators disagreed, shrieking “Vive l’Amerique” from sidewalks and balconies.



Twenty-seven acres of headstones today fill the American military cemetery at Carthage, outside Tunis. (*Collection of the author*)

NOTES

To provide an individual citation for every fact in this book would result in an extraordinarily cumbersome and pedantic ream of notes. I have instead grouped the sources relevant to particular passages of the text; the intent is to provide explicit attribution, as well as a guide for readers seeking additional source material. The bibliography also gives further information regarding the sources cited.

The following abbreviations appear in the endnotes and bibliography.

AAF Army Air Forces
AAFinWWII W.F. Craven and J.L. Cate, eds., *The Army Air Forces in World War II*, vol. II
AAR after action report
AD armored division
AFHQ micro Allied Forces Headquarters microfilm, NARA RG 331
AFHRA Air Force Historical Research Agency
ag adjutant general
AR armored regiment
ASEQ Army Service Experiences Questionnaire, MHI
Bde brigade
Bn battalion
CARL Combined Arms Research Library, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas
CBH Chester B. Hansen diary, MHI
CCS Combined Chiefs of Staff
CEOH U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Office of History
Chandler Alfred Chandler, ed., *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower: The War Years*, vol. II
CINCLANT Commander-in-Chief, Atlantic Fleet
CMH U.S. Army Center of Military History, Fort McNair, Washington, D.C.
Co company
Col U OHRO Columbia University Oral History Research Office
corr correspondence
CSI Combat Studies Institute, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas
CT combat team
DDE Lib Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library
Destruction I.S.O. Playfair and C.J.C. Molony, *The Mediterranean and the Middle East*, vol. IV
diss dissertation
Div division
DSC Distinguished Service Cross
E entry
ETO European Theater of Operations
FA field artillery
FCP Forrest C. Pogue, background material for *The Supreme Commander*

FDR Lib Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library
FMS Foreign Military Studies, MHI
FRUS *Foreign Relations of the United States: The Conferences at Washington, 1941–1942, and Casablanca, 1943*
GCM Lib George C. Marshall Library, Lexington, Va.
GSP George S. Patton, Jr., Papers
Hansen draft of Omar Bradley's *A Soldier's Story,* C. B. Hansen, MHI
HKH Henry Kent Hewitt Papers
ID infantry division
inf infantry
Intel intelligence
Iowa GSM Iowa Gold Star Museum, Fort Dodge, Iowa
IWM Imperial War Museum, London
JAG judge advocate general
JCS Joint Chiefs of Staff
lib library
LHC Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives, King's College, London
LKT Jr. Lucian K. Truscott, Jr.
LOC MS Div Library of Congress Manuscript Division
Med Mediterranean
MCC Mina Curtiss Collection
MHI U.S. Army Military History Institute, Carlisle, Pa.
MWC Mark Wayne Clark
micro microfilm
MP military police
MRC FDM McCormick Research Center, First Division Museum, Cantigny, Ill.
msg message
mss manuscript
MTOUSA Mediterranean Theater of Operations, United States Army
N Af North Africa
NARA National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Md.
NATOUSA North African Theater of Operations, United States Army
n.d. no date
NHC Naval Historical Center, Washington, D.C.
NSA National Security Agency
NWAf George F. Howe, *Northwest Africa: Seizing the Initiative in the West*
NWC Lib National War College Library
OCMH Office of the Chief of Military History
OCNO Office of the Chief of Naval Operations
OCS Office of the Chief of Staff
OH oral history
OSS Office of Strategic Services
OW Orlando Ward Papers
Para parachute
PMR Paul McD. Robinett papers
PP-pres Papers, Pre-presidential
PRO Public Record Office, Kew, England

qm quartermaster
Regt regiment
RG record group
RN Royal Navy
ROHA Rutgers University Oral History Archives of World War II
SEM Samuel Eliot Morison Office Files
SM Sidney T. Matthews Papers
SOOHP Senior Officer Oral History Program
S.P. self-published
td tank destroyer
TdA Terry de la Mesa Allen Papers
Three Years Harry C. Butcher, *My Three Years with Eisenhower*
TR Theodore Roosevelt III Papers
ts typescript
USAF U.S. Air Force
USAF HRC U.S. Air Force Historical Research Center
USMA Arch U.S. Military Academy Archives, West Point
USAWWII *United States Army in World War II*
USN U.S. Navy
USNAd "U.S. Naval Administration in World War II"
USNI OHD U.S. Naval Institute, Oral History Department, Annapolis, Md.
UTEP University of Texas at El Paso
UT-K University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Center for the Study of War and Society
WD War Department
WTF Western Task Force
WWII World War II
YU Yale University Library, Manuscripts and Archives

PROLOGUE

Twenty-seven acres: Author visits, Sept. 1996, Apr. 2000; "North Africa American Cemetery," n.d., American Battle Monuments Commission.

No large operation: *AAFinWWII,* 41 (*"the degree of strategic surprise"*); Siegfried Westphal, *The German Army in the West*, 131 (*"to the last man"*).

"There is a soul": William T. Sherman, *Memoirs,* 387.

North Africa is where: Mina Curtiss, ed., *Letters Home,* 65 (*"It is a very, very horrible war"*); James Tobin, *Ernie Pyle's War*, 89 (*"killing is a craft"*); A. B. Austin, *Birth of an Army,* 133 (*"The last war"*).

September 1, 1939: Gerhard L. Weinberg, *A World at Arms: A Global History of World War II,* 894, 57; Martin Gilbert, *The Second World War*, 14–19 (*"Take a good look"*). Weinberg estimates total war-related deaths at 60 million.

"The small countries": Winston S. Churchill, *Their Finest Hour,* 24. *France was not small*: *Destruction,* 116; Gilbert, 90 (*"First they were too cowardly"*); Mark M. Boatner III, *The Biographical Dictionary of World War II,* 421 (*"They call me only"*); *NWAf,* 16–17.

Pétain so pledged: Gilbert, 100 (*"Whatever happens"*), 130 (*"The war is won"*), 137 (*RAF pilots shot down*), 151 (*"Whither thou goest"*); Marvin A. Kreidberg and Merton G. Henry, *History of Military Mobilization in the United States Army, 1775–1945,* 674–75; Norman Gelb, *Desperate Venture,* 72 (*"our eyelids"*).

Hitler faced: Gilbert, 135 (*"we are on the march"*), 194–99, 246–47, 272, 277 (*"the single most decisive act"*), 304; Weinberg, 260, 264–72; Churchill, *The Grand Alliance,* 606, 608 (*"the sleep of the saved"*).

Two years, three months: Gelb, 25 (*"more unready for war"*); Christopher R. Gabel, *The U.S. Army GHQ Maneuvers of 1941,* 8; James A. Huston, *The Sinews of War: Army Logistics, 1775–1953,* 411; Richard M. Ketchum, *The Borrowed Years, 1938–1941,* 544 (*"reconstruction of a dinosaur"*). *That task had started*: Ketchum, 645; Lee B. Kennett, *G.I.: The American Soldier in World War II,* 19–22, 29; Ralph Stein and Harry Brown, *It's a Cinch, Private Finch!* (*"Do you like girls?"* and *"at least below the rank of major"*); Roy R. Grinker and John P. Siegel, *War Neuroses in North Africa.*

Jeremiads derided: Roger Barry Fosdick, "A Call to Arms," diss, 1985; *Time,* Aug. 18, 1941, 36.

Equipment and weaponry: Marvin Jensen, *Strike Swiftly: The 70th Tank Battalion,* 6 (*"tanks are dear"*); Doris Kearns Goodwin, *No Ordinary Time,* 51 (*"The idea of huge armies"*); David Brinkley, *Washington Goes to War,* 57; Alexander M. Bielakowski, "Calmer Heads Will Prevail," paper, Society for Military History, Apr. 2000; Alexander M. Bielakowski, "The Role of the Horse in Modern Warfare as Viewed in the Interwar U.S. Army's *Cavalry Journal,*" *Army History,* summer–fall 2000, 20.

To lead the eventual host: Mark A. Stoler, *George C. Marshall: Soldier-Statesman of the American Century,* 93; Gabel, 116; Charles E. Kirkpatrick, "Orthodox Soldiers: Army Formal Schools Between the Two World Wars," paper, March 1990; Richard W. Stewart, "The Red Bull Division," *Army History,* winter 1993, 1; letter, L. J. McNair to C. Brewer, Nov. 15, 1943, NARA RG 165, Director of Plans and Ops, corr, box 1229; E. J. Kahn, Jr., "Education of an Army," *New Yorker,* Oct. 14, 1944, 28; Joseph W. A. Whitehorne, *The Inspectors General of the United States Army, 1903–1939,* 440 (*stained with scandal*).

Yet slowly the giant stirred: Geoffrey Perret, *There's a War to Be Won: The United States Army in World War II,* 29 (*$9 billion*), 31; Gilbert, 240 (*amputation saws*).

But where?: Louis Morton, "Germany First: The Basic Concept of Allied Strategy in World War II," in Kent Roberts Greenfield, ed., *Command Decisions,* 3–38 (*"the problem confronting us"*); Maurice Matloff and Edwin M. Snell, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1941–1942, USAWWII,* 27, 44, 113; Ray S. Cline, *Washington Command Post: The Operations Division, USAWWII,* 56; Gilbert, 286 (*"life, liberty, independence"*).

The American idea: Gelb, *Desperate Venture,* 70 (*"Through France"*); Cline, 156; John Slessor, *The Central Blue,* 434 (*"go for him bald-headed"*); Arthur Bryant, *The Turn of the Tide,* 353 (*"wanted revenge"*).

Direct, concentrated attack: Russell F. Weigley, *The American Way of War,* 313 (for an enlightening critique of the U.S. strategic tradition see Brian M. Linn, *"The American Way of War* Revisited," *Journal of Military History,* April 2002, 501); Maurice Matloff, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1943–1944, USAWWII,* 11; Matloff and Snell, 156; memo, DDE, Chandler, vol. I, 66 (*"We've got to go"*).

As the new chief: Matloff, 12; Leo J. Meyer, "The Decision to Invade North Africa," in

Greenfield, ed., *Command Decisions,* 134; Samuel Eliot Morison, *The Two-Ocean War,* 222; Field Marshal Viscount Alanbrooke, OH, FCP, Jan. 28, 1947, MHI (*"We shall be pushed out"*); Alex Danchev and Daniel Todman, eds., *War Diaries, 1939–1945, Field Marshal Lord Alanbrooke,* 281–82; Richard W. Steele, *The First Offensive,* 171, 231; Benjamin A. Dickson, "G-2 Journal: Algiers to the Elbe," ts, n.d., MHI, 9 (*some skeptics*); Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe,* 43; Gilbert, 283; Frederick E. Morgan, ts, n.d., cited in FCP, MHI (*"He recoiled in horror"*); Robert E. Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins: An Intimate Biography,* 591; GCM, OH, Forrest C. Pogue, Oct. 5, 1956, GCM Lib (*"Bodies floating in the Channel"*); GCM, OH, July 25, 1949, SM, MHI (*"sacrifice play"*).

Whereas the dominant American strategic impulse: Morton, "Germany First," 34; Meyer, "The Decision to Invade North Africa," 132; Weigley, 328; Michael Howard, *The Mediterranean Strategy in the Second World War,* 14–17; Matloff and Snell, 55; Gelb, 96 (*"This has all along"*).

The American military disagreed: Matloff and Snell, 104 (*"indirect contribution"*); Gelb, 89 (*"will not result in removing"*).

To many American officers: William C. Frierson, "Preparations for TORCH," Dec. 1945, vol. I, Historical Division, WD Special Staff, CMH 2–3.7 AD, 22; Eric Larrabee, *Commander in Chief,* 436 (*"After England Failed"*).

Following another visit: Stoler, *The Politics of the Second Front,* 55–56; Matloff and Snell, 214, 231, 268–72, 276; Albert C. Wedemeyer, *Wedemeyer Reports!,* 158 (*"Scotch bagpipe band"*); msg, WD to AFHQ, Nov. 4, 1942, NARA RG 492, MTOUSA, box 1388; Walter Bedell Smith, OH, May 8, 1947, FCP, MHI (*often had to rely on the British*); Morison, *History of the United States Naval Operations in World War II,* vol. IX, *Sicily-Salerno-Anzio,* 4 (*war could last a decade*); GCM, OH, July 25, 1949, SM, MHI (*would have to field at least 200 divisions*).

Other factors also influenced: Walter Scott Dunn, Jr., *Second Front Now 1943*; Gilbert, 322, 350 (*Operation WATCHTOWER*), 335 (*"I am going on to Suez"*).

By chance, the bad news: Danchev and Todman, eds., 268–69, 286 (*Cromwell's death mask*); Gilbert, 335 (*"What can we do"*); Arthur Layton Funk, *The Politics of Torch,* 86; Meyer, 143; Matloff and Snell, 283; *NWAf,* 14.

The president had made: Howard, *Grand Strategy,* vol. IV, xxi (*"defeat of Germany"*); Danchev and Todman, eds., 250 (*"The prospects of success"*), 275 (*"to play baccarat"*); Charles Bolte, OH, Oct. 17, 1973, Maclyn Burg, DDE Lib, OH 395, 51–52 (*Army logisticians*); Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe,* 41; Meyer, 135–39 (*7,000 landing craft*); Matloff and Snell, 104 (*"persuasive rather than rational"*), 241 (*only 20,000*); Cline, 150 (*at least 600,000*), 157 (*"Who is responsible"*).

Roosevelt had saved: Forrest C. Pogue, *George C. Marshall: Ordeal and Hope, 1939–1942,* 330 (*"We failed to see"*); *Three Years,* 29 (*"blackest day"*); Matloff and Snell, 190 (*"thrashing around"*), 298 (*"a blessing in disguise"*), 310–11; Cline, 160; Funk, 86–92; minutes, CCS, July 25, 1942, 10:30 A.M., NARA RG 218, JCS records, box 325; Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate,* 449–51; *NWAf,* 15.

CHAPTER 1: PASSAGE
A Meeting with the Dutchman

A few minutes past ten A.M.: John Clagett, "Admiral H. Kent Hewitt, U.S. Navy," *Naval War College Review,* XXVIII, summer/fall 1975, 2 (*"squeezed the tar"*); note, July 24, 1943, HKH, LOC MS Div., box 1 (*turkey trot*); George Sessions Perry, "Why Don't They Write About Hewitt?" *Saturday Evening*

Post, Dec. 16, 1944, 22; Louis Mountbatten, OH, n.d., HKH, NHC, box 6 (*"a fat, bedraggled figure"*); HKH, n.d., Col U OHRO, CNOF-0334, NHC, box 20; Thaddeus V. Tuleja, "Admiral H. Kent Hewitt," in Stephen Howarth, ed., *Men of War: Great Naval Leaders of World War II*, 315–16; HKH, "Reminiscences of a World War II Admiral," ts, n.d., NHC, box 21, 170–206; John T. Mason, ed., *The Atlantic War Remembered*, 160–63.

In April 1942: DDE to T. Troubridge, Oct. 13, 1942, NARA RG 407, E 427, AG Office, WWII Ops Reports, box 203 (*"The object of the operations"*); Matloff and Snell, 291.

Through a tiny window: Brinkley, 117 (*if the military*); William D. Leahy, *I Was There*, 98; James B. Stack, OH-317, DDE Lib.; Alfred Goldberg, *The Pentagon: The First Fifty Years*, 175.

The plane settled: Associated Press article, in *New York Sun*, Jan. 30, 1943, HKH, LOC MS Div, box 9, folder 6 (*"You do everything"*); "Amphibious Training Command," #145, USNAd, NHC, VII-26; William S. Biddle, "Amphibious Training of American Troops in Great Britain," lecture, Fort Hood, 1943, William S. Biddle Papers, MHI; Kenneth Macksey, *Crucible of Power: The Fight for Tunisia, 1942–1943*, 48 (*imaginary ocean*); Ken Ford, *Battleaxe Division*, 6.

Would the eight: "Reminiscences of a World War II Admiral," 170–206; Michael Howard, *Grand Strategy*, 112; C.B.A. Behrens, *Merchant Shipping and the Demands of War*, 367–68; F. H. Hinsley, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, vol. 2, 470; Walter Karig, *Battle Report: The Atlantic War*, 167; Disney note, HKH, LOC MS Div, box 2, folder 6.

The staff car crawled: *New York Times*, Oct. 21, 1942, 1; *Washington Evening Star*, Oct. 21, 1942, 1 (*"there aren't any nylon stockings"*); Goodwin, 394.

The car pulled up: Quartermaster report, n.d., NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 231 (*among the secret cargoes*).

Since Roosevelt's final decision: Theodore J. Conway, SOOHP, Robert F. Ensslin, Sept. 1977, MHI; Leahy, 136 (*"pig-headed"*).

First, he insisted: Greenfield, ed., 149; FDR to Churchill, in Aug. 31, 1942, memo, E. King to GCM, NARA RG 218, JCS, box 325 (*"I am reasonably sure"*); James MacGregor Burns, *Roosevelt: The Soldier of Freedom*, 290 (*public opinion in North Africa*); Larrabee, 424.

There was skepticism: Harold Macmillan, *The Blast of War*, 160 (*"where all good Americans"*); Churchill to FDR, Sept. 14, 1942, NARA RG 218, JCS, box 225; Danchev and Todman, eds., 316 (*wait a full month*).

The second vital issue: Matloff and Snell, 287; minutes, CCS meeting, Aug. 28, 1942, NARA RG 218, JCS, box 225 (*"take great risks"*); Andrew Browne Cunningham, *A Sailor's Odyssey*, 470; Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, 79.

But General Marshall: Howard, *Grand Strategy*, 124, 127; *NWAf*, 26; *Destruction*, 124; msg, War Cabinet, Joint Intelligence Sub-Committee, Aug. 7, 1942, NARA RG 165, Plans and Ops, General Records, corr, box 1229; Bernard Fergusson, *The Watery Maze*, 197 (*drawstring*); General Lord Ismay, *The Memoirs of General Lord Ismay*, 261; MWC, OH, May 19, 1948, G. F. Howe, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 228; minutes, CCS meeting, Aug. 28, 1942, NARA RG 218, JCS, box 225 (*"only bring ridicule"*).

Roosevelt agreed: FDR to Churchill, Aug. 31, 1942, NARA RG 492, MTOUSA records, box 1388; Danchev and Todman, eds., 315 (*"a much wiser plan"*); Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, 80 (*"realm of the probable"*).

On September 5: GCM, OH, Oct. 5, 1956, FCP, GCM Lib; GCM, OH, July 25, 1949, SM, MHI.

At the White House: William Seale, *The President's House,* vol. II, 976; Hewitt, Col U OHRO, copy at NHC, Hewitt papers, box 20.

Even as he shook Patton's hand: HKH to GSP, Sept 1, 1942, HKH, LOC MS Div, box 2, folder 5 (*"By all means"*); HKH, OH, Jan. 23, 1951, G. F. Howe, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 228 (*Army planners proposed*); Ismay, 265 (*"bunch of rattlesnakes"*); "Amphibious Training Command," #145, USNAd, NHC, VII-8 (*"failure to cooperate"*); Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe,* 82 (*Eisenhower's personal warrant*); Carlo D'Este, *Patton: A Genius for War,* 422 (*"Don't scare the Navy"*); Warren Tute, *The North African War,* 152; *NWAf,* 43.

At precisely two: "FDR Day by Day, Oct. 21, 1942," Secret Service records, box 4, FDR Lib; diary, Oct. 21, 1942, GSP, LOC MS Div. (*"Come in"*).

"Well, gentlemen": Ladislas Farago, *Patton: Ordeal and Triumph,* 195 (*"conqueror or a corpse"*); John S. D. Eisenhower, *Allies: Pearl Harbor to D-Day,* 63 (*"cigarette-holder gesture"*); Larrabee, 486.

But TORCH had its own hazards: Morison, *The Two-Ocean War,* 223; S.L.A. Marshall, *World War I,* 192.

For his part, Roosevelt: Henry L. Stimson and McGeorge Bundy, *On Active Service in Peace and War,* 425, 416; diary, Oct. 21, 1942, GSP, LOC MS Div (*how to moor*); Clagett, "Admiral H. Kent Hewitt," 72 (*"just dropped off"*).

Gathering the Ships

An unholy din rolled: "Commander in Chief, Atlantic Fleet," vol. I, USNAd, 391; Morison, *Operations in North African Waters,* vol. II, *History of United States Naval Operations in World War II,* 48; *Soldier Stevedores,* Signal Corps Film Bulletin #32, NARA Films, RG 111, Chief Signal Officer; William Reginald Wheeler, ed., *The Road to Victory,* 35.

Into the holds: Richard M. Leighton and Robert W. Coakley, *Global Logistics and Strategy: 1940–1943,* 465; Frierson, "Preparations for 'Torch,'" vol. 1, 63 (*$100,000 in gold coins*); memo, Aug. 23, 1942, LKT Jr. Papers, GCM Lib, box 9 (*flyswatters*); msg, Oct. 18, 1942, NARA RG 338, General Records ETO, 7th Army Awards, box 1 (*Purple Hearts*).

In theory, only 800 people: Oscar W. Koch, *G-2: Intelligence for Patton,* 4; 12th Air Force doc., Oct. 17, 1942, Lauris Norstad Papers, Air Campaign in Naf, DDE Lib, box 6 (*"I am your friend"*); C. L. Strong, "Allo, Maroc," *Bell Telephone Magazine,* Sept. 1943; "Commander in Chief, Atlantic Fleet," vol. I, USNAd, 384; John H. Waller, *The Unseen War in Europe,* 252 (*"Behold"*).

Quartermasters had: Quartermaster report, n.d., NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 231 (*"Do not open"*); "Chemical Warfare Policy, Operation TORCH," Sept. 10, 1942, AFHQ G-3, and memo, "chemical warfare policy," W. B. Smith, Sept. 27, 1942, both in NARA, AFHQ micro, R-83-F (*"most unlikely"*). The use of chemical weapons appears never to have been seriously considered. See Brooks E. Kleber and Dale Birdsell, *The Chemical Warfare Service: Chemicals in Combat,* 87–93.

Using a Michelin: Jack F. Wilhm et al., "Armor in the Invasion of North Africa," Armored School, 18; M.T. Wordell and E.N. Seiler, *Wildcats over Casablanca,* 19 (*Baedekers*); Lucian K. Truscott, Jr., *Command Missions,* 33; Alfred M. Beck et al., *The Corps of Engineers: The War Against Germany,* 63; "Catalogue of Standard Ordnance Items," vol. I, in "Kasserine Pass Battles," vol. II, pt. 3, CMH.

All cargo was: Leighton and Coakley, 443; Carl E. Bledsoe, report, Oct. 15, 1942, NARA RG 165, Plans and Ops, Gen'l Records, corr, box 1228; "Commander in Chief, Atlantic Fleet," vol. I, USNAd,

391; John Erbes, "Hell on Wheels Surgeon," ts, n.d., USMA Arch, 11.

On this disorderly Thursday: Blumenson, *The Patton Papers, 1940–1945,* 92, 94–95; Farago, 194; D'Este, *Patton,* 425; Wheeler, ed., 10 (*Aeneid*).

It was a fair self-assessment: Rick Atkinson, introduction to GSP, *War as I Knew It,* xi–xxii; Mark M. Boatner III, *The Biographical Dictionary of World War II,* 413.

"Give me generals": Mountbatten, OH, n.d., HKH, NHC, box 6; Larrabee, 486; diary, Oct. 21, 1942, GSP, LOC MS Div.

His command for TORCH: Matloff and Snell, 317; E. N. Harmon with Milton MacKaye and William Ross MacKaye, *Combat Commander,* 69 (*"put iron in their souls"*); D'Este, *Patton,* 422, 426–27 (*"had been ordered into arrest"* and *"If you don't succeed"*).

In a dinner toast: Harry H. Semmes, *Portrait of Patton,* 81; Henry Gerard Phillips, *The Making of a Professional: Manton S. Eddy, USA,* 84; James H. Doolittle with Carroll V. Glines, *I Could Never Be So Lucky Again,* 299; Harmon, *Combat Commander,* 69; Martin Blumenson, *Patton: The Man Behind the Legend, 1885–1945,* 64.

On Friday morning, October 23: "Reminiscences of Rear Adm. Joshua W. Cooper," USNI OHD, John T. Mason, 1975 (*"If you have any doubts"*); Morison, *Operations in North African Waters,* 43.

As the hour of departure: Frierson, "Preparations for 'Torch,'" vol. I, 23.

More usually: Wheeler, ed., 224–25; Albert E. Cowdrey, *Fighting for Life: American Military Medicine in World War II,* 165–67 (*Recent experience*).

No less dramatic: GCM to AFHQ, Oct. 8, 1942, NARA RG 492, MTOUSA records of the special staff, box 1385; "W.R.P.," "Mission to Morocco," *Navy,* Nov. 1958, 7; Charles F. Marsh, ed., *The Hampton Roads Communities in World War II,* 259; Bertram B. Fowler, "Twelve Desperate Miles," *Saturday Evening Post,* Aug. 28, 1943, 14; Wheeler, ed., 73.

All the confusion: Walter T. Kerwin, Jr., SOOHP, D. A. Doehle, MHI, 1980 (*"a sweltering inferno"*); general courts-martial offense ledger sheets, NARA RG 153, Office of the Judge Advocate General, boxes 17–19; "Amphibious Training Command," #145, USNAd, IX-34; Steve Kluger, *Yank: The Army Weekly,* 58; Lee B. Kennett, *G.I.: The American Soldier in World War II,* 32.

Naughty Norfolk: J. Blan van Urk, "Norfolk—Our Worst War Town," *American Mercury,* Feb. 1943, 1944 (*"solid block of beer joints"* and *"give me a concentration camp"*); Phyllis A. Hall, "Crisis at Hampton Roads: The Problems of Wartime Congestion, 1942–1944," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography,* July 1993, 405 (*"girlie trailers"*); Marvin W. Schlegel, *Conscripted City: Norfolk in World War II,* 193 (*massacre white citizens*).

Sober and otherwise: Owen C. Bolstad, *Dear Folks: A Dog-Faced Infantryman in World War II,* 9; Edwin Hubert Randle, *Safi Adventure,* 20.

Eight to twelve officers shared: Robert Wallace, "Africa, We Took It and Liked It," *Saturday Evening Post,* Jan. 16, 1943, 20.

From this very anchorage: James R. Reckner, *Teddy Roosevelt's Great White Fleet,* 23; "Commander in Chief, Atlantic Fleet," vol. I, USNAd, 383 (*"previously seen salt water"*); A. Russell Buchanan, *The United States and World War II,* vol. I, 148. *Patton settled into*: Diary, Oct. 21 and 23, 1942, GSP, LOC MS Div.; Fred Ayer, Jr., *Before the Colors Fade,* 116.

"generals so bold": *NWAf,* 44; Farago, 194; D'Este, *Patton: A Genius for War,* 885n.

Shortly before seven: "U.S. Atlantic Fleet, Amphibious Force—Action Report," NARA RG 407,

E 427, box 24490. For an interesting antecedent, see Thucydides, "Launching of the Sicilian Expedition," *History of the Peloponnesian War*, Rex Warner trans., 427–9.

The dawn was bright: Bruce Catton, *A Stillness at Appomattox*, 56 (*bright and blowing*); Ch'ên T'ao, "Turkestan," *The Jade Mountain: A Chinese Anthology*, Witter Bynner, trans., 14 (*into the rooms*).

Rendezvous at Cherchel

It began with a single light: Frederick C. Painton, "Secret Mission to North Africa," *Reader's Digest*, May 1943, 1; Godfrey B. Courtney, "Clark's Secret Mission," in Louis L. Snyder, ed., *Masterpieces of War Reporting: The Great Moments of World War II*, 205–206 (*"got to get off"*); N.L.A. Jewell, *Secret Mission Submarine*, 21; E. Alexander Powell, *In Barbary*, 309; A. J. Redway, "Admiral Jerauld Wright: The Life and Recollections of a Supreme Allied Commander," NHC, WWII CF Indiv Pers, box 674; Joseph E. Persico, *Roosevelt's Secret War*, 200–205.

an odd choice: F. W. Winterbotham, *The Ultra Secret*, 90 (*among the few Americans*); Nigel Hamilton, *Master of the Battlefield: Monty's War Years, 1942–1944*, 154 (*a secret so profound*).

That Eisenhower had entrusted: Carl W. McCardle, "Mark W. Clark," *These Are the Generals*, 90–91 (*Contraband*); Blumenson, *Mark Clark*, 51, 54 (*"nine dittos"*), 248–5 (*"The more stars"*); Mark W. Clark, *Calculated Risk*, 49 (*"When the soup"*); Blumenson, *The Patton Papers, 1940–1945*, 87 (*"He seems to me"*); D'Este, *Bitter Victory*, 55 (*"evil genius"*).

The voyage to Cherchel: Funk, 164; *Three Years*, 146 (*"happy as a boy"*); David Alvarez, *Secret Messages*, 62, 93, 97, 152, 184, 166–67, 170–71; Mary S. Lovell, *Cast No Shadow*, 147; H. Montgomery Hyde, *Cynthia*, 147; Anthony Cave Brown, *The Last Hero: Wild Bill Donovan*, 229; Peter Tompkins, *The Murder of Admiral Darlan*, 20 (*"an ornament of Harry's"*); Kenneth Pendar, *Adventure in Diplomacy*, 11 (*"so many Alices"*); R. Harris Smith, *OSS*, 39; Leon Borden Blair, "Amateurs in Diplomacy: The American Vice Consuls in North Africa, 1941–1943," *Historian*, Aug. 1973, 607.

Only a howling dog: Redway, 236; Clark, 79; Richard Livingstone, "Mark Clark's Secret Landing," in Basil Liddell Hart, ed., *History of the Second World War*, vol. 3, 1200; Tompkins, 47 (*"What sort of army"*).

Murphy was too excited: Robert Murphy, *Diplomat Among Warriors*, 2, 70, 74, 102 (*"nobody ever pays"*), 107; Pendar, 18 (*"gaiety"*); Charles de Gaulle, *The Complete War Memoirs of Charles de Gaulle*, 314; Macmillan, *War Diaries: The Mediterranean, 1943–1945*, 69.

At six A.M. *General Mast*: Boatner, 349; L. James Binder, *Lemnitzer, A Soldier for His Time*, 82–83.

For more than four hours: Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, 87; Blumenson, *Mark Clark*, 82; Binder, 83–84 (*"Where are these"*).

Perhaps lies: Most participants in this celebrated episode wrote accounts, sometimes elaborated in the telling. Among the most reliable is Teissier's "Notes sur la Mission du General Clark en Afrique du Nord," quoted in Waller, *The Unseen War in Europe*, 256; Murphy, 119; Binder, 82–88; "The French-American meeting of the Messelmoun," OSS Files, NARA RG 226, E 99, box 39; William L. Langer, *Our Vichy Gamble*, 329; Renée Gosset, *Conspiracy in Algiers*, 45; Redway, 236; *Three Years*, 154; Clark, 85–88; Mason, ed., 201.

As Hewitt's Task Force: Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate,* 539; Michael Howard and John Sparrow, *The Coldstream Guards, 1920–1946,* 108 (*"only the boiling white foam"*).

Eight distinct deception plans: George Juskalian, author interview, Feb. 25, 2000; Charles Cruickshank, *Deception in World War II,* 38–44; Mason, ed., 194 (*platoon of reporters*).

Like Hewitt's ships: "North African Operation, Convoys, Plans," n.d., NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 231; *Tank Destroyer Forces World War II,* 19; "Glossary for Use of U.S. Army Forces," Sept. 1942, NARA RG 407, E 427, "Pre-Invasion Planning," box 24348.

The loading at British ports: Leo J. Meyer, "Strategy and Logistical History: Mediterranean Theater of Operations," CMH, 2.37 CC1, II-31; Frierson, "Preparations for 'Torch,'" vol. I, 26; "History of Planning, ASF [Army Service Forces]," 1946, CMH, 3-2.2 AA, 86.

The cable stirred: Frierson, "Preparations for 'Torch,'" vol. I, 37; "History of Planning, ASF," CMH, 86; Joseph Bykofsky and Harold Larson, *The Transportation Corps: Operations Overseas,* 143.

Few of the 72,000: "What to Do Aboard a Transport," 260; Francis J. Vojta, *The Gopher Gunners: A History of Minnesota's 151st Field Artillery,* 141 (*Belgravia Riding Academy*); Guy Ramsey, *One Continent Redeemed,* 20; A. D. Malcolm, *History of the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders 8th Battalion, 1939–47,* 74; Wallace, "Africa, We Took It and Liked It" Robert J. Berens, *Citizen Soldier,* 42; William F. Beekman, "A Diary of World War II," ts, n.d., Iowa GSM.

For the officers: Henry E. Gardiner, ts, n.d., USMA Arch, 78 (*"Blouses were worn"*); Monro MacCloskey, *Torch and the Twelfth Air Force,* 84 (*"Bath, sahib?"*); Juskalian, author interview, Feb. 25, 2000; letter, TR to Eleanor, Oct. 26, 1942, TR, LOC, box 9. (Ted Roosevelt was alternately known as TR, Jr., and TR, III; he was in fact the third successive Roosevelt male to bear the name. See Edmund Morris, *Theodore Rex,* 46, 766.)

Below the waterline: Kluger, *Yank: The Army Weekly,* 16; Mina Curtiss, ed., *Letters Home,* 102; Howard and Sparrow, 108; Jensen, 24.

Troops caught nibbling: Oswald Jett, "As I Saw the War," ts, n.d., ASEQ, 1st AD, 47th Medical Bn, MHI; Harry P. Abbott, *The Nazi "88" Made Believers,* 25; Bolstad, 70; Wilbur C. Darnell, author interview, Oct. 19, 1999; "Historical Record of the 19th Engineer Regiment, Oct. 1942–Oct. 1943," NARA RG 407, E 427, box 19248 (*"became quite wild"*).

Morale suffered: G. R. Grandage, "Operation TORCH: Invasion of North Africa," ts, IWM, 87/16/1 (*nothing stronger than ginger ale*); "Morale report for period 19–26 November 1942," Center Task Force, NARA RG 407, E 427, AG, NAf-Med, box 239 (*"sorry sons of bitches"* and *"I hate myself"*).

"To make a good army": Barbara W. Tuchman, *Sand Against the Wind: Stilwell and the American Experience in China, 1911–1945,* 204; Russell A. Gugeler, ts (unpublished Ward biography), OW, MHI, x-18, x-27; George F. Howe, *The Battle History of the 1st Armored Division,* 16; Hamilton H. Howze, *A Cavalryman's Story,* 37; Hamilton H. Howze, OH, Russell A. Gugeler, Aug. 1976, OW, MHI (*"None of the division"*).

Twenty months earlier: Charles E. Heller and William A. Stofft, eds., *America's First Battles, 1776–1965,* 238; Homer Ankrum, *Dogfaces Who Smiled Through Tears,* 22–34.

after nine false alarms: Vojta, 124; Brinkley, 36; Ankrum, 32 (*"World War II is a battle"*).

Ten months later: Benjamin F. Caffey, Jr., OH, Feb. 1950, SM, MHI; Ann Larson, ed., "The History and Contribution to American Democracy of Volunteer 'Citizen Soldiers' of Southwest Iowa,

1930–1945," 22; John H. Hougen, *The Story of the Famous 34th Infantry Division*.

Among those who survived: Robert R. Moore, Jr., author interview, June 13, 2000; *Omaha World-Herald*, Nov. 9, 1997, 1.

Fourteen years later, Bob Moore: "Induction of Company F," memo, Iowa GSM; author visit, southwest Iowa, Oct. 1999; *Villisca* (Iowa) *Review*, Feb. 20, 1941.

Then the time: Dave Berlovich, author interview, Oct. 19, 1999; *Clarinda* (Iowa) *Herald-Journal*, March 3, 1941; *Red Oak* (Iowa) *Express*, March 3, 1941; Larson, ed., 42.

And in Villisca: Villisca Review, Feb. 27 and March 6, 1941.

"Everyone was excited": Curtiss, ed., 102; William O. Darby with William H. Baumer, *Darby's Rangers: We Led the Way*, 7; Ramsey, 20; S.W.C. Pack, *Invasion North Africa, 1942*, 10; Drew Middleton, *Our Share of Night*, 167 (*"Chinese flag"*); "North Africa," NARA RG 338, Records of US Army Commands, WTF, box 1; Morison, *Operations in North African Waters*, 175n (*"First Families of Virginia, in bathrobes"*).

Shortly after sunset: Gardiner, ts, n.d., USMA Arch, 78; letter, TR to Eleanor, Oct. 30, 1942, TR, LOC, box 9.

A Man Must Believe in His Luck

Known as TUXFORD: DDE msg, Oct. 21, 1942, NARA RG 218, Records of JCS, box 325; Richard McMillan, *Mediterranean Assignment*, 316; Winston G. Ramsey, ed., "The War in Gibraltar," *After the Battle*, No. 21, 1978, 1; Alden Hatch, *General Ike*, 128 (*"thick as logs"*); Michael J. McKeough and Richard Lockridge, *Sgt. Mickey and General Ike*, 46 (*"ten shillings"*).

The Snoopers had: "Interviews on Four Aspects of the Air Campaign in Africa," July 1943, Office of Asst. Chief of Air Staff, Intel, NARA RG 334, NWC Lib, box 14; Ramsey, ed., "The War in Gibraltar," 1 (*windsocks*); "A Study of Gibraltar," July 1941, NARA RG 407, E 427, 1st AD, 601-2.10.

Late in the afternoon: Paul W. Tibbetts, Jr., *The Tibbetts Story*, 107; *AAFinWWII*, 66.

Staff cars pulled up: Carleton E. Coon, ts, n.d., NARA RG 226, OSS, box 39, folder 8 (*"General Howe"*); msg, NARA RG 407, E 427, "Pre-Invasion Planning," box 24350.

Eisenhower left the guest suite: Raymond H. Croll Papers, ts, n.d., MHI, 97–98; Tute, 155; Ramsey, ed., "The War in Gibraltar."

Eisenhower's brisk stroll: Larrabee, 412 (*"worth an army corps"*); Kenneth S. Davis, *Experience of War*, 285 (*"good and right in the moral sense"*); Arthur Coningham, OH, FCP, Feb. 14, 1947, MHI (*"Ike has the qualities"*).

In his rapid rise: Boatner, 152; Larrabee, 415, 419 ("*far more complicated*"), 420, 421 (*P. D. Eisenhauer*); Stephen E. Ambrose, *The Supreme Commander: The War Years of General Dwight D. Eisenhower*, 15 ("*lot of big talk*"), 17, 97 (*"not very sure of himself"*).

His capacity for hard work: Chronology, Chandler, vol. V; Ambrose, *The Supreme Commander*, 104; Larrabee, 420 (*"contrived"*); Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Soldier, General of the Army, President-Elect, 1890–1952*, 202; DDE to GCM, Oct. 20, 1942, Chandler, vol. I, 629 (*"Whenever"*); DDE to GCM, Chandler, vol. I, 591 (*"I find"*); DDE to Vernon E. Prichard, Aug. 27, 1942, Chandler, vol. I, 505 (*"Fake reputations"*).

As D-Day for TORCH: DDE to C.K. Gailey, Jr., Oct. 12, 1942, Chandler, vol. I, 608; Ambrose, *Eisenhower*, 178; DDE, *Crusade in Europe*, 65 ("*sober, even fearful*").

Inside Gibraltar: Photograph, Ramsey, ed., "The War in Gibraltar," 1; DDE to HKH, Nov. 3, 1942, HKH, correspondence, NHC, box 1 (*"Dear Kent"*).

On November 6: msg, Nov. 6, 1942, NARA RG 492, MTOUSA, box 1388; "Memorandum to General Eisenhower," Oct. 29, 1942, DDE Lib, PP-pres, box 153; GCM to DDE, Nov. 5, 1942, NARA RG 492, MTOUSA, box 1388 (*"orders to defend"*); Murphy, 121; Harry C. Butcher diary, DDE Lib, PP-pres, box 165, 164 (*"big and little"*).

On November 7: Three Years, 165–67; DDE to GCM, Nov. 7, 1942, Chandler, 669.

Not until reconnaissance planes: War diary, German naval staff, NARA RG 334, NWC Lib, box 645; diary, Hellmuth Greiner, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 225; *NWAf*, 186 ("*I await a ruthless*").

At daybreak on Saturday: "Torpedoing and Salvage of USS *Thomas Stone*," Jan. 26, 1943, NARA RG 407, box 24487; AAR, 39th CT, NARA RG 407, E 427, box 7501; Jensen, 26; Joseph B. Mittelman, *Eight Stars to Victory*, 56; Phillips, *El Guettar*, 43; AAR, 39th CT, NARA RG 407, E 427, box 7501.

Some hours passed: André Beaufre, "General Giraud's Escape," *History of the Second World War*, vol. 3, Basil Liddell Hart, ed., 1198 (*field glasses*); Kenneth S. Davis, *Dwight D. Eisenhower: Soldier of Democracy*, 357; Clark, 96; DDE to H. H. Giraud, Nov. 4, 1942, Chandler, vol. I, 656 (*phony London letterhead*).

Giraud was intrepid: Sept. 19, 1942, NARA RG 331, AFHQ micro, R-78-D (*"Surrounded"*); Brown, *The Last Hero*, 240; Davis, *Dwight D. Eisenhower*, 346 ("Allez, mes enfants!"); David Hunt, *A Don at War*, 154; Murphy, 180 (*porcelain cat*); Macmillan, *War Diaries*, 68 ("*so stately*"), 71; Butcher diary, DDE Lib, A-221 ("*Papa Snooks*").

The general's greatest genius: Beaufre, 1197; G. Ward Price, *Giraud and the African Scene*, 45.

Now he was in: Clark, *Calculated Risk*, 96-98; Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, 100; GCM to DDE, Nov. 1 and 6, 1942, NARA RG 492, MTOUSA, box 1388 (*10 million francs*); Binder, 97; Morison, *Operations in North African Waters*, 186; Davis, *Dwight D. Eisenhower*, 357; DDE to GCM, Oct. 29, 1942, Chandler, vol. I, 640; *Three Years*, 171 ("*Old gentleman*"); DDE to GCM, Nov. 7, 1942, Chandler, 668 ("*I'm weary*").

Dinner at Government House: Murphy, 180; Tompkins, 112; *Three Years*, 171 ("*We would like*").

Giraud took his leave: Ambrose, *Eisenhower*, 203 ("*airplane accident*"); S. W. Roskill, *The War at Sea, 1939–1945*, vol. II, 320; John S. D. Eisenhower, *Allies*, 176 (*a few moments of meditation*); Pack, *Invasion North Africa*, 26; Davis, *Dwight D. Eisenhower*, 354; DDE to GCM, Oct. 29, 1942, Chandler, vol. I, 642 (*"I fear nothing"*); DDE to GCM, Oct. 20, 1942, Chandler, vol. I, 628 (*"To a certain extent"*).

CHAPTER 2: LANDING
"In the Night, All Cats Are Grey"

Two hundred and thirty: "History of Third Port, TC," NARA RG 407, 270/64/28/7, 10; Powell, *In Barbary*, 322.

The plan was British: RESERVIST planning memo, Aug. 17, 1942, NARA RG 94, special file, 6–8. 1311/42; Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, 534 (*"in the night, all cats"*); AAR, n.d., "Reservist" file, SM, MHI.

To command RESERVIST: John Laffin, *British VCs of World War 2*, 25; Leo Disher, "HMS *Walney*,"

in John A. Parris, Jr., and Ned Russell, *Springboard to Berlin*, 93 (*"Rain, darkness"*), 102 (*"the opportunity I have been waiting for"*). Disher's firsthand account is brilliant.

Peters worried the Americans: Richard Lamb, *Churchill As War Leader*, 172 (*"showed how a frontal assault"*); Susan H. Godson, *Viking of Assault: Admiral John Lesslie Hall, Jr., and Amphibious Warfare*, 9; Fergusson, 182 (*"defenders must be drenched"*); Field order #1, Oct. 11, 1942, 26th Inf, MRC FDM; MWC, "Memorandum to General Eisenhower," Oct. 13, 1942, DDE, PP-pres, box 153 (*"a Trojan horse"*); Roskill, 327.

Convinced that Peters planned: AAR, NARA RG 407, "Special Files," box 24486; A. C. Bennett to CINC U.S. Fleet, Nov. 30, 1942, NARA RG 38, OCNO, box 786.

Another American admiral: "Reminiscences of Vice Adm. Bernhard H. Bieri," 1997, USNI OHD, 112 (*"I can't take your advice"*); Paul McDonald Robinett, *Armor Command*, 32; MWC, "Memorandum to General Eisenhower," Oct. 13, 1942, DDE, PP-pres, box 153 (*"If these craft"*); unmailed letter, OW to PMR, n.d., OW, MHI.

The honor of storming: "Historical and Pictorial Review," 6th Inf yearbook, 1941, MHI; Howze, OH, Gugeler, Aug. 1976, OW, MHI (*"finest assignment"*).

The overloaded cutters: Disher, in Parris and Russell, 102, 109 (*"without firing a shot"*); memo, Leland L. Rounds to William Donovan, July 13, 1944, "Torch Report," NARA RG 226, E 99, OSS files, box 40; L. L. Rounds, OH, Oct. 21, 1948, SM, MHI; Anthony Cave Brown, ed., *The Secret War Report of the OSS*, 145; "Awards of Medals for Gallantry During Attack on Oran Harbour," Admiralty AAR, PRO, 1/11915.

At one minute: AAR, Wallace Moseley, RN, Nov. 17, 1942, NARA RG 38, OCNO, CINCLANT, box 2; Disher, in Parris and Russell, 111; Marvin P. Clemons, ASEQ, 1st AD, MHI (*former coal mine brakeman*).

Peters, Duncan, and fifteen: *Walney* account: AAR, T. H. Troubridge, RN, Nov. 13, 1942, NARA RG 407, special file, 6–8. 1311/42; AAR, Wallace Moseley, RN, Nov. 17, 1942, NARA RG 38, OCNO, CINCLANT, box 2; AAR, RN, n.d., SM, MHI; Disher, in Parris and Russell, 93–125; Pack, *Invasion North Africa, 1942*, 87; AAR, RN, "Assault on Oran," Dec. 27, 1942, NARA RG 331, AFHQ micro, R-16-A; David Rame, *Road to Tunis*, 61–62 (*"wire through cheese"*); *NWAf*, 203; *Destruction*, 148.

Hartland *fared*: *Hartland* account: AAR, John M. Gill, USN, "Operations of U.S. Naval Forces, Center Task Force," Nov. 30, 1942, NARA RG 38, OCNO, box 786; "Awards of Medals for Gallantry During Attack on Oran Harbour," Admiralty, PRO, 1/11915.

A mile to the west: Ernie Pyle, *Here Is Your War*, 22 (*"Them dead men"*); Disher, in Parris and Russell, 123; memo, E. B. Howard to DDE, Nov. 18, 1942, NARA RG 407, E 427, box 3165.

Men paddled: "Awards of Medals for Gallantry," Admiralty, PRO, 1/11915; AAR, Gill; AAR, G. D. Dickey, USN, "Operations of U.S. Naval Forces, Center Task Force," Nov. 30, 1942, NARA RG 38, OCNO, box 786; Paul Auphan and Jacques Moral, *The French Navy in World War II*, 226.

French marines rounded up: "History of 3rd Battalion, 6th Armored Infantry," NARA RG 407; AAR, Wallace D. Moseley, RN, Admiralty, PRO, 1/11915; AAR, Gill; Auphan and Moral, 226–27; AAR, A. B. Cunningham, RN, "Operation TORCH—Report of Proceedings," March 30, 1943; *NWAf*, 204; AAR, RN, n.d., SM, MHI (*"contributed to the half-hearted manner"*); DDE to B. B. Somervell, Nov. 18, 1942, NARA RG 492, MTOUSA, records of special staff, box 1381; Edward Ellsberg, *No Banners, No Bugles*, 49, 71, 133.

Corpses bobbed: Andrew T. McNamara, *Quartermaster Activities of II Corps*, 28; William A. Carter,

"Carter's War," ts, 1983, CEOH, III-8; William F. Powers, OH, Herbert Hart, Aug. 1985, CEOH; John G. Rosta, OH, G. Kurt Piehler and Mark Rybak, ROHA, 1997; memo, II Corps QM, Nov. 30, 1942, NARA RG 331, AFHQ micro, R-73-D.

Ostensibly to avoid: memo, A.B. Cunningham, Dec. 18, 1942, Admiralty 1/11915, PRO (*"silence is the best policy"*); Rame, 60 (*hatless buccaneer*); Laffin, 26; "Reminiscences of Rear Adm. George W. Bauernschmidt," 1991, USNI OHD (*pilotage fees*).

Eisenhower eventually accepted: Butcher diary, DDE Lib, A-174; A. J. Redway, "Admiral Jerauld Wright," ts, 1995, NHC, 269; "Reminiscences of Vice Adm. Bernhard H. Bieri," 1997, USNI OHD (*"going to get that fellow"*); diary, Nov. 15, 1942, OW, MHI; Gugeler, OW, MHI, x-35.

In Barbary

Faint odors: John P. Downing, *At War with the British*, 68; H. R. Knickerbocker et al., *Danger Forward*, 38 (*"sumptuous as a condemned man's"*); *NWAf*, 192–93; "History of the 26th Infantry in the Present Struggle," part IV, n.d., MRC FDM; Bill Sabin, "The Loves and Lives of 13008634," ts, UT-K, MS-1881, box 20, 9 (*"Sure I'm scared"*); Rame, 7 (*"Looks as if"*).

Under the plan: *NWAf*, 192–93. (Many U.S. Army units in North Africa were organized into regimental combat teams and battalion combat teams, usually by adding engineers and other support units to the infantry or armored core. At the risk of oversimplification, I generally retain the traditional regimental and battalion nomenclature.)

The largest contingent: James J. Altieri, "Darby's Rangers: An Illustrated Portrayal of the Original Rangers," 1977, Louis F. Lisko Papers, Rangers, ASEQ, MHI; David W. Hogan, Jr., *Raiders or Elite Infantry?* 18; Milton Lehman, "The Rangers Fought Ahead of Everybody," *Saturday Evening Post*, July 15, 1946, 15; James Altieri, *The Spearheaders*, 122 (*"Be bloody thankful"*).

Two companies: William O. Darby and W.H. Dammer, "U.S. Rangers," lecture, Oct. 27, 1944, Army and Navy Staff College; Anders Kjar Arnbal, *The Barrel-Land Dance Hall Rangers*, 11; "Reminiscences of Walter C. W. Ansel," 1972, USNI OHD, 3–111 (*"For King and country!"*); Altieri, *The Spearheaders*, 129; Darby, *Darby's Rangers*, 19–21; Jerome Joseph Haggerty, "A History of the Ranger Battalions in World War II," 115; Knickerbocker et al., 45 (*The mayor of Arzew*); Ramsey, 30.

On the weather deck: Stanley J. Grogan, "Memorandum for Mr. McCloy," n.d., NARA RG 165, E 418, Director of Plans and Ops, box 1228; A. J. Liebling, "Find 'Em, Fix 'Em, and Fight 'Em," *New Yorker*, Apr. 24, 1943, 221; C. M. Eymer, ts, MRC FDM, Allen 1989.124, box 392; Consuelo Allen, author interview, Sept. 21, 2000; Knickerbocker et al., 38.

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The drowsy interwar years: obituary, *New York Times*, Sept. 13, 1969 (*"the fightingest man"*); "How Major Allen Beat Cowboy Champ in 300-Mile Race," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, Dec. 31, 1922; *San Antonio Light*, Jan. 20, 1952.

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With war, the rioters: Robert A. Hewitt, SOOHP, Earl D. Bevan, 1982, MHI (*kept a list in a safe*);

Robert W. Porter, Jr., SOOHP, John N. Sloan, 1981, MHI; "Gen. Marshall Smashing Army's Caste System in Quest for Best Leaders," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, Dec. 19, 1940.

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Confusion and error: Malcolm Marshall, ed., *Proud Americans of World War II*, 24 (*"Tank coming!"*); Paul K. Skogsberg, "The North African Campaigns," ASEQ, 1st Reconnaissance Troop, MHI, 21 (*ran him through*); Abbott, 28 (*"Everything's all right"*); Parris and Russell, 87 (*"The French die hard"*).

Terry Allen had seen worse: Liebling, "Find 'Em, Fix 'Em, and Fight 'Em," 221; letter, TdA to Associated Press, July 23, 1947, TdA, MHI (*"a mountebank"*); "Peppery General, Well Known Here, Changes His Branch of Service in New Assignment of Duty," *Kansas City Star*, Jan. 4, 1942; Frye, "Terrible Terry," *Kansas City Star*, June 17, 1943 (*"A soldier doesn't fight"*).

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At Beach Y: George Juskalian, author interview, Feb. 25, 2000; TR to Eleanor, Nov. 11, 1942, TR, LOC.

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Handsome he was not: Maxwell Hamilton, "Junior in Name Only," *Retired Officer*, June 1981, 28 (*"the most disreputable-looking"*); GCM to TdA, June 5, 1942, GCM Papers, Pentagon corr, GCM Lib, box 56, folder 17 (*"rare courage"*); Michael Pearlman, *To Make Democracy Safe for America*, 249.

His father, the twenty-sixth: Hamilton, 29, 31 (*"never amount"*); Pearlman, 250–51; Edward J. Renehan, Jr., *The Lion's Pride*, 210, 226; Linda Donn, *The Roosevelt Cousins*, 99.

Now Roosevelt was ashore: Pearlman, 251; TR to Eleanor, Oct. 20, Oct. 30, Nov. 11, 1942, Jan. 16, 1943, TR, LOC (*"little, scarcely seen shapes"*).

The French counterattacked: *Tank Destroyer Forces World War II*, 20; Karig, 213; Robinett, *Armor Command*, 56.

"Soldier, what": William M. Lee, ASEQ, n.d., 26th Inf, MHI (*"Come on, follow me"*); Mrs. Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., *Day Before Yesterday*, 440; Renehan, 66.

VILLAIN

One final element: "Parachutist's combat equipment," 2nd Bn/503rd Para Inf, "Air Campaign in N Af," DDE Lib, box 6; "Partial Planning File, First United States' Use of Parachute Operations in Connection with TORCH," 1942, MHI Lib (*Slips of rice paper*).

The objective of Operation VILLAIN: "Operation TORCH: The Dispatch of Aircraft from the United Kingdom by Eighth Air Force," Sept. 14, 1944, Historical Section, U.S. Strategic Air Forces in Europe, NARA RG 407, E 427, Pre-Invasion Planning, box 24351; Lowell Rooks, II Corps chief of staff, cited in MWC, "Memorandum to General Eisenhower," Oct. 7, 1942, DDE Lib, PP-pres, box 153 (*"no material difference"*); MWC, OH, SOOHP, F. S. Rittgers, Jr., 1972, MHI (*"The British just want"*).

The 2nd Battalion: William Pelham Yarborough, *Bail Out over North Africa*, 31; John C. Warren, *Airborne Missions in the Mediterranean, 1942–1945*, 8–9; "Administrative History, 60th Troop Carrier Group," AFHRA, NARA micro, R-B 0155-0157 (*"distracted conversation"*).

Clark had approved: Eighth Air Force msg, AFHRA, NARA micro, R-A 5857; Lloyd G. Wilson, "The Operations of the 509th Parachute Battalion in North Africa" William Breuer, *Geronimo: American Paratroopers in World War II,* 34 (*"Dear God"*).

After takeoff: Warren, 7; AAR, Gordon H. Browne, NARA RG 226, OSS, E 99, boxes 39–40.

The sun rose: AAR, Carleton S. Coon, NARA RG 226, E 99, OSS, box 39, folder 8 (*banging their fists*); Maurice Tugwell, *Airborne to Battle: A History of Airborne Warfare, 1918–1971*, 141.

Airborne once again: Gerard M. Devlin, *Paratrooper!,* 138; Wilson, "The Operations of the 509th Parachute Battalion in North Africa," 1947, 10; AAR, William P. Yarborough, Nov. 13, 1942, NARA RG 407, E 427, AG, WWII Operations Reports, box 234; "Administrative History, 60th Troop Carrier Group," AFHRA, NARA micro, R-B 0155–0157.

Most of Raff 's: Breuer, 41; "USAF Airborne Operations, World War II and Korea," 1962, USAF Historical Division, MHI, 5; Warren, 13.

To the Last Man

Viewed from the great: Powell, 280 (*"resounded to the groans"*); R.H.W.S. Hastings, *The Rifle Brigade in the Second World War, 1939–1945,* 209 (*"white-walled city"*); Tompkins, 11 ("*reclining woman*").

So it was: Murphy, 120–28 (*"I am convinced"*); Anthony Clayton, *Three Marshals of France*, 70; Tompkins, 70 ("*chloroform the city*"), 90 ("*painful search*").

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Murphy described: François Kersaudy, *Churchill and De Gaulle,* 222; Leahy, 48 (*Popeye*); Murphy, 127–30; Lamb, 211 (*"a bad man"*).

By a coincidence: Russell Brooks, "The Unknown Darlan," *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, Aug. 1955, 879; Boatner, 117; Tompkins, 65; Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe,* 105 (*"If I could meet"*); Murphy, 118, 129 (*"I have known"*).

For fifteen minutes: Pendar, AAR, Jan. 3, 1945, NARA RG 226, E 99, OSS, box 40 (*"The*

necessary"); Murphy, 131 (*"Giraud is not"*).

The insurrection: Funk, 212 (*"This isn't just"*), 218–20; Pendar, *Adventure*, 108-109 (Pirates of Penzance); AAR, "Narrative of Captain Frederick Brown," July 17, 1945, NARA RG 26, E 99, OSS, box 40; msg, Nov. 8, 1942, NARA RG 38, OCNO, Office of Naval Intel., box 1 (*"France and her honor"*).

Regrettably, the Allies: Bolstad, 31, 63; Leslie W. Bailey, "The Operations of the 3rd Battalion, 135th Infantry at Algiers," 1948, 11; *NWAf*, 243.

The lights of Algiers: AAR, A. B. Russell, RN, "Operation Terminal," Nov. 11, 1942, SM, MHI; Leslie W. Bailey, *Through Hell and High Water*, 52.

Then, on his fourth: AAR, A.F.C. Layard, in Bolstad, 225.

Badly shaken: Richard Collier, *The War in the Desert*, 14 (*"light out like stripey-assed baboons"*); Tute, 177; Auphan and Moral, 222; Layard, 225; Bailey, *Through Hell and High Water*, 46.

Fancourt sounded the recall: John MacVane, *Journey into War*, 59; H. L. St. J. Fancourt, "Report of Commanding Officer, Force TERMINAL," Nov. 11, 1942, SM, MHI (*"The morale effect of a destroyer"*).

Even with the ship gone: Bailey, *Through Hell and High Water*, 49; "A Partial History, 135th Infantry Regiment," n.d., Iowa GSM; "Regimental History, 135th Infantry," NARA RG 407.

Then the unmistakable creak: Hougen, *The Story of the Famous 34th Infantry Division*; Kenneth Maitland Davies, *To the Last Man*, 97; *NWAf*, 244; Bolstad, 95.

Thirty-three thousand: Richard F. Kinden, "The Road to Fort McGregor and the Long Way Home," ts, IWM, 84/50/1 (*"I should have thought"*); Pack, 64 (*"testing for salt"*).

Finding the right beach: Jack Marshall, "Tales of a Timid Commando," ts, n.d., ASEQ, 34th ID, MHI; AAR, "Company B, 168th Inf," Nov. 1942, Iowa GSM; Ankrum, 122 (*"I'm sorry to tell you"*); AAR, RN, Inshore Squadron, H.M.S.

Bulolo, Dec. 8, 1942, NARA AFHQ micro, RN Ops., R-17-A; Morison, *Operations in North African Waters*, 206; AAR, "5 Corps Lessons From TORCH," Nov. 26, 1942, NARA RG 334, NWC Lib, box 472.

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On the far western fringe: David Scott Daniell, *History of the East Surrey Regiment*, vol. IV, 151; Middleton, 175 (*"You gentlemen"*).

The 168th Infantry: NWAf, 236; Robert R. Moore, AAR, "Record of Events from 14 Oct. 1942 to Armistice, Nov. 1942," Iowa GSM; "The Tunisian Campaign," 34th Div., Dec. 13, 1943, NARA RG 407, E 427, 334–0.3 (*"not prepared"*); letter, Moore to family, Dec. 2, 1942 (*"I got my helmet creased"*); *Red Oak Express*, Feb. 22, 1943; *Des Moines Sunday Register*, July 18, 1943 (*"I thought the fight"*); Bill Roth, "The Longest Days of a G.I.," ts, n.d., Iowa GSM; 168th Inf Regt, pamphlet, Iowa GSM.

"Glory Enough for Us All"

The stars had once again: U.S.S. *Brooklyn* war diary, Nov. 7, 1942, SEM, NHC, box 15.

More than 100: The Landings in North Africa, 16 (*"reeling drunk"*); Morison attributes the "Chinese laundry" line to Robert C. Giffen, *Operations in North African Waters,* 48; Kreidberg and Henry, 678; Astor, 252.

A gale born south of Iceland: Erbes, "Hell on Wheels Surgeon," ts, USMA Arch, 11; Robert E. Coffin, "Operation TORCH: A Perilous Preview," *Army,* Nov. 1992, 42 (*"I can't believe a ship"*); Philip G. Cochran, OH, 1975, USAF HRC, 418; Fitzhugh L. Palmer, Jr., "The Old Indispensables," *Proceedings,* Aug. 1976, 61.

For Hewitt, the storm: Alfred M. Gruenther to GSP, Oct. 13, 1942, NARA RG 218, CCS 381, section 1–1a, box 325; Dickson, "G-2 Journal: Algiers to the Elbe," ts, MHI, 21; AFHQ msg, Nov. 7, 1942, NARA RG 492, MTOUSA, box 1388 (*"Very poor"*).

"I hope to God": Mountbatten, OH, n.d., HKH, NHC, box 6.

The choice: diary, Oct. 28, 30, 1942, GSP, LOC Ms Div, box 2, folder 13.

"We are to be congratulated": Blumenson, *Patton: The Man Behind the Legend,* 168; Farago, 9, 13 (*"Some goddam fool"*).

Despite their early antipathy: Blumenson, *Patton: The Man Behind the Legend,* 112, 121 (*"War is the only place"*); DDE to GSP, Jr., Oct. 13, 1942, Chandler, 618; *NWAf,* 44–45; "Reminiscences of Rear Adm. Elliott B. Strauss," 1989, USNI OHD (*"when things get overturned"*).

In the smallest hours: weather reports, HKH, correspondence, NHC, box 1; Tuleja, "Admiral H. Kent Hewitt," in Howarth, ed., 319–20.

Hewitt studied: Clagett, "Admiral H. Kent Hewitt, U.S. Navy," 76 (*"velvet"*).

A solitary banana boat: AAR, "Trip of Honduran SS *Contessa,"* March 22, 1943, in Wheeler, ed., 76.

With new urgency: Harmon, *Combat Commander,* 81; Franklyn E. Dailey, Jr., *Joining the War at Sea, 1939–1945,* 137 (*"resembled a fraternity house"*); memo, HQ Task Force A, Oct. 10, 1942, NARA micro, Western Task Force, AFHQ G-3, R-24-C (*first-day battle casualities*); Harry McK. Roper, "Report on Observations Made as Observer with Task Force Brushwood," n.d., NARA RG 337, Observer Reports, box 52; AAR, Hewitt, March 1943, NARA RG 218, JCS, CCS 381, section 1–1a, box 325 (*wetted down*); Morison, *Operations in North African Waters,* 71 (*"pretend they're Japs"*).

Commanders with an impulse: F.E.M. Whiting, correspondence, 1972, USNI OHD ("Ense petit"); Morison, *Operations in North African Waters,* 92 (*"glory enough"*); Emily Morison Beck, ed., *Sailor Historian: The Best of Samuel Eliot Morison,* 205 (*"gangway for a fighting ship"*).

Patton napped: Patton directive, Oct. 14, 1942, NARA RG 165, Office of the Director of Plans and Operations, General Records, corr, box 1229 (*"Get off that damned beach"*); GCM to DDE, n.d., NARA RG 492, MTOUSA, box 1387 (*"avoid firing"*); *NWAf,* 45, 70 (*"superiority complex"*).

On the darkened bridge: msg, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 229 (*"We come, among"*); AFHQ msg, NARA RG 218, JCS, box 325 ("Vive"); Farago, 17 ("Mes amis").

"God's most favorite": Hatch, *George Patton: General in Spurs,* 138.

Only rebels: Brooks, "Casablanca—The French Side of the Fence," *Proceedings,* Sept. 1951, 909; "Memorandum for Colonel Donovan," OSS AAR, Jan. 1943, NARA RG 226, E 99, box 40 (*scheme by Moroccan Jews*); "TORCH Report," Sept. 6, 1944, NARA RG 226, E 99, OSS, box 40 (*Leroy the Badger*); AAR, Émile Béthouart, NARA RG 226, E 99, OSS, box 40 (*"a juvenile enthusiasm"*); letter, Auguste Paul Noguès to G. F. Howe, n.d., NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 225.

After that, nothing: Macmillan, *The Blast of War,* 197 (*"No-Yes"*); AAR, Michel Despax, July 15, 1944, NARA RG 226, E 99, OSS, box 40 (*his mistress's bed*); AAR, Béthouart; letter, Noguès to

Howe; Philip H. Bagby, "D-Day in Casablanca," *American Foreign Service Journal*, March 1945, 16 (*Senegalese soldiers*); *NWAf*, 95.

"The sky is dark": letter, Dave Murdock, *Arizona Republic*, Dec. 6, 1942, MCC, YU. Soldier letters collected by Mina Curtiss frequently indicate the date and newspaper or magazine in which the correspondence was published.

The lieutenant was deceived: Morison, "The Approach to Fedala," ts, n.d., SEM, NHC, box 16 (*"One plot showed"*); "Commander in Chief, Atlantic Fleet," 1946, vol. I, USNAd, 426 (*"center of Times Square"*).

Despite this irrefutable evidence: 3rd ID, "Brushwood Final Report," Dec. 8, 1942, NARA micro, AFHQ G-3 Operations, R-24-C; "Commander in Chief, Atlantic Fleet," 1946, vol. I, USNAd, 426 (*"as though one switch"*); AAR, U.S. Atlantic Fleet Amphibious Force, n.d., NARA RG 407, E 427, box 24430; Morison, "The Approach to Fedala," ts, n.d., SEM, NHC, box 16; Truscott, *Command Missions*, 93 (*"To be perfectly honest"*).

Destroyers tacked: "Operations, 3rd Bn., 60th Combat Team, 8–11 Nov. 1942," NARA RG 407, E 427, box 7540; Ernest D. Whitehead, Sr., *World War II: An Ex-Sergeant Remembers*, 33 (*impaled his thigh*); Wallace, "Africa, We Took It and Liked It," 20; Randle, *Safi Adventure*, 27 (*"Don't harass"*).

Then the loadmasters bellowed: AAR, U.S.S. *Charles Carroll*, n.d., U.S. Atlantic Fleet Amphibious Force, NARA RG 407, E 427, box 24490.

At Fedala, the first wave: "Commander in Chief, Atlantic Fleet," 1946, vol. I, USNAd, 430 (*"indescribable confusion"*); "CSI Battlebook 3-A: Operation TORCH," CSI, 53; AAR, J. T. Hagglove, "Report of Operation at Fedala," U.S.S. *Leonard Wood*, Nov. 28, 1942, NARA RG 407, E 427, Box 24490; "Commander in Chief, Atlantic Fleet," 1946, vol. I, USNAd, 436; Kerwin, SOOHP, MHI, 123 (*scavenging life jackets*).

Eighty miles north: Truscott, *Command Decisions*, 97; Mittelman, 48 (*"like a yacht race"*); AAR, *Henry T. Allen*, n.d., SEM, NHC, box 16; "Western Task Force: Attack on Mehdia and Port Lyautey Airdrome," 1945, ts, 2–3.7 AEI, CMH.

The third and final: Karl Baedeker, *The Mediterranean*, 109; Justin McGuinness, *Footprint Morocco Handbook*, 203; Oscar Koch, ts, n.d., MHI (*picture postcards*); lecture, Louis Ely, Feb. 5, 1943, SEM, NHC (*Jew's Cliff*).

To seize Safi port: AAR, 47th Infantry, n.d., NARA RG 407, E 427, box 7514; Karig, 184 (*"sawed-off"*); SEM, NHC, box 4, folder 2; George Bastedo, "K Goes to Africa," ts, n.d., in Chester H. Jordan file, 3rd Bn, 47th Inf, ASEQ, MHI; Randle, *Safi Adventure*, appendix A (*"Violent, rapid"*).

The usual muddle: Harmon, 84 (*stretched a huge net*); "Commander in Chief, Atlantic Fleet," 1946, vol. I, USNAd, 408.

Machine-gun rounds: lecture, C. G. Richardson, "The Attack on Safi," Aug. 20, 1943, NARA RG 334, NWC Lib, box 164.

Unsettled, the troops: James Adams, "Observer's Report on Landing Operations of Task Force BLACKSTONE," Jan. 1943, NARA RG 337, E 15A, box 52 (*They flopped*); Bastedo, "K Goes to Africa" Wilhm et al., "Armor in the Invasion of North Africa."

Three more waves: Adams, "Observer's Report" (*"A soldier would snake"*); Randle, *Safi Adventure*, 45, 58.

By early afternoon: Mittelman, 65; Erbes, "Hell on Wheels Surgeon," 15 (*"with a welder's torch"*).

It was all too much: "Official Report Submitted by Commander of the Safi Garrison," Nov. 14, 1942, NARA RG 338, Fifth Army, box 1; *NWAf*, 109.

Eisenhower had trusted: Three Years, 173–76; DDE to GCM, Nov. 8, 1942, Chandler, 673 (*"Everything appears"*).

Besides that: DDE to John S. D. Eisenhower, Oct. 13, 1942, Chandler, vol. I, 617.

"this business of warfare": Three Years, 176–77; DDE to W. B. Smith, Nov. 9, 1942, Chandler, 678 ("*That I do* not *believe*").

"Worries of a Commander": DDE memo, Nov. 8, 1942, Chandler, 675.

CHAPTER 3: BEACHHEAD
A Sword in Algiers

This was war: Martha Gellhorn, quoted in Paul Fussell, *Doing Battle: The Making of a Skeptic*, 298 (*"our condition"*); Matthew Arnold, "Dover Beach."

East of the Algerian: *Destruction*, 144; *The Landings in North Africa*, 13; "5 Corps Lessons from TORCH," extract from letter, Nov. 26, 1942, NARA RG 334, NWC Lib, box 472 (*"all very friendly"*).

Lieutenant Colonel Edward J. Doyle: letter, John O'Daniel to OW, Jan. 1951, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 225; Berens, 36–37 (*Ignoring orders* and *"at the beach"*).

Luftwaffe pilots: *The Landings in North Africa*, 104; *Baltimore Sun*, Dec. 17, 1942; Karig, 220; Morison, *Operations in North African Waters*, 213.

Pleasing as such retaliatory: AAR, Jan. 3, 1945, NARA RG 226, E 99, OSS, box 40; Pendar, 112.

In Juin's limousine: Charles W. Ryder, OH, March 1949, SM, MHI (*"I will go anywhere"*); Murphy, 132.

A bugler perched: AAR, July 17, 1945, and Jan. 3, 1945, NARA RG 226, E 99, OSS, box 40 (*"I don't like blood"*); Pendar, 114; Hougen, *The Story of the Famous 34th Infantry Division* (*hunting trophies*); Ryder, OH, March 1949, SM, MHI (*"Are you"*); AAR, C.W. Ryder, Nov. 19, 1942, NARA RG 407, E 427, AG, box 244; Murphy, 133.

At dawn on Monday: Roskill, 325; Fergusson, 213; S.W.C. Pack, *Invasion North Africa 1942*, 80 (*"Everyone lie down!"*).

So, too, did General Giraud: Langer, 350 (*"his presence"*); DDE to GCM, Nov. 9, 1942, Chandler, 680 (*"stupid Frogs"*).

The authorities in Vichy: Langer, 356 (*"a rebel chief and a felon"*); memo, J. J. McCloy to L. J. McNair, March 31, 1943, NARA RG 165, Plans and Ops, box 1230; Funk, 234; Tompkins, 116 (*uniform had gone missing*).

Three hours later: Murphy, 135 (*"messes things"*); Darryl F. Zanuck, *Tunis Expedition*, 39, 48.

The Hôtel St. Georges: Baedeker, 221; Middleton, 191 (*spinsters touring*).

Clark found General Ryder: Berens, 38 (*"shoot their butts off"*); "Record of Events," Feb. 22, 1943, NARA RG 338, Fifth Army, box 1, 1–13; Clark, *Calculated Risk*, 108.

"We have work": Clark, *Calculated Risk*, 108–13; "Record of Events" (*"All my associates"*); Langer, 352 (*"Pétain is nothing"*); log, Nov. 10, 1942, Jerauld Wright Papers, LOC, box 2 (*"That is your decision"*); Murphy, 138 (*"Would you mind"*).

The Americans retreated: Murphy, 138 (*Clark's tacit threat*); Funk, 243 (*"in the name"*); Tompkins, 121 ("J'accepte"); "Record of Events," 13.

He immediately: Alan Moorehead, *The End in Africa*, 61 ("*He appeared*"); Funk, 240 (*"I issued"*); Tompkins, 123 (*"I am lost"*); "Record of Events," 13; Morison, *Operations in North African Waters*, 217; Dickson, "G-2 Journal: Algiers to the Elbe," 29 (*"Mon Admiral, by order"*).

At Gibraltar, Eisenhower thumbed: Chandler, 679 (*"War brings"*); Butcher diary, Nov. 8 (*"good assassin"*) and 13 (*"in a neutral country"*), DDE Lib, PP-pres, box 165.

But it was Oran: DDE to GCM, Nov. 9, 1942, Chandler, 680 (*"My biggest"*).

A Blue Flag over Oran

American soldiers had converged: Field Order #1, Oct. 11, 1942, 26th Inf., MRC FDM (*Brooklyn, Brockton*).

Terry Allen and a larger portion: Rame, 16 (*"scrofulous"*); author interview, Eston White; Downing, 92 (*When the mule*).

A wounded soldier lay: Downing, 89 (*"Don't kick"*); Fred W. Hall, Jr., "A Memoir of World War II," ts, 1997, Eisenhower Center, University of New Orleans (*"The fallen wire"*).

St. Cloud was a buff-tinted: *NWAf*, 220n; AAR, Leland L. Rounds, July 13, 1944, NARA RG 226, E 99, OSS, box 40; Field Order #1, intel. annex, Oct. 11, 1942, 26th Inf., MRC FDM (*"second- or third-class"*); Rame, 16.

At 3:30 P.M.*, the battalion*: Marshall, ed., *Proud Americans*, 31–40 (*"Keep going, Mac"*); Robert W. Baumer, *Before Taps Sounded*, 64.

Now French artillerymen: Marshall, ed., 26 (*"Please, please,"*), 31 (*"Stop!"*), 35 (*goats stampeded*).

Night slipped down: Russell F. Akers, OH, July 27, 1949, SM, MHI.

By seven A.M. *on November 9*: Parris and Russell, 193; Rame, 28–31.

"I'm going to put": Rame, 29; Knickerbocker et al., 46.

At that moment: Rogers, "A Study of Leadership in the First Infantry Division During World War II," 14, 16; "Nothing Stopped the Timberwolves," *Saturday Evening Post*, Aug. 17, 1946, 20; Frye, "'Terrible Terry' of the 1st Division Is Getting Tougher as He Goes Along."

Standing beneath a fig tree: John K. Waters, SOOHP, 1980, William C. Parnell III, MHI, 683; Mason, "Reminiscences and Anecdotes of World War II," MRC FDM; "A Factual Situation and Operations Report on the Combat Operations of the 1st Infantry Division," n.d., TdA, MHI (*"There will not be"*); "Terry Allen and the First Division in North Africa and Sicily," n.d., TdA, MHI; Ramsey, 55 (*"I just couldn't do it"*).

The circumvention of St. Cloud: Rogers, 15; Knickerbocker et al., 50 (*"You will not talk"*); Rame, 40; Howe, *The Battle History of the 1st Armored Division*, 45 (*flood the port*). (George Marshall later sent FDR a copy of Allen's field order no. 3 as a model of brevity.)

Festive crowds: Joseph S. Frelinghuysen, *Passages to Freedom*, 26; letter, William B. Kern to PMR, Jan. 1950, NARA RG 319, OCMH.

For more than five hours: "18th Infantry, Draft Regimental History," n.d., Stanhope Mason Collection, MRC FDM; Lida Mayo, *The Ordnance Department: On Beachhead and Battlefront*, 117 (*a large blue pennant*).

Beyond the killed: *NWAf*, 227, 228n; Observer Report, #41, March 5, 1943, NARA RG 337, Box 52 (*Allen and Roosevelt also relieved*); author interview, Juskalian, Feb. 25, 2000.

The liberators immediately: McNamara, 22; Pyle, *Here Is Your War*, 83 (*"to make them feel"*); Waters, SOOHP, 171; Edward J. Josowitz, *An Informal History of the 601st Tank Destroyer Battalion*, 7 (*threw a jolly party*); Pearlman, 249; author interview, Juskalian.

Almost 37,000 men now occupied: Howe, *The Battle History of the 1st Armored Division*, 47 (*"Everything is rosy"*); DDE to W. B. Smith, Nov. 10, 1942, Chandler, 686 (*"rush and rush"*).

"An Orgy of Disorder"

Casablanca provided: *Landings in North Africa*, 27–39; Auphan and Moral, 230–36; Morison, *Operations in North African Waters*, 93–114 (*"fire-away Flannagan"*).

hardly a syllable: *Three Years*, 182.

Hewitt considered: *New York Sun*, Jan. 30, 1943, HKH, LOC Ms. Div., box 9, folder 6; Clagett, "Admiral H. Kent Hewitt, U.S. Navy," part 2, 83; U.S.S.

Brooklyn war diary, Nov. 8, 1942, SEM, NHC, box 15 (*"Have noticed"*).

Within ten minutes: Brooks, "Casablanca—The French Side of the Fence," 909.

The Jean Bart: AAR, Carl E. Bledsoe, Jan. 27, 1943, NARA RG 337, E 15A, box 51; Mason, 181; Godson, 51.

The commander of the French: Auphan and Moral, 230; Tompkins, 162–65 (*black cassock* and *wives and children*).

French shells: AAR, R. E. Ingersoll, "TORCH Operation, Comments and Recommendations," March 1, 1943, NARA RG 407, E 427, "Special Files," box 24486; AAR, USN, "Participation in Operation TORCH Action off Casablanca," Nov. 19, 1942, NARA RG 407, E 427, "Special Files," box 24488; *Landings in North Africa*, 35; "Signal Communication in the North African Campaign," ts, 1945, *Tactical Communication in World War II*, Part I, Historical Section, Office of the Chief Signal Officer, MHI, 17.

concussion: HKH, "Reminscences of a World War II Admiral," ts, NHC, box 21; letter, Edward S. Johnston to SEM, Apr. 1947, SEM, NHC, box 16; Farago, 35–36 (*"I hope you have"*); Blumenson, *The Patton Papers, 1940–1945*, 103, 105 (*"I was on"*).

Hewitt was too busy: *Landings in North Africa*, 37; Morison, *Operations in North African Waters*, 100–101 (*"grasshopper with a rock"*), 104; "Reminiscences of Rear Adm. Joshua W. Cooper," OH, John T. Mason, 1975, USNI OHD (*galley trash can*); AAR, Daniel F. Seacord, U.S.S. *Ludlow*, n.d., NHC; Harley Cope, "Play Ball, Navy!" *Proceedings*, Oct. 1943, 1131.

Four miles: AAR, "Aircraft Operations During the Execution of TORCH," CINCLANT, March 30, 1943, NARA RG 38, OCNO, WWII Action, box 3; Wordell and Seiler, 133 (*Scotch tape*).

Patched and vengeful: C. T. Booth and M. T. Wordell, OH Dec. 4, 1942, NARA RG 334, E 315, NWC Lib, box 476 (*"The first pass"*); Wordell and Seiler, 93.

The air attacks and weight: "Commander in Chief, Atlantic Fleet," ts, 1946, vol. I, USNAd, 449; Wordell and Seiler, 93 (*"heeled over"*); Auphan and Moral, 233; *Landings in North Africa*, 35–36; Morison, *Operations in North African Waters*, 107.

The most operatic death: AAR, translated from French Naval Historical Service, n.d., in *Ludlow* file, NHC; Auphan and Moral, 233; *Landings in North Africa*, 36; Collier, 146 (*Terrified pigs*).

Of the French ships: AAR, "Aircraft Operations During the Execution of TORCH," CINCLANT, March 30, 1943, NARA RG 38, OCNO, WWII Action, box 3; Wordell and Seiler, 93 (*sweeping, ceremonial turn*); letter, C. V. August, *Chicago News*, Jan. 28, 1943, MCC, YU (*bathed in champagne*).

Diehard French officers: Ellsberg, 271 (*"We Come"*); Tompkins, 165.

Patton finally reached: letters, Edward S. Johnston to S. E. Morison, April–May 1947, SEM, NHC, box 16 (*"I cannot stomach"*); D'Este, *Patton*, 435.

That would be: Blumenson, *Patton: The Man Behind the Legend*, 128 (*"orgy of disorder"*); Observer Report #37, Feb. 10, 1943, NARA RG 337, box 52 (*"Had the landings"*); "Western Task Force: The Attack on Fedala," n.d., War Department, CMH, 2–3.7 WE; "Signal Communication in the North African Campaign," ts, 1945, *Tactical Communication in World War II*, Part I, Historical Section, Office of the Chief Signal Officer, MHI, 59; Kenneth G. Crawford, *Report on North Africa*, 45; letter, Arthur R. Wilson to GCM, Dec. 12, 1942, NARA RG 165, E 13, OCS, box 106; Joseph A. Watters, "The Invasion of North Africa at Fedala and Casablanca," ts, n.d., ASEQ, 3rd ID, MHI; *Three Years*, 148.

While trapped: Hatch, *George Patton: General in Spurs*, 138 (*"I wish"*); Charles R. Codman, *Drive*, 22; Harry H. Semmes, "George S. Patton, Jr.'s Psychology of Leadership," *Army*, Jan.–Feb. 1955, 1 (*"words of fire"*); Harmon, 94 (*useful rumor*).

Five French infantry battalions: Wilhm et al., 71; "History of Regimental Landing Group 30," March 30, 1943, NARA RG 407, E 427, box 245 (*"Rendezvous!"*); "Western Task Force: The Attack on Fedala" decoration affidavits, Mackenzie E. Porter, Robert D. Henriques, NARA RG 338, 7th Army Awards, box 2; William Ellsworth, OH, n.d., SM, MHI (*"For God's sake stop"*); Coffin, "Operation TORCH: A Perilous Preview," 42; Donald G. Taggart, ed., *History of the Third Infantry Division*, 23.

A white handkerchief: "History of Regimental Landing Group 30" (*offered water*).

Patrols pushing: Morison, *Operations in North African Waters*, 65 (*"the greatest setback"*).

Rommel was still: William Ellsworth, OH, n.d., SM, MHI; Franklin M. Reck, *Beyond the Call of Duty*, 27 (*"Good day, my friends!"*); Taggart, ed., 20; Morison, *Operations in North African Waters*, 86, 110; *NWAf*, 128; Farago, 39 (*"determined to slug it out"*).

The fight would be: "Commander in Chief, Atlantic Fleet," ts, 1946, vol. I, USNAd, 443; letter, Arthur R. Wilson to GCM, Dec. 12, 1942, NARA RG 165, E 13, OCS, box 106; Farago, 200 (*"My theory"*); Codman, 35 (*Patton strolled*); Blumenson, *The Patton Papers, 1940–1945*, 106 (*"God was"*).

God withdrew: Wilson to GCM, Dec. 12, 1942 (*"calmest day"*); Beck et al., 77; *Landings in North Africa*, 76; Garrison H. Davidson, OH, John T. Greenwood, 1980, CEOH, 172 (*"Let's do it"*).

Shore parties lacked: Bykofsky and Larson, 160; "Amphibious Training Command," ts, n.d., USNAd, VII-36, 58; "Signal Communication in the North African Campaigns," in *Tactical Communications in World War II*, part 1, 1945, MHI, 24; Leo J. Meyer, "Strategy and Logistical History: Mediterranean Theater of Operations," ts, n.d., CMH, 2.37 CC1, III-15; Earl Burton, "The Invasion of North Africa," in Armed Forces Series, vol. 2, 1992.

A company of 113: "Commander in Chief, Atlantic Fleet," 1946, ts, vol. I, USNAd, 431 (*"bring order"*); *History of 67th Armored Regiment*, 67; Taggart, ed., 23; "CSI Battlebook 3-A: Operation TORCH," CSI, ADA 151 625 (*"full of metal"*); decoration citation, Walter J. Burns, 204th MP Co., NARA RG 338, Fifth Army, A 47-A-3948, box 56.

Two hours later: H. Essame, *Patton: A Study in Command*, 55 (*"flay the idle"*); Blumenson, *The Patton Papers, 1940–1945*, 108 (*"nasty blue"* and *"beach was a mess"*).

One officer quoted Patton: Codman, 21.

Scourging would not: Taggart, ed., 29; Watters, ASEQ, MHI; Forrest K. Kleinman, "The Bizarre Battle for Casablanca," *Army,* Aug. 1997, 38; GSP to DDE, Nov. 14, 1942; "Western Task Force: The Attack on Fedala," 60.

"Today has been bad": Blumenson, *The Patton Papers, 1940–1945,* 109; DDE to GSP, Nov. 10, 1942, Chandler, 684.

Battle for the Kasbah

Of the nine major: LKT Jr. to MWC, Sept. 12, 1942, LKT Jr. Papers, GCM Lib, box 9 (*"should not be"*); Farago, 29; GCM to DDE, Oct. 5, 1942, NARA RG 492, MTOUSA, box 1386 (*"noon Dog Day"*).

"Beloved Wife": LKT Jr. to Sarah, Oct. 22, 1942, LKT Jr. Papers, GCM Lib; Lucian K. Truscott, Jr., *Twilight of the Cavalry,* xiii–xv; John K. Waters, SOOHP, William C. Parnell III, 1980, MHI; Boatner, 574; Truscott, *Command Missions,* 71; Theodore J. Conway, SOOHP, Robert F. Ensslin, 1977, I-22; diary, Oct. 15, 1942, GSP, LOC, box 2, folder 13 (*"I am just"*).

Truscott's opening gambit: Author visit, April 2000; P. M. Hamilton, OH, Nov. 30, 1949, SM, MHI; P. M. Hamilton, OH, July 1945, "Western Task Force: Attack on Mehdia and the Port Lyautey Airdrome," ts, 1945, CMH, 2–3.7 AEI; Reck, 44.

The failed diplomatic: "Western Task Force: Attack on Mehdia," 27; "Commander in Chief, Atlantic Fleet," 1946, ts, vol. I, USNAd, 416 (*"with cold steel"*); AAR, Carl E. Bledsoe, Jan. 27, 1943, NARA RG 337, E 15A, box 51 (*"absolutely dumbfounded"*).

Nightfall made matters worse: Semmes, 121; "Western Task Force: Attack on Mehdia," 63.

On the broad: Truscott, *Command Missions,* 113–14.

The troops ducked: LKT Jr. to GSP, Nov. 12, 1942, LKT Jr. Papers, GCM Lib, box 9 (*"halfway to Bermuda"*).

Like Patton, Truscott concluded: Farago, 29–30 (*"disaster against"*); Peter Andrews, "A Place to Be Lousy In," *American Heritage,* Dec. 1991, 100 (*Truscott suspected*); Truscott, *Command Missions,* 97–98 (*"One of the first lessons"*).

Yet only luck: Semmes, 125; Semmes, reply to Armored School queries, Dec. 1949, SM, MHI; Truscott, *Command Missions,* 118 (*"not a cheerful one"*).

At first light: AAR, Gordon Browne, n.d., OSS files, NARA RG 226, E 99, box 39 ("Tout va bien"); "Western Task Force: Attack on Mehdia," 4; msg, GCM, Oct. 2, 1942, NARA RG 492, MTOUSA, Special Staff, box 1385 (*"rivet attention"*); Malvergne Silver Star documentation, NARA RG 338, Fifth Army, box 56; Roul Tunley, "A Frenchman Returns," *Sea Power,* Jan. 1945, 13; AAR, Co C, 15th Engineer Combat Bn, n.d., NARA RG 407, E 427, 9th ID, box 7455.

Dallas *yawed wildly*: R. Brodie, Jr., OH, June 19, 1951, SM, MHI; *NWAf,* 165; Morison, *Operations in North African Waters,* 131.

Two hours later: "Western Task Force: Attack on Mehdia," 122; "Adventures by Men of the 60th Infantry Regiment in WWII," ts, 1993, MHI, 9; Mittelman, 72; Truscott, *Command Missions,* 120 (*"a beautiful sight"*); Frederic A. Henney, "Combat Engineers in North Africa: The Capture of Port Lyautey," *Military Engineer,* Jan. 1944, 1; *Landings in North Africa,* 53 ("Beau Geste").

Enemy resistance: *NWAf,* 164, 170 (*"a brightly colored pageant"*); "Western Task Force: Attack on

Mehdia," 96; Semmes, 139; Truscott, *Command Missions,* 123 (*"Our parley"*).

The three-day fight: AAR, LKT Jr., Dec. 15, 1942, AFHQ G-3, NARA micro R-24-C; AAR, "Trip of Honduran SS *Contessa,"* March 22, 1943, in Wheeler, ed., *The Road to Victory,* 76; Fowler, "Twelve Desperate Miles," 14.

In a final twist: *AAFinWWII,* 77; Astor, 282 (*"war hysteria"*).

"It's All Over for Now"

Gray with fatigue: Clagett, "Admiral H. Kent Hewitt, U.S. Navy," 72, 75.

Hewitt resumed: AAR, "Report on Operation TORCH by Capt. A. G. Shepard," Jan. 9, 1943, NARA RG 38, OCNO, WW II Action Reports, box 3; "Aircraft Operations during the execution of TORCH," March 30, 1943, CINCLANT, NARA RG 38, OCNO, box 3 ("*No more* Jean Bart"); Morison, *Operations in North African Waters,* 163; HKH, comment on Jan. 1950 Morison volume, HKH, NHC, box 1 ("*Come a little closer*").

For Patton, enough was enough: DDE to GSP, Oct. 13, 1942, NARA RG 492, MTOUSA Special Staff, AFHQ, box 1383; "Western Task Force: The Attack on Fedala," n.d., CMH, 2–3.7 WE.

At two A.M.*, about the time*: 3rd ID field artillery officer, OH, n.d., SM, MHI; Codman, 40 (*"Unless the French navy"*); Blumenson, *The Patton Papers, 1940–1945,* 109 (*"Staff wanted me"*).

At dawn, the guns: Arthur R. Wilson to GCM, Dec. 12, 1942, NARA RG 165, E 13, OCS, classified general correspondence, box 106 (*"Report whether"*); Wordell and Seiler, 162 (*"Boys, it's all"*).

Franco-American amity: Brooks, "Casablanca—The French Side of the Fence," 909 (*"Chicago, I give up!"*); Taggart, ed., 30.

At the Miramar: Geoffrey Keyes, OH, Feb. 15, 1950, SM, MHI.

"They drank $40 worth": GSP to Henry Stimson, Dec. 7, 1942, Blumenson, *The Patton Papers, 1940–1945,* 112; Morison, *Operations in North African Waters,* appendix II, 285; HKH, "Reminiscences," 230.

The conquest of Morocco: *NWAf,* 173; Blumenson, *The Patton Papers, 1940–1945,* 110 (*"We are in"*), 114 (*"If you adhere"*).

Press dispatches: Blumenson, *The Patton Papers, 1940–1945,* 107 (*"I realize"*), 111, 116, 119.

After leaving: "Report on Material and Logistics, Commander Task Force 34," n.d., NARA RG 407, E 427, "Special Files," box 24486; AAR, "Report on Operation TORCH by Capt. A. G. Shepard," Jan. 9, 1943, NARA RG 38, OCNO, WW II Action Reports, box 3; Wilhm et al., "Armor in the Invasion of North Africa," 47; HKH, "Reminiscences," 230.

And yet: AAR, "Report on Operation TORCH by Capt. A.G. Shepard," Jan. 9, 1943, NARA RG 38, OCNO, WWII Action Reports, box 3; *NWAf,* 175; war diary, German naval staff, Nov. 1942, NARA RG 334, NWC Lib, box 645 (*"Go after them"*).

"Good lads": letter, E. S. Johnston to SEM, Apr. 1947, SEM, NHC, box 16; Wordell and Seiler, 173; John Ellis, *Brute Force: Allied Strategy and Tactics in the Second World War,* 528.

Blackout drapes: Davidson, OH, 182; Codman, 47; author visit, April 2000.

At 7:48 P.M.*, the festivities*: Davidson, OH, 182.

The German submarine U-173: "Reminiscences of Vice Admiral Charles Wellborn, Jr.," 1972, USNI OHD (*"you could see"*); "Report on Material and Logistics, Commander Task Force 34," n.d., NARA

RG 407, E 427, "Special Files," box 24486; AAR, "Report on Operation TORCH by Capt. A. G. Shepard," Jan. 9, 1943, NARA RG 38, OCNO, WWII Action Reports, box 3; Morison, *Operations in North African Waters,* 169; Clay Blair, *Hitler's U-Boat War,* vol. II, 110; uboat.net/ boats/u173.htm.

The "goosing": U.S.S. *Brooklyn* war diary, Nov. 11, 2156 hrs., SEM, NHC, box 15.

Hewitt was furious: HKH, ts, n.d., comments on SEM, *Operations in North African Waters*, Jan. 1950 edition, HKH, NHC, box 1 (*"extreme reluctance"*).

For more than an hour: HKH to USN, June 16, 1950, HKH, NHC, box 1; HKH, "Reminiscences" Morison, *Operations in North African Waters,* 171.

Finally, he could continue: AAR, "Report on Operation TORCH by Capt. A. G. Shepard," Jan. 9, 1943, NARA RG 38, OCNO, WWII Action Reports, box 3.

Hewitt slumped: HKH, OH, G. F. Howe, Jan. 23, 1951, NARA RG 319, 2–3.7, box 228; HKH, ts, n.d., comments on SEM, *Operations in North African Waters,* Jan. 1950 edition, HKH, NHC, box 1.

As dusk sifted: Blair, *Hitler's U-Boat War,* vol. I, 473, and vol. II, 111; Morison, *Operations in North African Waters,* 171; uboat.net/boats/u130.htm.

Each hit home: AAR, *Hugh L. Scott,* Nov. 18, 1942, and "U.S. Atlantic Fleet, Amphibious Force, Action Report," both in NARA RG 407, E 427, box 24490.

Her two sisters: *Landings in North Africa,* 78; letter, E. S. Johnston to SEM, Apr. 1947, SEM, NHC, box 16 (*"The damned fools"*); msg, L. B. Ely to HKH, Nov. 12, 2025 hrs., HKH, NHC, box 1; Codman, 48.

Fifteen hundred survivors: "United States Navy Medical Department at War, 1941–1945," vol. I, part 3, ts, n.d., USNAd, 673; Albert W. Kenner, "Medical Service in the North African Campaign," *Military Review,* Feb. 1944, 5; Harry McK. Roper, "Report on Observations Made as Observer with Task Force Brushwood," n.d., NARA RG 337, Observer Reports, box 52; Blumenson, *The Patton Papers, 1940–1945,* 168 (*"pieces of bacon"*); Charles M. Wiltse, *Medical Service in the Mediterranean and Minor Theaters,* 119, 121.

Friday's dawn brought: AAR, NARA RG 407, E 427, U.S. Atlantic Fleet Amphibious Force, box 24430.

Soldiers looking seaward: Blair, vol. II, 201; "Comments of Admiral H. Kent Hewitt, USN, on *Operations in North African Waters* (original edition), 26 Feb. 1947" HKH to SEM, March 13, 1947; HKH to J. L. Hall, March 13, 1947, all in HKH, NHC, box 1.

General Clark's arrest of Darlan: "Record of Events," Feb. 22, 1943, NARA RG 338, Fifth Army, box 1, 25–28 (*"Not once"*); Murphy, 142 ("Merde!").

At noon on November 13: *Three Years,* 190; DDE to W. B. Smith, Nov. 11, 1942, Chandler, 693; DDE to Churchill, Nov. 11, 1942, Chandler, 689; DDE to GCM, Nov. 11, 1942, Chandler, 692.

At the St. Georges: Funk, 248 (*a coward*).

Eisenhower sighed: DDE to GCM, Nov. 9 and 11, 1942, Chandler, 680, 692; DDE to MWC, Nov. 12, 1942, Chandler, 698; DDE to W.B. Smith, Nov. 12, 1942, Chandler, 701; "Record of Events," Feb. 22, 1943, NARA RG 338, Fifth Army, box 1; letter, Noguès to G. F. Howe, Jan. 1950, NARA RG 319, OCMH, 2–3.7 CC1, box 225.

Eisenhower shook hands: DDE to MWC, Nov. 11, 1942, Chandler, 699 (*"When you are away"*); Clark, 123 (*"Now we can"*).

Sixty years after torch: *NWAf,* 173; *Destruction,* 154.

The number of French killed: De Gaulle, 353; Marcel Vigneras, *Rearming the French*, 18; DDE to W. B. Smith, Nov. 16, 1942, Chandler, 718 (*eighteen French battalions*); Butcher diary, A-4, Nov. 25, DDE Lib, PP-pres, box 166 (*"remain embittered"). torch had lured*: Milton Viorst, *Hostile Allies: FDR and Charles de Gaulle*, 123 (*"It's not very pretty"*); DDE to W. B. Smith, Nov. 12, 1942, Chandler, 702 (*"We are just"*).

The war's momentum: Roy Jenkins, *Churchill: A Biography*, 702–703.

"habits of peace": W.G.F. Jackson, *The Battle for North Africa*, 396.

"For God's sake": DDE to W. B. Smith, Nov. 12, 1942, Chandler, 702; Leahy, 137 (*the White House).*

CHAPTER 4: PUSHING EAST
"We Live in Tragic Hours"

At two A.M. *on November 8*: Twelve Apostles summary, n.d., NARA RG 226, E 99, OSS files, box 39 (*with his Spanish maids*); Tompkins, 141–42 (*"They had better"*); Boatner, 155; Cunningham, 186 (*the Monk*), 221; Philip Jordan, *Jordan's Tunis Diary*, 132 (*"fashion plate gone seedy"*); Alan Moorehead, *The End in Africa*, 82 (*"Hurry"*).

There was no need: Ralph Bennett, *Ultra and Mediterranean Strategy*, 190 (*"panther's leap"*); *Kriegstagebuch*, 90th Panzer Armee Korps, Nov. 16–30, 1942, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 225; Volkmar Kühn, *German Paratroops in World War II*, 158–61; Paul Carell, *The Foxes of the Desert*, 311; Loerzer, "Negotiations with…Estéva," n.d., FMS, #D-040, 2 (*low, intimidating pass*).

French troops ringed: Paul Deichmann, "Mission of OB Süd…in North Africa After the Allied Landing," n.d., FMS, #D-067, 6; Cunningham, 226; NARA RG 319, OCMH, "Background Papers to NW Africa," box 222.

Hitler had learned: Kühn, *German Paratroops in World War II*, 158; Walter Warlimont, *Inside Hitler's Headquarters, 1939–1945*, 271; Anthony Martienssen, *Hitler and His Admirals*, 147; msg, Hitler to Mussolini, Nov. 20, 1942, NARA RG 319, OCMH, 2-3.7, box 225 (*"Yours in"*).

Already 230: Horst Boog et al., *Germany and the Second World War*, vol. VI, *The Global War*, 793–94 (*"cornerstone of our conduct"*).

On Tuesday, November 10: Walter Nehring, "The First Phase of the Battle in Tunisia," 1947, FMS, #D-147, 29; Franz Kurowski, *The History of the Fallschirm Panzerkorps Hermann Göring*, 109; Kühn, 160; Gardiner, memoir, ts, 1970, USMA Arch, 84.

Weak as the German vanguard: Blumenson, *Kasserine Pass*, 35, 37 (*"I count on everyone"*); Brooks, "The Unknown Darlan," 879 (*"November 8, we fight everybody"*); Auphan and Moral, 251 (*"The enemy is the German"*).

On November 12: *Kriegstagebuch*, Nov. 16, 1942, 2130 hrs, 90th Panzer Armee Korps, Nov. 16, 1942, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 225 (*"only nodding"*); Robinett, *Armor Command*, 73 (*"After forty years"*); NARA RG 319, OCMH, "Background Papers to NW Africa," box 222; Blumenson, *Kasserine Pass*, 38 (*"I shall be known"*).

Sadly, yes: Bennett, 191; *Kriegstagebuch*, Nov. 16–30, 1942, 90th Panzer Armee Korps, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 225 (*"cannot read"*); Carell, 311 (*marched four abreast*); Albert Kesselring, "The War in the Mediterranean," part II, "The Fighting in Tunisia and Tripolitania," n.d., FMS, #T-3 P1, 7; AAR, Bayerlein, Apr. 19, 1943, NARA RG 319, OCMH, 2-3.7, box 225; Deichmann, 18; "Account of Marjorie Springs," n.d., NARA RG 226, E 99, OSS, box 39 (*newly fashionable goose*

step); Nigel Nicholson and Patrick Forbes, *The Grenadier Guards in the War of 1939–1945*, vol. II, 339.

Soon enough, Derrien: Tompkins, 145; Auphan and Moral, 269; Kühn, *Rommel in the Desert*, 181–84.

A French court: Morison, *Operations in North African Waters*, 241 (*"national unworthiness"*); Cunningham, 226 (*"it is an honor"*); Tompkins, 145; Auphan and Moral, 284–85 (*Derrien, too*); Clayton, *Three Marshals of France*, 73.

"We live in tragic hours": Blumenson, *Kasserine Pass*, 42.

Conviviality reigned: Kesselring, FMS, T-3 P1, part II, 6; Kesselring, *The Memoirs of Field-Marshal Kesselring*, 8–9; Macksey, *Kesselring: The Making of the Luftwaffe*, 155–56; Boatner, 271.

On November 10: Macksey, 143 (*poison gas*); Kühn, *German Paratroops in World War II*, 172 (*"drop of water"*).

The Allies had achieved: Siegfried Westphal, *The German Army in the West*, 121; Lowell Bennett, *Assignment to Nowhere: The Battle for Tunisia*, 101; H. A. Jacobsen and J. Rohwer, eds., *Decisive Battles of World War II: The German View*, 212.

A Cold Country with a Hot Sun

Five hundred and sixty: Hinsley, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, vol. II, 475; Middleton, *Our Share of Night*, 169 (*"Those squareheads"*); Freeland A. Daubin, Jr., "The Battle of Happy Valley," Apr. 1948, ts, Armored School Advanced Officers Class, 9 (*"that all of the Germans"*).

Town mayors donned: Gardiner, memoir, ts, 1970, USMA Arch, 79 (version also in PMR, "Tank Commander," ts, n.d., GCM Lib., box 20); Moorehead, 73; Ralph Bennett, 225; Robert H. Welker, "G.I. Jargon: Its Perils and Pitfalls," *Saturday Review of Literature*, Oct. 1944, 7; Harmon, *Combat Commander*, 107 (*reparations*).

British troops dominated: Austin, 10 (*"Edwardian motoring veil[s]"*); Howard and Sparrow, 109; "History, HQ Detachment, 109th Medical Bn, 34th ID," Feb. 1942–Nov. 1943, NARA RG E 427, box 9618; Moorehead, 91 (*fishmongers in striped sweaters*); A.A.C.W. Brown, "364 Days Overseas Service," ts, 1981, IWM, 81/33/1; letter, Dan Rupert, May 22, 1943, MCC, YU; Jordan, 46.

For the Yanks: Oswald Jett, ASEQ, "As I Saw the War," ts, 1988, 1st AD, 47th Medical Bn, 287; Laurence R. Robertson, ASEQ, ts, n.d., 1st AD, MHI, 164; Powell, *In Barbary*, 102; Randle, *Safi Adventure*, 138; Frelinghuysen, 27.

Eastward the caissons: Rame, 81–82 (*"hanging like red lamps"*); Peter Schrijvers, *The Crash of Ruin*, 44.

At dusk they bivouacked: Liebling, *Mollie & Other Pieces*, 31; Robertson, ASEQ, 1st AD, MHI, 164; Bolstad, 105 (*"Gas!"*); letter, Virginia Samsell, n.d., MCC, YU (*burro named Rommel*).

Pilfering by the locals: Jensen, 51; Mayo, 120; Ralph G. Martin, *The GI War, 1941–1945*, 41; Hilary St. George Saunders, *The Red Beret*, 81; Howe, *The Battle History of the 1st Armored Division*, 51 (*"If they"*); McNamara, 30 (*"useless, worthless, illiterate"*).

At dawn, the promenade: letter, Jack Pardekooper, Jan. 1943, MCC, YU (*"Every town over here"*); letter, Joseph T. Dawson, Nov. 21, 1942, MRC FDM (*"The sky is almost"*); Rame, 88 (*"She'll be"*).

Thanks to Ultra's decipherment: Hinsley, vol. II, 466–67, 488–89 (*"low category"* and *"probable scale"*).

There was much talk: Frierson, "Preparations for TORCH," 1945, vol. I, CMH 2-3.7 AD, 46 (*primarily to the British*); Yarborough, SOOHP, 1975, MHI, 26; Howe, *The Battle History of the 1st Armored Division*, 51–54.

Proverbially: Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, 119 (*"were not clearly understood"*); DDE to E. N. Eisenhower, Nov. 16, 1942, Chandler, 724.

"I get so impatient": DDE to W. B. Smith, Nov. 11, 12, and 16, 1942; DDE to E. N. Eisenhower, Nov. 16, 1942, all in Chandler, 693, 703, 724.

Nor was he yet: Hinsley, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, abridged ed., 256, 263, 267; Jackson, *The Battle for North Africa*, 399.

Perhaps the biggest: Leighton and Coakley, 438; Beck et al., 63; Meyer, "Strategy and Logistical History: Mediterranean Theater of Operations," vol. I, II–40; AAR, Henry C. Wolfe, Dec. 12, 1942, NARA RG 407, E 427, "Pre-Invasion Planning," box 24348; Jordan, 40 (*"Inevitably there was chaos"*).

Ordnance officers wandered: Mayo, 119; Meyer, "Strategy and Logistical History," vol. I, IV–7; Lunsford E. Oliver, "In the Mud and Blood of Tunisia," *Collier's*, Apr. 17, 1943, 11; DDE to GCM, Nov. 30, 1942, Chandler, 779; Field Marshal the Viscount Alexander of Tunis, "The African Campaign from El Alamein to Tunis," *London Gazette*, Feb. 3, 1948, 865.

Even success: Russell F. Akers, OH, July 27, 1949, SM, MHI.

This muddle greeted: DDE to Anderson, Nov. 12, 1942, DDE Lib, PP-pres, box 5 (*"I applaud"*); Parris and Russell, 155 (*"The German"*).

Anderson had been born in India: CBH, Apr. 18–22, 1943, MHI (*"grinning preoccupation"*); Gregory Blaxland, *The Plain Cook and the Great Showman*, 28–29, 106, 167 (*"jutting chin"*); Jordan, 44 (*"moderately successful surgeon"*), 61.

One British general: David Fraser, *And We Shall Shock Them*, 251 (*"plain cook"*); "Personal Diary of Lt. Gen. C. W. Allfrey, the Tunisian Campaign," Feb. 7, 1943, Allfrey Collection, LHC (*Sunshine*); Chandler, 778n (*GROUCH*); Boatner, 9; Jordan, 137; DDE to GCM, Oct. 10, 1942, Chandler, vol. I, 628 (*"he studies"*); K.A.N. Anderson to DDE, Dec. 23, 1948, DDE Lib, PP-pres, box 5 (*"a queer sort"*); Anderson to DDE, Jan. 19, 1944, DDE Lib, PP-pres, box 5 (*"good medicine"*).

Anderson's most ambitious: "General Anderson's Plan, 19 September 1942," Kenneth Anderson file, DDE Lib, box 5; "Possible Variations to Plan Y," First Army, Nov. 7, 1942, PRO, WO 175/50; *NWAf*, 277.

A battalion of the Royal West Kent: AAR, Inshore Squadron, H.M.S *Bulolo*, Dec. 8, 1942, NARA, AFHQ micro, RN Operations, R 17-A.

Two bombs hit: David Rolf, *The Bloody Road to Tunis*, 34 (*"swimming frantically"*); AAR, Inshore Squadron, H.M.S.

Bulolo, Dec. 8, 1942, NARA, AFHQ micro, RN Operations, R 17-A (*lowered boats without orders*); Pack, *Passage to Africa*, 102.

Most soldiers and sailors: Roskill, 337; Macksey, *Crucible of Power*, 87.

Things went better: Baedeker, 301; Saunders, 80 (*"I'll have"*); *NWAf*, 278.

Unfortunately, Bône: "At the Front in North Africa," U.S. Army Signal Corps, 16mm; Moorehead, 81; Meyer, IV-13; Cyril Ray, *Algiers to Austria*, 8; Rame, 280 (*"In this force"*).

Having chased Napoleon: Shelby Foote, *The Civil War*, vol. III, 29; *Destruction*, 169; Ray, 9, 32; AAR, 26th Armoured Bde, PRO, WO 175/211; Howe, *The Battle History of the 1st Armored Division*, 54; George Forty, *Tank Action*, 110.

"had no appeal": Blaxland, 91.

And then, they were in Tunisia: Parris and Russell, 209; Marshall, *Over to Tunis*, 45 (*"cold country"*); R.L.V. ffrench Blake, *A History of the 17th/21st Lancers, 1922–1959*, 91, 113 (*"The most important thing"*); Liebling, 38; Gustav A. Mueller, ASEQ, ts, n.d., 13th AR, 1st AD, 249.

To protect Anderson's: Edson D. Raff, *We Jumped to Fight*, 74, 79; William A. Carter, "Carter's War," ts, n.d., CEOH, IV-6; William F. Powers, OH, Aug. 1985, Herbert Hart, CEOH, 45 (*"stamped the hell"*).

But most of the Allied force: Ray, 55; Ford, 46 (*said to be feuding*); Robinett, *Armor Command*, 77 (*Santa Claus*); Daniell, *The Royal Hampshire Regiment*, vol. 3, 89.

With Anderson's approval: AAR, "Operation of 1st Bn., Parachute Regiment," E.W.C. Flavell, and S Company report, Jan. 18, 1943, in Lt. Gen. Sir Charles Walter Allfrey Collection, LHC, 3/4; J. Hill, "Operation TORCH," *Army Quarterly and Defence Journal*, Jan. 1946, 177 (*all 3,000*); Macksey, *Crucible of Power*, 93 (*"non-existent preponderance"*).

They cheered again: J.R.T. Hopper, "Figures in a Fading Landscape," ts, 1995, IWM, 97/3/1.

Then Stuka dive-bombers: Hill, "Operation TORCH," *Army Quarterly and Defense Journal*, Jan. 1946, 177; AAR, 1st Derbyshire Yeomanry, n.d., PRO 175/293; Saunders, 83–86; Blaxland, 105 (*local enthusiasm faded*); Lowell Bennett, 123.

Medjez-el-Bab

"Whoever has Medjez-el-Bab": Kühn, *German Paratroops in World War II*, 162 (*"master of all Tunisia"*); Austin, 31 (*tobacco and salt*); Baedeker, 329; Homer, *The Iliad*, trans. Robert Fagles, 160.

Medjez-el-Bab's strategic value: author visits, Sept. 1996, Apr. 2000; Moorehead, 71.

At this bucolic place: Kriegstagebuch, Division Lederer, Nov. 17 and 20, 1942, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 225 (*"throw the enemy back"*); Kühn, *German Paratroops in World War II*, 162; "Notes by Major Burckhardt on Tactics in Africa," NARA RG 407, E 427, "Pre-Invasion Planning," box 24348; Wilhelm Knoche, "Meine Erlebnisse im Tunesien-Feldzug," FMS, D-323, 12, 19–20 (*"Think what's at stake"*); Kesselring, *Memoirs*, 142.

At four A.M. *on November 19*: Hill, "Operation TORCH," 177; AAR, "Operations of 1st Bn., Parachute Regiment," Jan. 18, 1943, Allfrey Collection, LHC, 3/4.

Barré passed word: AAR, 1st Derbyshire Yeomanry, n.d., PRO, WO 175/293; AAR, First Army, PRO, WO 175/50.

An apricot dawn: Knoche, 28; Edward A. Raymond, "Some Battle Lessons," *Field Artillery Journal*, Feb. 1944, 104 (*"The war"*).

West of town: Hill, "Operation Torch," 177 (*"guns of all calibers"* and *"gun teams had worked"*).

The balance of the day: Howard A. Smith, Jr., "Among Those Baptized," *Field Artillery Journal*, Apr. 1944, 214 (*"Poor buggers"*); James Lucas, *Panzer Army Africa*, 143.

By late afternoon: NWAf, 287; DDE, "Commander-in-Chief's Dispatch, North African Campaign, 1942–1943," 19; Raymond, 104; Knoche, 29, 31; Kühn, *German Paratroops in World War II*, 168; Lucas, 143.

This disagreeable news: Howe, *The Battle History of the 1st Armored Division*, 52 (*Anderson had resisted*); *NWAf*, 291.

Neither side: Liebling, 3; Lowell Bennett, 130 (*"a funny sort of front"*).

But Axis forces: Kriegstagebuch, 90th Panzer Armee Korps, Nov. 22, 1942, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 225 (*"There is no time"*); Hinsley, *British Intelligence in the Second World War,* abridged ed., 270; AAR, 17th/21st Lancers, PRO, WO 175/292 (*"Alice"*); Anderson to DDE, Nov. 16, 1942, NARA, AFHQ micro, R-5-C;W. S. Chalmers, *Full Cycle: The Biography of Admiral Sir Bertram Home Ramsay,* 151 (*"Huns are beating"*).

Never hesitant to play: John Kennedy, *The Business of War,* 274 (*"like a peacock"*); Jenkins, *Churchill: A Biography,* 681 (*"not as good fighters"*); Danchev and Todman, eds., 243 (*"totally unfit"*).

Eisenhower maintained: DDE to H. H. Arnold, Nov. 21, 1942, Chandler, 751; memo, DDE, Nov. 22, 1942, Chandler, 761 (*"It would be wrong"*); Hinsley, *British Intelligence in the Second World War,* abridged ed., 263, 270 (*25,000*); DDE to W. B. Smith, Nov. 18, 1942, Chandler, 734 (*"If we don't"*).

Most disheartening: Anthony Farrar-Hockley, "The Follow-up to TORCH," Basil Liddell Hart, ed., *History of the Second World War*, vol. 3, 1228.

Allied fighters, by contrast: NWAf, 293; Richard G. Davis, *Carl A. Spaatz and the Air War in Europe,* 139; *AAFinWWII*, 121 (*"rather appalling"*), 127; DDE to GCM, Nov. 22, 1942, Chandler, 759; asst. G-3 inspection report to AFHQ, Dec. 1942, NARA, AFHQ micro, R-5C.

Troops learned to their sorrow: Warren, 14; Charles Messenger, *The Tunisian Campaign*, 13 (*crew chiefs sat*); John S. D. Eisenhower, 204; Tibbits, 119 (*crews wielded*); L. F. Ellis, *Welsh Guards at War,* 27 (*"a loving type of mud"*).

On November 24: W. J. Jervois, *The History of the Northamptonshire Regiment: 1934–1948,* 119; *NWAf,* 302.

The other prong: ibid.; Ray, 12–13; Farrar-Hockley, 1228; Lucas, 144; Macksey, *Crucible of Power,* 94; Ford, 17.

Fat Geese on a Pond

With both brigades: Rolf, 36 (*"Armor for Tunis!"*); AAR, "Operations of 1st Bn., Parachute Regiment," Jan. 18, 1943, Allfrey Collection, LHC, 3/4; Saunders, 88 (*"great ebony warriors"*); Waters, SOOHP, 1980, MHI (*"tank-infested"*); Blaxland, 104, 108.

son of a Baltimore banker: Waters, SOOHP, 54, 66.

Waters's fifty-four light tanks: Arthur Robert Moore, ASEQ, ts, 1993, 1st AD; Forty, *United States Tanks of World War II in Action,* 42–51; Daubin, 6 (*"squirrel rifle"* and *"hat box"*).

The battalion rolled: Waters, SOOHP, 611 (*"I'm scared to death"*); Daubin, 16 (*"three-day growth"*); Howe, *The Battle History of the 1st Armored Division,* 66.

Farther north: ffrench Blake, 93 (*"sent up a stream"*).

But it was on: Waters, SOOHP, 611 (*"Right in front of me"*); Robinett, *Armor Command,* 65, Daubin, 6–19.

Seventeen Stuarts: Daubin, 19 (*"fat geese"*); Waters, SOOHP, 611; Rudolph Barlow, OH, n.d., SM, MHI; Lowell Bennett, 197 (*"bounced off like peas"*); Hans Jürgen von Arnim, "Recollections of Tunisia," 1951, trans. Janet E. Dewey, FMS, #C-098, CMH, 20; Rame, 156 (*shot down or crushed*); Forty, *United States Tanks of World War II in Action,* 47, 49; Howe, *The Battle History of the 1st Armored Division,* 67; Boog et al., 805.

Panicky, exaggerated reports: Nehring, "The First Phase of the Battle in Tunisia," FMS, #D-147, MHI (*"tear open one tactical hole"*); *Kriegstagebuch*, 90th Panzer Armee Korps, Nov. 25, 1942, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 225; Ulrich Bürker, "Einsatz Der 10. Panzer Division in Tunisien, II. Teil," Dec. 1947, FMS, #D-310, 10; Lucas, 136 (*preparing to burn*).

Kesselring voiced sympathy: Kesselring, "The War in the Mediterranean, Part II, The Fighting in Tunisia and Tripolitania," FMS, #T-3, P1, MHI, 13 (*"made a beautiful mess"*); Kesselring, *Memoirs,* 143.

Smiling Albert's assurances: Chandler, 778n (*DIZZY* and *INCUR*); Nicholson and Forbes, 265; Kennett, 122 (*"never had any bringing up"*).

The key to the door: Charles Hendricks, "A Time of Testing: U.S. Army Engineers in the Tunisia Campaign of World War II," paper, Oct. 1999, Colloquium on Military Fortifications and Infrastructure in Tunisia; DDE to GSP, Nov. 26, 1942, Chandler, 774 (*"At this moment"*); DDE to W. B. Smith, Nov. 27, 1942, Chandler, 777 (*"I believe"*).

CHAPTER 5: *PRIMUS IN CARTHAGO*
"Go for the Swine with a Blithe Heart"

From the tall windows: Raymond H. Croll, ts, n.d., MHI, 116; CBH, Feb. 1942, MHI; minutes, commander-in-chief staff conference, Oct. 26, 1942, NARA RG 331, AFHQ micro, R-79-D (*had intended to move*).

"How weary I am": DDE to MWC, Nov. 20, 1942, and Nov. 21, 1942, Chandler, 745, 750.

He was hardly: Croll, 99, 116.

Eisenhower's own office: Three Years, 199.

A few days before leaving: DDE to MWC, Nov. 20, 1942, Chandler, 744; Robert Murphy, Col U OHRO, David C. Berliner, OH-224, Oct. 12, 1972, 6–7; "History of AFHQ, Part One, Aug.–Dec. 1942," n.d., NARA RG 331, box 63 (*400 offices*); Butcher diary, DDE Lib, A-43 (*as much meat*); "Tactical Communication in World War II," part 1, "Signal Communication in the North African Campaigns," 1945, Historical Section, Office of the Chief Signal Officer, MHI, 54 (*"reasonable estimate"*); Hansen, 3/40 (*"huge, chairborne force"*); Dickson, "G-2 Journal: Algiers to the Elbe," n.d., MHI, 30 (*"never were so few"*); Jordan, 180 (*"it's worth fifty divisions"*).

Algiers already showed: Croll, 116 (*electric razors*); Moorehead, 65; MacVane, *Journey into War*, 85 (*"I am married"*); Rame, 206; both in NARA RG 338, Fifth Army awards and decorations, A 47-A-3948, box 56 (*"Valor, Patience"*).

Oranges: Carter, "Carter's War," ts, 1983, CEOH, III-2, III-14; Lowell Bennett, 295; Jensen, 50.

Indiscipline overwhelmed: AAR, Dec. 28, 1942, Center Task Force, Staff JAG, NARA RG 407, E 427, AG, WWII Ops Reports, box 244; AAR, II Corps JAG, Dec. 22, 1942, and AAR, HQ II Corps, JAG, Sept. 9, 1943, both in NARA RG 338, II Corps JAG, box 157.

There was folderol: DDE, *Crusade in Europe,* 128 (*Eisenhower was a Jew*); Milton S. Eisenhower, *The President Is Calling,* 145 (*"Ike"*); Butcher diary, Nov. 25, 1942, DDE Lib (*Clark gave*); DDE to GCM, Nov. 21, 1942, and DDE to MWC, Nov. 21, 1942, Chandler, 748; John D'Arcy-Dawson, *Tunisian Battle,* 66 (*correspondents advised*).

"After leaving where we were": Dale Allen Hawley, *New York Herald Tribune,* July 3, 1943, MCC, YU.

In a message on November 22: Chandler, 767n; Butcher diary, DDE Lib, A-50 (*"Go for the swine"*);

DDE to MWC, Nov. 19, 1942, Chandler, 740; DDE to W. B. Smith, Nov. 18, 1942, Chandler, 736.

In truth, he spent: DDE to W. B. Smith, Nov. 18, 1942, Chandler, 732.

No distraction tormented: DDE to W. B. Smith, Nov. 9, 1942, Chandler, 677 (*"these Frogs"*); DDE, "Commander-in-Chief's Dispatch, North African Campaign," 17 (*"morbid sense of honor"*); DDE to GCM, Feb. 4, 1943, Chandler, 937 (*"volatile"*); Kennedy, 282 (*"a dog about religion"*).

But the commander-in-chief lacked: CCS, "Minutes of Meeting," Jan. 15, 1943, 1430, NARA RG 218, "Records of U.S. JCS," box 195 (*132 desertions*); Wallace, "Africa, We Took It and Liked It," 20; "The Reminiscences of Rear Adm. George W. Bauernschmidt," 1991, USNI OHD, appendix B, 9 (*French supply requests*).

More distracting: Crawford, *Report on North Africa,* 83 (*"like a Tammany scan- dal"*); Milton Eisenhower, 137 (*"fighting Nazis"*); *Three Years*, 192 (*"stinking skunk"*); Chandler, 739n (*"We are fighting"*); Langer, 368.

Darlan's repressive actions: MacVane, *On the Air in World War II,* 121; Macmillan, *The Blast of War*, 184; Middleton, 242; Tompkins, 132, 136, 139 (*hoarded coffee*).

Eisenhower averted: DDE to GSP, Nov. 26, 1942, Chandler, 775; DDE to GCM, Nov. 17, 1942, Chandler, 729; DDE to CCS, Nov. 14, 1942, Chandler, 708; DDE to W. B. Smith, Nov. 14, 1942, Chandler, 712.

Roosevelt had authorized: Three Years, 206 (*"I am but a lemon"*).

All this was folderol: Ramsey, 111 (*"For Christ's sake"*); Omar N. Bradley and Clay Blair, *A General's Life,* 133; Hanson Baldwin, *New York Times*, March 29, 1969, 1 (*"best damn lieutenant colonel"*); Piers Brendon, *Ike: His Life and Times,* 96 (*"fatchist"*); Macmillan, *The Blast of War,* 174 (*"I'm no reactionary!"*).

At the end: Hatch, *General Ike*, 130; McKeough and Lockridge, 51, 61; Merle Miller, *Ike the Soldier*, 435; *Three Years,* 199, 206.

Even an officer as strong: DDE to GCM, Nov. 17, 1942, Chandler, 731; Kay Summersby Morgan, *Past Forgetting,* 110 (*"lonely man"*); DDE to H. H. Arnold, Nov. 21, 1942, Chandler, 751.

He regretted, too: DDE to GCM, Nov. 30, 1942, Chandler, 781; Ismay, *Memoirs,* 289; Bryant, 527, 528, 534 (*"far too busy"*); *Three Years*, 201 (*"The whole thing"*).

The low moan: Ramsey, 236; Paul Semmens, "The Hammer of Hell," ts, n.d., CMH, 94; *Three Years,* 306, 200.

To his son: DDE to John S. D. Eisenhower, Nov. 20, 1942, Chandler, 747 (*"I hope"*); Morgan, 101; Davis, *Dwight D. Eisenhower: Soldier of Democracy,* 399.

"The Dead Salute the Gods"

no roasted peacock: Daubin, "The Battle of Happy Valley" AAR, T. A. Seely, includes OH w/ J. K. Waters, Dec. 29, 1942, NARA RG 337, Observer Reports, #46, box 52; Rame, 120 (*"swallows diving"*); Fergusson, 96 (*"Like all things German"*); Charles W. Eineichner, ASEQ, Rangers, MHI (*"any weapon we had"*); "Lessons of the Tunisian Campaign, 1942–3, British Forces," n.d., NARA RG 492, MTOUSA, box 56.

On the rare occasions: Tank Destroyer Forces World War II, 22; Howe, *Battle History of the 1st Armored Division,* 69; Rame, 138; Robert S. Cameron, "Americanizing the Tank," diss, Temple Univ., 1994, 772 (*any airborne object*); Robert A. Brand, ASEQ, 16th Inf, MHI; Relman Morin, *Dwight D. Eisenhower: A Gauge of Greatness,* 81 (*"WEFT"*).

Despite such demoralizing episodes: H. B. Latham to G. F. Howe, June 13, 1950, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 228; AAR, T. A. Seely, NARA RG 337, Observer Reports, #46, box 52.

Before dawn on November 26: NWAf, 300–301; author visit, Apr. 2000; Howe, *Battle History of the 1st Armored Division*, 68; Daubin, 1–29; Waters, SOOHP, 611 (*"a beautiful column"*).

The approaching Mk IV: ffrench Blake, *A History of the 17th/21st Lancers, 1922–1959*, 97; Belton Y. Cooper, *Death Traps*, 25.

From the ridge: Daubin, 1–29 (*"long searing tongues"*); minutes, "Meeting of the Subcommittee on Armored Vehicles of the National Research Council," June 1943, 9; John Ellis, *On the Front Lines*, 153 (*"like a finger"*).

Wreathed in gray smoke: Messenger, 21 (*"snapped like a cap pistol"* and *"power-driven grindstone"*); Daubin, 1–29.

"Our losses,": Kriegstagebuch, Nov. 26, 1942, Div. Lederer, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 225.

"The Americans had done well": ffrench Blake, 97.

Ten miles south: Parris and Russell, 223–24 (*eggs and a beefsteak*); Middleton, 209 (*"dusty and empty"*).

Tucked into an oxbow: author visit, Apr. 2000; Blaxland, 111; Robinett, *Armor Command*, 75 (*"haunting memory"*).

The Surreys were spread: Jordan, 237 (*twelve hours*); Daniell, *History of the East Surrey Regiment*, vol. IV, 153–57; Lowell Bennett, 212–15; Ford, 27–28 (*"My good man"*); Middleton, 215 (*"We'll be in Tunis"*); war diary, XC Panzer Corps, Nov. 27, 1942, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 225.

There was not a moment: Gardiner, ts, 1970, USMA Arch, 84–86; Gerald Linderman, *The World Within War*, 58; *Destruction*, 177.

For two miles: Gordon A. Baker, *Iron Knights: The United States 66th Armored Regiment*, 136 (*"looked like a damned cathedral"*); Gardiner, "We Fought at Kasserine," *Armored Cavalry Journal*, March/Apr. 1948, 8.

Perfectly camouflaged: Gardiner, ts, USMA Arch, 84–86 (*"horribly wounded"*); Jervois, 119–22; Howe, *Battle History of the 1st Armored Division*, 72–73 (*"fought in each other's presence"*); Robinett, *Armor Command*, 75–76; AAR, n.d., PMD, LOC, box 6; Linderman, 25 (*"burns like twenty haystacks"*); Lowell Bennett, 298 (*"As soon as I get well"*).

British soldiers, stone deaf: Middleton, 209–10 (*"When they reached"* and *"sixpence for a Spitfire"*); ffrench Blake, 98; Jordan, 65 (*"a pack of lies"*); Rame, 141 (*"The dead salute"*).

Toward midnight: Jervois, 121 (*recognized as witless*); *Destruction*, 177.

Regrettably, this decision: AAR, 5th FA Bn, Nov. 13, 1942–Jan. 18, 1943, and 5th FA Bn journal and operations report, Nov. 20, 1942–March 1, 1943, and letter, R. N. Tyson to Clift Andrus, Dec. 3, 1942, all in NARA RG 407, E 427, box 5879; Robinett, *Armor Command*, 71 (*"looked like street lights"*); Frelinghuysen, 27–38 (*"Frederic Remington painting"*); 10th Panzer Div., intel report, Dec. 17, 1942, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 227.

Dawn on November 29: Jervois, 122; Middleton, 211 (*"Drag ass"*); Frelinghuysen, 41–45 (*"People who fight a war"*).

The southern prong: Malcolm, 89–91 (*"no more menacing"*); author visit, Apr. 2000; Ray, 14–15; Austin, 19, 35.

Both presumptions: Carell, 313 (*"a Tunisian Verdun"*); Jean-Yves Nasse, *Green Devils: German Paratroops, 1939–1945*, 72–74; James E. Mrazek, *The Fall of Eben Emael*, 180–91.

The Argylls stopped: Malcolm, 91–95 (*"Look, George"* and *"If only I had"*); *Kriegstagebuch*, Nov. 28, 1942, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 225; Lucas, *Panzer Army Africa*, 147; *NWAf*, 308n; Ford, 22; Richard Doherty, *Only the Enemy in Front*, 7, 35; Blaxland, 117 (*"gaunt and gangling figure"*).

The commandos departed: Jack A. Marshall, ASEQ, 34th Div, 168th Inf, "The Battle That Wasn't," ts, n.d., MHI; Jack A. Marshall, "Tales of a Timid Commando," ts, n.d., author's possession (*"a tall, Dracula-like figure"*); AAR, 1st Commando troops, n.d., C. W. Allfrey Collection, LHC, 3/5/3; Jordan, 88–93; "British Commandos," Aug. 1942, Military Intelligence Service, WD, 7; Fussell, *Wartime*, 284 (*"Never give the enemy"*); H. Marshall, *Over to Tunis*, 82 (*"ant in a hairbrush"*); Lowell Bennett, 99; *Kriegstagebuch*, Div von Broich, Dec. 1, 1942, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 225 (*"decimated in a short fire fight"*); Coon, *A North Africa Story*, 68 (*"tall, Dracula-like figure"*); Hougen, *The Story of the Famous 34th Infantry Division.*

Five hundred and thirty: AAR, "Report by Lt. Col. J. D. Frost, MC," 2nd Bn, the Parachute Regiment, n.d., PRO, WO 175/56; John Frost, *Nearly There*, 1; Frost, *A Drop Too Many*, 74 (*"We were not"*); Robert Peatling, *Without Tradition: 2 Para, 1941–1945*, 73–87 (*"traveling circus"* and *"a medieval look"*); Warren, 17; Saunders, 93–99; Tugwell, 144.

At five P.M. *the 180 men: Destruction*, 177n; *NWAf*, 309; Rame, 179 (*"Dr. Livingston"*); *AAFinWWII*, 87.

"Jerry Is Counterattacking!"

In late November: chronology, Chandler, vol. v, 99; *Three Years*, 204–208 (*"Boy Scout trip"*).

the shocking news: Auphan and Moral, 255–66 (*"Scuttle!"*); Cunningham, 158, 255–65; Jean-Paul Pallud, "The French Navy at Toulon," *After the Battle*, 1992, 1 (*"The ship is sunk!"*); De Gaulle, *Memoirs*, 359; Boatner, 301; *Three Years*, 203–204.

Of greater concern: DDE to GCM, Nov. 30, 1942, Chandler, 700 (*"apparently imbued"*); Clark, *Calculated Risk*, 134 (*"the Anderson setup"*); Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, 48 (*"nothing is more difficult"*).

Some things about the war: Hinsley, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, vol. II, 487 (*exceeded 850*), 491; DDE to GCM, Nov. 30, 1942, Chandler, 779; *Three Years*, 208; Abbott, 64 (*"There'll be Stukas"*).

To Eisenhower's surprise: Huston, 478 (*U.S. Army doctrine* and *Regulations had prohibited*); Chandler, 968n (*until 1941*); Dickson, "G-2 Journal: Algiers to the Elbe," MHI, 44 (*"only way to hurt a Kraut"*); *NWAf*, 480 (*"Purple Heart box"*); Linderman, 25 (*Ronsons*); Cameron, "Americanizing the Tank," 764; Jensen, 60 (*"light every time"*); Robinett, *Armor Command*, 157 (*"rat racing"*).

"My immediate aim": DDE to GCM, Nov. 30, 1942, Chandler, 779.

Even as this pretty delusion: Ulrich Bürker, "Einsatz der 10. Panzer Division in Tunisien," Dec. 1947, FMS, #D-310, MHI, 15; Boog et al., 805 (*"definite change"* and *"play for time"*); *NWAf*, 310; Lucas, 151; Ralph Bennett, 194; Heinz Pomtow, "The Campaign in Tunisia," FMS, #3-A, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 225; 10th Panzer Div, "Combat Report of the Tébourba Engagement, 1–4 December 1942," n.d., PMR, LOC Ms Div box 4; Kühn, *German Paratroops in World War II*, 174 (*only thirty German*).

From decrypted German messages: Hinsley, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, vol.

II, 504 (*"special priority signal"*); Ford, 31 (*"All around us"*); Rame, 164–65 (*"incandescent, enormous"*). Rame was the nom de plume of A. D. Divine.

Fischer's tanks had closed: war diary, Blade Force, Dec. 1–2, 1942, PRO, WO 175/179; "At the Front in North Africa with the U.S. Army," NARA RG 111, Office of the Chief Signal Officer, No. 1001, Dec. 1942; AAR, 78th Div, Dec. 2, 1942, PRO, WO 175/168.

Two German infantry groups: 10th Panzer Div., "Combat Report of the Tébourba Engagement, 1–4 December 1942" (*"Not the slightest interest"*); *NWAf,* 315–16 (*the Americans retreated*); R. N. Tyson to Clift Andrus, Dec. 3, 1942, NARA RG 407, E 427, box 5879.

They came running: Moorehead, 90 (*"Keep clear"*); Nicholson and Forbes, 263 (*"Thank God"*).

The CCB commander: "Register of Graduates," class of 1913, USMA, 1989 ed.; Robinett, *Armor Command,* 87; Rame, 153.

Robinett was delighted: "Comments on *Kasserine Pass,"* PMR, MHI, 4 (*"Always do whatever"*), 12; Martin M. Philipsborn, Jr., Papers, MHI; Abbott, 51; Robinett, *Armor Command,* 77–80; Robinett biographical sketch, 1945, CMH; McCurtain Scott, OH, March 1976, Russell Gugeler, OW, MHI (*"fussy"*); "Personal Diary of Lt. Gen. C. W. Allfrey, the Tunisian Campaign," Feb. 15, 1943, LHC (*"all talk and grouse"*).

Robinett arrived: corr, Philip G. Walker to PMR, Aug. 9, 1950, PMR, LOC, box 4 (*bitter objections* and *"appeared to be watching"*); *NWAf,* 317; 10th Panzer Div., "Combat Report of the Tébourba Engagement, 1–4 December 1942" Abbott, 51 (*"demoralizers"*); Jordan, 96 (*"The most intrepid chaps"*); Oliver, "In the Mud and Blood of Tunisia," 11 (*"The boys stuck"*).

Now the noose: Howe, *Battle History of the 1st Armored Division,* 78; Robinett, *Armor Command,* 80–82; Nehring, "The First Phase of the Battle in Tunisia," 1947, FMS #D-147, MHI, 37; Rame, 169; Linderman, 254 (*"hammers of the devil"*).

Robinett had seen: PMR, "The Axis Offensive in Central Tunisia, Feb. 1943," n.d., PMR, LOC; Robinett, *Armor Command,* 77.

General Fischer himself: 10th Panzer Div., "Combat Report of the Tébourba Engagement, 1–4 December 1942."

Fischer also deployed: Nehring, FMS #D-147, 27 (*"decisive"*), 37; Egon Kleine and Volkmar Kühn, *Tiger: The History of a Legendary Weapon, 1942–1945,* 8; Kühn, *Rommel in the Desert,* 178.

From a range: AAR, 2nd Hampshires, Dec. 31, 1942, 78th Div. appendix, PRO, WO 175/168; Daniell, *The Royal Hampshire Regiment,* vol. III, 91–98; Bryan Perrett, *Against All Odds,* 153 (*"The situation"*).

If Wednesday: M. J. Barton, "The Hampshire Regiment at Tébourba, 1942," *Army Quarterly and Defence Journal,* Apr. 1944, 57–63; 10th Panzer Div, "Combat Report of the Tébourba Engagement, 1–4 December 1942" (*"Indications are"*); Blaxland, 126 (*"It was Dunkirk"*).

"Commander is dissatisfied": First Army, command post files, n.d., PRO, WO 175/56.

Too late: situation report to K.A.N. Anderson, Dec. 4, 1942, First Army, PRO, WO 175/50; K.A.N. Anderson, "Operations in North West Africa," *London Gazette,* 1946; Jordan, 75 (*"Bollocks!"*); Messenger, 24 (*"Looking back"*).

At noon: 10th Panzer, "Combat Report," Dec. 4, 1942; AAR, Philip G. Walker to PMR, Aug. 9, 1950, PMR, LOC, box 4 (*"But for occasional curses"*); Daniell, *The Royal Hampshire Regiment,* 98; Jordan, 76 (*"One night in Glasgow"*).

At a field hospital: ffrench Blake, 102; Gardiner, ts, USMA Arch, 95 (*"illuminated by*

candlelight").

Several miles to the east: Moynihan, ed., 67 (*"with delicate respect"*).

The East Surreys had departed: Daniell, *History of the East Surrey Regiment,* 157; Daniell, *The Royal Hampshire Regiment,* 91; *NWAf,* 320n; Nehring, 37; 10th Panzer, "Combat Report," Dec. 4, 1942; Jordan, 69 (*"There is an air"*).

"The coordination of tank attacks": PMR to GCM, Dec. 8, 1942, NARA RG 165, E 13, box 106; Robinett, *Armor Command,* 85 (*"had not foreseen"*).

"My dear C-in-C": Anderson to DDE, Dec. 5, 1942, DDE Lib, PP-pres, box 5.

"There was abroad": ibid; Anderson, "Operations in North West Africa" Anderson to DDE, n.d., PRO, WO 175/50 (*"enemy has already"*); Anderson to DDE, Dec. 6, 1942, PRO, WO 175/50 (*"wheezy French lorries"*).

Fischer and his 10th Panzer Division: CCB Operations Report, Dec. 6, 1942, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 229; corr, W. B. Kern to PMR, "Account of the Battle Between U.S. and German Forces near El Bathan," Apr. 25, 1950, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 229 (*a single man*); Robinett, *Armor Command,* 88–91 (*terrified .50-caliber gunner*).

As the battalion commander: 27th Armored FA Bn, "Battalion History," n.d., PMR Papers, GCM Lib, box 12 (*"For Christ's sake"*); Howe, *Battle History of the 1st Armored Division,* 85; *NWAf,* 328.

Help had been ordered: Erbes, "Hell on Wheels Surgeon," 31 (*"charge up the valley"*); AAR, Philip G. Walker, n.d., PMR, LOC, box 4 (*"Shells were cutting"*); CCB Operations Report, Dec. 6, 1942; Howe, *Battle History of the 1st Armored Division,* 87; Robinett, *Armor Command,* 93.

Rain began: Martin Philipsborn, "Intelligence Report for Period 1 Dec. to 11 Dec. 1942," CCB, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 229 (*"total effect was in fact terrifying"*).

Latrine rumors: Lowell Bennett, 205 (*poison gas*), 132 (*"Beware"*); Daniell, *History of the East Surrey Regiment,* vol. IV, 157; E.W.C. Flavell, "Operations of 1st Bn., Parachute Regiment," Dec. 7 and 10, 1942, C. W. Allfrey Collection, LHC, 3/4; Butcher diary, DDE Lib, A-100 (*burned an entire Arab village*); Rame, 146 (*"like an escaping murderer"*); T. J. Camp, ed., "Tankers in Tunisia," 34; AAR, 2nd Bn, 13th AR, n.d., PMR, LOC, box 6; letter, Thomas Riggs to parents, June 25, 1943, PMR, LOC, box 4 (*like repelled like*); Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory,* 124 (*a potential reliquary*).

"In an attack": Fuller quoted in S.L.A. Marshall, *Men Against Fire,* 71; asst. G-3 inspection report to AFHQ, n.d., NARA AFHQ micro, R 5-C; First Army to AFHQ, Dec. 8–9, 1942, AFHQ micro, R 5-C (*"Reason is"*).

Even before Eisenhower's reply: Juin, OH, Dec. 5, 1948, SM, MHI (*Juin stalked off*); Louis Koeltz, *Une Campagne Que Nous Avons Gagnée Tunisie,* 83–84.

Omens and auguries: "Operations Report," CCB, Dec. 10, 1942, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 229; Howe, *Battle History of the 1st Armored Division,* 91.

At eight A.M.*:* Nicholson and Forbes, *265 (*"Tank Boche!"); Robinett, *Armor Command,* 96–100.

Holding a poor map: W. H. Hatcher to PMR, Oct. 13, 1949, PMR, LOC, box 4 (*futile effort to blind*); AAR, 10th Panzer, "The Tank Battle of Cactus Hill in the Area to the Southwest of Tébourba," PMR, LOC, box 4; Robinett, *Armor Command,* 100–104 (*"ground was alive"* and *"You have ruined me!"*).

He had indeed: AAR, G. E. Lynch, March 5, 1943, NARA RG 337, Observer Reports, box 52, #21;

"From Beer Beach to Kasserine Pass: The Story of the 175th Field Artillery Battalion," NARA RG 407, E 427, box 9542; AAR, J. Wedderburn Maxwell, 78th (U.K.) Div, in 175th FA Bn, War Diary, NARA RG 407, E 427, box 9542; *NWAf*, 332; Robinett, *Armor Command*, 104 (*"new terrors into the minds"*); Howe, *Battle History of the 1st Armored Division*, 92 (*reasoned pleas*); Rame, 197–98 (*"Turn the column"* and *stuffed bedrolls*).

At 1:30 A.M.: Oliver, "In the Mud and Blood of Tunisia," 11 (*"I never felt so bad"*); James Scott Stapel, ts, 1988, ASEQ, 1st AD (*thermite grenades*); Butcher diary, DDE Lib, A-85, A-93 (*Eisenhower also considered*); Gugeler, ts, OW, MHI, x-39; Mayo, 121; *NWAf*, 332; Anderson, "Operations in North West Africa" (*"crippling loss"*); Robinett, *Armor Command*, 109; AAR, "Operations of Company C, 701st TD Battalion, 3 Oct. 1942 to 24 Jan. 1943," NARA RG 407, E 427, box 23699; DDE to K.A.N. Anderson, Dec. 14, 1942, Chandler, 841 (*no longer combat worthy*).

"The faults were clear": Rame, 202.

Other deficiencies: Robinett, *Armor Command*, 109; GSP to GCM, Dec. 21, 1942, NARA RG 165, E 13, chief of staff classified correspondence, box 106 (*live goats*); Howe, *Battle History of the 1st Armored Division*, 95 (*training ammunition*); *NWAf*, 332n.

"We are having our troubles": Robert H. Ferrell, ed., *The Eisenhower Diaries*, 83.

CHAPTER 6: A COUNTRY OF DEFILES
Longstop

For eleven days: Johnson, *One More Hill*, 25; Jack Belden, *Still Time to Die*, 219 (*"standing on a window ledge"*); Nicholson and Forbes, 266, 271 ("Fabriqué à Paris!" and *"family of Arabs living"*); Parris and Russell, 249 (*"one bloody great mine"*).

By December, 180,000 American troops: Matloff, 52; DDE memo, Dec. 15, 1942, Chandler, 842; Zanuck, 102, 117 (*pulverized dates*); L. Bennett, 237; letter, Harold Gottlieb, 32nd Bombardment Sq., in Annette Tapert, *Lines of Battle: Letters from American Servicemen, 1941–1945* (*"No shave, no bath"*); "Memorial Booklet, 2nd Lt. Robert Maurice Mullen, Co. A, 18th Inf., 1st Div.," MRC FDM, 1988.32, box 206 (*"Thanks for giving me"*); Robinett, *Armor Command*, 113 (*bathrobes*).

"There are none": quoted in Tobin, 80.

The lull allowed: Downing, *At War with the British*, 111, 135, 140 (*"old-fashioned workingmen"*); Donald McB. Curtis, *The Song of the Fighting First*, MRC FDM, 67 (*"We've eaten British compo"*).

Across the killing fields: Boog et al., 806; Samuel W. Mitcham, Jr., "Arnim," in Correlli Barnett, ed., *Hitler's Generals*, 335–41; *Destruction*, 187.

Defense meant fortifications: "French Policy Toward Arabs, Jews and Italians in Tunisia," OSS, Research and Analysis Branch, Dec. 1943, NARA RG 334, E 315, NWC Lib, box 895 (*"Equipped with tools"*); war crimes testimony, Heinz Schweiger, June 1945, NARA RG 153, JAG, file 3-32, box 2 (*Others were press-ganged*); war diary, V Corps, Dec. 27, 1942, and intel summary, early December, PRO, WO 175/82; "Information Gathered from the 20th to the 23rd December 1942," II Corps Miscellaneous Papers, n.d., NARA RG 407, E 427, box 3163; "18th Infantry, Draft Regimental Wartime History," Stanhope Mason Collection, MRC FDM, 22; Dorothy Stannard, *Tunisia*, 259.

"This means a most un-Christian Christmas": Anderson to DDE, Dec. 16, 1942, First Army files,

PRO, WO 175/50; also, NARA, AFHQ micro, R-188-D; Anderson to DDE, Dec. 15, 1942, Chandler, 841n; Anderson dispatch, "Operations in North West Africa."

Longstop offered: author visit, Apr. 2000; John Horsfall, *The Wild Geese Are Flighting*, 26 (*"so foul, broken, blasted"*); Ray, 35 (*"a country of defiles"*).

Had the British spent: AAR, 1st Guards Bde, Jan. 9, 1943, PRO, WO 175/86; *Destruction*, 188; Howard and Sparrow, 113; E. R. Hill, "The Coldstream at Longstop Hill," *Army Quarterly and Defence Journal*, July 1944, 175 (*"We failed to realize"*).

As required by the unwritten rules: Hill, "The Coldstream at Longstop Hill" AAR, 1st Guards Bde, Jan. 9, 1943, PRO, WO 175/86; Middleton, 232 (*Muzzle flashes reddened*); *NWAf*, 339–41; Perrett, *At All Costs*, 156; Messenger, 28–29; Horsfall, 153; AAR, 2nd Coldstream Guards, Dec. 23–25, 1942, PRO, WO 175/487.

An hour passed: S-1 journal, 1/18th Inf., Dec. 22–25, 1942 (*"Brooklyn"*), and 1st Guards Bde, Operations Order No. 1, Dec. 22, 1942, NARA RG 407, E 427, box 5351; Saunders, 111 (*"Blackpool beach"*); "Report of Longstop Hill Engagement, Tunisia," 18th Inf, March 20, 1943, NARA RG 407, E 427, box 5936.

The relief in combat: NWAf, 341–43; AAR, 1st Guards Bde, Jan. 9, 1943, PRO, WO 175/186; Howard and Sparrow, 113 (*hiked in squelching boots*); Hill, "The Coldstream at Longstop Hill," 175; Rame, 207 (*"Good King Wenceslas"*).

Dawn on Longstop: Marshall, ed., *Proud Americans of World War II*, 51–55 (*"They just appeared"*).

Along the hill crest: Austin, 127, 131 (*"like a boy"* and *"leaping with light"*); Ellis, *On the Front Lines*, 69; "18th Infantry, Draft Regimental Wartime History," Stanhope Mason Collection, MRC FDM, 21 (*"mud would foul your rifle"*).

Pinned in a cactus: Porter, SOOHP, 259; Linderman, 243 (*"white chrysanthemum"*); Marshall, ed., *Proud Americans*, 55.

The Coldstreams had just finished: AAR, 1st Guards Bde, Jan. 9, 1943; PRO, WO 175/186; "Report of Longstop Hill Engagement, Tunisia," 18th Inf, March 20, 1943, NARA RG 407, E 427, box 5936; Ray, 29; Ellis, 98 (*"bored indifference"*), 71 (*"the release of fear"*); Moynihan, ed., 67 (*some already green*); Nicholson and Forbes, 269 (*even for mules*); Messenger, 29 (*bogged down 5,000 yards*); Hill, "The Coldstream at Longstop Hill," 175.

A lull persisted: Parris and Russell, 256 (*"guns flashed"*).

From that pinnacle: AAR, V Corps, Dec. 24, 1942, PRO, WO 175/82 (*"in our possession"*); Hill, "The Coldstream at Longstop Hill," 175; *NWAf*, 342 (*"never been appreciated"*).

The rain slowed: Marshall, ed., *Proud Americans*, 55 (*"Get this man out!"* and *handing out razor blades*); D'Arcy-Dawson, 52; Edward A. Raymond, "Long Toms in Action," *Field Artillery Journal*, Nov. 1943, 803 (*"Muddy Christmas"*).

Eisenhower had yet: Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Soldier, General of the Army, President-Elect, 1890–1952*, 215; chronology, Chandler, vol. V, 102; United Press article, Feb. 27, 1943, James R. Webb Collection, DDE Lib; DDE to Ira C. Eaker, Dec. 6, 1942, Chandler, 808 (*wicked dagger*); Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, 124; McKeough and Lockridge, 85.

He suspected: Three Years, 210; CCS to DDE, Chandler, vol. II, 793n (*"Losses in"*); DDE to Churchill, Dec. 5, 1942, Chandler, 802 (*"this battle"*); DDE to T. T. Handy, Dec. 7, 1942, Chandler, 811 (*"every recognized"*); Butcher diary, DDE Lib, A-96 (*"Engage and wear"*); Foote, *The Civil War*,

vol. 3, 739 (*Grant's casualties*).

"Through all this": memo, DDE, Dec. 10, 1942, Chandler, 824.

Shortly after noon: Baedeker, 301; Rame, 102 (*"cubes of frozen moonlight"*); Raff, 60; Powell, *In Barbary,* 252.

Even as they neared: NWAf, 337; Butcher diary, A-99; DDE, "Commander-in-Chief's Dispatch, North African Campaign," 22 (*all rail loadings*); "History of Planning Division, ASF," ts, 1946, CMH, 3-2.2; Kreidberg and Henry, 649 (*twice as many*); *Destruction,* 385; Harry L. Coles and Albert K. Weinberg, *Civil Affairs: Soldiers Become Governors,* 51 (*"Stop sending stockings"*); GCM to DDE, Dec. 23, 1942, NARA, AFHQ micro, R-49-M, Supreme Allied Commander's Secretariat (*"Do* not *discuss"*).

Increasingly, the strain showed: John S. D. Eisenhower, *Allies,* 210; *Three Years,* 218 (*"a caged tiger"*); GCM to Elmer Davis, Dec. 13, 1942, NARA RG 165, E 13, OCS correspondence, box 106 (*"I am very"*); GCM to John Dill, Dec. 5, 1942, Chandler, 793n (*Privately the chief*); William D. Hassett, *Off the Record with F.D.R.,* 145 (*"Why are they so slow?"*).

The strain on Eisenhower: Three Years, 212 (*"Those are your troubles"*); Howze, *A Cavalryman's Story,* 52 (*"Tell everybody here"*); Butcher diary, Nov. 27, 1942, DDE Lib, A-99 (*"Damned if I'm not"*), A-106;

Following an overnight stop: Robinett, *Armor Command,* 113 (*"greatly depressed"*); *Three Years,* 227–228 (*"ordered trials"* and *offered to resign*); Butcher diary, A-112; First Army log, Dec. 24, 1942, PRO, WO 175/50 (*"Decision was made"* and *"Due to continual rain"*).

"They Shot the Little Son of a Bitch"

Algiers on Christmas Eve: Renée Gosset, *Conspiracy in Algiers,* 130; Mario Faivre, *We Killed Darlan,* 122; Tompkins, 185 (*Mousse d'Islam*); Parris and Russell, 193; Robert M. Marsh, ASEQ, 81st Reconn., 1st AD, 1989, MHI; A.A.C.W. Brown, "364 Days Overseas Service," 1981, IWM, 81/33/1; R. Priestly, 2nd Bn, Para Regt, ts, IWM, 83/24/1; Paul K. Skogsberg, "The North African Campaigns," ASEQ, ts, n.d., 1st Reconn. Troop, 1st ID, 25; Fussell, *Wartime,* 186 (*"White Mistress"*).

Morale officers: "History of Special Service Section," II Corps, n.d., NARA RG 407, E 427, box 3236 (*"extremely bad discipline"* and *"at high tension"*); Gale A. Mathers, "The Special Service Office in the European Theater," Aug. 30, 1943, NARA RG 407, E 427, box 3236 (*"I have seen cases"*); Crawford, 172.

The Little Fellow: Howard and Sparrow, 109; MacVane, *On the Air in World War II,* 143 (*"His small blue eyes"*); Clark, *Calculated Risk,* 128; MWC, SOOHP, Forest S. Rittgers, Jr., 1972–73, MHI (*"You know, the Little Fellow"*); Murphy, 143 (*"There are four plots"*).

One would suffice: Tompkins, 185–87; Gosset, 130; Faivre, 125–26; Murphy msg to State Dept., Dec. 24, 1942, NARA, AFHQ micro, R-226-B; Ambrose, *Ike's Spies,* 49–50; Anthony Verrier, *Assassination in Algiers,* 226.

Half a mile away: MWC, SOOHP, MHI (*"They shot"*).

A voluble mob: Murphy, 143; Clark, *Calculated Risk,* 128–30 (*"a troublesome boil"*); Boatner, 119; William H. Lee, memo, AFHQ, Dec. 24, 1942, OW, MHI; Marsh, ASEQ; MacVane, *Journey into War,* 134; MacVane, *On the Air in World War II,* 157 (*"never seen happier faces"*).

Eisenhower had insisted: "Tactical Communications in World War II," part 1, *Signal Communication*

in the North African Campaign, 1945, Historical Section, Office of the Chief Signal Officer, MHI, 92 (*he remained beyond reach*); First Army log, Dec. 24, 1942, PRO, WO 175/50 (*"most serious thing"*); Juin, OH, Dec. 5, 1948, SM, MHI; Anderson to Brooke, Dec. 25, 1942, PRO, WO 175/56; "Record of Events and Documents from the Date That Lieutenant General Mark W. Clark Entered into Negotiations with Admiral Jean Francois Darlan Until Darlan Was Assassinated," Feb. 22, 1943, NARA RG 338, Fifth Army, box 1 (*"Have just returned"*); Davis, *Dwight D. Eisenhower: Soldier of Democracy,* 401; *Three Years,* 229 (*ended one problem*).

Badly reduced: Rudolf Lang, "Battles of Kampfgruppe Lang in Tunisia," 1947, FMS, #D-173, MHI.

More than a hundred: AAR, 1st Guards Bde, Jan. 9, 1943, PRO, WO 175/186; "Report of Longstop Hill Engagement, Tunisia," 18th Inf, March 20, 1943, NARA RG 407, E 427, box 5936; Howard and Sparrow, 116; "18th Infantry, Draft Regimental Wartime History," MRC FDM, 24; Marshall, ed., *Proud Americans,* 55 (*"We will fight to the last"*).

The right flank: Linderman, 284 (*"sick kittens"*); Nicholson and Forbes, 269 (*"a few scraggy chickens"*).

Word soon circulated: NWAf, 343; Hill, "The Coldstream at Longstop Hill," 175; Downing, 145.

Longstop belonged to the Germans: Arnim, "Recollections of Tunisia," FMS #C-098, MHI; Operations Bulletin No. 2, May 31, 1943, HQ, NW African Air Forces, NARA RG 334, NWC Lib, box 132 (*4,000-pound bomb*).

Of the Tommies and Yanks: Intel. Summary No. 89, 1st Guards Bde, May 15, 1943, PRO, WO 175/186 (*oddly unmolested*); Nicholson and Forbes, 271 (*"a cheese-grater"*); William G. Chamberlin, ASEQ, 32nd FA Bn, 1st ID, n.d.; Johnson, *One More Hill*, 27–28 (*"Objective lost"*).

"This Is the Hand of God"

For a man: McKeough and Lockridge, 63; DDE to Berthe Darlan, Dec. 25, 1942, Chandler, 861 (*"You have"*); Morgan, 98, 101 (*"God rest ye merry"*).

The investigation: MacVane, *On the Air in World War II,* 158; Moorehead, *The End in Africa,* 58; Faivre, 131 (*"I have brought to justice"*); Tompkins, 195–97 (*coffin*); Verrier, 249 (*"surprised to be shot"*).

As his assassin: "Darlan funeral," Signal Corps, 35mm, B&W, NARA, ADC 1002; Curt Riess, ed., *They Were There,* 530 (*"Not a tear"*); Butcher diary, DDE Lib, A-121; Tompkins, 191 (*bared halberds*).

As the funeral: United Press account, *New York Times,* Dec. 27, 1942; *New York Times,* Dec. 28, 1942; "Funeral for Admiral Darlan—Record of Events," Dec. 26, 1942, NARA, AFHQ micro, R-204-F (*"all sidearms"*).

The requiem mass: Cunningham, OH, Feb. 12, 1947, Forrest C. Pogue, MHI (*"Go ahead"*).

It was over: "Darlan funeral," Signal Corps, 35mm, B&W, NARA, ADC 1002; "Funeral for Admiral Darlan—Record of Events," Dec. 26, 1942, NARA, AFHQ micro, R-204-F (*"the following errors"*).

The procession wound: Gosset, 130; De Gaulle, *Memoirs,* 381 (*"the long disease"*); Macmillan, *The Blast of War,* 167 (*"Once bought"*); Hunt, 153 (*"fell like a stone"*).

Finger-pointing: Fergusson, 148 (*"a cup of tea"*); *Three Years,* 239 (*"Is there anyone here"*); Jordan, 139 (*"Arab"*); D'Este, *Bitter Victory,* 55 (*"You will find the Americans"*).

Yet a harsher: Larrabee, 436 (*"our Italians"*); Alexander G. Clifford, *The Conquest of North Africa, 1940–1943,* 405 (*"gifted amateurs"*); W.R.C. Penney, ts, n.d., LHC (*"crashing bores"*); Fergusson, 148 (*"The British cope"*).

"The plain facts": AAR, 1st Guards Bde, Jan. 9, 1943, PRO, WO 175/86.

To Major General Terry Allen: Dixon, "Terry Allen," 57 (*"Please always remember"*); GCM to TdA, July 30, 1942, GCM Lib, Pentagon correspondence, box 56, folder 17; Baumer, 68, 117 (*"all that stuff"*); Pyle, *Here Is Your War,* 187 (*"like vermin"*).

Yet as the weeks: Dixon, "Terry Allen," 57; Steven Clay, *Blood and Sacrifice: The History of the 16th Infantry Regiment,* 27 (read in mss); Curtis, 42; Liebling, "Find 'Em, Fix 'Em, and Fight 'Em," 221 (*"like whiskey"*); Pyle, *Here Is Your War,* 188 (*"Is this a private war"*); Robert W. Porter, SOOHP, John N. Sloan, 1981, MHI, 260; S.L.A. Marshall, *Men Against Fire,* 161 (*"A man fights"*).

The last straw: Porter, SOOHP, 259–60 (*"I can't understand"*); "Terry Allen and the First Division," MHI; D'Este, *Bitter Victory,* 274.

good men dared: Sherwood, xvii.

The bottom of the year: DDE to CCS, Dec. 26, 1942, Chandler, 868 (*"severest disappointment"*); "directive for commander-in-chief, Allied Expeditionary Force," Aug. 13, 1942, NARA RG 218, JCS records, box 325.

An enormous siege: Bennett, *Ultra and Mediterranean Strategy,* 196; Ellis, *On the Front Lines,* 36; "Commander-in-Chief's Dispatch, North African Campaign, 1942–1943," 51. (Eisenhower came to believe that quick victory in Tunisia would have put Allied troops in the Po River Valley in northern Italy by winter 1943.)

For now, there were deficiencies: Allerton Cushman, AGF Observer Report, March 29, 1943, NARA RG 165, E 418, Director of Plans and Ops, box 1228 (*"The German army"*); Stanley J. Grogan, "Memorandum for Mr. McCloy," n.d., NARA RG 165, E 418, box 1228 (*"More than discipline"*); John P. Lucas, Observer Report, Apr. 28, 1943, NARA RG 165, E 13, OCS classified general correspondence, box 106 (*"not leading their men well"*).

They had seen things: Marshall, "The Battle That Wasn't," ASEQ, 34th Inf Div, MHI (*"cracked porcelain surface"*); Michael D. Doubler, *Closing with the Enemy,* 253, 293; Linderman, 212 (*"questers"*); John C. McManus, *The Deadly Brotherhood: The American Combat Soldier in World War II,* 282 (*"Twins, we feel"*).

"Things have not gone well": Anderson to Brooke, Dec. 25, 1942, PRO, WO 175/56.

CHAPTER 7: CASABLANCA

The Ice-Cream Front

At 10:30 P.M.: "President's Trip to Casablanca," Guy H. Spaman to Frank J. Wilson, June 26, 1945, FDR Lib, Secret Service records, box 4; George E. Durno, "Flight to Africa: A Chronicle of the Casablanca Conference Between President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill," n.d., FDR Lib, 200-2-U; Hassett, 127, 142, 146; Leahy, 143; Raymond W. Copson, "Summit at Casablanca," *American History,* Apr. 2002, 60.

With a steamy sigh: Seale, vol. II; Michael F. Reilly, *Reilly of the White House,* 136–47; Goodwin, 366; Sherwood, 665.

A kind of Roman camp: AAR, 1st Armored Signal Batt, Sept 18, 1943, NARA RG 165, director for plans and ops, corr, box 1230; Wordell and Seiler, 281.

Fragrant with begonias: Reilly, 150; Austin, 71; Durno, 63, 66, 68; msg to DDE, Jan. 10, 1943, NARA, AFHQ micro, "Casablanca Conference," R-49-M; Donald E. Houston, *Hell on Wheels: The 2nd Armored Division,* 143 (*"Hail to the Chief"*); Macmillan, *The Blast of War,* 194; memo, Arthur R. Wilson, Dec. 10, 1942, NARA RG 407, E 427, box 246 (*George Washington*).

Overseeing this feverish activity: Austin, 71 (*"Every other four-wheeler"*); Semmes, *Portrait of Patton,* 132; Patton, *War As I Knew It,* 35; Codman, 76 (*"absolutely steady"*); Crawford, *Report on North Africa,* 26 (*"the Ice-Cream Front"*).

Patton was miserable: Farago, 222 (*huge Packard*); A. G. Shepard, "Report on Operation TORCH," Commander in Chief, U.S. Atlantic Fleet, serial 0014, NARA RG 38, OCNO, box 3; Robinett, *Armor Command,* 110 (*"Where are the Germans"*); Blumenson, *Patton,* 174–75 (*"Top Dog"*); John Field, "Patton of the Armored Force," *Life,* Nov. 30, 1942, 113; Blumenson, *The Patton Papers, 1940–1945,* 163 (*"kill someone"*).

Patton discharged: Blumenson, *The Patton Papers, 1940–1945,* 175, 123, 150.

Arriving from London: Pendar, *Adventure in Diplomacy,* 140 (*"working up mud"*); Thomas B. Buell, *Master of Sea Power: A Biography of Fleet Admiral Ernest J. King,* 253; Pogue, *George C. Marshall: Organizer of Victory, 1943–1945,* 18 (*dire warnings*).

Churchill and his entourage: Lord Moran, *Churchill: Taken from the Diaries of Lord Moran,* 85 (*silk vest and nothing else*); Ismay, *Memoirs,* 284–85 (*"we were clever enough"*); Bryant, 434, 485; Kennedy, 280; W. Averell Harriman and Elie Abel, *Special Envoy to Churchill and Stalin, 1941–1946,* 180 (*"Any fool can see"*); Goodwin, 301 (*"big English bulldog"*).

"at the conference": Matloff and Snell, 379 (*"the British will have a plan"*); Roger Parkinson, *A Day's March Nearer Home,* 14; "The Reminiscences of Walter C. W. Ansel," 1972, USNI OHD, 3–124; Ian Jacob diary, quoted in Bryant, 540 (*"dark hole"*); Moran, 78 (*"the control of the Mediterranean"*); D'Este, *Bitter Victory: The Battle for Sicily,* 38 (*"dripping of water"*); Lord Tedder, *With Prejudice,* 390; Macmillan, *War Diaries: The Mediterranean, 1943–1945,* 8.

Speedy Valley

Operation SATIN envisioned: *The AAF in Northwest Africa,* 29; "Memorandum of Conference at Advanced Allied Force Headquarters," Jan. 21, 1943, NARA, AFHQ micro, R-187-D; *Three Years,* 236.

SATIN was bold: *NWAf*, 350; Roskill, 433 (*437,000 soldiers*); CCS msg, Jan. 1943, NARA RG 218, JCS records, box 325 (*"The Allied forces"*); "Diary Covering the Activities of General Fredendall and Supporting Players," Jan. 3, 1943, James R. Webb Collection, DDE Lib (*"II Corps is to be bait"*).

Eisenhower and his staff: memo, AFHQ G-4, Jan. 15, 1943, NARA, AFHQ micro, R-188-D (*"logistically out of hand"*); "Record of Conference Held by C-in-C Allied Force," Jan. 10, 1943, NARA, AFHQ micro, R-188-D (*"fatal to do nothing"*).

Eisenhower made several moves: "History of Allied Force Headquarters," 1945, MTOUSA Historical Section, NARA RG 407, E 427, 95ALI-0.1, boxes 142–43; Theodore J. Conway, SOOHP, Sept. 1977, Robert F. Ensslin, MHI; Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Soldier, General of the Army, President-Elect, 1890–1952*, 226; Akers, OH, July 27, 1949, SM, MHI; D. Clayton James, with Anne Sharp Wells, *A Time for Giants*, 153 (*"begged and pleaded"*); Butcher diary, DDE Lib, A-8 (*"Clark admitted"*), A-127 (*"Ike doesn't think Clark"*), A-157, A-194 (*"manure pile"* and *lectured him*); Danchev and Todman, eds., 356 (*"very ambitious and unscrupulous"*).

"I bless the day": DDE to GCM, Nov. 11, 1942, Chandler, 690.

At fifty-nine: "Outline History of II Corps," n.d., NARA RG 407, E 427, box 3112; Robert H. Berlin, *U.S. Army World War II Corps Commanders*, 5; *These Are the Generals*, 227 (*"very soldierly little fellow"*); Benjamin S. Persons, *Relieved of Command*, 27; "World War II Generals," 1945, WD, USMA Lib.

Thirty-five years later: letter, James Webb to family, Apr. 20, 1943, OW, MHI (*a conviction that neither*); Leland L. Rounds, OH, Oct. 21, 1948, SM, MHI; "Leland L. Rounds: His Tale, July 13, 1944," OSS files, NARA RG 226, E 99, box 39 (*"Lay off"*).

Orders issued from: Curtis, "The Song of the Fighting First," ts, 1988, MRC FDM, 56; Carter, "Carter's War," ts, n.d., CEOH, III-13.

Truscott found him: Kirkpatrick, "Orthodox Soldiers: Army Formal Schools Between the Two World Wars," 10; Truscott, *Command Missions*, 144 (*"outspoken in his opinions"*); Fredendall to LKT Jr., Jan. 22, 1943, 1050 hrs. and 1345 hrs., LKT Jr., GCM Lib, box 9, folder 5.

Fredendall also harbored: "Diary Covering the Activities of General Fredendall," Oct. 7, 1942, "Log of Our Transatlantic Flight," James R. Webb Collection, DDE Lib; James, *A Time for Giants*, 95 (*"Ike is the best"*); Dickson, "G-2 Journal," MHI, 35.

Lloyd Fredendall's chosen avenue: Rame, 214 (*Solomon the Eunuch*); Baedeker, 315; Miller, *Ike the Soldier*, 472; G-1 report, HQ II Corps, Feb. 14, 1943, NARA RG 492, MTOUSA, box 263; Carter, "Carter's War," III-13 (*"Fredendall's kindergarten"*); Dickson, "G-2 Journal," 37 (*"surrounded by children"*); "Diary Covering the Activities of General Fredendall," Jan. 25, 1943, James R. Webb Collection, DDE Lib (*"woods are stiff"*).

Tébessa's high plateau: "Diary Covering the Activities of General Fredendall," Jan. 8 (*"cold as a snake"*), Jan. 9 (*bulletproof Cadillac*), and Jan. 11 (*"Everyone is freezing"*), 1943, James R. Webb Collection, DDE Lib; Austin, 77 (*"lumber camp"*); Pyle, *Here Is Your War*, 301 (*in his canvas chair*).

Day and night: blueprint, 19th Engineer Regt, NARA RG 407, E 427, box 19248; "Historical Record of the 19th Engineer Regiment," Oct. 1942–Oct. 1943, NARA RG 407, box 19248; "II Corps Engineer Section Journal," Jan. 21–March 1943, NARA RG 407, E 427, box 3234; "Diary Covering the Activities of General Fredendall," Jan. 25, 1943, James R. Webb Collection, DDE Lib.

Some officers believed: Truscott, *Command Missions*, 146; MacVane, *Journey into War*, 195 (*"Some of ours"*); Waters, SOOHP, MHI, 175–76, 202 (*some questioned*); Carter, "Carter's War," CEOH, IV-15 (*"We had no proper"*).

Suspected Tunisian collaborators: "History of the 26th Infantry in the Present Struggle," MRC FDM, 5/19, 6/13; Raff, 194–95 (*"Of the thirty-nine"*).

Ted Roosevelt, who had been peeled: TR to Eleanor, Jan. 16 and Feb. 2, 1943, TR, LOC, box 9; Cameron, "Americanizing the Tank," 761; "Journal for the 3rd Battalion," 26th Infantry, Feb. 1943, MRC FDM (*"everything but the Rising Sun"*).

Among the most active: AAR, "Account of Carleton S. Coon," NARA RG 226, E 99, OSS, box 39, folders 8, 34, 39, 75, 85 (*"mule turds"*); Coon, *A North African Story*, 68 (*"rogues and cutthroats"*), 76 (*"one Arab and one cow"*), 79; George C. Chalou, ed., *The Secrets War: The Office of Strategic Services in World War II*, 20 (*"Bad-Eyes Brigade"*); *The Overseas Targets: War Report of the OSS*, vol. 2, 19–20 (*"This use of hostages"*); Brown, *The Last Hero: Wild Bill Donovan*, 266, 269 (*"Captain Retinitis"*).

"It is still": TR to Eleanor, Feb. 6, 1943, TR, LOC, box 9.

So were the tens: Pyle, "Our Soldiers in Tunisia Learn the Agony of War," ts, n.d., AAR, 26th Inf, NARA RG 407, E 427, box 5942; Mayo, 135; article, Gault MacGowan, *New York Sun*, Dec. 8, 1942 (*Army grub*); letter, Raymond Dreyer to family, March 10, 1943, MCC, YU (*Life Savers*); letter, Joseph T. Dawson to family, Apr. 26, 1943, Dawson Collection, MRC FDM (*"We often wonder"*); Abbott, 64 (*"Tunisian deer"*); Lawrence J. Starr, ASEQ, 135th Inf, 34th ID, MHI; Houston, 139; *History 67th Armored Regiment*, 71.

Dysentery, parasites: Wilson, "The Operations of the 509th Parachute Battalion in North Africa," 1948; Hamilton H. Howze, "The Battle of Sidi bou Zid," lecture, n.d., Cavalry School, MHI (*"Stuka time"*); D'Arcy-Dawson, 95 (*"Messerstorks"*); Ray, 34 (*250 Allied casualties*); Ford, 44 (*Evelegh ordered*); Austin, 77.

"Never out of artillery range": Lawrence J. Starr, ASEQ, 135th Inf, 34th ID, MHI (*"An old man at twenty"*); *Tank Destroyer Forces World War II*, 24; Liebling, 66 (*"old man with chilblains"*); Robinett, *Armor Command*, 139 (*"Lay it on them!"*); Abbott, 83 (*"Mother, please"*).

"I should have": diary, Nov. 10, 1942, OW, MHI; Robinett, *Armor Command*, 28 (*"I would either go"*).

Known as Dan: author interviews, Edith Ward Spalding, Oct. 2000, Robin Ward Yates, Sept. 2000, and John Ward Yates, August 2001; obituary, *Assembly*, March 1973; Gugeler, ts, n.d. (unpublished Ward biography), OW, MHI, I-11, III-1, V-4, VII-13, IX-4, IX-22; David A. Shugart, "On the Way: The U.S. Field Artillery in the Inter-War Period," paper, Apr. 2000, Society for Military History, 5; W. B. Smith to OW, July 1943, OW, MHI; OW to 8th AD cadre, March 3, 1942, OW, MHI.

Ward had two peculiarities: Gugeler, IX-16; diary, Nov. 8, 1942, Jan. 15, 20, 27, 1943, OW, MHI.

"The Touch of the World"

The Emperor of the West: logs, *FRUS*; Reilly, 152; Elliott Roosevelt, *As He Saw It*, 71 (*"Winnie is"*).

Preserving the status quo: Austin, 73 (*"Business: Chiefs of Staff"*); Sherwood, 676 (*"Ike seems jittery"*); Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, 133, 135; Frederick E. Morgan, OH, n.d., FCP, MHI (*how such a man*).

He spoke without notes: Chandler, 906n; *FRUS*, Jan. 15, 1943, 569 (*"might be a good division"*), 567 (*"At first operations"*).

Watching this performance: Bryant, 17, 552 (*"shooting his tongue"*); Boatner, 63; Danchev and

Todman, eds., xv (*"I flatly disagree"*); David Fraser, *Alanbrooke,* 92–93, 297; Kennedy, 291.

did not distract: Danchev and Todman, eds., 352 (*"ridiculous plan"*), 351 (*"Eisenhower as a general"*).

Now Brooke pounced: msg no. COS (W) 430, British chiefs of staff, Jan. 5, 1943, Watson Notes, GCM Lib; *FRUS*, 567, 574, 577; Bryant, 548; *NWAf*, 353; Hinsley, *British Intelligence in the Second World War,* vol. II, 579 (*Ultra decrypt today*).

Eisenhower tried to regroup: *FRUS,* 567–69 (*"any necessary adjustments"*); *Three Years,* 236 (*"Fredendall's plan"*); "Minutes of Meeting," CCS, Jan. 15, 1943, NARA RG 218, JCS records, box 195.

British and American chiefs: Kent Roberts Greenfield, *American Strategy in World War II: A Reconsideration,* 31; Howard, *Grand Strategy*, vol. IV, 245; Morison, *The Two-Ocean War,* 241; Behrens, 328; Francis Tuker, *Approach to Battle,* 319 (*It is axiomatic*).

No sooner had Eisenhower: *FRUS,* 539 (*"final victory"*); memo, British chiefs of staff, Jan. 2, 1943, NARA RG 165, E 422, box 54; "Minutes of Meeting," JCS, Jan. 16, 1943, 1700 hrs., NARA RG 218, box 169; Matloff, 24 (*Eisenhower's own planners*).

All of which argued: *FRUS,* 539, 570, 572, 573; Clark, *Calculated Risk*, 50 (*"Why stick your head"*); Leighton and Coakley, 673.

As Brooke had listened: Bryant, 545; Pogue, *George C. Marshall: Organizer of Victory, 1943–1945,* 7; Ernest J. King and Walter Muir Whitehill, *Fleet Admiral King,* 413 (*"old crustacean"*); Buell, xi, 11, 75 (*foghorn voice*), 78–79 (*bibulous and lecherous*); GCM, OH, Oct. 5, 1956, Forrest Pogue, GCM Lib (*"Albion perfidious"*); C. E. Lambe, OH, Feb. 26, 1947, FCP, MHI (*"his eye on the Pacific"*).

King threw a rock: "Minutes of Meeting," JCS, Jan. 16, 1943, 1700 hrs., NARA RG 218, box 169 (*"do not seem"*); *FRUS,* 547, 549; Mary H. Williams, ed., *Chronology, 1941–1945*, *USAWWII*, 81–97; Leighton and Coakley, 662, 663n (*only 15 percent*); Mansoor, *The GI Offensive in Europe,* 47–48 (*virtually all U.S. Marines*); Matloff and Snell, 157 (*at least three times*), 357–60.

No matter: *FRUS,* 553, 555; Albert C. Wedemeyer, *Wedemeyer Reports!*, 165 (*secretly tape-recorded*), 158; "Minutes of Meeting," JCS, Jan. 16, 1943, 0930 hrs., NARA RG 218, box 169 (*"If we subscribed"*).

Brooke recorded his assessment: Danchev and Todman, eds., 360.

Casablanca lay: Gugeler, ts, MHI, X-53 (*"too terrible"*); *Three Years,* 243 (*"neck is in a noose"*); Butcher diary, DDE Lib, A-176; Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe,* 136–37; Danchev and Todman, eds., 363 (*"deficient of experience"*); Sherwood, 689 (*"The President told General Marshall"*); D'Este, *Eisenhower: A Soldier's Life,* 623 (read in mss) (*"what I'm going to do with Tunisia"*); Roosevelt, *As He Saw It,* 79 (*"What's your guess?"*); Blumenson, *The Patton Papers, 1940–1945,* 154 (*"He thinks his thread"*).

Brooke's deputy: Kennedy, 273 (*"He is difficult enough"*); Codman, 76; Durno, 73 (*"You Are My Sunshine"*); Reilly, 155; Harmon, *Combat Commander,* 109 (*"Corporal of the guard!"*).

Mornings, he lounged: Sherwood, 688; Roosevelt, *As He Saw It*, 102; Macmillan, *The Blast of War,* 194; Kersaudy, 240 (*"Come and see"*); Ismay, OH, Dec. 17 and Dec. 20, 1946, FCP, MHI (*"Very well"*); Frederick E. Morgan, OH, n.d., FCP, MHI (*"to view with contempt"*); Charles F. A. Portal, OH, Feb. 7, 1947, FCP, MHI (*"We don't get paid"*).

Roosevelt also found: Roosevelt, *As He Saw It,* 94; Codman, 76; Powell, *In Barbary*.

A state dinner: *FRUS,* 832 (*effects of teetotalism*), 608 (*"there just aren't going"*).

Around and around: "Minutes of Meeting," CCS, Jan. 16, 1943, 1030 hrs., NARA RG 218, JCS records, box 195 (*"how Germany is to be defeated"*).

There it was: "Minutes of a meeting at the White House on Thursday, Jan. 7, 1943, at 1500," NARA RG 165, E 422, box 54; *FRUS*, 594–96, 597 (*"not interested in occupying Italy"*); Trumbull Higgins, *Soft Underbelly,* 47; "Minutes of Meeting," CCS, Jan. 18, 1943, 1030 hrs., NARA RG 218, JCS records, box 195.

After two stormy hours: Danchev and Todman, eds., 362 (*"It is no use"*).

"We lost our shirts": Wedemeyer, 191–92.

Besides, the president: Signal Corps film, ADC-979 and ADC-465, NARA; Walter Logan, United Press account, Jan. 21, 1943; Durno, 74 (*"Roadsides were a panorama"*); Reilly, 160 (*To distract curious*), 155 (*"The Heinies know"*); Harmon, 109; Blumenson, *The Patton Papers, 1940–1945,* 157 (*"bunch of cheap detectives"*); Clark, *Calculated Risk,* 149 (*"Negro troops who"*); Whitehead, 35–37; "President's Trip to Casablanca," Guy H. Spaman to Frank J. Wilson, June 26, 1945, FDR Lib, Secret Service records, box 4 (*no bullets*); Harriman and Abel, 181 (*trained on the docile troops*).

Rumors that FDR: Houston, 144 (*"Anything is possible"*); Durno, 75–79; Logan, UP account, Jan. 21, 1943; Blumenson, *The Patton Papers, 1940–1945,* 158 (*"says India is lost"*); *Three Years,* 283 (*"hoped to die"*).

The distant roar: "Minutes of Meeting," CCS, Jan. 19, 1943, 1600 hrs., NARA RG 218, JCS records, box 195; Austin, 71–72 (*"We'll need"*); John S. D. Eisenhower, *Allies,* 238 (*"petit De Gaulle"*), 244; Tompkins, 230 (*"a self-seeker"*); Codman, 72, 80 (*"Uncle Sam"*); Murphy, 170, 174–76; Roosevelt, *As He Saw It,* 74, 91 (*"a dud"*); De Gaulle, 387, 392; Anthony Eden, *The Memoirs of Anthony Eden, Earl of Avon,* 421; Leahy, 144; Pendar, 151 (*Jeanne d'Arc*); Moran, 88; *FRUS,* 694; Harmon, 109; Signal Corps film, ADC-979 and ADC-465, NARA; Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate,* 682; Sherwood, 685 (*entire Secret Service detail*); Reilly, 158.

But here they were: Signal Corps film, ADC-979 and ADC-465, NARA; Price, 190; MacVane, *Journey into War,* 180–83; Davis, *Experience of War,* 379; Sherwood, 688 (*"a very warlike look"*); Jordan, *Jordan's Tunis Diary,* 153 (*"Peter Pan"*); Parris and Russell, 277 (*"I was born"*).

As the generals: *FRUS,* 726 (*"unprecedented in history"*), 822; Macmillan, *The Blast of War,* 203; Price, 191; Middleton, 254; Harriman and Abel, 186 (*"the privilege"*); Moorehead, 119 (*"It was all rather embarrassing"*).

"I think we have all": *FRUS,* 727; Copson, "Summit at Casablanca" (*"storm and ruin"*).

No one scrutinizing: Sherwood, 687, 696 (*"popped into my mind"*); *FRUS,* 635 (*"the united nations"*); "Minutes of a meeting at the White House on Thursday, Jan. 7, 1943, at 1500," NARA RG 165, E 422, box 54; Wedemeyer, 187 (*"compel the Germans"*).

What was done was done: Robert Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932–1945,* 373; Howard, *Grand Strategy,* vol. IV, 282–85; Anne Armstrong, *Unconditional Surrender,* 13–14 (*Third Punic War* and *none of the fifteen*).

The reporters had their story: MacVane, *Journey into War,* 180–83; Austin, 73 (*"What's your paper, eh?")*; Middleton, 254 (*"the touch of the world"*).

while the hacks: Harriman and Abel, 191 (*For four hours*); Moran, 89; Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate,* 694 (*"most elaborately organized brothels"*); "Minutes of Meeting," Jan. 15, 1943, 1000 hrs., NARA RG 218, JCS records, box 169 (*"refuse any invitation"*); Sherwood, 694; Pendar, 135.

Their refuge: "Moses Taylor Villa," NARA RG 338, Fifth Army files, box 262; Durno, 26; Bryant, 563; Pendar, 136, 140, 145 (*nervous breakdown*).

Looming above La Saadia: Moran, 90 (*"paralyzed legs dangling"*); Churchill, *Hinge of Fate,* 695; Pendar, 148–49.

They sat in reverent silence: *FRUS,* 535; Powell, *In Barbary,* 428, 436 (*Sinners' Concourse*); Pendar, 148–49 (*"ain't no war"*); Marvine Howe, "In Marrakesh," *New York Times*, March 3, 2002; Larrabee, 39.

But what should happen: Morison, *History of United States Naval Operations in World War II,* vol. IX: *Sicily-Salerno-Anzio,* 7 (*"Where do we go"*); GCM, OH, Oct. 29, 1956, FCP, GCM Lib (*"chrome steel baseboards"*); "Minutes of Meeting," JCS, Jan. 20, 1943, 0900 hrs., NARA RG 218, box 169; Lamb, 222 (*"Nothing in the world"*).

The compromises at Anfa: Behrens, 331; Greenfield, *American Strategy,* 92 (*"I note that the Americans"*); Morton Yarmon, "The Administrative and Logistical History of the ETO," part IV, "TORCH and the European Theater of Operations," 1946, CMH, 8.31 AA, 117; Vigneras, 31, 38; Abraham Friedman, "Operation TORCH: The Dispatch of Aircraft from the United Kingdom by Eighth Air Force," Sept. 14, 1944, Historical Section, U.S. Strategic Air Forces in Europe, NARA RG 407, E 427, box 24351, 15–16; Slessor, 448.

Many months would also pass: Armstrong, 154 (*"putrefying albatross"*); Parkinson, 70; Greenfield, *American Strategy,* 9; Thomas Fleming, *The New Dealers' War: F.D.R. and the War Within World War II,* 184–85; Warlimont, 316; Howard, *Grand Strategy,* vol. IV, 284 (*"a word of encouragement"*).

A sense of companionship: Murphy, 168 (*"a reluctant tail"*); Christopher Hitchens, "The Medals of His Defeat," *Atlantic Monthly,* Apr. 2002, 118 (*wariness*); Danchev and Todman, eds., 364 (*"charming people"*); "Minutes of Meeting," copy #61, CCS, NARA RG 218, JCS records, box 195 (*some pencil turned*); George Q. Flynn, *The Mess in Washington: Manpower Mobilization in World War II,* 207 (*a great waterman*); Harriman and Abel, 191 (*"the old order could not last"*).

Dinner at La Saadia: Pendar, 149–58 (*"I am the pasha"* and *"Don't tell me"*); Roosevelt, *As He Saw It,* 119; Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate,* 695; Moran, 90 (*"I love these Americans"*); Harriman and Abel, 191–92; Larrabee, 39.

CHAPTER 8: A BITS AND PIECES WAR
"Goats Set Out to Lure a Tiger"

The almond trees: Robinett, *Armor Command,* 152–55 (*panniers heaped* and *grave markers*); Moorehead, 109 (*veiled women peered*); Henry E. Gardiner, ts, n.d., USMA Arch, 120 (*its brakes stuck*).

As a first line of defense: Anthony Clayton, *Three Marshals of France,* 74 (*"British senior officers"*); Adrian Clements Gore, "This Was the Way It Was," ts, 1987, IWM, 90/29/1 (*"a comic-opera soldier"*).

The French possessed almost no: Truscott, *Command Missions*, 135; Anderson, "Operations in North West Africa," June 7, 1943, *London Gazette;* Ankrum, 207, 225; Liebling, *Mollie & Other War Pieces*, 92 (*"goats set out"*); msg, Advance AFHQ to AFHQ, Feb. 3 and 4, 1943, NARA, AFHQ micro, R-100-D, 319.1 (*"somewhat discouraged"*).

"This past week": "Memo for diary," Jan. 19, 1943, Chandler, 909; *Three Years*, 242–43 (*"one of the world's greatest"*), 244, 245 (*"Mud is a silly alibi"*), 250; DDE to J. T. McNarney, Jan. 19, 1943, Chandler, 914 (*"There is no use"*).

The abrupt scuttling: DDE to GCM, Jan. 30, 1943, Chandler, 932 (*"We must keep"*); DDE to CCS, Feb. 3, 1943, Chandler, 934 (*"offensively defensive"*); Butcher diary, Jan. 18, 1943, DDE Lib, A-161 (*"I don't want anything"*).

In this the Germans: NWAf, 377; memo, DDE to W. B. Smith, Jan. 11, 1943, and memo, L. W. Rooks to W. B. Smith, Feb. 11, 1943, NARA AFHQ micro, R-71 Special (*"no action can be taken"*); Rame, 221 (*"retiring from crest to crest"*); Anderson, "Operations in North West Africa" (*"not hopeful"*).

General Anderson ordered: NWAf, 378, 382; "Report of Ousseltia Valley Campaign, 19–29 January 1943," CCB, 1st AD, Feb. 12, 1943, NARA RG 407, E 427, 601-CCB-0.3 (*"An excellent example"*); Rame, 218–19 (*"a lake of morning mist"*); "The French Army of North Africa in the Tunisian Campaign," lecture, 1943, Fort Hood, William S. Biddle Papers, MHI; Howe, *The Battle History of the 1st Armored Division*, 111–13; Truscott, *Command Missions*, 138 (*400 Germans*).

French casualties: *NWAf*, 382, 386n, 387; "Report of Liaison Officer on French Troops," Jan. 24, 1943, LKT Jr. Papers, GCM Lib, box 9, folder 5 (*"French can no longer"*); memo, DDE, Jan. 19, 1943, Chandler, 909; "Personal Diary of Lt. Gen. C. W. Allfrey, the Tunisian Campaign," Jan. 13, 1943, Allfrey Collection, LHC; Anderson, "Operations in North West Africa" G-1 report, HQ II Corps, Feb. 14, 1943, NARA RG 492, MTOUSA, box 263; Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, 489; DDE to Anderson, Jan. 26, 1943, Chandler, 922.

He had no sooner: Three Years, 244–45, 255; DDE to W. B. Smith, Jan. 26, 1943, Chandler, 923 (*"barracks used by our soldiers"*); DDE to T. Handy, Jan. 28, 1943, Chandler, 927 (*"As much as we preach"*).

Orlando Ward, who ostensibly commanded: Gugeler, ts, OW, MHI, X-62; diary, Jan. 23, 28, 1943, OW, MHI; Truscott, *Command Missions*, 142; *NWAf*, 387–88; Fredendall to LKT Jr, phone transcript, Jan. 24, 1943, LKT Jr. Papers, GCM Lib, box 9, folder 5 (*"Remember that force"*); Howze, OH, Aug. 1976, Russell Gugeler, OW, MHI; "Report of Operation, 27 January–3 February 1943," 1st AD, NARA RG 407, E 427, box 14767; Knickerbocker et al., 59, 82 (*"bits and pieces"*).

General von Arnim duly noted: author visit, April 2000; Carell, 333 (*"my nightmare"*); Wilson, "The Operations of the 509th Parachute Battalion in North Africa" James B. Carvey, "Faïd Pass," *Infantry Journal*, Sept. 1944, 8.

That was about to change: Howze, "The Battle of Sidi bou Zid," lecture, n.d., Cavalry School, MHI (*"Do not fire"*); Akers, OH, July 27, 1949, SM, MHI; Truscott, *Command Missions*, 150; Hansen, 2/80 (*"the most important point"*); Blumenson, "Kasserine Pass, 30 January–22 February 1943," in Heller and Stofft, eds., 245.

Prompt, decisive action: "Narrative of Events from 23 January 1943 to 26 February," CCA, 1st AD, NARA RG 407, E 427, 601-CCA-0.3, box 14767; Blumenson, *Kasserine Pass*, 108.

McQuillin's nickname: R. E. McQuillin, Army biographical files, MHI; Robert Simons, OH, July 1976, Gugeler, OW, MHI (*"As a man he was"*); Howze, OH, Aug. 1976, OW, MHI.

Having granted the enemy: A. N. Stark, Jr., Army biographical files, MHI; author interviews, George Juskalian, Feb. 25, 2000 (*"It was nerve-racking"*), and Paul F. Gorman, Feb. 7, 2000; Akers, OH, July 27, 1949, G. F. Howe, SM, MHI; Truscott, *Command Missions,* 148; Blumenson, *Kasserine Pass,* 109; Raphael L. Uffner, "Recollections of World War II with the First Infantry Division," ts, n.d., MRC FDM, 245–50 (*"strongly rejected"*); "History of the 26th Infantry in the Present Struggle," MRC FDM, 7/1–2; Robinett, *Armor Command,* 143.

Truscott and Ward drove: author visit, Apr. 2000; Jordan, *Jordan's Tunis Diary,* 175 (*"that half-world"*); Truscott, *Command Missions,* 148–49.

The American force: "History of the 26th Infantry in the Present Struggle," 7/1–2; Laurence P. Robertson, ts, 1988, ASEQ, 1st AR, 1st AD, MHI (also, earlier draft in Laurence Robertson papers, USMA Arch); "Narrative of Events from 23 January 1943 to 26 February," CCA, 1st AD, NARA RG 407, E 427, 601-CCA-0.3, box 14767; G. C. Kelleher, Army biographical files, MHI; Uffner, 250 (*French toast*).

For Company H: Robertson, ts, MHI, 184 (*"The velocity"* and *heavy black bread*); Truscott, *Command Missions,* 149; Uffner, 248; "Catalogue of Standard Ordnance Items, Volume I," in "Kasserine Pass Battles," vol. II, part 3, CMH.

The failed counterattack: "Narrative of Events from 23 January 1943 to 26 February," CCA, 1st AD, NARA RG 407, E 427, box 14767; OW to McQuillin, Jan. 31, 1943, 2115 hrs., NARA RG 407, E 427 (*"I am counting on you"*); "History of the 26th Infantry in the Present Struggle," 7/2–3 (*"held their fire"*); *NWAf,* 393–94;E. C. Smith, Feb. 14, 1943, MCC, YU (*"shook us"*); AAR, CCA, Feb. 1, 1943, and S-2 report, CCA, Feb. 1, 1943, NARA RG 407, E 427, box 14767.

Faïd Pass was gone: NWAf, 392 (*scathing message*), 394n (*more than 900*); Heller and Stofft, eds., 246 (*McQuillin bitterly*); Hansen, 2/80 (*"To retake it"*); Howe, *The Battle History of the 1st Armored Division,* 135; Rudolf Lang, "Battles of Kampfgruppe Lang in Tunisia," 1947, FMS, D-173; Carell, 331 (*"It will soon be over"*).

"This Can't Happen to Us"

Fredendall's attention: Liebling, *Mollie & Other War Pieces,* 76 (*"draw the pucker string"*); *NWAf,* 392–96.

Infantrymen from the 1st Battalion: Edwin L. Powell, Jr., OH, 1982, Lynn L. Sims, CEOH, 102–107 (*"Sunday School picnic"*); author interview, Aurelio Barron, Oct. 19, 1999 (*"All down the road"*); "History of the 168th Infantry," Jan. 31, 1942, NARA RG 407, E 427, boxes 9575–77; Rame, 229; Rolf, 79 (*"It was the most terrible thing"*); *AAFinWWII,* 142; Lauren E. McBride, "The Battle of Sened Station," *Infantry Journal,* Apr. 1945, 30 (*"Maimed and twisted"*).

Three different colonels: Stewart, "The 'Red Bull' Division: The Training and Initial Engagements of the 34th Infantry Division, 1941–43," 1; Dennis B. Dray, "Regimental Commander of the 168th Infantry, Colonel Thomas Davidson Drake: Battle of Sened and Sidi bou Zid, Tunisia," ts, Nov. 1977, Iowa Military Academy, Iowa GSM; memo, Jan. 12, 1943, in William F. Beekman, "A Diary of World War II as Observed Through the Eyes, Ears, and Mind of Bill Beekman," ts, n.d., Iowa GSM (*"Neither will good table manners"*); Green and Gauthier, eds., 76 (*Quack-Quack*).

As his 1st Battalion huddled: Thomas D. Drake, "Factual Account of Operations, 168th Infantry," Apr. 1945, Charles W. Ryder Collection, DDE Lib, container 4; Ankrum, 174; Curtiss, ed., 276.

But first, Sened Station: Drake, "Factual Account of Operations, 168th Infantry" "History of the

168th Infantry," NARA RG 407, E 427, Moynihan, ed., 57.

a cakewalk: author interview, Aurelio Barron (*"Go on up there!"*); Ankrum, 174 (*"all those bees"*); Hougen, *The Story of the Famous 34th Infantry Division*; McBride, "The Battle of Sened Station" (*"I saw his canteen"*); Drake, "Factual Account of Operations, 168th Infantry" (*"Men were dying everywhere"*).

At midafternoon: Berens, 5, 47 (*"Kill them all!"*); "168th African History," in "168th Infantry Publications," Iowa GSM; Rame, 235.

Fredendall was considerably less charmed: NWAf, 397 (*contradictory orders*); "Historical Record, HQ," March 1, 1943, CCD, NARA RG 407, E 427, 601-CCD 0.3 (*"Too much time"*); Carter, "Carter's War," CEOH, IV-13 (*"There has been a breakthrough!"*); Drake, "Factual Account of Operations, 168th Infantry" Camp, ed., 55 (*"A sort of hysteria"*); Powell, OH, CEOH, 110 (*"hightailing it"*); letter, James McGuinness to parents, May 23, 1943, Co. F, 168th Inf, World War II Letters, 1940–1946, Western Historical Manuscript Collection, University of Missouri–Columbia, Missouri (*"Some of the fellows"*).

The American attack was spent: "History of the 168th Infantry," NARA RG 407, E 427 (*"Your outfit"*); AAR, 1st AD, Jan. 27–Feb. 3, 1943, "Kasserine Pass Battles," vol. I, part I, CMH (*"no decisive objective"*); Howe, *The Battle History of the 1st Armored Division*, 129; *NWAf*, 398; Ankrum, 174.

"One of the things that gives me": DDE to Fredendall, Feb. 4, 1943, Chandler, 939; Truscott, *Command Missions*, 150 (*Fredendall was too rash*); *Three Years*, 254 (*"futile rushing around"*); diary, Feb. 8, 10, 1943, OW, MHI (*"spherical SOB"*).

As recently as February 1: "Meeting, 1000 hours, 1 Feb. 1943," NARA, AFHQ micro, R-188-D; *NWAf*, 399.

"We could not help wondering": "701st Tank Destroyer Battalion: North African Campaign Diary, B Company," 1943, MHI.

"The Mortal Dangers That Beset Us"

At eight A.M. *on February 12*: David Irving, *The Trail of the Fox*, 267.

The trailer door: Fritz Krause, "Studies on the Mareth Position," n.d., FMS, D-046, MHI, 9 (*"My dear young friend"*); Kesselring, "The War in the Mediterranean," part II, "The Fighting in Tunisia and Tripolitania," 49–50 (*"The very last armored"*); Forty, *The Armies of Rommel*, 176; B. H. Liddell Hart, ed., *The Rommel Papers*, 394 (*"It's two years"*).

"Rommel, Rommel, Rommel!": Bryant, 450 (*"What else matters"*); Boatner, 461; Matthew Cooper, *The German Army, 1939–1945*, 352; Charles Douglas-Home, *Rommel*, 110; Macksey, *Kesselring: The Making of the Luftwaffe*, 101; Kesselring, "The War in the Mediterranean," part II, "The Fighting in Tunisia and Tripolitania," 49–50 (*"one good division"*); James J. Sadkovich, "Of Myths and Men: Rommel and the Italians in North Africa, 1940–1942," *International History Review*, May 1991, 284; Bruce Allen Watson, *Exit Rommel*, 56, 158–59 (*"fugitive leading"*).

"Day and night": Liddell Hart, ed., *The Rommel Papers*, 390–91; Bennett, *Ultra and Mediterranean Strategy*, 373–74; Krause, "Studies on the Mareth Position," 9 (*"a broken man"*).

Rommel understood: *NWAf*, 370, 372; Field Marshal the Viscount Alexander of Tunis, "The African Campaign from El Alamein to Tunis," 1948, supplement to *London Gazette*, 868; Anderson,

"Operations in North West Africa."

Yet Rommel's German units: "Rommel to Tunisia," NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 227; war diary, Panzer Army Africa, Feb. 3–4 and Feb. 10–17, 1943, in "Kasserine Pass Battles," vol. I, part 1, CMH; Hellmuth Greiner diary notes, Feb. 16, 1943, and personnel report, Panzer Armee Afrika, Feb. 1, 1943, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 225; Kesselring, "Final Commentaries on the Campaign in North Africa, 1941–1943," 1949, FMS, #C-075, 17 (*"hypnotic influence"*); *NWAf,* 370.

True, Rommel's army included: Boog et al., 801n (*350,000 Axis men*); *NWAf,* 371; Anderson, "Operations in North West Africa."

Rommel increasingly blamed: Domenico Petracarro, "The Italian Army in Africa, 1940–1943: An Attempt at Historical Perspective," *War & Society,* Oct. 1991, 103 (*tied bandannas*); Enno von Rinteln, "The Italian Commmand and Armed Forces in the First Half of 1943: Their Situation, Intentions, and Measures," 1947, FMS, #T-1a, trans. Janet E. Dewey, MHI (*"was in agony"*); Westphal, *The German Army in the West,* 130; Kesselring, "Italy as a Military Ally," n.d., FMS, #C-015, 9 (*"three fashionable passions"*); war diary, Panzer Army Africa, Feb. 11, 1943, in "Kasserine Pass Battles," vol. I, part 1, CMH.

In these and other matters: Arnim, "Recollections of Tunisia," 48–49 (*"sober cal- culations"* and *"a second Stalingrad"*); Greiner diary notes, Feb. 16 (*"house of cards"*) and March 10, 1943 (*brigade of homosexuals*), and personnel report, Panzer Armee Afrika, Feb. 1, 1943, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 225; Jackson, *The Battle for North Africa*, 415; *Destruction*, 274.

talk of decampment: Kesselring, "Final Commentaries on the Campaign in North Africa, 1941–1943," 28, 31; Kesselring, *Memoirs*, 143, 149; Warlimont, 310, 284 (*restricted rations*).

to avoid a similar diet: Alexander, "The African Campaign from El Alamein to Tunis," 868; *Destruction*, 273, 283–84; OKW to Comando Supremo, Jan. 19, 1943, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 225; Irving, *The Trail of the Fox,* 253 (*English dictionary*); Liddell Hart, ed., *The Rommel Papers*, 397 (*"break up the American"*).

Kesselring agreed: Irving, 266–67 (*"We are going to go"*); *NWAf*, 206–207; war diary, Fifth Panzer Army, Feb. 8, 1943, in "Kasserine Pass Battles," vol. I, part 1, CMH (*"weaken the American"*); war report, Panzer Army Africa, Jan. 16 to Feb. 12, 1943.

The front remained: Pyle, *Here Is Your War*, 154; Dickson, "G-2 Journal," MHI, 37; Oswald Jett, "As I Saw the War," ts, n.d., ASEQ, 47th Medical Bn, 1st AD, MHI, 287 (*Army chaplain*); war diary, 27th Armored FA, Feb. 11, 1943, PMR, GCM Lib, box 12 (*Clubmobile*).

II Corps had suffered: Waters, SOOHP, 690; William H. Simpson, AGF Observer Report, Apr. 1943, NARA RG 165, E 418, Director of Plans and Ops, box 1229 (*130 charged with absence*); Ankrum, 179–80 (*"Hell, no"*); Hougen, *The Story of the Famous 34th Infantry Division*; William Petroski, "Fifty Years Later, Defeat by Rommel Still Clear," March 21, 1993, *Des Moines Sunday Register* (*"We had never heard of them"*); Heller and Stofft, eds., 247.

Quiescence at the front: Everett S. Hughes diary, Feb. 10, 1943, "Allied High Command" micro, reel 5, David Irving collection, MHI (original in LOC Ms Div) (*"too complicated to be placed"*); G-3 memo, Feb. 8, 1943, NARA RG 331, AFHQ micro, R-188-D (*Allied intelligence concluded*); Hinsley, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, 274; Ralph Bennett, 373–74.

Commanders in Tunisia: Statement, P. C. Hains, III, 1st AR, in AAR, 2nd Bn, 168th Inf, "Kasserine Pass Battles," vol. 1, part 1 (*seven possible*); Robinett, *Armor Command*, 152 (*"He sucked in his breath"*), 155, 160; Robinett, "Among the First," ts, PMR, GCM Lib, box 22, 366–70 (*"The*

conference"); Martin Philipsborn, Jr., and Milton Lehman, "The Untold Story of Kasserine Pass," *Saturday Evening Post,* Feb. 14, 1948, 23 (*"We can't win"*).

Daubed it was: *NWAf,* 402–403; Leon F. Lavoie et al., "The First Armored Division at Faïd-Kasserine," 1949, Armored School Advanced Course, 22 (*"The generals of three nations"*).

Nor were commanders certain: "Diary Covering the Activities of General Fredendall and Supporting Players, Dec. '42–March '43," James R. Webb Collection, DDE Lib (*"They seemed to expect"*); Gugeler, ts, OW, MHI, x-66; E.C. Hatfield, diary, Feb. 6, 1943, OW, MHI (*"angry and disappointed"*); Howze, SOOHP, MHI; Howze, OH, Gugeler, OW, MHI (*"infuriated, insulted"*).

The greatest insult arrived: Jackson, 430; *NWAf,* 400; Gugeler, ts, OW, MHI, x-72 (*"It's wrong"*).

Fredendall had visited Sbeïtla: Peter C. Hains, III, OH, May 1991, David W. Hogan, MHI (*"Good God"*); Blumenson, *Kasserine Pass*, 122; Andrews, "A Place to Be Lousy In," 100; Gugeler, ts, OW, MHI, x-73; Howze, OH, Gugeler, OW, MHI (*"Neither he nor I"*).

Orders were orders: Howe, *The Battle History of the 1st Armored Division*, 141; Ankrum, 182 (*"isn't that much barbed wire"*), 183 (*"How would you hear rocks"*), 186 (*"Poppycock!"*); AAR, 2nd Bn, 168th Inf Regt, Feb. 3–16, 1942, Iowa GSM; Waters, SOOHP, 189–90 (*"Waters, I've got orders"* and *"General McQuillin, let me ask"*).

There was nothing for it: AAR, 168th Inf Regt, Feb. 27, 1943, Iowa GSM; AAR, 3rd Bn, 168th Inf Regt, n.d., Iowa GSM; AAR, 2nd Bn, 168th Inf Regt, Feb. 3–16, 1942, Iowa GSM (*"killed at once"* and *"when I want prisoners taken"*); Robertson, ts, ASEQ, 1st AR, 1st AD, MHI.

"A Good Night for a Mass Murder"

As commander-in-chief: Chandler, vol. I, 604n (*far greater powers*); Danchev and Todman, eds., 365 (*neither "the tactical"* and *"We were pushing"*); Miller, *Ike the Soldier,* 464; DDE to GCM, Feb. 8, 1943, Chandler, 942–46 (*"popular impression"*); *Three Years*, 258 (*"burning inside"*).

Upon hearing the news: Three Years, 260; Hughes diary, Jan. 24, 1943, MHI (*"Ike is doomed"*).

that *woman*: Miller, 469; Morgan, *Past Forgetting*, 111; Irving, *The War Between the Generals: Inside the Allied High Command,* 47–48; Hughes diary, Feb. 12, 1943, MHI (*"Maybe Kay"*).

Skibereen was behind the wheel: chronology, Chandler, vol. V, 105; D. D. Eisenhower, *At Ease: Stories I Tell to Friends*, 259 (*"taking too many trips"*); Charles M. Thomas, diary fragment, Feb. 13, 1943, possession of Roger Cirillo (*"I never knew the wind and sand"*).

"In one respect only": Truscott, *Command Missions*, 153; Blumenson, *Kasserine Pass*, 124; Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe,* 141 (*"the divisions have"*).

Fifteen minutes later: Michael J. King, "Rangers: Selected Combat Operations in World War II," 1985, CSI, 15; Altieri, "Darby's Rangers," 1945, Ranger Book Committee; Jerome Joseph Haggerty, "A History of the Ranger Battalions in World War II," Ph.D. diss, 1982, Fordham University, 120; Altieri, *The Spearheaders*, 197 (*"We've got to leave our mark"*), 206 (*"good night for a mass murder"*); Patrick O'Donnell, *Beyond Valor,* 33–35 (*at least one wounded prisoner*).

Anderson walked in: Akers, OH, SM, MHI; Dickson obituary, *Assembly,* Sept. 1978; B. A. Dickson, "statement of service," Benjamin A. Dickson Collection, USMA Arch, box 3; Blumenson, *Kasserine Pass,* 125.

"Rommel can be expected": Dickson, "G-2 Journal: Algiers to the Elbe," 38–43 (*"alarmist and a*

pessimist"); Dickson, OH, Dec. 13, 1950, G. F. Howe, SM, MHI.

For over two hours: Porter, SOOHP, MHI; Hinsley, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, 583–85, 757; Dickson, "G-2 Journal: Algiers to the Elbe," 38–43; Robert A. Hewitt, OH, n.d., G. F. Howe, SM, MHI (*"General disposition of forces"*); John H. Thompson, "Kasserine Fiasco Laid to British," *Chicago Tribune*, Feb. 1948; DDE to GCM, Feb. 15, 1943, Chandler, 955 (*"as good as could be made"*), 956 (*"seems keen and fit"*).

An urgent phone call: PMR to DDE, Sept. 12, 1967 (*"hoped to win"*), and DDE to PMR, Sept. 15, 1967, Robinett Papers, MHI; Robinett, "Among the First," ts, PMR, GCM Lib, box 22, 366–70 (*"Only a question"* and *"The yielding of ground"*); Robinett, *Armor Command*, 160–62 (*"only evidence"* and *"Now that General Eisenhower"*); Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, 142.

Another cactus patch: Gugeler, ts, OW, MHI, x-77; Truscott, *Command Missions*, 153; Peter C. Hains, III, OH, Apr. 26, 1951, G. F. Howe, SM, MHI; "The Battle of Sidi bou Zid," n.d., PMR, LOC, box 6.

Eisenhower had sensed: diary, Feb. 13, 1943, OW, MHI (*"Ike would swap"*); Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, 142; Eisenhower, *At Ease*, 259–60 (*"Get your mine fields out"*); CCA, "Narrative of Events from 23 January 1943 to 26 February," 1st AD, NARA RG 407, E 427, 601-CCA-0.3, box 14825 (*"listened to a description"*); "The Battle of Sidi bou Zid," n.d., PMR, LOC, box 6.

He stepped from: D'Este, *Eisenhower: A Soldier's Life*, 641mss (*"We do not pray"*); Blumenson, *Kasserine Pass*, 139 (*"General, what will we do"*); John S. D. Eisenhower, *Allies*, 269 (*"I think you're going"*).

A week later: DDE to GCM, Feb. 21, 1943, Chandler, 970 (*"a delicate matter"*); Hinsley, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, vol. II, 583–86, 757–59 (*"A-day"*), 761–62; G-2 records, II Corps, Feb. 13, 14, 1943, NARA RG 338, II Corps, box 9 (*"Urgent. Absolute priority"* and *"Rommel has been reported"*); "The Battle of Sidi bou Zid," n.d., PMR, LOC, box 6; Waters, SOOHP, 193 (*"My error"*); *NWAf*, 411.

A cold drizzle: "History of the 26th Infantry in the Present Struggle," 6/13; Robertson, ts, ASEQ, 1st AR, 1st AD, MHI; letter, W. Bruce Pirnie, Jr., to Amon G. Carter, June 16, 1943, OW, MHI (*"seemed sort of silly"*); msg, DDE to AGWAR, Feb. 13, 1943, 1013 hrs., NARA RG 331, AFHQ micro, G-3 Forward, Constantine, R-99-D, 319.1 (*"Axis cannot risk"*)

CHAPTER 9: KASSERINE
A Hostile Debouchment

A brief, howling sandstorm: Hudel and Robinett, "The Tank Battle at Sidi bou Zid," in "Kasserine Pass Battles," n.d., vol. I, part 1, CMH; Lucas, *Panzer Army Africa*, 165; AAR, "Narrative of Events from 23 January 1943 to 26 February," CCA, 1st AD, NARA RG 407, E 427, 601-CCA-0.3; *Tätigkeitsbericht*, 10th Panzer Div., 14–22 Feb. 1943, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 225; James E. Hagan, ASEQ, n.d., Co G, 3rd Bn, 1st Armored Regt; Ankrum, 186 (*"Krupp Iron Works"*); Howze, "The Battle of Sidi bou Zid," lecture, MHI.

Three miles east: letter, W. Bruce Pirnie, Jr., to Amon G. Carter, June 16, 1943, OW, MHI (*"really changed the sound"*); Waters, SOOHP, 204, 213 (*"If you can't fire"*); *NWAf*, 408, 412.

One after another: Howe, *The Battle History of the 1st Armored Division*, 145–46; David W. Hazen, "Role of the Field Artillery in the Battle of Kasserine Pass," master's thesis, 1973, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 43 (*somehow forgotten in the confusion*); Thomas E. Hannum,

"The 30 Years of Army Experience," ASEQ, ts, n.d., Co A, 91st Armored FA, MHI (*"We didn't know exactly"*); Robert G. Bond, "Induction into the Armed Service," ASEQ, ts, n.d., 1st AD, MHI; Howze, "The Battle of Sidi bou Zid" William H. Balzer, ASEQ, ts., n.d., 1st Armored Regt, MHI (*"All around me comrades"*); 443rd CA Battalion history, and letter, Werner L. Larson to G. F. Howe, 1951, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 229; Wiltse, 126 (*"lost his sense of direction"*); John T. Jones, Jr., ASEQ, n.d., Co H, 3rd Bn, 1st Armored Regt.

The enemy without question: AAR, "Operations of 3rd Bn, 1st Armored Regt," Feb. 14, 1943, NARA RG 407, E 427, box 14916; Harold V. Boyle, Associated Press account of *Texas, Cavalry Journal*, March–Apr. 1943, 12 (*"smoked us up"* and *"like peas"*); Robertson, ASEQ, Co H, 1st Armored Regt, MHI (*"dryland Dunkirk"*); John B. Scheller, ASEQ, n.d., 1st Armored Regt Band, MHI (*"Take off, men!"*); Hannum, "The 30 Years of Army Experience" (*"air was full of whistles"*); Stanley J. Krekeler, ASEQ, ts, n.d., 91st Armored FA, 1st AD, MHI (*lint from camouflage nets*); Pirnie to Carter, June 16, 1943, OW, MHI (*"suddenly blossomed"*); Milo L. Green and Paul S. Gauthier, ed., *Brickbats from F Company*, 149; Howe, *The Battle History of the 1st Armored Division*, 150–53; Louis V. Hightower, DSC citation, 1943, NARA RG 492, NATOUSA general orders; Blumenson, *Kasserine Pass*, 141–42.

Of fifty-two Shermans: *Kriegstagebuch*, 21st Panzer Div., 14–23 Feb., 1943, in "Kasserine Pass Battles," vol. I, part 2, CMH; Hudel and Robinett, "The Tank Battle of Sidi bou Zid."

The disaster: AAR, "1st Armored Regt., North African Campaign, Nov. 8, 1942–May 9, 1943," NARA RG 407, E 427, box 14916; Waters, SOOHP, MHI, 203–22 (*"Sir, I couldn't"*), 596 (*"There must be something"*); AAR, 2nd Bn, 168th Inf Regt, Feb. 1943, Iowa GSM; "Kasserine Pass Battles," n.d., vol. I, part 1, CMH (*"Pete, I'm going to shut"*); Balzer, ASEQ, 1st Armored Regt, MHI; Blumenson, *Kasserine Pass*, 164–65.

Ten miles to the southeast: Edgar P. Moschel, statement in "168th Inf Regt. Narrative of Action," n.d., Iowa GSM; Franklin M. Davis, Jr., "The Battle of Kasserine Pass," *American Legion*, Apr. 1965, 22 (*"It seems like"*); AAR accounts by Gerald C. Line, Thomas D. Drake, Harry P. Hoffman, in "Kasserine Pass Battles," vol. I, part 1, CMH; Hougen, *The Story of the Famous 34th Infantry Division*.

Drake soon recognized: "Narrative of Events from 23 January 1943 to 26 February," CCA; AAR, 3rd Bn, 168th Inf Regt, Feb. 8–20, 1943, Iowa GSM; letter, Thomas D. Drake to Charles W. Ryder, Oct. 4, 1944, Ryder Papers, DDE Lib, box 1 (*"fled so fast"*).

At two P.M. *Drake*: "Narrative of Events from 23 January 1943 to 26 February," CCA; "Brief Statement of Lt. Col. John H. Van Vliet, Jr.," in "168th Inf Regt. Narrative of Action," Iowa GSM; letter, Drake to Ryder, Oct. 4, 1944, Ryder Papers, DDE Lib., box 1; AAR account, Marvin E. Williams, 3rd Bn, 168th Inf, "Kasserine Pass Battles," vol. I, part 1, CMH; Blumenson, *Kasserine Pass*, 145.

Eisenhower and Truscott: chronology, Chandler, vol. V; Morgan, 112 (*"very tired"*); Truscott, *Command Missions*, 155–56 (*"There was no reason"*); DDE to GCM, Feb. 15, 1943, Chandler, 956 (*"I really believe"*).

The truth would soon: Hazen, 42, 48–54; William R. Betson, "Sidi bou Zid—A Case History of Failure," *Armor*, Nov.–Dec. 1982, 38; Peter Hoffman, *Stauffenberg: A Family History, 1905–1944*, 171; DDE to GCM, Feb. 15, 1943, Chandler, 956; AAR, 60th Inf Regt, Feb. 1943, NARA RG 407, E 427, box 7535.

With Summersby: Powell, *In Barbary,* 242 (*"barbarians"*); Baedeker, 290 ("Venari lavari"); Truscott, *Command Missions*, 156; Truscott aide official diary, Feb. 1943, LKT Jr. Papers, GCM Lib, box 18, folder 1.

"When you remember me": Miller, *Ike the Soldier,* 477 (*"always to do my duty"*); McKeough and Lockridge, 73 (*picked out "Taps"*).

None Returned

With Anderson's decision: Liebling, *Mollie & Other Pieces,* 67, 85; Dickson, "G-2 Journal: Algiers to the Elbe," MHI, 43; "History of the 26th Infantry in the Present Struggle," Feb. 15, 1943, MRC-FDM, 8/4–16 (*Madame LaZonga*); "Journal for the 3rd Battalion," 26th Infantry Regt, Feb. 15, 1943, MRC-FDM; Messenger, 50 (*"rather sinister darkness"*); AAR, "Account of B Company Operations at Gafsa," 19th Engineer Regt, n.d., in II Corps records, NARA RG 407, E 427, box 19248 (*wedged six tons of ammonal*); Liddell Hart, ed., *The Rommel Papers*, 400 (*The explosion also demolished*). Ammonal is composed of TNT, ammonium nitrate, and aluminum; guncotton is an ingredient of smokeless gunpowder.

The sprawling air bases: *AAFinWWII,* 155; AAR, "Report of Operations, XII Air Support Command," Apr. 9, 1943, NARA; Pyle, *Here Is Your War,* 176 (*large wall map*); "From Beer Beach to Kasserine Pass: The Story of the 175th Field Artillery Battalion," n.d., 34th ID, NARA RG 407, E 427, box 9542; Edwin L. Powell, Jr., OH, 1982, Lynn L. Sims, CEOH (*"Before I finished"*); *NWAf,* 437; AAR, 805th Tank Destroyer Battalion, "The Tunisian Campaign," Feb. 1943, NARA RG 407, E 427, box 23768; *Tank Destroyer Forces World War II*, 29.

A battlefield bromide: Charles J. Hoy, "Reconnaissance Lessons from Tunisia," *Cavalry Journal*, Nov.–Dec. 1943, 16–19; Ben Crosby, OH, March 1951, G. F. Howe, SM, MHI (*"badly used up"*); Moschel, statement in "168th Inf Regt. Narrative of Action," n.d., Iowa GSM.

Yet a mood of benighted: letter, Robinett to H. Gardiner, Dec. 26, 1967, PMR, GCM Lib, box 5, folder 21; First Army to II Corps, Feb. 14, 1943, 2010 hrs., NARA RG 331, AFHQ micro, AFHQ G-3 Forward, R-100-D, 319.1 (*"As regards action"*).

This hallucination: George F. Hoffman and Donn A. Starry, eds., *Camp Colt to Desert Storm: The History of U.S. Armored Forces,* 151; diary, Feb. 15, 1943, OW, MHI (*"I didn't like it much"*); Howe, *The Battle History of the 1st Armored Division,* 157; Howze, *A Cavalryman's Story,* 41, 59 (*"not contesting the order"*); Catton, *A Stillness at Appomattox*, 211; George L. Durgin, ASEQ, 2nd Bn, 1st Armored Regt, 1st AD, MHI (*"Off we went"*); Robinett, *Armor Command,* 163 (*"saluted and smiled"*).

Half a mile south: Tobin, *Ernie Pyle's War*, 15 (*"signature belch"*); Pyle, *Here Is Your War,* 167 (*"We are going to kick hell"*); Hains, OH, Apr. 26, 1951, SM, MHI.

The day was dry: Edwin H. Burba, "Battle of Sidi bou Zid," *Field Artillery Journal,* Sept. 1943, 643; Robertson, ASEQ, Co. H, 1st Armored Regt, MHI (*"'Into the valley of death'"*); author visit, Apr. 2000.

Alger had been told: "The Attack on Sidi bou Zid," 2nd Bn, 1st Armored Regt, "by officers of the battalion while POWs," n.d., James D. Alger Collection, USMA Arch; "Record of Events," 2nd Bn appendix to AAR, 1st Armored Regt, North African campaign, Nov. 8, 1942–May 9, 1943, NARA RG 407, E 427, box 14916; Howze, "The Battle of Sidi bou Zid" Howe, *The Battle History of the 1st Armored Division*, 159; *NWAf,* 419–21; war diary, 10th Panzer Div., Feb. 15, 1943, "Kasserine Pass Battles," vol. I, part 2; "G-3 Journal" and message traffic, 1st AD, Feb. 15, 1943, NARA RG 407, E 427, box 14767 (*"Tanks now approaching"* and *"Keep your eye peeled"*); letter, T. Riggs to parents,

June 25, 1943, PMR LOC, box 4.

No sooner did: Rame, *Road to Tunis*, 247–48 (*"like a bright diamond"* and *"within a matter of minutes"*); Pyle, *Here Is Your War*, 170 (*"Brown geysers"*).

The killing was confined: Lavoie et al., "The First Armored Division at Faïd-Kasserine" Macksey, *Crucible of Power*, 149–153 (*electric blue*); Macksey, *Tank Versus Tank*, performance chart, 107; Ellis, *On the Front Lines*, 117 (*"it takes ten minutes"*); "Record of Events," 2nd Bn appendix to AAR, 1st Armored Regt, North African campaign, Nov. 8, 1942–May 9, 1943, NARA RG 407, E 427, box 14916 (*"None returned"*).

"As dusk began": R. E. McQuillin, comments on draft of *Northwest Africa: Seizing the Initiative in the West*, n.d., NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 228; Balzer, ASEQ, 1st Armored Regt, MHI (*"I found myself"*); Howe, *The Battle History of the 1st Armored Division*, 163–65 (*"We might have walloped"*); *NWAf*, 415; DDE, "Commander-in-Chief's Dispatch, North African Campaign, 1942–1943," 35; Krekeler, ASEQ, 91st Armored FA, MHI; Anderson to DDE, Feb. 15, 1943, 1743 hrs, NARA RG 331 micro, AFHQ G-3 Forward, R-99-D, 319.1 (*"dangerously dispersed"*); Tobin, 82 (*"awful nights"*).

"Sometimes That Is Not Good Enough"

The immolation: *Des Moines Sunday Register*, July 18, 1943, 1; AAR, 2nd Bn, 168th Inf Regt, Feb. 3–19, 1943, "Kasserine Pass Battles," vol. I, part 1, CMH; Austin, 87 (*"Message okay"*).

At 10:30 P.M.*:* AAR, 2nd Bn, 168th Inf Regt, Feb. 15–16, 1943, Iowa GSM *("so close"*); Norland Norgaard, AP dispatch in *Red Oak Express*, Feb. 22, 1943, 1; *Des Moines Sunday Register*, July 18, 1943, 1; "An American Story: The Life and Times of a Midlands Family," *Omaha World-Herald*, Nov. 9, 1997, 1; Hougen, *The Story of the Famous 34th Infantry Division*; *NWAf*, 424; Eugene L. Daniels, DSC citation, NATOUSA Gen'l. Order 66, July 30, 1943, NARA RG 492.

Drake's ordeal: AAR account, Marvin E. Williams, 3rd Bn, 168th Inf, "Kasserine Pass Battles," vol. I, part 1, CMH (*"Besieged"*); letter, Drake to Ryder, Oct. 4, 1944, Ryder Papers, DDE Lib, box 1; *Tätigkeitsbericht*, 10th Panzer Div., Feb. 16, 1943, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 225; AAR, "168th Inf Regiment Narrative of Action," Iowa GSM; Blumenson, *Kasserine Pass*, 196; *Kriegstagebuch*, 21st Panzer Div., Feb. 17, 1943, "Kasserine Pass Battles," vol. I, part 2, CMH; Robert L. Owen, ts, Jan. 19, 1993, "Kasserine Pass file," Iowa GSM; AAR accounts, G. C. Line, T. D. Drake, "Kasserine Pass Battles," vol. I, part 1, CMH; "Brief Statement of Lt. Col. John H. Van Vliet, Jr.," in "168th Inf Regt. Narrative of Action," Iowa GSM; AAR, Harry P. Hoffman, 3rd Bn, 168th Inf Regt, Iowa GSM.

A few minutes later: H. P. Hoffman, G. C. Line, T. D. Drake accounts, "Kasserine Pass Battles," vol. I, part 1, CMH; Van Vliet account, "168th Inf Regt. Narrative of Action," Iowa GSM; Larson, ed., "The History and Contribution to American Democracy of Volunteer 'Citizen Soldiers' of Southwest Iowa, 1930–1945," 57–58; AAR, 3rd Bn, 168th Inf Regt, Feb. 16–17, 1943, Iowa GSM.

"We marched": Bill Roth, "The Longest Days of a G.I.," n.d., Iowa GSM (*"Whenever the moon"*); Larson, ed., 61–63; author interview, Dave Berlovich, Oct. 19, 1999 (*"You're marked"*).

Dawn caught them: author interviews, Clifton J. Warner, Ross W. Cline, Oct. 19, 1999; AAR, 3rd Bn, 168th Inf Regt, Feb. 17, 1943, Iowa GSM; Drake, in "Kasserine Pass Battles," vol. I, part 1 (*"gained the desired ground"*); William Walling Luttrell, "A Personal Account of the Experiences as a German Prisoner of War," ts, n.d., Iowa GSM (*"He took one look"*); Van Vliet account, "168th Inf Regt. Narrative of Action," Iowa GSM; letter, Drake to Ryder, Oct. 4, 1944, Ryder Papers, DDE Lib, box 1 (*"You go to hell"*); Blumenson, *Kasserine Pass*, 199; Roth, "The Longest Days of a G.I."

Kriegstagebuch, 21st Panzer Div., Feb. 17, 1943, "Kasserine Pass Battles," vol. I, part 2, CMH; *NWAf*, 424; Larson, ed., 61–63, 66–67; letter, Gerald C. Line to wife, March 2, 1943, Iowa GSM, #1999.25.2 (*"sane or insane"*).

Their triumph at Sidi bou Zid: "Signal Communication in the North African Campaigns," 1945, Historical Section, Special Activities Branch, Office of the Chief Signal Officer, "Tactical Communication in World War II, Part 1," MHI, 166 (*"unbelievably low"*); Philipsborn report to Robinett, CCB, 1st AD, Feb. 16, 1943, NARA RG 407, E 427; Howe, "American Signal Intelligence in Northwest Africa and Western Europe," 1980, U.S. Cryptologic History, series IV, WWII, vol. I, NARA RG 457, NSA files, SRH 391, box 114, 29–30; war diary, Panzer Army Afrika, Feb. 16, 1943, "Kasserine Pass Battles," vol. I, part 2, (mislabeled "Fifth Panzer Army"), CMH; *Destruction*, 292; *NWAf*, 425–26.

Rommel's staff car: Liddell Hart, ed., *The Rommel Papers*, 398–400 (*"Hitler! Rommel!"*); Messenger, 50.

Arnim had: Liddell Hart, ed., *The Rommel Papers*, 400 (*"I had never gambled"*); war diary, Panzer Army Afrika, Feb. 18, 1943, "Kasserine Pass Battles," vol. I, part 2, CMH; Irving, *The Trail of the Fox*, 270; Arnim, "Recollections of Tunisia," FMS, C-098, 55; minutes of conference with Kesselring, Arnim, et al., war diary, 10th Panzer Div, Feb. 15, 1943, "Kasserine Pass Battles," vol. I, part 2.

Allied intelligence detected: Hugh Skillen, *Spies of the Airwaves*, 274; Bennett, *Ultra and Mediterranean Strategy*, 206–207.

Kesselring dithered: war diary, Panzer Army Afrika, Feb. 18, 19, 1943, "Kasserine Pass Battles," vol. I, part 2, CMH; *NWAf*, 440; Liddell Hart, ed., *The Rommel Papers*, 402 (*"appalling and unbelievable"*), 411 (*"old war horse"*).

Not since A.D. 647: Blumenson, *Kasserine Pass*, 178; Robinett, *Armor Command*, 165–66 (*"indescribable confusion"*); Howze, "The Battle of Sidi bou Zid" Schrijvers, 63 (*"slapping us around"*).

Panic built slowly: Martin, 47; Cowdrey, 117 (*"a ghastly word"*); Roberta Love Tayloe, *Combat Nurse: A Journal of World War II*, 39; letter, unsigned, Feb. 23, 1943, MCC, YU (*"Americans never retreat"*).

Night deepened: letter, unsigned, Feb. 17, 1943, MCC, YU (*"Shooting. Have to go"*); "Account of Carleton S. Coon," NARA RG 226, OSS records, E 99, box 39, folder 8 (*"We didn't want to"*); "Signal Communication in the North African Campaigns," 1945, Historical Section, Special Activities Branch, Office of the Chief Signal Officer, "Tactical Communication in World War II, Part 1," MHI, 100, 164 (*pigeon platoon*).

At 8:30 P.M.: Howe, *The Battle History of the 1st Armored Division*, 172; Philipsborn report to Robinett, CCB, 1st AD, Feb. 16, 1943, NARA RG 407, E 427; *NWAf*, 432; letter, R. I. Stack to G. F. Howe, March 8, 1951, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 226; Rame, 253; Ankrum, 221 (*"I'll be damned"*); Robert M. Marsh, ASEQ, ts, notes to G. F. Howe, Sept. 23, 1952, 81st Reconnaissance Bn, 1st AD, MHI (*"We were next"*); Oswald Jett, ASEQ, "As I Saw the War," ts, n.d., 47th Medical Bn, 1st AD, MHI, 287 (*"Get that junk"*).

The fog of war: McCurtain Scott, OH, March 1976, Gugeler, OW, MHI (*"annoyed and rattled"*); diary, Feb. 16, 1943, OW, MHI; Gugeler, ts, OW, MHI, x-85.

Ward was further discomposed: CCA, "Narrative of Events from 23 January 1943 to 26 Feb.," NARA RG 407, E 427, 601-CCA-0.3, box 14825; Ben Crosby, OH, March 1951, G. F. Howe, SM,

MHI; letter, R. I. Stack to G. F. Howe, March 8, 1951, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 226 (*"I told General Ward"*); author visit, Apr. 2000; *NWAf,* 432.

Fredendall immediately: phone memos, Feb. 16–17, 1943, LKT Jr. Papers, GCM Lib, box 9; Truscott, *Command Missions,* 159–62 (*"tanks were fighting"*); Blumenson, *Kasserine Pass,* 191; PMR, "Comments on *Kasserine Pass* by Martin Blumenson," PMR, MHI, 7; II Corps provost marshal journal, Feb. 19, 1943, NARA RG 407, E 427, box 3126.

This farrago: *Kriegstagebuch,* 21st Panzer Div., Feb. 16–17, 1943, "Kasserine Pass Battles," vol. I, part 2, CMH; Howe, *The Battle History of the 1st Armored Division,* 172–73; war diary, 10th Panzer Div., Feb. 17, 1943, "Kasserine Pass Battles," vol. I, part 2, CMH.

"Move the big elephants": Robinett, *Armor Command,* 165–69 (*"When things are going badly"*); Robinett, "The Axis Offensive in Central Tunisia," lecture, n.d., PMR, LOC MS Div.

In truth: Blumenson, *Kasserine Pass,* 192 (*"Everything is going badly"*); phone transcript, Feb. 17, 1943, 1055 hrs., LKT Jr. Papers, GCM Lib, box 9 (*"I have had"*).

Ward and Robinett braced: L. C. Gates, *The History of the 10th Foot, 1919–1950,* 135; letter, T. Riggs to parents, June 25, 1943, PMR, LOC MS Div, box 4 (*"We stood in the cactus"*).

Fifteen minutes: *Tank Destroyer Forces World War II,* 27 (*"Everybody was throwing"*); Gardiner, "We Fought at Kasserine," 8 (*"I counted thirty-five"*); Robinett, *Armor Command,* 167–75 (*"let them have it!"*); Robinett, "The Axis Offensive in Central Tunisia," lecture; n.d.; Howe, *The Battle History of the 1st Armored Division,* 175–79; *NWAf,* 434–36; CCB log, Feb. 17, 1943, NARA RG 407, E 427, 601-CCB-0.3, box 14825.

"War is cruelty": Foote, *The Civil War,* vol. III, 602; Rame, 252, 254 (*"The night was heavy"*); Tobin, 82 (*"You need feel"*).

"This Place Is Too Hot"

Two formidable sentinels: author visits, Sept. 1996 and Apr. 2000; *NWAf,* 348, 446 (*"gigantic, crudely corrugated"*).

Kasserine Pass is not impregnable: *NWAf,* 446 (*"offers such advantages"*); phone transcript, Feb. 17, 1943, 1340 hrs. (*"I am holding"*), and phone memo, Rooks to Truscott, Feb. 18, 1943, LKT Jr. Papers, GCM Lib, box 9; AAR, 19th Engineers, March 8, 1943, NARA RG 407, E 427, box 19248; Beck et al., 96–98 (*failed to complete*); Conway, SOOHP, MHI (*"trying to draw a line"*).

Just beyond: *NWAf,* 440–42, 453; Hoffman, *Stauffenberg,* 171; war diary, Panzer Army Afrika, Feb. 19, 1943, "Kasserine Pass Battles," vol. I, part 2; Kesselring, *Memoirs,* 151; *Destruction,* 295.

Even at his distant remove: "History of the 26th Infantry in the Present Struggle," MRC FDM, 8/14–16 (*"pull a Stonewall Jackson"*); phone transcript, Feb. 18, 1943, 1022 hrs., LKT Jr. Papers, GCM Lib, box 9; Heller and Stofft, eds., 255–57 (*hold back more than 200*); letter, Stark to OW, Jan. 28, 1951, OW, MHI; "Historical Record of the 19th Engineer Regiment," Oct. 1942–Oct. 1943, NARA RG 407, E 427, box 19248; AAR, 2nd Bn, 19th Engineers, RG 407, box 19248; author interview, Hans von Luck, May 1994, Hamburg; Hans von Luck, *Panzer Commander,* 113; war diary, Afrika Korps, Feb. 19, 1943, "Kasserine Pass Battles," vol. I, part 2.

And, soon, on the right: Davis, "The Battle of Kasserine Pass," 22; "History of the 26th Infantry in the Present Struggle," MRC FDM, 8/19; *NWAf,* 451.

Shadows swallowed: memo, Charles A. L. Dunphie, forwarded to G. F. Howe from Cabinet Office historical section, Sept. 11, 1951, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 229 (*"out of his depth"*); "Report of Operations," II Corps, May 2, 1943, "Kasserine Pass Battles," vol. 1, part 2, CMH (*"well in hand"*); letter, Stark to OW, Jan. 28, 1951, OW, MHI (*"that blockhead"*); "History of the 26th Infantry," MRC FDM, 8/21.

Even as this puff: diary, Charles M. Thomas, Co. C, 19th Engineers, possession of Roger Cirillo (*"The worst of it all"*); letter, George F. Hertz, published in *Iowa City Daily Iowan,* May 19, 1943, MCC, YU; Ellis, *On the Front Lines,* 89 (*"women sobbing"*).

Night fever spread: AAR, 19th Engineers, March 8, 1943, NARA RG 407, E 427, box 19248 (*"A considerable number of men"*); "History of the 26th Infantry," MRC FDM, 8/22; *NWAf,* 452; "Historical Record of the 19th Engineer Regiment," Oct. 1942–Oct. 1943, NARA RG 407, box 19248; II Corps provost marshal journal, report from William A. Seitz, Co. A, 26th Inf, n.d., NARA RG 407, E 427, box 3126 (*"In some instances"*).

Bad as the bad night: *NWAf,* 454–55; Hoffman, *Stauffenberg,* 171.

The American collapse: "History of the 26th Infantry," MRC FDM, 8/24–25; diary, C. M. Thomas, possession of Roger Cirillo (*"Forget about"*); Blumenson, *Kasserine Pass,* 249–52; "Historical Record of the 19th Engineer Regiment," Oct. 1942–Oct. 1943, NARA RG 407, E 427, box 19248 (*"This place is too hot"*).

The "uncoordinated withdrawal": AAR, 19th Engineer Regt, March 8, 1943, NARA RG 407, E 427, box 19248; "History of the 26th Infantry," MRC FDM, 8/22–25 (*French gunners* and *"action shots"* and *"Fight to the last man"*); Blumenson, *Kasserine Pass,* 255 (*Casualties just among infantrymen*); *NWAf,* 455; Conway, SOOHP, MHI (*Washington on horseback*); letter, Stark to OW, Jan. 28, 1951, OW, MHI (*"We had to crawl"*).

"Order, Counter-order, and Disorder"

Demolitionists laid: Rame, 263 (*slabs of guncotton*); McNamara, 57; "Tébessa Tableaux," ts, n.d., Samuel L. Meyers Papers, MHI (*slaughtering every chicken*).

As always in the great clash: letter, TR to Eleanor, Feb. 24, 1943, TR, LOC; Renehan, 234; Roosevelt, *Day Before Yesterday,* 441.

Little buoyancy: Mason, "Reminiscences and Anecdotes of World War II," MRC FDM (*"head in hands"*); *These Are the Generals,* 227 (*"I like that man"*); James R. Webb, "First Waltz with Rommel," ts, n.d., James R. Webb Papers, DDE Lib, box 1 (*"If I were back home"*); Michael Carver, ed., *The War Lords: Military Commanders of the Twentieth Century,* 603 (*"I saw his attitude change"*); Blumenson, *Kasserine Pass,* 280.

Fredendall repaired: "Diary Covering the Activities of General Fredendall and Supporting Players, Dec. '42-March '43," James R. Webb Collection, DDE Lib (*"Dabney, open up the bottle"*); Clift Andrus, notes on Omar Bradley's *A Soldier's Story,* n.d., MRC FDM (*"Dinner!"*).

"I'm going to be": Hal Boyle, "Brass Seen at Fault at Kasserine Pass," Associated Press, Feb. 11, 1948, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 225; Fredendall to DDE, Feb. 19, 1943, DDE Lib, PP-pres, box 42 (*"Ward appears tired"*).

While Eisenhower pondered: *NWAf,* 457–58; Robinett, *Armor Command,* 175–77; Robinett, "The Axis Offensive in Central Tunisia, Feb. 1943," lecture; Robinett, letter to G. F. Howe, March 4, 1952, PMR, LOC MS Div., box 4; letter, Philipsborn to G. F. Howe, Feb. 18, 1952, PMR, LOC MS Div., box 4

(*"There is no use"*); Dunphie memo, forwarded to G. F. Howe from Cabinet Office historical section, Sept. 11, 1951, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 229; Porter, SOOHP, MHI (*"Get hold"*); letter, F.A.V. Copland-Griffiths to A. F. Smith, March 19, 1943, 1st Guards Bde, PRO WO 175/186 (*"the most perfect example"*).

Into the muddle: Alexander, "The African Campaign from El Alamein to Tunis," 869; DDE to Alexander, Feb. 7, 1943, NARA RG 331, AFHQ micro, R-5-C; Blaxland, 160; Alexander to DDE, Feb. 19, 1943, 1920 hrs., Alexander files, DDE Lib, box 3, folder 8; Alexander to Montgomery, Feb. 22, 1943, in Stephen Brooks, ed., *Montgomery and the Eighth Army*, 152 (*"very shocked"*).

He cut a dashing: Austin, 105; Carver, ed., *The War Lords*, 332–37 (*"natural good manners"* and *"able more than clever"*); Boatner, 4–5; Doherty, *Irish Generals*, 32, 36 (*"At the worst crises"*), 38 (*Churchill's favorite*); D'Este, *Eisenhower: A Soldier's Life*, 650 (mss) (*"Our position is catastrophic"*); Rupert Clarke, *With Alex at War*, xii–xiii; Brian Holden Reid, in John Keegan, ed., *Churchill's Generals*, 105 (*"archetypal Edwardian hero"*).

Some thought him stupid: Reid, in Keegan, ed., *Churchill's Generals*, 104 (*"Wellington without the wit"*), 108 (*"empty vessel"*), 109 (*"Intellect was not"*); Rolf, 25; Clarke, *With Alex at War*, xii (*tap dancing*); Dominick Graham and Shelford Bidwell, *Tug of War: The Battle for Italy, 1943–1945*, 36 (*"the campaigns of Belisarius"*).

Brilliantly slow: Alexander, OH, n.d., G. F. Howe, SM, MHI (*"solid soldier"* and *"allowing the Germans"*); Hamilton, 166 (*"The poor body"*); *Destruction*, 304 (*"Real fault"* and *"My Main anxiety"*); "Reminiscences of Hanson Weightman Baldwin," OH, 1976, John T. Mason, Jr., USNI OHD (*"old school tie"*); Reid, in Keegan, ed., 114 (*"quite useless"*).

First, Rommel's northern thrust: war diary, 10th Panzer Div., Feb. 19, 1943, "Kasserine Pass Battles," vol. I, part 2, CMH; Benjamin Caffey, OH, Feb. 1950, G. F. Howe, SM, MHI; *NWAf*, 452–53; Johnson, *One More Hill*, 37 (*"If they attack us"*); Howard and Sparrow, 119; "18th Infantry, Draft Regimental Wartime History," Stanhope Mason Collection, MRC FDM; Camp, ed., 23 (*"taking shoe boxes"*).

A renewed assault: author interview, Clem Miller, Jan. 4, 2000; author interviews, Edward Boehm, Nov. 26, 1999, and Jan. 4, 2000; Edward Boehm, "My Autobiography in WWII," ts, 1997, possession of Roger Cirillo, 36; "The Fragrance of Spring Was Heavy in the Air," account of 185th FA Bn, *Trail Tales*, Boone County (Iowa) Historical Society, No. 35, 1979, 37; Vernon Hohenberger, "Retracing My Footsteps in World War II," ts, n.d., Iowa GSM, 37; "The Tunisian Campaign, 34th Division," Iowa GSM, 5.

Checked on the right: AAR, 10th Bn, The Rifle Brigade, PRO, WO 175/518; *Destruction*, 297; Davis, "The Battle of Kasserine Pass," 22 (*"like caterpillars dropping"*); *The Rifle Brigade in the Second World War, 1939–1945*, 217; Austin, 90; D.G.A., "With Tanks to Tunis," *Blackwoods*, June 1945, 399 (*"We were forced"* and *"as hard as stiff legs"*); ffrench Blake, 118.

Rommel again held: Liddell Hart, ed., *The Rommel Papers*, 405; *NWAf*, 458, 460; Robinett, "Comments on *Kasserine Pass* by Martin Blumenson," PMR, MHI, 13, 16.

A reconnaissance report: author visit, Apr. 2000; *NWAf*, 461.

The scouts were wrong: Stanhope Mason and F. W. Gibb, OH, Apr. 26, 1951, G. F. Howe, SM, MHI; letter, Joseph T. Dawson to brother, Feb. 21, 1943, Dawson Collection, MRC FDM (*"this is our sector"*); Hazen, 104; Steven Clay, *Blood and Sacrifice: The History of the 16th Infantry Regiment from the Civil War Through the Gulf War*, 33 (mss); Edwin L. Powell, Jr., OH, 1982, Lynn L. Sims, CEOH, 130; Robinett, *Armor Command*, 181; letter, Philipsborn to G. F. Howe, Feb. 18, 1953, with PMR comments, PMR, LOC MS Div, box 4 (*"simply written on the ground"*).

Anderson on this very Saturday: "Personal Diary of Lt. Gen. C. W. Allfrey, the Tunisian Campaign (with 5 Corps)," Feb. 21, 23, 1943, Allfrey Collection, LHC (*"American fighting value"*); Haggerty, "A History of the Ranger Battalions in World War II," Ph.D. diss, 121 (*"a hairy-chested commander"*); Altieri, *The Spearheaders,* 236 (*"Onward we stagger"*).

The tanks came: Robinett, *Armor Command,* 183; *NWAf,* 462–64; Howe, *Battle History of the 1st Armored Division,* 191; "Combat Command B, Operations Report, Bahiret Foussana Valley, 20–25 February, 1943," "Kasserine Pass Battles," vol. I, part 2, CMH; II Corps, "report of operations," May 2, 1943, "Kasserine Pass Battles," vol. I, part 2, CMH; Clay, 35 (mss); Macksey, *Crucible of Power,* 166.

Repulsed on the right: NWAf, 463–64; Robinett, "The Axis Offensive in Central Tunisia, Feb. 1943," lecture, LOC MS Div.

Undeterred, two grenadier battalions: Robinett, *Armor Command,* 185; Andrus, notes on Omar Bradley's *A Soldier's Story,* n.d., MRC FDM; Clay, 35 (mss); Robinett, "The Axis Offensive in Central Tunisia, Feb. 1943," lecture, LOC; Robinett, "Comments on *Kasserine Pass* by Martin Blumenson," PMR, MHI, 13; Blumenson, *Kasserine Pass,* 279; Rolf, 139 (*Panic Sunday*).

Yet something had hardened: Andrus, notes on Omar Bradley's *A Soldier's Story,* n.d., MRC FDM (*"air was full"* and *"An artilleryman's dream"*); Andrus biographical file, compiled by Albert H. Smith, MHI (*"most skillful and practical"*).

A single battalion: "Combat Command B, Operations Report, Bahiret Foussana Valley, 20–25 February, 1943," "Kasserine Pass Battles," vol. I, part 2, CMH; Gardiner, "We Fought at Kasserine," 8 (*"A column of prisoners"*); Robinett, *Armor Command,* 187 (*"captured a whole flock"*).

"Lay Roughly on the Tanks"

As this action in the west: Messenger, 54; Irving, *The Trail of the Fox,* 274 (*"He suddenly"*).

By midafternoon all euphoria: AAR, 2nd Bn, 19th Engineers, May 20, 1943, NARA RG 407, E 427, box 19248; Liddell Hart, ed., *The Rommel Papers,* 405 (*"They did not seem"*); 10th Panzer Div. intelligence report, "Re: the advance of the 10th Panzer Division through the Faïd Pass to Thala," Feb. 25, 1943, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 225; Hoffman, *Stauffenberg,* 172.

The British had: Cameron Nicholson, "The Battle of Kasserine, February 1943," Nicholson collection, IWM, micro DS/MISC 7, 4 (*"no full-blooded orders"* and *"I found it difficult"*); Dunphie memo, forwarded to G. F. Howe from Cabinet Office historical section, Sept. 11, 1951, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 229; memo, S. L. Irwin to P. M. Robinett, June 23, 1949, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 229 (*"usual story"*); Nigel Nicholson, *Alex: The Life of Field Marshal Earl Alexander of Tunis,* 176 (*"He's right behind us"*).

Absent full-blooded orders: Dunphie memo; Blaxland, 163 (*"beautiful to watch"*); ffrench Blake, 119; *NWAf,* 465; D.G.A., "With Tanks to Tunis," 399 (*"erect in his scout car"*).

Dunphie was a gunner: Dunphie memo; Nicholson, *Alex,* 176 (*"empty but heavy"*); author visit, Apr. 2000; Herman Walter Wright Lange, "Rommel at Thala," *Military Review,* Sept. 1961, 72.

Almost on Dunphie's heels: war diary, 2/5 Leicestershire Regiment, Feb. 1943, PRO WO 175/513; Blaxland, 163; C. Nicholson, "The Battle of Kasserine" ffrench Blake, 119; Hastings, 219 (*"Keep away"*); Macksey, *Crucible of Power,* 169; *Tätigskeitbericht,* 10th Panzer Div., Feb. 21, 1943, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 225.

Two thousand yards: D.G.A., "With Tanks to Tunis" (*"German tracers"*); Dunphie memo (*"tank fight in the dark"*); AAR, F Battery, 12 (HAC) Regt, RHA, appendix C, and "The Battle of Thala (North

Africa) with F Bty 12th (HAC) Regt," RHA, appendix E ("*Lay roughly*"), and war diary, "Operations of Nickforce, 20–23 Feb. 1943," appendix D, all in Nicholson collection, micro, DS/MISC 7, IWM; Irwin memo to Robinett, June 23, 1949; war diary, 2/5 Leicestershire Regiment, Feb. 1943, PRO WO 175/513; Hastings, 219 ("*alarms were many*"); Watson, 143; Heller and Stofft, eds., 259; Blumenson, *Kasserine Pass,* 270, 275.

Dawn came: Dunphie memo ("*Irwin himself*"); memo, Irwin to Robinett, June 23, 1949 ("*extremely critical*"); Irwin, OH, Jan. 1950, G. F. Howe, SM, MHI; AAR, "Thala Engagement, 21–24 Feb. 1943," 9th ID artillery, n.d., NARA RG 407, E 427, box 7424; AAR, 60th FA, n.d., NARA RG 407, E 427, box 7471; Phillips, *Sedjenane: The Pay-off Battle,* 28; Phillips, *The Making of a Professional: Manton S. Eddy, USA,* 91; William C. Westmoreland, *A Soldier Reports,* 20.

It served: Blumenson, *Kasserine Pass,* 275; Austin, 91 ("*I'm sorry*").

The field marshal had shot: NWAf, 469; Liddell Hart, ed., *The Rommel Papers,* 406–407.

True to character: Kesselring, "The Events in Tunisia," 1949, FMS, #D-066, MHI, 5–10; AAR, Panzer Army Africa, Feb. 22, 1943, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 225 (*It appears futile*); Watson, 169; Kesselring, "The War in the Mediterranean, Part II, The Fighting in Tunisia and Tripolitania," FMS, #T-3 P1, 38.

Thala would prove: "Narrative of Events, Thala Engagement, 21–24 Feb. 1943," 9th ID artillery, March 4, 1943, "Kasserine Pass Battles," vol. I, part 1, CMH; Robinett, "Comments on *Kasserine Pass,"* PMR, MHI ("*toughest day*"); Austin, 93 ("*Gilbert and Sullivan*"); Kesselring, "Final Commentaries on the Campaign in North Africa," FMS, #C-075, MHI, appendix, 14; AAR, Panzer Army Africa, Feb. 23, 1943, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 225 ("*The enemy follows*"); Hoffman, 172; Liddell Hart, ed., 408 ("*I've stood up*").

On February 22: DDE to Fredendall, Feb. 22, 1943, Chandler, 980 ("*every confidence*"); Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe,* 145 ("*perfectly safe*"); Hinsley, *British Intelligence in the Second World War,* vol. II, 592–93; Howe, "American Signal Intelligence in Northwest Africa," U.S. Cryptologic History, series IV, vol. 1, NARA RG 457, NSA files, SRH 391, box 114, 29–30; memo, B. A. Dixon, II Corps G-2, Apr. 19, 1943, NARA RG 407, E 427, box 3163 ("*inability of most Arabs*").

Several more convoluted: AAR, 1st AD, "Report of Operations, Bahiret Foussana Valley," Feb. 23, 1943, "Kasserine Pass Battles," vol. I, part 2, CMH; Blumenson, *Kasserine Pass,* 282; Robinett, "Comments on *Kasserine Pass,"* PMR, MHI, 15; Gugeler, x-104; DDE to Fredendall, Feb. 22, 1943, Chandler, 982; Harmon, *Combat Commander,* 50 ("*cobra without*"), 112 ("*make up your mind*"), 116 ("*Nobody goes back*"); "Report of Gen. Harmon on taking command II Corps as deputy," n.d., LKT Jr. Papers, GCM Lib, box 9; C. Nicholson, "The Battle of Kasserine," 9 ("*to fight this battle out*"); Harmon, OH, Sept. 1952, G. F. Howe, SM, MHI (*Concluding that the man* and *"a fucking bloody nose"*).

In a Thala cellar: letter, F.A.V. Copland-Griffiths to A. F. Smith, March 19, 1943, 1st Guards Bde, PRO WO 175/186 ("*The Germans have gone!*"); C. Nicholson, "The Battle of Kasserine," 9 ("*Man cannot tell*"); war diary, "Operations of Nickforce," Feb. 23, 1943, 1130 hrs ("*not unduly*").

"Our follow-up was slow": Harmon, OH, Sept. 1952, G. F. Howe, SM, MHI; Harmon, *Combat Commander,* 50, 111–16; Nicholson, "The Battle of Kasserine," 9; Robinett, "Comments on *Kasserine Pass* by Martin Blumenson," PMR, MHI, 15; Hatfield diary, Feb. 23, 1943, OW, MHI ("*feels very low*").

Light snow fell: Robinett, *Armor Command,* 195 ("*cluttered with wrecked*"); Parris and Russell,

293, 296 (*chewing gum*); diary, C. M. Thomas; "Personal Diary of Lt. Gen. C. W. Allfrey," Feb. 23, 1943 (*orders were issued*); AAR, "The Tunisian Campaign, 34th Division," 5.

Even if Allied troops: "G-2 Report on Tunisian Campaign," 34th ID, June 12, 1943, Iowa GSM; "Report of Engineer Operations, II Corps, 15 March to 10 April 1943," NARA RG 338, box 147; letter, F.A.V. Copland-Griffiths to A. F. Smith, March 19, 1943, 1st Guards Bde, PRO WO 175/186 (*"vehicles were blowing up"*); Hendricks, "A Time of Testing: U.S. Army Engineers in the Tunisian Campaign of World War II," lecture, 7; Ralph Ingersoll, *The Battle Is the Pay-off*, 112 (*"like caddies"*); Howze, *A Cavalryman's Story*, 61; Beck et al., 106; Charles S. Schwartz, "The Field Operations of a Maintenance Battalion," ts, n.d., ASEQ, in papers of W. L. Rossie, 1st AD, MHI.

A precise tally: Heller and Stofft, eds., 261; *NWAf*, 477–78; "Office, Division Inspector, 1st AD," Feb. 23, 1943; *Destruction*, 302; DDE to GCM, Feb. 24, 1943, Chandler, 984 (*"not a child's game"*).

"The proud and cocky": Three Years, 268; *NWAf*, 479; Ellis, *Brute Force*, 253; Gugeler, x-99; Robinett, "Comments on *Kasserine Pass*," 14 (*"one would have to search"*).

That error could be laid: Three Years, 265 (*"full responsibility"*); Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, 146 (*"had I been willing"*).

There were other: Three Years, 244; DDE to GCM, Feb. 24, 1943, Chandler, 984 (*expressed surprise*); Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, 148; Chandler, 958n (*"I am disturbed"*).

Certainly he had done: DDE to L. R. Fredendall, Feb. 22, 1943, Chandler, 981; DDE to Churchill, Feb. 17, 1943, Chandler, 960 (*"We must be prepared"*); DDE to J.S.D. Eisenhower, Feb. 19, 1943, Chandler, 965 (*"It is possible"*).

Fratricide flourished: Semmens, "The Hammer of Hell," 122; Paul L. Williams, "Report of Operations, XII Air Support Campaign," Apr. 9, 1943; Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, 145; Richard G. Davis, *Carl A. Spaatz and the Air War in Europe*, 199.

the hammer of typewriters: Ingersoll, 31.

CHAPTER 10: THE WORLD WE KNEW IS A LONG TIME DEAD

Vigil in Red Oak

Southwest Iowa's second winter: *Red Oak* (Iowa) *Express*, *Villisca* (Iowa) *Review*, *Clarinda* (Iowa) *Herald-Journal*, *Council Bluffs Nonpareil*, Feb.–Apr. 1943; Larson, ed., "The History and Contribution to American Democracy of Volunteer 'Citizen Soldiers' of Southwest Iowa, 1930–1945," 43; author visit, southwest Iowa, Oct. 1999; "Red Oak, Iowa, Has 23 Boys Missing in Action in North Africa," *Life*, May 3, 1943, 26; Milton Lehman, "Red Oak Hasn't Forgotten," *Saturday Evening Post*, Aug. 17, 1946, 14 (*American Legion Park* and *female drivers* and *"They kind of dreaded me"*); 168th Infantry Publications," Iowa GSM.

When letters began arriving: *Red Oak* (Iowa) *Express*, Apr. 26, 1943 (*"Send the food parcel first"*); *Villisca* (Iowa) *Review*, March 18, 1943 (*"I lost everything"*); memo, Jan. 2, 1945, and repatriated POW statements, Apr. 1945, NARA RG 153, Office of the JAG, box 2, files 3-2 and 3-8; letter, Drake to Ryder, Oct. 4, 1944, Ryder Papers, DDE Lib; Lehman, "Red Oak Hasn't Forgotten" (*Ko-z-Aire Furnace Company* and *she set gold stars*); Larson, ed., 43 (*"Red Oak came as close"*).

"We Know There'll Be Troubles of Every Sort"

The Carthaginians of antiquity: Powell, *In Barbary*, 64; DDE to GCM, Feb. 21, 1943, Chandler, 971

(*"this affair"*); Jordan, 201; E. Hughes diary, March 6, 1943, "Allied High Command," Irving collection, MHI, reel 5 ("*pretty discouraging*").

First to go: E. A. Mockler-Ferryman, ts, n.d., LHC, 129–35 (*"If a man is not wanted"*); DDE to Brooke, Feb. 20, 1943, Chandler, 969 (*"broader insight"*); "History of the 26th Infantry in the Present Struggle," 9/3, MRC FDM, box 301; Robinett, "The Axis Offensive in Central Tunisia, Feb. 1943," lecture (*"professional graveyard"*); Alexander, OH, G. F. Howe, SM, MHI (*"watch him"*).

Orlando Ward also awaited: diary, March 4, 1943, OW, MHI; Butcher diary, DDE Lib, A-250 (*voicing regret*); DDE to Fredendall, Feb. 20 and March 2, 1943, Chandler, 969 and 1002; Persons, 2; Harmon, *Combat Commander*, 120 (*"no damned good"*); Harmon, OH, Sept. 1952, G. F. Howe, SM, MHI (*"common, low"*); Blumenson, ed., *The Patton Papers, 1940–1945*, 177 (*"coward"*), 181; Truscott, *Command Missions*, 173; Alexander, OH, SM, MHI (*"I'm sure"*).

A final verdict came: Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 42; Hansen, 3/70; letter, Harmon to G. F. Howe, Oct. 16, 1952, NARA RG 319, OCMH (*soft landing*); DDE to GCM, March 3 and 4, 1943, Chandler, 1006–1007; "Diary covering the activities of Gen. Fredendall," James R. Webb Collection, DDE Lib (*"something wrong"*); Rolf, 165 (*"Glory be"*); W. B. Smith, OH, May 12, 1947, G. F. Howe, SM, MHI (*"a good colonel"*).

Patton was hunting boar: Garrison H. Davidson, OH, 1980, John T. Greenwood, CEOH, 189; DDE to GCM, March 11, 1943, Chandler, 1022; memo, DDE to GSP Jr., March 6, 1943, Chandler, 1010; Hatch, 149; *Three Years*, 273 (*"tears came to his eyes"* and *"like the devil"*).

"With sirens shrieking": Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 43; Gugeler, x-127 (*"picturesque"*); Skillen, 284 (*"scares the shit"*).

Both reactions pleased him: Paul Wanke, "American Military Psychiatry and Its Role Among Ground Forces in World War II," *Journal of Military History*, Jan. 1999, 141; Robinett, *Armor Command*, 204; observer report, team #3, n.d., NARA RG 165, Director of Plans and Ops, corr, box 1229 (*"can sweat"*); Blumenson, *Patton*, 183.

They soon developed: Ingersoll, 20, 28; Thomas E. Hannum, "The Thirty Years of Army Experience," ts, n.d., ASEQ, 91st Armored FA, 1st AD, MHI; Downing, 188; Philip G. Cochran, OH, 1975, USAF HRC, 88 (*"don't even have underwear"*); Josowitz, *An Informal History of the 601st Tank Destroyer Battalion*; Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 44.

Determined and energetic: Blumenson, *Patton*, 183; Mason, "Reminiscences and Anecdotes of World War II," ts, 1988, MRC FDM, 64–67, 130–31 (*"yellow-bellies"*); Carter, "Carter's War," CEOH, VI-18; Gardiner, ts, USMA Arch, 137; W.R.C. Penney, ts, n.d., LHC (*"smart, blasphemous"*); Foote, vol. 3, 395 (*"stern open air"*); Bradley and Blair, *A General's Life*, 99 (*"strangest duck"*).

Morale improved: memo to AFHQ chief engineer, March 9, 1943, NARA, AFHQ micro, R-90-F; Robert John Rogers, "A Study of Leadership in the First Infantry Division During World War II," master's thesis, 1965, Fort Leavenworth, 21 (*"Watch us run"*); TR to Eleanor, March 2, 6, 11, and 20, 1943, TR, LOC, box 9.

Soldiers were viewed: Robert R. Palmer et al., *The Procurement and Training of Ground Combat Troops*, 170, 175, 181–83 (*"as one would buy"*); Kreidberg and Henry, 647; letter, J. L. Devers to L. J. McNair, Feb. 4, 1944, NARA RG 165, Director of Plans and Ops, corr, box 1230; Taggart, ed., 41; Houston, 145; Harmon, "Notes on Combat Experience During the Tunisian and African Campaigns," in "Kasserine Pass Battles," vol. II, part 3; report, Walton H. Walker, June 29, 1943, NARA 165, E 418, box 1229 (*"sacks of wheat"*); "Activities of the G-1 Section During the Tunisian Campaign," 34th ID, n.d., Iowa GSM; memo, from 5th Replacement Bn to II Corps, Apr. 12, 1943, NARA RG 492,

MTO, special staff, box 1043; T. J. Camp, ed., 15; report #42, March 13, 1943, NARA RG 337, Observer Reports, box 52; "Lessons of the Tunisian Campaign, 1942–3, British Forces," n.d., NARA RG 492, MTOUSA, box 56.

No less worrisome: Russell Hill, *Desert Conquest,* 235 (*"a bit windy"*); Donald Vining, ed., *American Diaries of World War II,* 53; Cowdrey, 137–44; Grinker and Spiegel, 234; DDE to GSP Jr., Apr. 12, 1943, NARA RG 94, II Corps, box 3161 (*"increasing number"*).

First known as shell shock: "Casualties, Wounded, and Wounds, 1946–7," G-3 Section, Army Field Forces, NARA RG 337, file 704, series 10, box 46 (*"the ostrich attitude"*); Wanke, 127–46; Doubler, 243–44; McManus, 67 (*"beat his head"*); Grinker and Spiegel, 14–16, 31, 38, 59, 63, 71, 232–34; Philip G. Cochran, OH, USAF HRC, 106 (*"Am I becoming uncourageous?"*).

Visiting a field hospital: Parris and Russell, 299.

"One Needs Luck in War"

Dawn was just: Daniell, *The Royal Hampshire Regiment,* vol. 3, 103–105; "155th Field Battery at Béja," *Field Artillery Journal.*

Eight similar attacks: *NWAf,* 502–509 (*"nincompoops"*); *Destruction,* 327–28; Ray, 41; Rommel, *Krieg Ohne Hass,* 363–64; McCurtain Scott, OH, March 1976, R. Gugeler, OW, MHI (*"too many generals"*).

not the nincompoops: Daniell, *History of the East Surrey Regiment,* vol. 4, 161; Austin, 97–98; Forty, *Tank Action: From the Great War to the Gulf,* 119; Parris and Russell, 268; Kühn, *Rommel in the Desert,* 196; Kleine and Kühn, *Tiger: The History of a Legendary Weapon, 1942–1945; Destruction,* 328n (*"Tank Killer"*).

The Germans fared: *NWAf,* 505; *Destruction,* 327; Alexander, "The African Campaign from El Alamein to Tunis," 870–71 (*"almost inevitable"*); Anderson, "Operations in North West Africa."

Cruel mountain fighting: Parris and Russell, 264–65; Gates, 138–43; R. Priestly, ts, n.d., 2nd Bn, Para Regt, IWM, 83/24/1; Perrett, *At All Costs,* 159; *NWAf,* 508; Anderson, "Operations in North West Africa" (*"not a happy period"*).

Rommel was still seething: Liddell Hart, ed., *The Rommel Papers,* 414–16; Irving, *The Trail of the Fox,* 280–84 (*"What a colony"*).

Yes, this would have made: Liddell Hart, ed., *The Rommel Papers,* 414 (*"end of the army"*); Macksey, *Tank Versus Tank,* 119 (*kicked a soccer ball*); *NWAf,* 514–19; *Destruction,* 322–26.

But Ultra decrypts: Hinsley, *British Intelligence in the Second World War,* vol. 2, 283; Bennett, *Ultra and Mediterranean Strategy,* 210, 379.

Thick mist lingering: Blaxland, 189; Rolf, 162; Irving, 282; *Destruction,* 325 (*"wandered rather vaguely"*); D. C. Quilter, ed., *"No Dishonorable Name,"* 159 (*"A great many"*); Ian C. Cameron, *History of the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders 7th Battalion,* 80 (*"wonderful shoot"*); Hamilton, 169 (*"I shall write letters"*).

"the first perfect battle": Clifford, 400; letter, A.J.A. Weir to parents, June 1943, IWM, 67/258/1 (*"larger than a card table"*); Bernard Ireland, *The War in the Mediterranean, 1940–1943,* 198; Kesselring, *Memoirs,* 152; Greiner diary, March 10, 1943, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 225; Liddell Hart, ed., *The Rommel Papers,* 415–16 (*"great gloom"*).

If hardly unexpected: Liddell Hart, ed., 416 (*"plain suicide"*), 422; Irving, *The Trail of the Fox,*

283 (*"During the drive"* and *"whole thing stinks"*), 288 (*"fallen from grace"*); Hans von Luck, *Panzer Commander,* 114; author interview, Hans von Luck, Hamburg, May 1994; Westphal, 127 (*"gradually consumed*"); Kesselring, "The War in the Mediterranean, Part II, The Fighting in Tunisia and Tripolitania," 42 (*"last trump"*); Ronald Lewin, *Rommel as Military Commander,* 209 (*"not quite normal"*); Rommel to Arnim, March 12, 1943, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 226.

"I have observed": DDE to J.S.D. Eisenhower, March 12, 1943, Chandler, 1028.

After months of sailing: Chandler, 961n (*"selflessness of character"*); *Three Years,* 280 (*"Tell Ike"*).

"I have caught up": DDE to GCM, Alexander et al., Chandler, 860, 1020, 1049, 1052, 1018.

He was busier: DDE to Edgar Eisenhower, GCM, et al., Chandler, 1018, 1024, 1009, 1050, 862; Jordan, 197 (*"Eisenhower's genius"*).

More and more: DDE to GCM, et al., Chandler, 1033, 1036, 860.

Rommel famously observed: Martin Van Creveld, *Supplying War,* 201; 601st Ordnance Bn, unit history, MHI; *Logistical History of NATOUSA/MTOUSA,* n.d., NARA RG 407, E 427, AG, WWII operations reports, 95-AL1-4, box 203; Bykofsky and Larson, 148; quartermaster memo, n.d., NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 225; Leighton and Coakley, 475 (*"brilliant"*).

In World War I: lecture, B. B. Somervell, "Army Service Forces," Aug. 9, 1943, NARA RG 334, NWC Lib, L-1-43, box 167; Kreidberg and Henry, 649; memo, North African logistics, n.d., NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 225.

Can do: Leighton and Coakley, 485; Ellis, *Brute Force: Allied Strategy and Tactics in the Second World War,* 298 (*II Corps lost more armor*); "Signal Communication in the North African Campaigns," from "Tactical Communications in World War II," part I, Historical Section, Chief Signal Officer, MHI, 120 (*500 miles*); McNamara, 60 (*new shoes*); *Logistical History of NATOUSA/MTOUSA,* 82.

The Americans' "genius": Behrens, 333, 313 (*"creating resources"*); Kennett, 93; McNamara, 70; letter, Carter B. Magruder to LeRoy Lutes, March 21, 1943, NARA RG 319, OCMH, Ordnance Dept., box 596; "History of Planning Division, Army Service Forces," 1946, CMH, 3-2.2 AA, 87.

"The American Army": Ellis, *Brute Force,* 525 (*"overwhelms them"*); Donald Davison, "Aviation Engineers in the Battle of Tunisia," 1943, 12; Beck et al., 90.

The German military: Leighton and Coakley, 14; Cooper, *The German Army, 1933–1945,* 362; Bragadin, 245–47 (*"roaring furnace"*); Friedrich Weber, "Battles of 334th Division and of Group Weber," n.d., FMS, #D-215, MHI.

Ships not yet sunk: Howard, *Grand Strategy,* vol. 4, 349–50; Warlimont, "High Level Decisions —The Tunisian Campaign," Feb. 1951, FMS, #C-092a, MHI, 19; *NWAf,* 368, 499n, 513fn, 682; Liddell Hart, ed., *The Rommel Papers,* 417 (*"to create the build-up"*).

Other woes: *NWAf,* 366; AAR, Wehrmacht transportation officer, Apr. 1–May 4, 1943, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 225 (*lignite*); Arnim, "Recollections of Tunisia," FMS, C-098, MHI, 62 (*oil cakes*), 84.

These tribulations: Lucas, *Panzer Army Africa,* 173 (*"paper divisions"*); Bennett, *Ultra and Mediterranean Strategy,* 373–74; *Destruction,* 274 (*"if no supplies"*); Warlimont, "High Level Decisions," Feb. 1951, FMS, #C-092a, MHI, 33–34 (*"a fortress"*); Cooper, 368 (*"Hitler wanted"*).

"The Devil Is Come Down"

The soft whir: *Desert Victory*; Brian Horrocks, *A Full Life,* 148; Brooks, ed., 176; D'Este, *Bitter Victory,* 99 (*"wee bugger"*); Fred Majdalany, *The Battle of El Alamein,* 150; Hill, *Desert Conquest,* 252–61 (*"this conqueror business"*).

Bernard Law Montgomery: Majdalany, 37–38 (*"lonely and loveless"*); Tute, 194; Hamilton, 142; Boatner, 372–74; John North, ed., *The Alexander Memoirs, 1940–1945,* 17 (*"One only loves"*).

the Book of Job: Doherty, *Irish Generals,* 29; W. P. Lunn-Rockliffe, "The Tunisian Campaign," *Army Quarterly and Defence Journal,* Apr.–May 1969, 109, and June–July, 1969, 228; Rolf, 26 (*"Kill Germans"*); Alan F. Wilt, *War from the Top,* 197; Gilbert, 372; Barnett, *The Desert Generals,* 268 (*"sheer weight of British resources"*); Charles D. McFetridge, "In Pursuit: Montgomery After Alamein," *Military Review,* June 1994, 54; Chalmers, 158; Hamilton, 169 (*"trust him"*).

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Brigadier, 277; Powell, *In Barbary*, 123; Tuker, 299; H. Marshall, *Over to Tunis*, 100; Hastings, 201.

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CHAPTER 11: OVER THE TOP
"Give Them Some Steel!"

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"Search Your Soul"

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Heritage, winter 1993, 48 (*"We baked"*); AAR, 1st ID, "Gafsa–El Guettar," March 31, 1943, possession of Roger Cirillo; author interview, Albert H. Smith, Jan. 24, 2000; "History of the 26th Infantry in the Present Struggle," FDM MRC, box 301, 9/62–81; Martin, *The GI War*, 56 (*"Night just closes down"*); Mason, "Reminiscences and Anecdotes," 54 (*"fussed and fumed"*), 136.

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Such atrocities: inspector general report, July 13, 1943, NARA RG 492, MTOUSA, records of the special staff, box 2011 (“*three out of five*”).

But other crimes: “Historical Report of the Provost Marshal Section of the Atlantic Base Section,” Oct. 5, 1942, to May 31, 1943, NARA RG 492, provost marshal general, box 2228; Giraud letter in memo, Apr. 3, 1943, NARA RG 331, AFHQ micro, R-204-F; memo, J. C. Holmes, chief, AFHQ liaison section to G-1 (personnel), May 3, 1943, NARA RG 331, AFHQ micro, R-204-F; memo, NATO provost marshal to G-1, May 6, 1943, NARA RG 331, AFHQ micro, R-204-F.

Some of the most appalling: “Report of the Battalion Chief of Leon Tenneroni,” Bône, Apr. 21, 1943, in “Inspections and Investigations by Inspectors General and Other Officers & Reports Of [*sic*],” vol. II, serial #8, HQ NATO, June 6, 1943, to CG, 8th AAF, “Report of Security Investigation,” NARA RG 492, MTO, Records of the Special Staff, box 1043; “History of the 98th Engineer (General Service) Regiment,” Aug. 17, 1941–May 1944, NARA RG 407, E 427, Engineers, box 19556; WWII U.S. Army executions, JAG, history branch office, U.S. force, ETO, 8-3.5 AA, v. 1; memo, “comparison of executions during WWI and WWII,” U.S. Army JAG to undersecretary of war, Apr. 22, 1946, author’s possession.

“I Had a Plan…Now I Have None”

“a soft feel”: TR to Eleanor, Apr. 6, 1943, TR, LOC, box 9; *Destruction*, 374–75 (“*last man*” and “Non è stata”).

It was not especially good: Adrian Stewart, *Eighth Army’s Greatest Victories*, 189; Jackson, *Alexander of Tunis as Military Commander*, 189; Benson, “Some Tunisian Details,” 2 (“*Attack and destroy*”).

They swung at air: Wellard, 80 (“*abreast like a Spanish fleet*”); AAR, “The El Guettar Operation, Intelligence Report,” Benson Force, n.d., NARA RG 407, E 427, box 3126; Blumenson, *The Patton Papers, 1940–1945*, 213; *NWAf*, 577; “Report on Operation, 15 March–10 Apr. 1943,” II Corps, CARL, N-2652A; Hoffman, *Stauffenberg*, 177–80; Boatner, 534.

Within an hour: Parkinson, 89 (“*Hello, Limeys!*”); Gordon, 169; Hill, *Desert Conquest*, 272 (“*somebody besides a Nazi*”), 300.

Eisenhower was jubilant: DDE to John S. D. Eisenhower, Apr. 8, 1943, Chandler, 1083; DDE to E. E. Hazlett, Jr., Apr. 7, 1943, Chandler, 1081 (“*It seems*”).

He was just: DDE to A. D. Surles, Apr. 6, 1943, Chandler, 1080; DDE to GSP, Apr. 5, 1943, Chandler, 1073 (“*my policy*”).

Proximity to the British: Tedder, 406 (“*The only way*”); Lewin, *Montgomery as Military Commander*, 178; Brooks, ed., 157–72, 191; Butcher diary, DDE Lib, PP-pres, box 166, A-282; “Reminiscences of Hanson Weightman Baldwin,” 1976, John T. Mason, USNI OHD, 4–375 (“*anybody except that son of a bitch*”); Morgan, *Past Forgetting*, 115 (“*a thorn in my side*”).

As if to compensate: DDE to GSP, Apr. 5, 1943, Chandler, 1073; Blumenson, *The Patton Papers, 1940–1945*, 220, 218.

Yet in his ecumenical: B.A. Dickson, OH, Dec. 13, 1950, SM, MHI; Bradley and Blair, *A General's Life*, 144–45 (*"speechless"*); Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 59 (*"This war's"*); DDE to Alexander, March 23, 1943, Chandler, 1056; DDE to GCM, March 29, 1943, Chandler, 1059; DDE to GSP, Apr. 5, 1943, Chandler, 1074 (*"your corps"*).

One final chance: author visit, Apr. 2000; "G-2 Report on Tunisian Campaign," June 12, 1943, 34th ID, Iowa GSM; Vaerst, "Operations of the Fifth Panzer Army in Tunisia," MHI, 18; Arnim, "Recollections of Tunisia," MHI, 91; Forty, *The Armies of Rommel*, 177; Carell, 340; Blaxland, 219 (*powers of German sergeants*).

This was a mistake: Ryder, OH, Feb. 21, 1950, G. F. Howe, SM, MHI (*"go out in that area"*); "The Tunisian Campaign, 34th ID," Dec. 13, 1943, NARA RG 407, E 427, 334-0.3; msg "to all officers of the 34th Div., 11 March 1943," 201 file, Charles W. Ryder papers, DDE Lib, box 2 (*"creeping paralysis"*); Clem Miller, *Some Things You Never Forget*, 109; Davies, 103–107; Hougen, *The Story of the Famous 34th Infantry Division*; AAR, 109th Medical Bn, n.d., in "109th Med Publications," Iowa GSM.

Belatedly, Alexander realized: Nehring, FMS, MS #T-3, vol. 3a, MHI; Macksey, *Crucible of Power*, 229, 257.

At eleven a.m. : Macksey, *The Tank Pioneers*, 186–91 (*"watch your step"*); Hansen, 3–66; Blaxland, 211; Liddell Hart, "Notes for History, Talk with Crocker," July 9, 1943, LHC, 11/1943/46; AAR, IX Corps, n.d., PRO, WO 175/97.

It was regrettable: "The Tunisian Campaign, 34th ID," Dec. 13, 1943, NARA RG 407, E 427, 334-0.3; Ryder, OH, SM, MHI; Caffey, OH, Feb. 1950 SM, MHI (*"I had a plan"*); *NWAf*, 583–85; *Destruction*, 377–80; Harold G. Bull, OH, Sept. 21, 1950, SM, MHI.

Now another officer: Louis-Marie Koeltz, "Memo on meeting held April 6, 1943, at the command post of General Ryder," 1950, trans. for author by Claudia Brown, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 225; Robinett, *Armor Command*, 126; Alexander, OH, SM, MHI; letter, J. T. Crocker, Sept. 8, 1950, and memo, Gordon H. A. MacMillan, n.d., both in memo, H. B. Latham, Cabinet Office Historical Section, to G. F. Howe, Sept. 25, 1950, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 229.

It went badly: JAG, 34th ID, "Historical Report on Activities," June 30, 1943, Iowa GSM; "Chaplain's Report on the Tunisian Campaign," 34th ID, n.d., NARA RG 407, E 427, box 9417; Alexander to DDE, Apr. 7, 1943, Alexander files, DDE Lib, box 3, folder 8 (*"reasonably confident"*); D'Este, *Bitter Victory*, 62 (*"soft, green"*); Robert Ward, OH, Nov. 30, 1950, G. F. Howe, SM, MHI (*"no one was saying"*); Hansen, 3/60-6 (*"brittle and axiomatic"*); Ryder, OH, Feb, 21, 1950, SM, MHI (*"wished to win"*).

Perhaps, Ryder mused: "The Tunisian Campaign, 34th ID," Dec. 13, 1943, NARA RG 407, 334-0.3; Virgil Craven, "The Operation of Company I, 133rd Infantry, in the Attack at Fondouk Gap," 1950, Fort Benning Infantry School, 6, 9–19; Bailey, *Through Hell and High Water*, 90; Ankrum, 250, 243; Austin, 114; D.G.A., "With Tanks to Tunis," 399; Green and Gauthier, ed., 154; letter, Ray C. Fountain, *Des Moines Tribune*, Aug. 5, 1943, Iowa GSM.

There would be no bombing: "Proposed Mission Against Fondouk Gap, Tunisia, On 7 April 1943," Feb. 7, 1951, Air University Lib, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 228; Davis, *Carl A. Spaatz and the Air War in Europe*, 207; log, Co C, 1st Bn, 133rd Infantry Regt, Iowa GSM (*"A wave of flying dust"*); Miller, *Some Things You Never Forget*, 111 (*"a pea on a plate"*); Roland Anderson, "The Operations of the 135th Infantry Regiment in the Vicinity of Fondouk el Okbi," 1948, Fort Benning Infantry

School; Bailey, *Through Hell and High Water,* 90 (*"We continued"*); letter, Robert P. Miller to G. F. Howe, Jan. 14, 1951, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 229; Craven, "The Operations of Company I," 10–19 (*"did little more"*); Robert Ward, OH, Nov. 30, 1950, G. F. Howe, SM, MHI; author interview, Paul Calder, Nov. 8, 1999; Ankrum, 238 (*"the mere raising"*).

General Crocker was fixated: AAR, letter, 1st Guards Bde, Apr. 21, 1943, PRO, WO 175/186; Ellis, *Welsh Guards at War,* 114–21; *NWAf,* 588 (*even abandoned*); Blaxland, 221 (*boulder-to-boulder*).

A hard night: Craven, "The Operations of Company I," 19, 22 (*"hill looked bigger than ever"* and *asked to be arrested*); "Narrative History, North African–Tunisian Campaign, 133rd Inf Regt.," June 7, 1943, NARA RG 407, E 427, box 9549; letter, Donald C. Landon to G. F. Howe, Jan. 17, 1951, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 228; Richard F. Wilkinson, ts, n.d., in AAR, Co C, 1st Bn, 133rd Inf Regt, Iowa GSM (*"brew tea"*).

They went—but: Alexander, "The African Campaign from El Alamein to Tunis," 877–79; ffrench Blake, *A History of the 17th/21st Lancers, 1922–1959,* 133 (*"We shall all"*); Moorehead, 145; C. N. Barclay, *History of the 16th/5th The Queen's Royal Lancers, 1925 to 1961,* 88–91 (*set fire to blankets* and *"The tank rocked"*); "Combat Report," 3rd Co (German) 334th Mobile Bn, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 225; Anderson, "The Operations of the 135th Infantry Regiment" AAR, 16th/5th Lancers, Apr. 9–10, 1943, PRO, WO 175/291; Bailey, *Through Hell and High Water,* 96 (*"as smooth and white"*).

The retreating Italians: *Kriegstagebuch* V, Fifth Panzer Army, Apr. 9, 1943, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 226; *NWAf,* 588–90; *Destruction,* 382; Jordan, 226; Rolf, 215 (*"usual wog town*"); author visit, Apr. 2000; D'Arcy-Dawson, 199–201; Austin, 117; Hansen, 41/116; diary, G. P. Druitt, Apr. 1943, IWM, 96/38/1.

American losses: "The Tunisian Campaign, 34th ID," Dec. 13, 1943, NARA RG 407, E 427, 334-0.3; Bolstad, 135 (*"It is only"*); Ankrum, 253, 256; AAR, Co C, 109th Medical Bn, n.d., Iowa GSM (*"You couldn't make"*); Green and Gauthier, ed., 154; letter, Robert R. Moore to Dorothy, Nancy Jo, May 12, 1943, possession of Robert R. Moore, Jr.

A great opportunity: *NWAf,* 591–92; letter, J. T. Crocker, Sept 8, 1950, and memo, Gordon H. A. MacMillan, n.d. (*"all commanders"*), both in memo, H. B. Latham, Cabinet Office Historical Section, to G. F. Howe, Sept. 25, 1950, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 229; Bull, OH, Sept. 21, 1950, SM, MHI (*"severe and caustic"*); *Time,* Apr. 19, 1943, 28.

Ryder declined: Richard Wilson, "The Gallant Fight of the 34th Division," 1943, *Des Moines Register and Tribune*; Charles Werterbaker, account of Fondouk, *Time,* May 24, 1943; Bailey, *Through Hell and High Water,* 100; E. N. Harmon to H. G. Bull, Apr. 1943, Harmon papers, MHI (*"I do not believe"*); diary, G. P. Druitt, Apr. 1943, IWM, 96/38/1; Macksey, *Crucible of Power,* 261; Schrijvers, *The Crash of Ruin* (*"Our cousins regret"*).

Eisenhower was both: Butcher diary, DDE Lib, PP-pres, box 166, A 306, 307, 308, 313 (*"whale tracks"* and *advocated sacking*); Hughes diary, May 1, 1943, MHI, R-5 (*"Ike says"*); DDE to GCM, Apr. 5, 1943, Chandler, 1073; DDE to MWC, March 29, 1943, Chandler, 1062; Mina Curtiss, ed., *Letters Home,* 61 (*"We have found"*).

chapter 12: the inner keep
Hell's Corner

One hundred thousand: "Operations of II Corps, Northern Tunisia, 23 Apr.–9 May," NARA RG 407, E 427, box 3113; Pyle, *Here Is Your War*, 247 (*"dead weary"*); Vining, ed., 71; letter, Raymond Dreyer, May 18, 1943, in *Fenton* (Iowa) *Reporter*, July 1, 1943, MCC, YU (*"five months"*); Moorehead, 153 (*"hilarious, shouting bands"*); H. Marshall, *Over to Tunis*, 46 (*convolvulus resembled wood smoke*).

Not even a Tunisian spring: Meyer, "Strategy and Logistical History: Mediterranean Theater of Operations," n.d., vol. I, CMH, X-16; *NWAf*, 604–605; CBH, Apr. 1943, MHI.

To Béja: *To Bizerte with the II Corps*, 4–9; *NWAf*, 599–601; *Destruction*, 398; Alexander memo, Apr. 21, 1943, NARA, AFHQ micro, R-6-C (*"We have got"*).

Getting the Allied divisions: C. S. Sugden, XVIII Army Group, to AFHQ G-3, Apr. 7, 1943, NARA RG 331, AFHQ micro, R-6-C (*"present low state"*); Morton Yarmon, "The Administrative and Logistical History of the ETO: IV, TORCH and the ETO," March 1946, Historical Division, U.S. Army Forces, ETO, CMH, 8.31 AA v. 4, 97 (*467,000 troops*); GSP to Alexander, Apr. 11 and 12, 1943, GSP, LOC, box 32; Bradley and Blair, 150 (*"Take them"*); Mayo, 142; Harmon, *Combat Commander*, 130 (*"just a childish fancy"*); Blumenson, *The Patton Papers, 1940–1945*, 218 (*"I would rather"*); Pogue, *George C. Marshall: Organizer of Victory, 1943–1945*, 189 (*"marked fall"*), 191 (*battlefield equals*).

On April 18: Patton, *War As I Knew It*, introduction by Rick Atkinson, xi (*"fighting general"*); letter, Akers to C. B. Hansen, Jan. 12, 1951, Hansen papers, MHI (*"we doubled figures"*); Dickson, "G-2 Journal," MHI, 59 (*"Your estimates"*); Hansen, 4/121 (*Patton disputed*); "Report on Operation Conducted by II Corps, U.S. Army, Tunisia," Apr. 10, 1943, Arthur S. Nevins Papers, MHI; AAR, II Corps, "Report on Operation," etc., "Statistical Data Corrected to Include 2 May 1943," CARL, N-2652 A.

As he left: Blumenson, *The Patton Papers, 1940–1945*, 221.

On Thursday morning: Bradley and Blair, 25, 35, 50, 58, 159; Liebling, 89 (*"least dressed-up"*); Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 29; Fletcher Pratt, *Eleven Generals: Studies in American Command*, 300, 314; B. A. Dickson, OH, SM, MHI; Davis, *Dwight D. Eisenhower: Soldier of Democracy*, 413 (*"too damned sound"*).

With map unfurled: Liebling, 89; DDE to Bradley, Apr. 16, 1943, Chandler, 1093; Bradley and Blair, 155; Martin, *The G.I. War, 1941–1945*, 57 (*"hunting wild goats"*); Hansen, 5/60A (*"djebel hopping"*), 5/27 (*"This chap Bradley"*); "Operations of II Corps, Northern Tunisia, 23 Apr.–9 May," NARA RG 407, E 427, box 3113.

Although the endgame: Donald Davison, "Aviation Engineers in the Battle of Tunisia," June 1943, AAF School of Applied Tactics, Orlando, MHI, 13, 28; "Statement by Brig. Gen. Laurence S. Kuter," May 22, 1943, Pentagon, NARA RG 319, background *To Bizerte with II Corps*, 2-3.7 BA, box 103 (*"We attacked Bizerte"*); Operations Bulletin No. 2, May 31, 1943, HQ, NW African AF, NARA RG 334, NWC Lib, box 132 (*killed 752 civilians*); "Interview on Four Aspects of the Air Campaign in Africa," July 5, 1943, Office of Assistant Chief of Air Staff, Intel., NARA RG 334, NWC Lib, box 14; *Destruction*, 412; Carell, 351.

Allied minelayers: Bragadin, 242–43; "Reports Received by U.S. War Department on Use of Ultra in the European Theater, WWII," NARA RG 457, NSA files, SRH-037, 12; *The AAF in Northwest Africa*, Wings at War, No. 6, Center for Air Force History, 59–60 (*twenty-eight tons of bombs*); letter, R. Bruce Graham, Feb. 28, 1943, MCC, YU (*"It's Better to Give"); Destruction*, 416–17.

Kesselring turned to air transport: "Operations Bulletin No. 1," Apr. 30, 1943, HQ NW AAF, NARA RG 334, NWC Lib, box 132; Ulrich Buchholz, "Supply by Air of the Enlarged Bridgehead of Tunis," 1947, FMS, #D-071, MHI; *Destruction,* 415–16.

Worse was to come: Richard Thruelsen and Elliott Arnold, *Mediterranean Sweep: Air Stories from El Alamein to Rome,* 86–93; *Destruction*, 601; Buchholz, "Supply by Air," FMS, #D-071; MacCloskey, 166; DDE, "Commander-in-Chief's Dispatch," 44; Davis, *Carl A. Spaatz and the Air War in Europe*, 196; Roderic Owen, 205; Tedder, 205 (*"If Kesselring goes on"*); *Destruction,* 416.

Although a quarter-million: Hinsley, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, vol. 2, 611; Rinteln, "The Italian Command and Armed Forces in the First Half of 1943" (*"was in agony"*); Lucas, *Panzer Army Africa,* 176; "P.W.B. Combat Propaganda," Sept. 2, 1943, AFHQ, Wallace Carroll Papers, LOC MS Div, box 3; "Psychological Warfare in the Mediterranean Theater," Aug. 1945 report to War Dept., Naples, MHI; Wallace Carroll, *Persuade or Perish,* 158.

Axis reserves: *Destruction,* 603, 604n, 542; Hinsley, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, vol. II, 612; First Italian Army to OKH, Apr. 14, 1943, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 225 (*"the repulse"*); Ellis, *Brute Force*, 255 (*"armored division without petrol"*); Macksey, *Crucible of Power*, 271 (*"squinting for ships"*); Hinsley, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, abridged ed., 5; *Destruction,* 360, 403. *the German high command*: Warlimont, 307–308, 313 (mangiatori); Kesselring, *Memoirs*, 155; CCS to Joint Staff Mission and DDE, Apr. 7, 1943, DDE Lib, PP-pres, box 91; *Destruction,* 384 (*daily ration*).

If his virtual abandonment: *NWAf,* 601–602; *Destruction,* 409, 393–94.

Il Duce's backbone: Arnim, "Recollections of Tunisia," 71, 66 ("*the greatest desire*").

Hammering Home the Cork

As the Allied armies: Lindsay, 85–87; *The Tiger Kills*, 179–80; C.R.B. Knight, *Historical Record of the Buffs*, 176.

Montgomery had known: *Destruction,* 397–402 (*"bald rock faces"*); Hamilton, 233–36 (*"if Anderson"*); Lewin, *Montgomery as Military Commander,* 177–82; Macksey, *Crucible of Power*, 241, 271; *The Tiger Kills*, 184–90; Lindsay, 89; Stevens, *Fourth Indian Division*, 233; Tuker, 338, 346 (*fortifications were lightly held*); Prasad, ed., 511.

Even the second-highest: author visit, Apr. 2000; Lewin, *Montgomery as Military Commander*, 180 (*"rotting stalagmite"*); John Laffin, "The Battle of Takrouna," *After the Battle* 12, 1976, 48; I. McL. Wards, *Takrouna,* 3–27 (*"One of those grim moments"*); Kippenberger, 305–11 (*"never a moment"*); Horrocks, 163; Hill, *Desert Conquest,* 291.

But that was it: Prasad, ed., 511–12; *The Tiger Kills*, 184 (*"My hands"*); Hill, *Desert Conquest*, 265; Montgomery to Brooke, Apr. 12, 1943, quoted in Brooks, ed., 206; Macksey, *Crucible of Power*, 272 (*"In the darkness"*).

For the first time: Kippenberger, 313–14 (*"wait for the enemy"*); Bradley, *A Soldier's Story,* 90 (*"Let's radio"*).

Weary and distracted: Destruction, 441–42; G. R. Stevens, 245 (*surly rebellion*); Horrocks, 164 (*"Of course we can"*).

Even the most irresistible: Hunt, 176 (*"rather a sad"*); David Williams, *The Black Cats at War: The*

Story of the 56th (London) Division T.A., 1939–1945; Macksey, *Crucible of Power*, 287; Messenger, 111 (*"It was only"*); Hamilton, 236–38; Brooks, ed., 222 (*"short rest"*).

As usual in Tunisia: Hamilton, 216 (*"partridge drive"*); Brooks, ed., 209; Davis, *Carl A. Spaatz and the Air War in Europe*, 208–209 (*seventy different air attacks*); Messenger, 102; Macksey, *Crucible of Power*, 277; Blaxland, 227 (*"The plan's all right"*); Nicholson and Forbes, 318–19.

The Germans struck: Anderson, "Operations in North West Africa" Kurowski, 118; Horsfall, 167 (*"Go away, James"*).

Crocker launched: *Destruction*, 434; *NWAf*, 612; Messenger, 103–104; Ellis, *On the Front Lines*, 75 (*"Men have begun"*).

On April 26: Anderson, "Operations in North West Africa" George E. Wrockloff, "Land Mines," n.d., NARA RG 334, NWC Lib, ANSCOL S-1-43, W-89, box 169; Macksey, *The Tank Pioneers*, 191; Hastings, 229.

So it was up to Allfrey: Malcolm, 118; Ray, 50; *Destruction*, 436 (*"ghosts of good soldiers"*); Marshall, *Over to Tunis*, 124–25; Skillen, 327 (*"like a crowd"*); Horsfall, 98 (*"children of Satan"*), 140.

Good Friday dawned: D'Arcy-Dawson, 213–14; Perret, *At All Costs*, 159–66; Alexander to Montgomery, March 29, 1943, in Brooks, ed., 189; Middleton, 269; Malcolm, 118; Ray, 52; Austin, 132; Daniell, *History of the East Surrey Regiment*, vol. IV, 171; Jordan, 237 ("*an infernal sight*"); Messenger, 105 (*"the whole ridge"*); P. Royle, ts, n.d., IWM, 66/305/1 (*Zeiss binoculars*).

Longstop had fallen: *Destruction*, 437; *NWAf*, 611–13; AAR, 1st Bn Irish Guards, Apr. 27–30, 1943, PRO, WO 175/488; G. E. Thurbon, ts, n.d., IWM, 94/8/1; D.J.L. Fitzgerald, *History of the Irish Guards in the Second World War* (*"threw everything"* and *"no time for the gangrene"*); Nicolson and Forbes, 321–30 (*"pungent scent"*); Marshall, *Over to Tunis*, 134–35 (*"a forest of rifles"*).

The hill remained: Anderson, "Operations in North West Africa" *Three Years*, 292 (*3,500 casualties*); *NWAf*, 613; G. P. Druitt, ts, n.d., IWM, 96/38/1 (*"One arm was sticking"*).

"Count Your Children Now, Adolf!"

"We are sitting": Baumer, 122; Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 81.

The guns finished: Austin, 120 (*"the hollows"*); Arthur R. Harris, "The Bigger They Are the Harder They Fall," *Field Artillery Journal*, May–June 1938, 228; *NWAf*, 614; Hannum, "The 30 Years of Army Experience," ASEQ, 91st Armored FA, 1st AD, MHI, 38–40 (*"Count your children"*).

The infantry surged: Tobin, 95 (*"long, slow line"*); *NWAf*, 621–23; Johnson, *One More Hill*, 63–64; Eston White, author interview, Feb. 2000; log, "16th Infantry, Béja-Mateur Campaign," Apr. 25, 1943, NARA RG 407, E 427, box 5919; John W. Baumgartner et al., "History of the 16th Infantry, 1798–1946," 28; "History of the 26th Infantry in the Present Struggle," MRC FDM, 10/26–74; Spivey, 76 (*"Please shoot me"*).

Into this maelstrom: Kahn, "Education of an Army," *New Yorker*, Oct. 14, 1944, 28, and Oct. 21, 1944, 34; G. Perret, *There's a War to Be Won: The United States Army in World War II*, 70; Larrabee, 119 (*"a Presbyterian pulpit speaker"*); Boatner, 353.

Now McNair did something: McNair diary, visit to North Africa, Apr. 15–May 3, 1943, NARA RG 337, HQS, commanding general, box 1 (*"nowhere did I find"*); Clay, *Blood and Sacrifice*, 167 (mss); CBH, Apr. 23–25, 1943, MHI; Kahn, "Education of an Army" John Kelley, interview by Michael

Corley, 1977, possession of Paul Gorman (*argued bitterly*); Hall, "A Memoir of World War II" Charles T. Horner, Jr., "The General's First Purple Heart," ts, n.d., ASEQ, 16th Inf Regt, 1st ID, MHI (*"get the jeep"*); Hansen, 5/52 (*upside down*); Clark, *Calculated Risk,* 168 (*"American soldiers"*).

That was untrue: Three Years, 292; Phillips, *Sedjenane,* 27, 57, 67.

Impassable it proved to be: AAR, "Report on the Operation Conducted by the 9th Infantry Division in Northern Tunisia, 11 Apr.–8 May 1943," NARA RG 407, E 427, box 7326; AAR, 47th Inf Regt, NARA RG 407, E 427, box 7514; AAR, 60th Inf Regt, NARA RG 407, E 427, box 7535; AAR, 9th ID artillery, NARA RG 407, E 427, box 7424; *NWAf,* 615–20; Mittelman, 106–14.

So it went: Phillips, *Sedjenane,* 86, 104 (*"a dark theater"*), 111; Mittelman, 106–14; "The Fragrance of Spring Was Heavy in the Air," *Trail Tales,* 1979, Boone Co. (Iowa) History Society, Iowa GSM; "G-2 report, II Corps, Battle for Bizerte," Annex B, counter-intelligence section, May 13, 1943, NARA RG 407, E 427, box 3126 (*"free from Arabs"*); "Adventures by Men of the 60th Infantry Regiment in WWII," 1993, MHI, 20–22.

The enemy held fast: Bradley, *A Soldier's Story,* 89; Liebling, *Mollie & Other Pieces* 9; Mittelman, 106; Howard and Sparrow, 118; D'Arcy-Dawson, 134; William E. Faust, ASEQ, ts, 1st ID artillery, 1990, MHI, 42, 50.

No hill loomed: author visit, Apr. 2000; Anderson, "Operations in North West Africa" Alexander, "The African Campaign from El Alamein to Tunis" (*"best German troops"*).

Anderson proposed: Bradley, 86–87 (*"Never mind"*), Bradley and Blair, 157 (*"far over his head"*); *To Bizerte with the II Corps,* 16; CBH, May 1, 1943, MHI; "G-3 Report, Tunis Operation," 1st ID, Apr. 28–30, 1943, NARA RG 407, E 427, box 5759; "History of the 26th Infantry in the Present Struggle," MRC FDM, chapter 10; CBH, May 1, 1943 (*"This campaign is too important"*).

To seize the hill: Caffey, OH, SM, MHI; Bradley, 85 (*"Get me that hill"*); letter, Robert P. Miller to G. F. Howe, Jan. 14, 1951, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 225; Arnold N. Brandt, "The Operations of the 1st Battalion, 135th Infantry at Hills 609 and 531," 1948 (*"There was excitement"*); Ryder, OH, SM, MHI; Berens, 62; Bailey, *Through Hell and High Water,* 106; Green and Gauthier, 120–24 (*"For the love of heaven"* and *"crouched gray shapes"*); Pyle, *Here Is Your War,* 254 (*rocks wrapped*); Bolstad, 140 (*"We lay there awaiting dawn"*).

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Determined to bury: Tuker, 367–69 (*"stunning weights"*); *Destruction,* 450–51; Stevens, *Fourth Indian Division,* 251–53; Marshall, *Over to Tunis*, 118 (*"you could almost"*); "Military Reports of the United Nations," Sept. 15, 1943, Military Intelligence Division, WD, NARA RG 334, box 585; Messenger, 113–14 (*"a roof of shells"*).

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Early on Friday afternoon: *Three Years,* 289 (*"hen"*); DDE to CCS et al., Chandler, 1100, 1108, 1113, 1118; Butcher diary, DDE Lib, A-349 (*"good and drunk"*).

he was sleeping badly: *Three Years*, 310; DDE to GCM et al., Chandler, 1104, 1114, 1115, 1148.

Now the fifty-five-year-old: *Three Years*, 298; Butcher diary, DDE Lib, A-365 (*"How much better"*).

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At Hammam Lif: Clifford, 443; Ellis, *Welsh Guards at War*, 123; Parris and Russell, 354 (*"like a steamboat"*); Howard and Sparrow, 142; Nicholson and Forbes, 339; Blaxland, 257; Quilter, ed., 54.

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points"); Horrocks, 172 (*"I have waited"*).

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Neither starvation: *Destruction*, 445–46; *NWAf*, 662; Hansen, 5/104; Parris and Russell, 348 (*"fought like sportsmen"*).

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EPILOGUE

Roses perfumed: Signal Corps footage, NARA film, ADC-1113 and ADC-2407; Bailey, 119; letter, Joe Farley, n.d., MCC, YU (*"too damn hot"*); Macmillan, *War Diaries*, 88–91 (*"football crowd"*).

Shortly before noon: Gardiner, ts, USMA Arch, 151–52 (*"same precision"*); Nicholson and Forbes, 349; diary, May 20, 1943, GSP, LOC, box 2, folder 13 (*"French ecclesiastic"*).

At noon, the crowd's mood: *Three Years*, 312; Moorehead, 65; Hougen, *The Story of the Famous 34th Infantry Division*; Bailey, *Through Hell and High Water*, 119.

After the French: Bailey, 119 (*"Arkansas backwoods men"*); diary, May 20, 1943, GSP, LOC, box 2, folder 13 (*"lack pride"*); Harmon, *Combat Commander*, 141; Davies, 110–11.

Then pipers: memo, 24th Guards to 1st Irish Guards, May 17, 1943, PRO, WO 175/488 (*"Brasses will"*); Macmillan, *War Diaries*, 90–91; Gardiner, ts, USMA Arch, 151–52 (*"much the better show"*).

The parade straggled: Nicholson, *Alex*, 193 (*"Hundreds of Italians"*); Nicholson and Forbes, 349; Macmillan, *War Diaries*, 91–92; *Three Years*, 313; Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 109 (*"waste of*

time").

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Young ones do: *Destruction,* 460; *NWAf,* 675; D'Arcy-Dawson, 24 (*"Mort!");* letter, Joseph T. Dawson to family, June 1, 1943, J. T. Dawson Collection, MRC FDM; Doubler, 240; Blaxland, 253 (six battalion commanders), 265.

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Any twenty-first-century author writing about World War II owes an incalculable debt to those of the twentieth century, and I gratefully acknowledge mine. Among the hundreds of volumes consulted for this work, a special recognition is owed the 114-volume *U.S. Army in World War II*, the official history informally known as the Green Series. I have also profited from the official British *History of the Second World War*, as well as innumerable regimental and division histories, personal memoirs, historical analyses, and scholarly studies. The compendium is large, and now one book larger.

Out of conviction that the ground itself has a great deal to say, I traveled to Tunisia in September 1996 and April 2000; to Morocco in April 2000; and to El Alamein, Egypt, in May 1996. To further steep myself I visited Volgograd (formerly Stalingrad), Moscow, the Seelow Heights east of Berlin, and other battlefields in Italy, France, Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands from 1994 to 2001. I also interviewed many veterans. But the core of this narrative is drawn from primary, contemporaneous sources—diaries, letters, records official and unofficial, after-action reports, unpublished memoirs, original maps—a surprising number of which have not previously been used in comprehensive accounts of the war. For help in tracking down these many thousands of documents I am deeply grateful for the professionalism and patience of a hundred or more historians and archivists.

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Maps by Gene Thorp

The Day of Battle

THE WAR IN SICILY AND ITALY, 1943–1944

VOLUME TWO OF THE LIBERATION TRILOGY

Rick Atkinson

The Day of Battle

To John Sterling

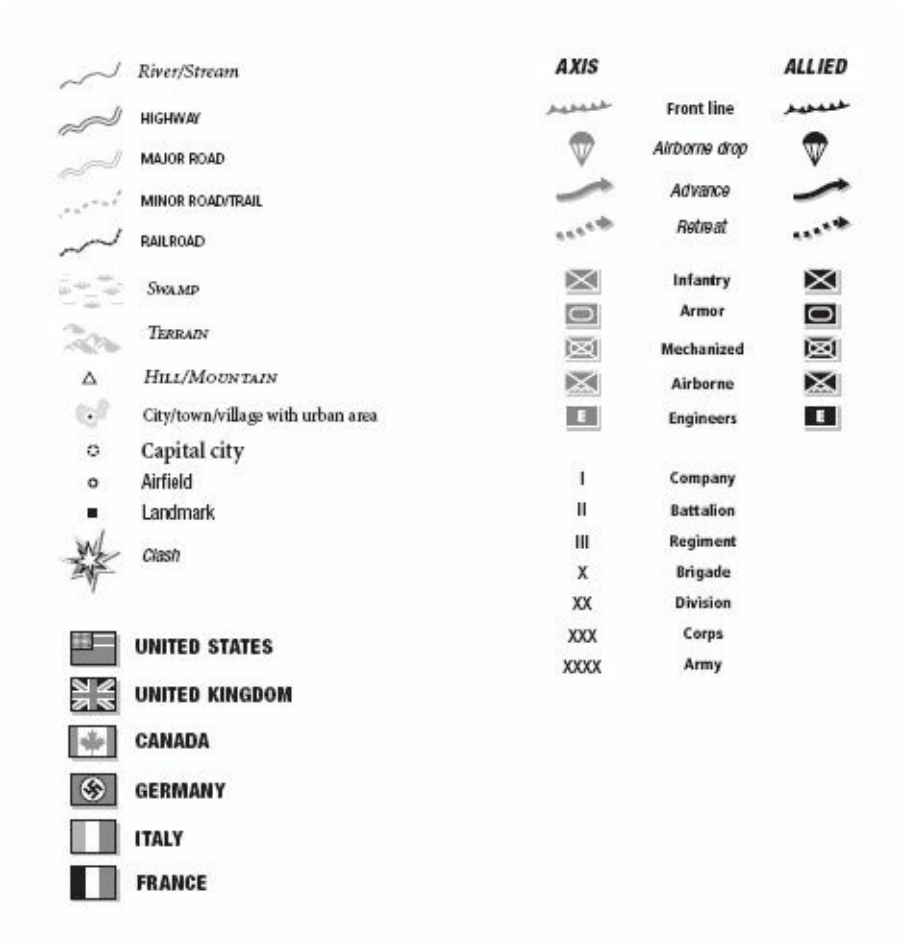
Muses, launch your song!
What kings were fired for war, what armies at their orders
thronged the plains? What heroes sprang into bloom,
what weapons blazed, even in those days long ago,
in Italy’s life-giving land?

Virgil, *The Aeneid*

MAPS

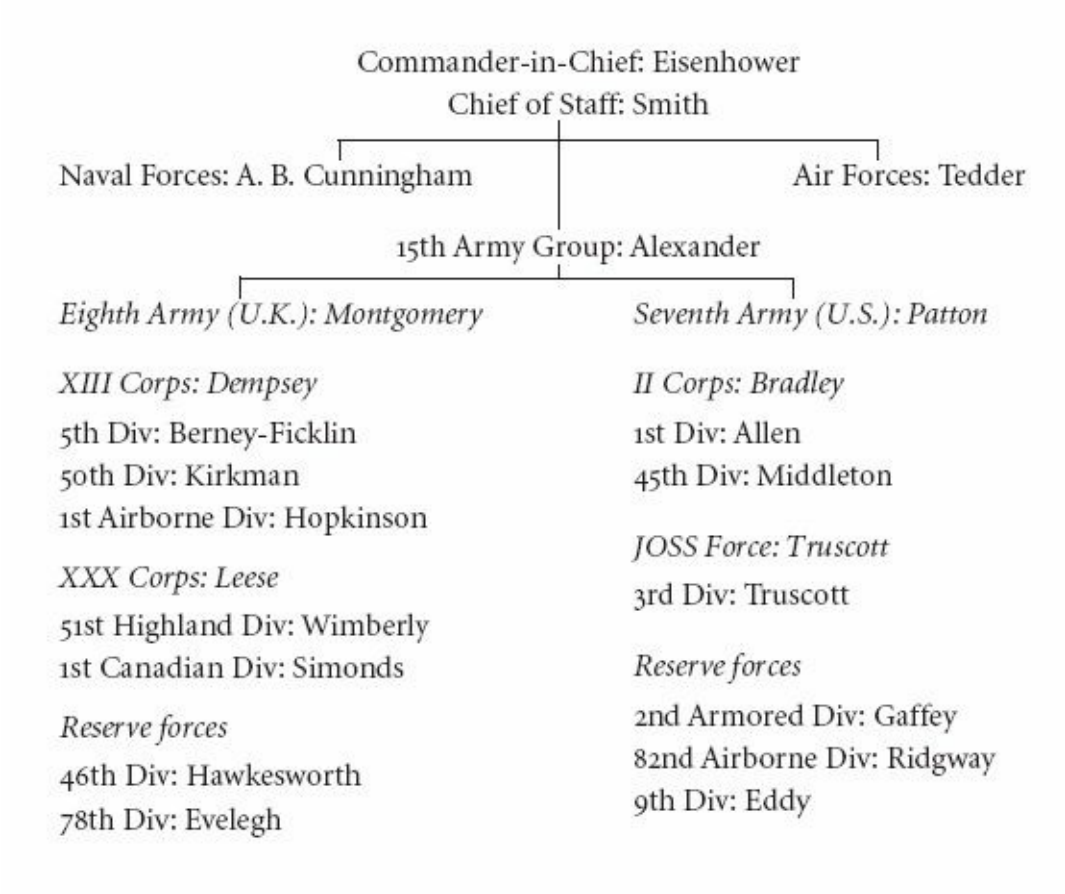
1. Operation HUSKY, Invasion of Sicily, July 1943
2. Counterattack at Gela, July 11, 1943
3. Attack Across Sicily, July 1943
4. Capture of Troina, August 1–6, 1943
5. Race to Messina, August 1943
6. The Italian Battlefield, September 1943–June 1944
7. Struggle at Salerno, September 9–14, 1943
8. Fifth Army at the Winter Line, mid-November 1943
9. First and Second Attacks on San Pietro, December 1943
10. Canadian Attack at Ortona, December 1943
11. Assault on the Rapido River, January 20–22, 1944
12. Anzio Landings and Early Advance, January 22–31, 1944
13. U.S. and French Attacks at Cassino, January 25–February 12, 1944
14. German Counterattack at Anzio, February 16–20, 1944
15. Operation DICKENS at Cassino, March 15–24, 1944
16. Operation DIADEM, May 11–23, 1944
17. Breakout at Anzio, May 23–25, 1944
18. Shifting the Attack at Anzio, May 25–26, 1944
19. The Liberation of Rome, May 31–June 4, 1944

MAP LEGEND


River/Stream
HIGHWAY
MAJOR ROAD
MINOR ROAD/TRAIL
RAILROAD
SWAMP
TERRAIN
HILL/MOUNTAIN
City/town/village with urban area
Capital city
Airfield
Landmark
Clash
UNITED STATES
UNITED KINGDOM
CANADA
GERMANY
ITALY
FRANCE
AXIS
ALLIED
Front line
Airborne drop
Advance
Retreat
Infantry
Armor
Mechanized
Airborne
Engineers
I Company
II Battalion
III Regiment
X Brigade
XX Division
XXX Corps
XXXX Army

ALLIED CHAIN OF COMMAND

INVASION OF SICILY, JULY 1943



ALLIED CHAIN OF COMMAND

OPERATION DIADEM, FINAL DRIVE TO ROME, MAY 1944

Supreme Allied Commander, Mediterranean: Wilson
Deputy: Devers

Naval Forces: J. Cunningham

Air Forces: Eaker

Allied Armies in Italy: Alexander

Eighth Army: Leese

XIII Corps: Kirkman

6th Armoured Div: Evelegh
4th Div: Ward
78th Div: Keightley
8th Indian Div: Russell
1st Canadian Armoured Bde: Murphy

I Canadian Corps: Burns

5th Canadian Armoured Div: Hoffmeister
1ST Canadian Div: Vokes
25th Tank Bde: Tetley

II Polish Corps: Anders

3rd Carpathian Div: Duch
5th Kresowa Div: Sulik
2nd Polish Armoured Bde: Rakowski

X Corps: McCreery

2nd NZ Div: Freyberg
24th Guards Bde: Clive
2nd Para Bde: Pritchard
12th South African Bde: Palmer
Italian Motorized Bde Group

Reserve forces

6th South African Armoured Div: Poole
V Corps: Allfrey

Fifth Army: Clark

II Corps: Keyes

85th Div: Coulter
88th Div: Sloan

VI Corps: Truscott

1st Armored Div: Harmon
3rd Div: O'Daniel
34th Div: Ryder
45th Div: Eagles
1st UK Div: Hawkesworth
5th UK Div: Gregson-Ellis
1st SSF: Frederick

French Expeditionary Corps: Juin

1st Fr. Inf Div: Brosset
2nd Moroccan Inf Div: Dody
3rd Algerian Inf Div: Monsabert
4th Moroccan Mtn Div: Sevez
Fr. Goumiers: Guillaume

Reserve forces

IV U.S. Corps h.q.: Crittenberger
36th Div: Walker
Italian Bde Group

The Day of Battle

PROLOGUE

SHE could be heard long before she was seen on that foggy Tuesday morning, May 11, 1943. Through the mist swaddling lower New York Bay sounded a deep bass A, two octaves and two notes below middle C, not so much blown as exhaled from the twin seven-foot whistles on the forward funnel, specially tuned to be audible ten miles away without discomfiting passengers at the promenade rail. Her peacetime paints—red, white, and black—had vanished beneath coats of pewter gray, although only after a spirited protest by camouflage experts who preferred a dappled pattern of blues and greens, called the Western Approaches scheme, to better befuddle enemy U-boats trying to fix her speed, bearing, and identity. Not that anyone glimpsing the famous triple stacks, the thousand-foot hull, or the familiar jut of her regal prow could doubt who she was. Gray paint had also been slathered over her name, but she remained, in war as in peace, the *Queen Mary*.

She slid past Ambrose Light at 8:30 A.M., precisely five days, twenty hours, and fifty minutes after leaving Gourock, Scotland. Escorting U.S. Navy destroyers peeled away to seaward. Like her antebellum colors, the *Queen*'s prewar finery was long gone, stripped and stored in a New York warehouse: the six miles of Wilton carpet, the two hundred cases of bone china and crystal, the wine cabinets and humidors that had provided fourteen thousand bottles and five thousand cigars on a typical crossing in the palmy days of peace. For this voyage, designated WW #21W, she had been transformed into a prison ship. Carpenters had removed any belowdecks fitting that could be used as a weapon, while installing alarm bells, locks, sandbagged machine-gun redoubts, and coiled barbed wire around dining and exercise areas. Now from deep in the hold came the drone of five thousand German prisoners, bagged in the North African campaign just ending and held in Scottish cages before being tendered to the *Queen* in Gourock. Three hundred British soldiers stood watch below; any guard inclined to befriend the enemy was advised, "Remember their barbarities." In truth, five days of violent zigzagging across the North Atlantic had rendered the barbarians docile. This lot, bound for a constellation of camps in the American Southwest, more than tripled the German POW population in the United States, which eventually would reach 272,000. To reduce heating bills, most camps sat south of 40 degrees north latitude; some commandants fed their prisoners bacon and eggs, encouraged camp pets and piano lessons, and permitted the Germans to order curtains from a Sears, Roebuck catalogue. That, too, encouraged docility.

But it was on the upper decks that the *Queen Mary*'s larger purpose on this voyage could be found. The secret passenger manifest listed the United Kingdom's most senior war chiefs, including commanders of the British Army, navy, and air force, bound for Washington, D.C., and TRIDENT, the code name for a two-week Anglo-American conference on war strategy. Officers crowded the rails as the ship glided through the Verrazano Narrows, peering into the fog in a vain effort to glimpse the Manhattan skyline seven miles north; they settled instead for dim views of Coney Island to starboard and Staten Island's Fort Wadsworth to port. Stewards and subalterns scurried about, sorting piles of luggage and tagging those bound for the White House with red slips bearing a large "W"—including two dozen bags belonging to a certain "Air Commodore Spencer." Secret documents were collected and filed in locked boxes stacked in the former children's playroom on the promenade deck, while classified wastepaper smoldered in an incinerator improvised from a bathtub in mezzanine suite number 105.

To mislead potential spies lurking in Scottish ports, great pains had been taken to obscure the details of this voyage. The ship's print shop in Gourock had engraved menus in Dutch to suggest that

the mysterious traveler to New York was Wilhelmina, exiled queen of the Netherlands. Workmen also installed wheelchair ramps and handrails, and counterintelligence rumormongers in dockyard pubs let slip that the *Queen Mary* was being dispatched to pick up President Franklin D. Roosevelt for a secret visit to Britain. But all pretense ended shortly after nine A.M. The ship's great screws turned a final turn, the iron anchor sank with a rattle and a mighty splash, and Air Commodore Spencer strolled on deck, "looking well and fat and pink," and eager to get on with the war.

Like the *Queen Mary,* Winston S. Churchill was simply too obtrusive to disguise, "the largest human being of our time," as one contemporary concluded. There was the Havana cigar, of course, said to be long as a trombone and one of the eight he typically smoked in a day. The familiar moon face glowered beneath the furrowed pate he had taken to rubbing with a scented handkerchief. This morning, after leaving a £10 tip for the *Queen*'s service staff, he swapped the casual "siren suit" worn through much of the voyage for the uniform of the Royal Yacht Squadron. The effect had been likened to that of "a gangster clergyman who has gone on the stage." The previous night Churchill had celebrated both his imminent arrival in America and the third anniversary of his premiership with the sort of feast that recalled not only the *Queen*'s prewar luxury but the sun-never-sets Empire itself: croûte au pot à l'ancienne, petite sole meunière, pommes Windsor, and baba au rhum, all washed down with a magnum of Mumm's Cordon Rouge, 1926.

"We are all worms," Churchill once intoned, "but I do believe I am a glow-worm." Who could dispute it? For three years he had fought the good fight, at first alone and then with the mighty alliance he had helped construct. He had long warned minions that he was to be awakened at night only if Britain were invaded; that alarum never sounded. His mission in this war, he asserted, was "to pester, nag and bite"—a crusade that Roosevelt, who would receive thirteen hundred telegrams from Churchill during the war, knew all too well. "Temperamental like a film star and peevish like a spoilt child," the prime minister's army chief wrote of him; his wife, Clementine, added, "I don't argue with Winston. He shouts me down. So when I have anything important to say I write a note to him."

"In great things he is very great," said the South African statesman and field marshal Jan Smuts, "in small things not great." Certainly the small things engaged him, from decrying a shortage of playing cards for soldiers, to setting the grain ration for English poultry farmers, to reviewing all proposed code words for their martial resonance. (He sternly forbad WOEBETIDE, JAUNDICE, APÉRITIF, and BUNNYHUG.) Yet his greatness in great things obtained. It was perhaps best captured by an admirer's seven-word encomium: "There is no defeat in his heart."

Sea voyages always reinvigorated Churchill, and none more than WW #21W. The prime minister's traveling party privately dubbed him "Master," and he had worked them hard each day, from cipher clerks to field marshals, preparing studies and the memoranda known as "prayers" for the TRIDENT meetings set to start on Wednesday. Typists worked in shifts on a specially designed silent Remington, taking down dispatches and minutes he mumbled through billowing cigar smoke. (His diction was further impeded by his lifelong struggle with the letter "s.") He stamped especially urgent documents with the decree "action this day," then retired for another hand of bezique—played with multiple decks from which all cards below seven were removed—and another tot of brandy, or champagne, or his favorite whiskey, Johnnie Walker Red. He had insisted on mounting a machine gun in his lifeboat. If the *Queen* were torpedoed, he declared, "I won't be captured. The finest way to die is in the excitement of fighting the enemy…. You must come with me in the boat and see the fun." At times he seemed weighted with cares—"all hunched up and scowling at his plate"—and he rebuked those unblessed with his fluency by reading aloud from Fowler's *Modern English Usage* on the "wickedness of splitting infinitives and the use of 'very' instead of 'much.'" Yet more often he was in high spirits: discussing seamanship with the captain on the bridge, watching films like *The Big Shot* and *All Through the Night* in the lounge, or chuckling at stories swapped over supper in his cabin with

his confederates. Particularly pleasing was a Radio Berlin report that placed him in the Middle East, supposedly attending a conference with Roosevelt. “Who in war,” he asked, “will not have his laugh amid the skulls?”

Churchill had proposed inspiriting his American cousins by storming ashore in Manhattan’s Battery Park, then promenading up Broadway. “One can always do what one wants if it takes people by surprise,” he explained. “There is not time for plotters to develop their nefarious plans.” Alas, the U.S. Secret Service disagreed, and instead three anonymous launches wallowed across the gray harbor toward the *Queen Mary* from Tompkinsville, on Staten Island. Waiting on the docks was Harry Hopkins, the president’s closest counselor, with the *Ferdinand Magellan,* a seven-car presidential train pointed toward Washington.

As Churchill stepped into the lead launch, the *Queen*’s entire company stood at the rails and cheered him off, their huzzahs trailing him to shore, where he disembarked and tossed a farewell wave before clambering onto the waiting train. They also knew, as they stood baying into the fog, that there was no defeat in his heart.

Packed into the *Magellan* baggage car with the suitcases and document crates was a thick sheaf of maps that had covered the walls of a makeshift war room next to Churchill’s cabin on the *Queen Mary.* Replicating the campaign maps in the subterranean Cabinet War Rooms beneath Great George Street in London, the sheets depicted—with pushpins and lengths of colored yarn—the battle lines on a dozen combat fronts around the globe on this Tuesday, the 1,349th day of the Second World War. The struggle that had begun in September 1939 was more than half over; yet if both commanders and commanded intuited that they were nearer the end than the beginning, they also sensed that less than half the butcher’s bill had been paid in a bloodletting that ultimately would claim sixty million lives: one life every three seconds for six years. They also knew that if the Allied powers—led by the United States, Britain, and the Soviet Union—now possessed the strategic initiative, the Axis powers of Germany, Italy, and Japan still held the real estate, including six thousand miles of European coastline and the entire eastern littoral of Asia. This the maps made all too clear.

The exception to Axis territorial hegemony was Africa, a campaign now in its final hours. Seven months earlier, in November 1942, Anglo-American troops had landed in Morocco and Algeria, sweeping aside weak forces of the collaborationist Vichy French government, then wheeling east for a forced march into Tunisia through the wintry Atlas Mountains. There they joined cause with the British Eighth Army, which, after a hard-won victory at El Alamein in Egypt, had pushed west across the crown of Africa. A succession of battles lost and won against two German-Italian armies raged across Tunisia, a country the size of the state of Georgia; particularly galling was the drubbing at Kasserine Pass in February 1943, which had cost six thousand U.S. casualties and, in terms of yardage lost, would remain the worst American defeat of the war. Yet superior airpower, naval forces, artillery, and the combined weight of the Allied armies had trapped and crushed the Axis forces, which would formally surrender on Thursday, May 13. The booty included a quarter million Axis prisoners, among them the scruffy vanguard now queued up in the *Queen Mary*’s hold for delousing.

Victory in North Africa—exhilarating, unqualified victory—also gave the Allies control of the fine ports and airfields from Casablanca to Alexandria. It forestalled Axis threats to Middle Eastern oil fields, reopened the Suez Canal for the first time since 1941—saving two months’ sailing time for convoys going out to India from Britain, since they no longer had to circumnavigate Africa—and exposed the wide southern flank of occupied Europe to further Allied attack. The triumph in North Africa also coincided with victory in the North Atlantic. Ferocious depredations by German submarine

wolfpacks had abruptly declined, thanks to improved electronic surveillance and because cryptologists had cracked German naval radio codes, allowing Allied warplanes and ships to pinpoint and destroy the marauders. Germany would lose forty-seven U-boats in May, triple the number sunk in March, and more than 3,500 Allied merchant ships would cross the Atlantic in the summer of 1943 without a sinking; a year earlier, the Allies had lost a ship every eight hours. The German submariner casualty rate during the war, 75 percent, would exceed that of every other service arm in every other nation.

Elsewhere in this global war, the ebb and flow of battle was less decisive. In the Pacific, Japan had been driven from Guadalcanal and Papua; Japanese reinforcements had been badly whipped in the Bismarck Sea in February; and American forces on this very day, May 11, were landing on Attu in the Aleutians, a far-corner fight that would obliterate the Japanese garrison of 2,500 at a cost of more than a thousand U.S. lives. American fighter pilots on April 18, again thanks to a timely radio intercept, ambushed and killed Admiral Isokoru Yamamoto, architect of the sneak attack on Pearl Harbor. Yet Japan held firm in Burma, and still occupied ports, coastal cities, and much farmland in China, as well as Pacific islands from the Kuriles to the central Solomons. Tokyo had embraced a defensive strategy of attrition and stalemate in hopes of breaking the Allies' will and keeping the Soviet Union out of the Pacific war.

On the Eastern Front, the war retained the immensely sanguinary character that had prevailed since Adolf Hitler invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941. Here, too, the tide had turned against the Axis, which less than a year earlier had invested the suburbs of Leningrad and Stalingrad and stood but a few hours' drive from the Caspian Sea. The Germans had lost thirty divisions since January, most of them at Stalingrad or in Tunisia, a loss equivalent to one-eighth of Hitler's total order of battle; tank numbers had dropped in the past three months from 5,500 to 3,600. A Soviet counteroffensive recaptured Kursk, Rostov, and the entire eastern shore of the Sea of Azov. Joseph Goebbels, propaganda minister for the Third Reich, described the Führer's despair in his diary on May 9: "He is absolutely sick of the generals…. All generals lie, he says. All generals are disloyal. All generals are opposed to National Socialism."

And yet: the Red Army remained more than three hundred miles from Germany's eastern border, facing two-thirds of the Wehrmacht's combat strength. Hitler still commanded three hundred German divisions, plus ninety more from satellite armies. The pummeling of German industry and cities with vast bomber fleets showed promise but had had skimpy results so far, in part because much of America's airpower had been diverted from British bases to Africa. All of continental Europe, except for neutral Spain, Portugal, Switzerland, and Sweden, remained under the Axis boot, from the Bay of Biscay to the river Donetz, and from the North Cape to Sicily. Some 1.3 million forced laborers toiled in German factories, while another quarter million slaved on Atlantic Wall fortifications along the vulnerable west coast in France and the Low Countries; countless others deemed worthless or dangerous were herded into concentration or extermination camps, including a quarter million French, of whom only 35,000 would survive.

The next Anglo-American blow—after victory in North Africa—had been decided five months earlier, in Casablanca at the last big strategy conference. Operation HUSKY was summarized in twenty-one words by the Combined Chiefs of Staff, the amalgamation of American and British commanders who directed the war for Roosevelt and Churchill: "An attack against Sicily will be launched in 1943 with the target date as the period of the favorable July moon." The largest island in the Mediterranean lay only a hundred miles from Tunis, off the toe of the Italian boot, and its invasion would provide a postscript to the African campaign. American strategists had been leery of waging war in the Mediterranean since even before the November 1942 landings in northwest Africa; Roosevelt triggered that campaign by siding with Churchill and overruling his own generals, who argued that Allied power should instead be concentrated in Britain for a direct lunge across the English Channel

toward Berlin. The American high command at Casablanca agreed to support HUSKY because the capture of Sicily would further safeguard Mediterranean shipping and perhaps divert Axis strength from the Soviet front; it would also provide air bases for bombing Italy and other targets in occupied Europe, and might cause weak-kneed Rome to abandon the war by abrogating its "Pact of Steel" with Berlin, formalized in May 1939.

Beyond Sicily, however, there was no plan, no grand strategy, no consensus on what to do with the immense Allied army now concentrating in the Mediterranean. For this reason, the TRIDENT conference had been convened in Washington. Churchill had harbored ambitions of a campaign on mainland Italy for nearly a year; in early April he petitioned Roosevelt to go beyond Sicily, which he decried as "a modest and even petty objective for our armies…. Great possibilities are open in this theatre." Knocking Italy from the war "would cause a chill of loneliness over the German people, and might be the beginning of their doom." Sensing Yankee reluctance, he had warned Harry Hopkins on May 2 of "serious divergences beneath the surface" of Allied comity; privately, he told King George VI of his determination to battle the "Pacific First" advocates in Washington, where many demanded a stronger American effort against Tokyo.

"We did not come here with closed minds or rigid plans," Churchill had dictated during the passage from Gourock in preparing his opening argument for the TRIDENT talks. His musings, pecked on that silent Remington across 10 Downing Street stationery, included "Objective 1: Get Italy out of the war" and "Never forget there are 185 German divisions against the Russians…. We are not at present in contact with *any*." And the heart of the matter: if Sicily fell "by the end of August, what should these [Anglo-American] troops do in the seven or eight months between this and a first possible BOLERO [the staging in Britain for a cross-Channel invasion of western Europe]? We cannot afford to have idle armies while the Russians are bearing such a disproportionate weight."

Beneath his brass lay a supplication. Forty-five months of war had stretched Britain as far as she would stretch. More than 12 percent of the British population now served in the armed forces; with national mobilization nearly complete, severe manpower shortages loomed if the war dragged on, particularly if it required storming the glacis of Festung Europa across the Channel. British battle deaths already exceeded 100,000, with thousands more missing, 20,000 merchant mariners lost, and another 45,000 dead in the United Kingdom from German air raids.

Salvation lay here, in America. The green and feeble U.S. Army of just a few years earlier now exceeded 6 million, led by 1,000 generals, 7,000 colonels, and 343,000 lieutenants. The Army Air Forces since mid-1941 had grown 3,500 percent, the Army Corps of Engineers 4,000 percent. A Navy that counted eight aircraft carriers after Pearl Harbor would have fifty, large and small, by the end of 1943. More cargo vessels would be built this year in the United States—a Liberty ship now took just fifty days, from keel laying to launch—than existed in the entire British merchant fleet. Just today, perhaps as a subtle reminder to Churchill before his arrival, Roosevelt had publicly announced that "production of airplanes by the United States"—86,000 in 1943—"now exceeds that of all other nations combined." Of $48 billion in war supplies provided by the United States to its allies, two-thirds would go to Britain.

The first eighteen months of war for the United States had been characterized by inexperience, insufficiency, and, all too often, ineptitude. A long seasoning, still unfinished, was required, a sorting out: of strong from weak, effective from ineffective, and, as always, lucky from unlucky. That sorting and seasoning continued in combat units and among those who commanded them. The *New York Times*'s veteran military correspondent Hanson Baldwin, after a long trip through the war zone, had concluded on this Tuesday morning's front page that "the greatest American problem is leadership: the Army so far has failed to produce a fraction of the adequate officer leadership needed." As for the average GI, Baldwin added, he "is not mentally tough or sufficiently determined. Part of his heart is in

it, but only part."

Yet at home, where the productive capacity of the American industrial base approached full mobilization, the process was more advanced. The country had heaved itself from the ways of peace to the ways of war, galvanized as never before and perhaps never again. A final automobile had emerged from American production lines on February 10, 1942; supplanting it in 1943 would be thirty thousand tanks—more than three per hour around the clock, and more in a year than Germany would build from 1939 to 1945. The Rudolph Wurlitzer Company now made compasses and deicers instead of pianos and accordions, International Silver turned out Browning Automatic Rifles rather than tableware, and various lipstick, typewriter, and hubcap manufacturers produced, respectively, cartridge cases, machine guns, and helmets. Similar conversions occurred throughout the economy, which this year would also make 6 million rifles, 98,000 bazookas, 648,000 trucks, 33 million sets of soldiers' cotton drawers, 61 million pairs of wool socks. And on, and on, and on.

So, too, had the war infiltrated every kitchen, every closet, every medicine cabinet. Sugar, tires, and gasoline had been rationed first, followed by nearly everything else, from shoes to coffee. "Use it up, wear it out, make it do, or do without" became a consumer mantra. Plastic buttons replaced brass; zinc pennies supplanted copper. To save fifty million tons of wool annually, the government outlawed vests, cuffs, patch pockets, and wide lapels; hemlines rose, pleated skirts vanished, and an edict requiring a 10 percent reduction in the cloth used for women's bathing suits led to the bikini. Regulation L-85, issued by the War Production Board, not only rationed natural fibers but also limited fabric colors to those approved by the Dyestuff Advisory Committee, including honor gold, valor red, and gallant blue.

German prisoners might order curtains from Sears, Roebuck but the catalogue no longer offered saxophones, copper kettles, or plows. A bobby pin shortage forced hairdressers to improvise with toothpicks, while paint-on hosiery replaced vanished silk with the likes of "Velva Leg Film Liquid Stockings." Nationwide, the speed limit was thirty-five miles per hour, known as "victory speed." A government campaign to salvage toothpaste tubes—sixty tubes contained enough tin to solder all the electrical connections in a B-17 bomber—resulted in 200 million collected in sixteen months. "Bury a Jap with scrap," posters urged, and elaborate charts informed Americans that 10 old pails held sufficient steel for a mortar, 10 old stoves equaled 1 scout car, and 252 lawn mowers would make an antiaircraft gun.

But all those recycled mowers and toothpaste tubes, all the warships and planes and wool socks, would pay off only if they were flung into the proper battles, in the proper campaigns, guided by a proper, war-winning strategy. And such a strategy did not yet exist.

No place in America had been more transformed by war than Washington, which the *Ferdinand Magellan* entered from the northeast with a hypnotic *clack-clack-clacking* shortly after six P.M. "The once sleepy southern city of charm and grace on the Potomac has burgeoned into the frenzied capital of the world," fumed the *Washington Times-Herald.* "Lobbyists, propagandists, experts of every species, wealthy industrialists, social climbers, inventors, ladies of uneasy virtue and pickpockets infest the city."

To this panoply now were added a prime minister and his retinue of more than a hundred generals, admirals, clerks, bodyguard detectives, and Royal Marines. At 6:45 P.M., a convoy of limousines rolled from the White House grounds and turned south. Seven Secret Service agents sat in squad cars along the route, including an agent posted at the top of an inconspicuous ramp on Fourteenth Street, which sloped to a subterranean rail spur under the Bureau of Engraving and

Printing. As the train lurched to a stop in a squeal of brakes, the limousines pulled onto the platform. Lifted from the lead vehicle and placed in a waiting wheelchair, Franklin Roosevelt scanned the *Magellan*'s rear passenger compartment. His gray pallor, the wattled neck, the bagged and hazy eyes, all the fretful symptoms of stress and age seemed to vanish at the sight of Churchill clumping forward in his improbable yacht squadron uniform. The president beamed, the prime minister beamed, and the conclave that would search for that war-winning strategy to save the world was under way.

But first the visitors must be settled, and this was no simple task. "If the war lasts much longer, Washington is going to bust right out of its pants," *Life* magazine had warned in January. Five months later, the busting was well advanced. The city's twelve thousand hotel rooms were always booked, forcing some visitors to find shelter as far away as Philadelphia. Houseboat colonies sprouted on the Potomac River, and sprawling hamlets of shabby temporary houses, known as demolishables, spread through the District of Columbia and its suburbs. There would be no houseboats or demolishables for the British delegation, of course: Churchill took a suite at the White House, and the rest of the delegation was shoehorned into the Statler Hotel, the Wardman Park, the British embassy, and various other hostels and private houses. Sixteen Royal Marines marched off to a U.S. Army barracks, sweating miserably in the clinging humidity that entitled British diplomats in Washington to "tropical post pay."

Churchill could sense that the country had indeed changed since his previous visit eleven months earlier, and so had its capital. The Pentagon, which in 1942 was still under construction across the river in Hell's Bottom, now stood complete as not only the world's largest office building, but also "the largest feeding operation under one roof in the world" (55,000 meals a day for 35 cents each). All those well-fed, poorly housed War Department bureaucrats were busier than ever. One wit proposed a new government motto—"Exhaustion is not enough"—and on Pennsylvania Avenue a makeshift information center for visiting contractors and businessmen was known as "the Madhouse." This month, the War Manpower Commission had announced plans to induct twelve thousand men into the military every day for the rest of the year, with childless married men called to the colors for the first time and those with children certain to be drafted soon. Perhaps not coincidentally, the FBI director, J. Edgar Hoover, disclosed that his agents had arrested more than five hundred draft dodgers in twenty cities, with warrants outstanding on three thousand others.

Among other signs of these frenzied times: thirty-five "rumor clinics" had been established across the country "to investigate malicious and meaningless rumors," which would be vetted by college professors—apparently immune to scuttlebutt—whose findings would be reported in local newspapers. There was such a crying need for lathe operators, machinists, and leather workers that some help-wanted ads even solicited "White or Colored"; a government press release urgently seeking skilled typists for the war effort contained forty-six errors on a single page. The Office of War Information reported that a recent plea for fine blond hair—used in weather instruments and optical equipment—had resulted in such a cascade of golden tresses that no further donations were needed.

Amid the mania and the melodrama, one notable addition had been made to the Washington landscape four weeks before Churchill's arrival. He could have seen it from his White House digs, looking past the fading azaleas and beyond the Washington Monument to a grove of cherry trees framing the Tidal Basin. There, the memorial to Thomas Jefferson had been dedicated, an elegant neoclassical temple sheltering a nineteen-foot statue of the third president—temporarily cast in plaster, because the War Production Board needed the bronze. Jefferson's manifesto, chiseled in marble, summarized perfectly the animating sentiment of the men who would begin meeting tomorrow in search of a path that could carry them to war's end: "I have sworn upon the altar of God eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man."

They got to work at 2:30 P.M. on Wednesday, May 12, in Roosevelt's oval study, a snug hideaway above the Blue Room. Nautical paintings and etchings decorated the walls, and a bearskin covered the floor. The president sat in his armless wheelchair greeting Churchill and the ten other men—mostly from the Combined Chiefs—who joined that first session. Roosevelt's massive desk, positioned away from the windows by the Secret Service, held a blue lamp, four cloth toy donkeys, a stack of books, an inkpot, a medicine bottle, a small clock shaped like a ship's wheel, and a bronze bust of the First Lady, which had somehow escaped the scrap collectors.

Five months earlier, American strategists had left the Casablanca conference convinced they had been outfoxed by the British, who were better prepared and had been unified in their determination to continue the Mediterranean strategy begun with the invasion of North Africa. To avoid another humiliation, the Yanks before TRIDENT had bombarded the British with position papers; they also drafted more than thirty studies on various war policies and doubled the size of the U.S. delegation. In searching for "a grand design by which to reach the heartland of Europe" in decisive battle, American planners scrutinized potential portals to the continent, from the Iberian Peninsula and southern France to Italy, Greece, and Turkey. Still, almost to a man they favored the most direct route across the English Channel.

The president's brain trust also worked hard to overcome what many considered the biggest obstacle to American strategic hegemony: Roosevelt himself, and his evident willingness to be swayed by Churchill's honeyed oratory. "The man from London…will have his way with our Chief, and the careful and deliberate plans of our staff will be overridden," the secretary of war, Henry Stimson, told his diary on May 10. "I feel very troubled about it." The U.S. Joint Chiefs had conferred with Roosevelt at the White House three days earlier and had wrung from him a vow to press the British for commitment to a cross-Channel invasion of Europe. Driving home the point, a Joint Chiefs memo reiterated the Pentagon's "antipathy to an invasion of the Italian mainland," while warning that the British "are traditionally expert at meeting the letter while avoiding the spirit of commitments." Roosevelt replied with a three-word scribble across the margin that echoed Churchill's minute on the *Queen Mary:* "No closed minds."

In this charged milieu, "the man from London" spoke. North Africa was done, Operation HUSKY in Sicily was near. "What should come next?" Churchill asked. The Allies had "the authority and prestige of victory" and must "grasp the fruits of our success." Following his typed notes, he laid out his arguments: Russia fighting 185 German divisions; Allies currently fighting none; Italy ripe for the plucking.

The prime minister had used the phrase "soft underbelly" in a cable to Roosevelt in November 1942, meaning the supposedly vulnerable southern flank of Axis Europe. Privately, to his military advisers this week, Churchill added, "We want them to agree to the exploitation of HUSKY and the attack on the underbelly taking priority." Now he pressed the point. "Need we invade the soil of Italy, or could we crush her by air attack? Would Germany defend Italy?" Answering himself, Churchill said it was imperative "to use our great armies to attack Italy" rather than leave them idle after Sicily. If Hitler rallied to defend his Fascist partner, Benito Mussolini, that many fewer German troops could fight the Russians. The prime minister did not believe a defeated Italy would present an economic burden to the Allies, nor did he even concede "that an occupation of Italy would be necessary."

There it was, the British strategy in a Mediterranean nutshell. Roosevelt replied immediately. Churchill's argument was vivid but unpersuasive. "Where do we go from Sicily?" the president asked, again echoing the prime minister. Some twenty-five Allied divisions—with roughly fifteen thousand men each—would muster in the Mediterranean by the end of Operation HUSKY and "these must be kept

employed." But he had "always shrunk from the thought of putting large armies in Italy," a diversion that could "result in attrition for the United Nations and play into Germany's hands." Better to continue staging a mighty host in Britain. The subsequent invasion, a knockout punch aimed at the German homeland, "should be decided upon definitely as an operation for the spring of 1944." Finishing, the president smiled and gave the casual toss of the head that one admirer called his "cigarette-holder gesture."

This impasse persisted the next morning when the Combined Chiefs—the half dozen heads of the American and British armies, navies, and air forces—met without Roosevelt and Churchill in the Federal Reserve Building, a severe rectilinear edifice with a pillared portico facing Constitution Avenue. The scent of roses and fresh cut grass seeped past the rigid sentries into the wainscoted room used by the board of governors; here, the U.S. delegation presented an eleven-paragraph memo entitled "Global Strategy of the War." Point 3 held the crux: "It is the opinion of the United States chiefs of staff that a cross-Channel invasion of Europe is necessary to an early conclusion of the war with Germany."

A tall, austere man with sandy hair gone gray carried forward the American argument. General George C. Marshall, the Army chief of staff, knew his mind on this issue even as he fretted over the president's susceptibility to British blandishments. Marshall was a clean-desk man, famously convinced that "no one ever had an original idea after three o'clock in the afternoon," and he disdained orthodoxy, sycophants, and the telephone. To Churchill he was "the greatest Roman of them all"; a British general described him as "a little aloof, dignified, above the battle, unbuyable…. I never saw him show his feelings in any way." In fact, Marshall possessed a molten temper. He demanded that subordinates "expunge the bunk, complications, and ponderosities" from the nation's war effort, and his signature query, accompanied by the unblinking gaze of those ice-blue eyes, could terrify lieutenants and lieutenant generals alike: "Are you confident that you've thought this through?" Aside from horseback riding, gardening was his sole civil diversion; "the pride of his heart," according to his wife, remained the compost pile outside his Virginia home.

Invading Italy, Marshall said, "would establish a vacuum in the Mediterranean" that would suck troops and matériel away from a cross-Channel attack. Operations after Sicily "should be limited to the air offensive" or risk "a prolonged struggle" in the Mediterranean, which was "not acceptable to the United States."

Arguments spilled from those thirty War Department studies: eliminating Italy from the war could bring more burden than benefit, since precious Allied shipping would be needed to feed the Italian civilian population. Germany would recoup the twelve million tons of coal currently provided Rome each year, as well as the rolling stock now needed to supply Italy. The "soft underbelly" in general lacked sufficient ports to support the huge Allied armies needed to plunge into central Europe. American planners considered the British beguiled by "side-shows," "periphery-pecking," and "unremunerative scatterization." (That last must have disheartened every lover of the language regardless of strategic creed.) Privately, the Yanks suspected that Britain's fixation on the Mediterranean reflected both traditional imperial interests and fainthearted reluctance to again risk the horrific casualties incurred on the Western Front a generation earlier.

"Mediterranean operations," Marshall added, "are highly speculative as far as ending the war is concerned."

Listening attentively was General Sir Alan Brooke, chief of the Imperial General Staff, whose sharp-featured countenance did not betray his private assessment of Marshall: "a big man and a very great gentleman who inspired trust, but did not impress me by the ability of his brain." Brooke's brain was able enough, though he tended to dismiss as purblind those uncommitted to his own vision. At fifty-nine, with round shoulders and dark, pomaded hair, he could be petulant—"very liverish," in his

phrase; this state was perhaps the handmaiden to exhaustion after four years of war with the Germans and, not infrequently, with Churchill. “When I thump the table and push my face towards him what does he do?” the prime minister said. “Thumps the table harder and glares back at me.” Brooke calculated that each month battling Churchill “is a year off my life”; in a letter to a friend he added, “It is the night work after dinner till 1 a.m. with him that kills me.” The ninth and youngest child of an expatriate Anglo-Irish baronet, Brooke had been born and raised in France, a history that bestowed on him both a native fluency and a lifelong dread of the nickname Froggie. He nurtured homely passions for birds and for wildlife photography, in which he was a pioneer. If Marshall had his compost pile, Brooke had Southeran’s shop on Sackville Street, where he would sit transfixed in his red uniform braces, scrutinizing ornithological plates. On the *Queen Mary* he had put aside *Birds of the Ocean* long enough to note in his diary, with handwriting as vertical and jagged as the Irish coastline: “Running a war seems to consist in making plans and then ensuring that all those destined to carry [them] out don’t quarrel with each other instead of the enemy.”

Now he quarreled with Marshall, albeit without raising his voice. The eleven-paragraph U.S. strategic memo was answered with a thirty-one-paragraph British countersalvo. Point 5 encapsulated Britain’s thesis: “The main task which lies before us this year in the European theatre is the elimination of Italy. If we could achieve this, it is our opinion that we should have gone a very long way towards defeating Germany.”

Brooke pressed the point with staccato precision. Germany currently kept thirty-five divisions in France and the Low Countries, with another ten, available as reinforcements, in the Fatherland; attacking Italy would divert some of these German troops and weaken defenses against an eventual Allied cross-Channel attack, which might not be feasible until 1945 or 1946 anyway. If Italy collapsed, German soldiers would have to replace the forty-three Italian divisions occupying the Balkans and the seven others bivouacked in southern France. Without Italian allies, Berlin was unlikely to fight south of the Po Valley in northern Italy. “Our total commitment on the Italian mainland in the event of a collapse,” a British staff memo estimated, “will not exceed nine divisions.”

A stack of studies, bound in red leather folders, further advanced the British cause. “If Italy collapses, the Germans cannot hold Italy *and* the Balkans, and they will concentrate everything they can on the defence of the latter.” The Mediterranean offered such enticing oppportunities that “we shall have every chance of breaking the Axis and of bringing the war with Germany to a successful conclusion in 1944.”

But, Brooke warned his American colleagues, unless the fight was carried into Italy after the capture of Sicily, “no possibility of an attack into France would arise.” Indeed, “to cease Mediterrranean operations on the conclusion of HUSKY would lengthen the war.”

Momentary silence fell on the room as the session ended. The Allies were miles apart, still, and mutually suspicious. “Your people have no intention of ever crossing the Channel,” one American planner had told his British counterpart. Admiral Ernest J. King, the irascible U.S. chief of naval operations, subsequently advised his fellow chiefs, “We ought to divert our forces to the Pacific.”

At Marshall’s suggestion they adjourned with a scraping of chairs and ambled next door to the Public Health Building. Lunch awaited them in the map room, where strategic thrust and parry momentarily yielded to small talk and the benign clink of cutlery. That night Brooke confided to his diary, “I am thoroughly depressed.”

* * *

Washington lacked the isolated tranquillity that had distinguished Casablanca five months earlier. Endless meetings, often three or more a day, were followed by endless social obligations, including four consecutive nights of black-tie affairs. For all its sophisticated war paint, the capital remained a provincially convivial place, eager to please and atwitter at hosting such distinguished battle captains.

Fans at a Washington Nationals baseball game applauded wildly at the appearance of a pair of genuine field marshals in the box seats. Bing Crosby and Kate Smith sang between innings as the visitors tried to divine the difference between home plate and a home run. At one dinner party, each arriving guest reached into a top hat—one for ladies, another for gentlemen—and drew a slip on which was printed the name of a famous lover in history. Table seating then was determined by uniting the paramours: Helen with Paris, Cleopatra with Antony, Chloe with Daphnis, Heloïse with Abelard. Also intimate, if less risqué, was a private showing at the White House of a new U.S. Army Signal Corps film, *The Battle of Britain;* doughty Royal Air Force pilots climbed into their cockpits, Spitfires tangled with Messerschmitts, mortally wounded planes heeled over in smoky spirals. Churchill sat transfixed by the spectacle, the flickering projector light reflecting off the tears that coursed down his plump cheeks. Only the Washington heat remained inhospitable, forcing some wilting Brits to desperate measures: the wife of the economist John Maynard Keynes was found perched, entirely nude, before the open door of a Westinghouse refrigerator in the Georgetown house where the couple was staying.

To escape both official Washington and social Washington, Marshall bundled the Combined Chiefs onto a pair of transport planes for a weekend in southeast Virginia. Landing at Langley Field, the men squeezed into eight waiting Army staff cars and motored up Route 17 for a tour of the Yorktown battlefield, where the British professed—amid guffaws—not to recall “the name of that chap who did so badly here” in 1781. Then it was on to Williamsburg, the meticulously restored former colonial capital.

If Washington had been atwitter, Williamsburg seethed with excitement at the visitation. Lawns had been trimmed, hedges clipped, honeysuckle cropped. At the Williamsburg Inn, linen and china emerged from wartime storage crates, and the silver was polished and repolished. Carpenters built a new table to seat thirteen diners and adjusted the floodlights to illuminate the dogwoods. Someone managed to circumvent government restrictions on Freon to procure the only two tanks of refrigerant south of Richmond: the inn would be pleasingly air-conditioned.

John D. Rockefeller, Jr., who had financed Williamsburg’s resurrection, got wind of the visit and assigned various servants to oversee dinner preparations. Appalled to learn that inferior cream might be used to make the ice cream, Rockefeller ordered a fresh urn dispatched from his estate at Pocantico Hills in New York, along with select fruits and cheeses, while his private club in Manhattan prepared fresh terrapin à la Maryland, which required two days of simmering. Terrapin, cream, fruit, cheese, and a consignment of sherry all were tucked into the upper berth of a Pullman car at Penn Station by an overburdened butler, who staggered off the train in Richmond four hours later and continued with his bounty to Williamsburg by limousine.

Shortly before five P.M. on Saturday, May 15, the convoy of chiefs turned off Queen Street onto Duke of Gloucester Street before stopping at the old Capitol building, where they were greeted by a black doorman in colonial livery. Having admired the rubbed woodwork and the portrait of young George Washington, they strolled to the Raleigh Tavern for finger sandwiches and cinnamon toast in the Daphne Room, washed down with tea and highballs. Then it was on to the inn, where fires crackled in the twin lobby hearths—Freon be damned—and bourbon juleps were served in goblets made by a local silversmith. Dinner, at 8:15, included Rockefeller’s menu, plus crabmeat cocktail, Virginia ham, beaten biscuits, and a 1929 Heidsieck Dry Monopole champagne. All agreed that the strawberry ice

cream was divine.

After coffee and brandy, Marshall rousted the visitors for a midnight excursion to the colonial governor's palace, brilliantly lighted with hundreds of candles in each room and throughout the gardens. Admiral Sir Dudley Pound, the first sea lord, lost his way in the topiary maze and called for help from the other chiefs, who rushed to the rescue only to get lost themselves, with much boyish chortling.

Sunday morning, after breakfast on the terrace, the chiefs played croquet on the lawn or went swimming in borrowed trunks. Brooke, who was mulling whether to spend £1,500 for a forty-five-volume set of *Gould's Birds,* tromped off with his field glasses in search of catbirds and hairy woodpeckers. Before heading to the airfield for the return flight, the high command filed into Bruton Parish Church, where ushers escorted them to General Washington's pew. Parishioners jammed the sanctuary, clogging the twin transept aisles with folding chairs after the pews filled. Dudley Pound, who was suffering from an unsuspected brain tumor and had but a few months to live, had been asked to read the scripture. Stepping to the lectern, he thumbed to the sixth chapter of Matthew and sang out, "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin." Pound finished in a strong voice:

> Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

While the chiefs went south, Roosevelt and Churchill headed north. With Eleanor Roosevelt and Harry Hopkins also in the limousine, and a motorcycle escort clearing the road, the motorcade rolled up Massachusetts Avenue before angling out of the capital on Wisconsin Avenue toward the presidential retreat called Shangri-La—later renamed Camp David—in the Catoctin Mountains of central Maryland. Spying a billboard for Barbara Fritchie Candy, Roosevelt recited a couplet from John Greenleaf Whittier's ballad about the legendary Civil War heroine who defied passing rebel troops by waving the Stars and Stripes from her window.

> "Shoot, if you must, this old gray head,
> But spare your country's flag," she said.

To the president's amazement, Churchill then "gabbled the whole poem," all sixty lines—"She leaned far out on the window-sill, / And shook it forth with a royal will." Soon the Roosevelts and Hopkins were punctuating the prime minister's cadences with the refrain: "Shoot, if you must…"

For three days they unbent in the serene glades of Shangri-La, napping in the log cabins, angling for brook trout, discussing the hot tramp of Confederate troops through these hills toward Gettysburg eighty years earlier. Another guest, Roosevelt's daughter, Anna, wrote her husband on May 14 that Churchill "picks his teeth all through dinner and uses snuff liberally. The sneezes which follow the latter practically rock the foundations of the house…. I admired his snuff box and found it was one that had once belonged to Lord Nelson." Often the president sat by a window with his beloved stamp collection; when Churchill's pleas grew too insistent for more tanks or more planes, more this or more that, Roosevelt would cut him short by holding a stamp specimen to the light and murmuring, "Isn't this a beauty from Newfoundland?" On other occasions, to relieve the president from the "Winston hours," an aide would summon Roosevelt to an imaginary phone call.

They had much in common besides their ultimate responsibility for saving the world. They shared passions for secrecy, skulduggery, and military history. Roosevelt "loved the military side of events," one subordinate wrote, "and liked to hold them in his own hand," while Churchill seemed to fancy himself the reincarnation of his famous ancestor the Duke of Marlborough, the victor over the French at Blenheim in 1704. Despite his current resistance to Churchill's Italian gambit, the president had his own "diversionist tendencies" and harbored a fascination for the Mediterranean nearly as lurid as the prime minister's. Neither ever forgot, or tried to forget, the agony that war had brought to so many. (Marshall routinely sent Roosevelt brilliantly colored graphics detailing the latest combat casualty figures, "so that it would be quite clear.") Certainly the president's admiration and affection for Churchill ran deep. "Isn't he a wonderful old Tory to have on our side?" he once asked.

And yet: Churchill could draw near and no nearer. Convivial and charming, Roosevelt at his core remained opaque, mysterious, unknowable in what one aide called "his heavily forested interior." Trying to follow his thought process, Henry Stimson said, was "very much like chasing a vagrant beam of sunshine around an empty room." Seldom did he issue orders; rather, he intimated that he "wished to have things done." No politician ever was better at resolving problems by ignoring them; Roosevelt could elevate inaction to an art form. Yet on more than twenty occasions he rejected the advice of his military brain trust to follow his own instincts, as he had done in deciding to invade North Africa the previous November. "Not a tidy mind," one British observer noted, and the American chiefs could only agree. "The president," Eleanor once said, "never 'thinks'! He *decides*."

He reduced his own political philosophy to two nouns: democrat and Christian. A bit more nuanced were his inalienable Four Freedoms—of speech, of worship, from want, and from fear—which he had articulated in the State of the Union message of January 1941. Months earlier, he had begun to dream about the postwar world, and if he kept Churchill at arm's length it was partly because his vision did not include the restoration of colonial empires. Surely he had spoken from the heart in telling the prime minister, "It is fun to be in the same decade with you." Yet there was also cold conviction in Roosevelt's observation to his son Elliott: "Britain is on the decline."

America was ascendant, and Roosevelt had reason to hope that his countrymen possessed the stamina to remake a better world: a forthcoming Roper opinion poll, secretly slipped to the White House on Thursday, revealed that more than three-quarters of those surveyed agreed that the United States should play a larger global role after the war. Nearly as many believed that the country should "plan to help other nations get on their feet," and more than half concurred that Americans should "take an active part in some sort of an international organization with a court and police force strong enough to enforce its decisions." The president found it equally heartening that 70 percent approved of his war leadership and two-thirds favored him for reelection in 1944 if the world was still at war.

But if Britain was on the decline, so was Roosevelt personally, as he no doubt realized. Those who had seen him at Casablanca were dismayed at how frail he now looked, and all the pretty stamps in Newfoundland could not fully restore him. "Something at once attractive and pathetic in this man," a British diplomat wrote in his diary. "The great torso, the huge and splendid head, the magnificent frame, immobile, anchored to a sofa or a chair, carried from room to room." Roosevelt said little about his health, other than to grouse over a recurrent sinus condition. It was just another secret to keep.

Negotiations resumed at 10:30 A.M. on Monday. Camaraderie and good fun promptly popped like soap bubbles, and for three days the deadlock persisted as the military chiefs haggled. Brooke and his British colleagues renounced both imperial designs in the Mediterranean and any peripheral

strategems; rather, they argued, an Italian campaign "in the spirit of the chase" would exploit a Sicilian victory, unhinge Rome, and unbalance Berlin. The Americans refused to concede, and declared that no U.S. ground or naval forces would be released for combat beyond Sicily. Marshall, whose beetling brows gave him a stern Old Testament look, reminded the chiefs "that in North Africa a relatively small German force" had fought an irksome rearguard campaign for six months; a German decision to fight in Italy "might make intended operations extremely difficult and time consuming."

Nearly three dozen aides and staff officers hovered behind the chiefs, rifling through documents or pulling out those red leather folders to prove this point or dispute that assertion. By 4:30 on Wednesday afternoon, Marshall had reached his limit. The chiefs were scheduled to meet Roosevelt and Churchill at the White House in two hours; to confess that the high command remained at loggerheads would likely mean ceding strategic planning to the president and prime minister, a prospect horrifying to every man in epaulets. Marshall proposed that the room be cleared except for the chiefs. The supernumeraries filed out; ninety minutes later, the door reopened, and on the mahogany table lay an agreement.

It was a curious compromise, because compromise it was. A cross-Channel attack would be launched—the target date was fifty weeks away: on May 1, 1944—"to secure a lodgement on the Continent from which further offensive operations can be carried out." To help assemble the twenty-nine divisions required for such an invasion, soon to be code-named OVERLORD, four American and three British divisions would be transferred from the Mediterranean after the Sicilian campaign to staging bases in Britain. As for the Med, the Allied commander-in-chief in North Africa, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, was instructed to plan whatever operations following the conquest of Sicily seemed "best calculated to eliminate Italy from the war and to contain the maximum number of German forces." The chiefs calculated that Eisenhower eventually would be left with twenty-seven divisions and 3,600 aircraft to continue his war against the soft underbelly, although a direct invasion of Italy was not specified.

The baby had been cut in half, a solution perhaps satisfying to the disputants but rarely auspicious for the baby. As the officers collected their papers and snapped shut their briefcases, a grumble of thunder rolled across Washington. Rain soon lashed the city from the west, breaking the heat.

TRIDENT had another week to run. If the central disagreement had been finessed, a dozen other issues required resolution, from shipping allocations to operations in the Pacific. The social round also continued without mercy. At a reception on the South Lawn of the White House, the Marine Band played Stephen Foster airs and "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" while guests sipped iced coffee and stared beyond the fence at tourists who stared back. During a British embassy luncheon on May 22, Churchill, fortified with whiskey, declared that he expected "England and the United States to run the world…. Why be apologetic about Anglo-Saxon superiority?" The bemused vice president, Henry A. Wallace, accused the prime minister of advocating "Anglo-Saxondom *über Alles*." Churchill waved away the charge. "We Anglo-Saxons"—he pronounced it *schaxons*—"are the only ones who really know how to run the show." Poor Brooke left the luncheon to get a haircut and tumbled down fourteen stone steps; battered and bruised, he found consolation in the purchase of two rare bird books discovered in a local shop.

Rarely content and never quiescent, Churchill now threatened to overplay his hand. He kept Roosevelt up until 2:30 in the morning of Monday, May 24. (After TRIDENT, the exhausted president would flee to his Hyde Park estate and sleep ten hours for three consecutive nights.) Later that day the

prime minister sought to repudiate the compromise reached by the chiefs, because it failed to specifically advocate an invasion of Italy. He also raised the notion of a continued attack into Yugoslavia and Greece. To Lord Moran, his personal physician, Churchill added, “Have you noticed that the president is a very tired man? His mind seems closed. He seems to have lost his wonderful elasticity…. I cannot let the matter rest where it is.”

Harry Hopkins warned Churchill to do just that or risk an ugly rupture; even Roosevelt complained that the prime minister was acting like a “spoiled boy.” Chastened, Churchill agreed instead to fly from Washington to Algiers to confer with Eisenhower, taking in tow both a scuffed-up Brooke and a grumpy Marshall, who likened himself to “a piece of baggage.” Hopkins told Moran, “We have come to avoid controversy with Winston. We find he is too much for us.” The physician agreed that Churchill “is so taken up with his own ideas that he is not interested in what other people think.”

Still, the sweep of his rhetoric proved a tonic, as it had so many times before. At noon on a bright Wednesday, a joint session of Congress convened in the House of Representatives, joined by the British ambassador’s son, a young subaltern who had lost both legs in North Africa and who was wheeled into the House gallery by his tall, stooped father. Churchill had spent nearly ten hours the previous day dictating speech drafts to his long-suffering typists, and he now stood at the podium, grasping the lapels of his dark suit, rolling his vowels and reminding free men everywhere that the road was long, but the cause was righteous. “War is full of mysteries and surprises. A false step, a wrong direction, an error in strategy, discord or lassitude among the Allies, might soon give the common enemy power to confront us,” he said. “It is in the dragging-out of the war at enormous expense, until the democracies are tired or bored or split, that the main hopes of Germany and Japan must now reside.”

After fifty minutes he finished, as he often finished, by taking flight:

> By singleness of purpose, by steadfastness of conduct, by tenacity and endurance—such as we have so far displayed—by this and only by this can we discharge our duty to the future of the world and to the destiny of man.

Roosevelt had remained at the White House to avoid crowding Churchill in the limelight. He listened to the speech on the radio he kept in the left drawer of his big desk. “Winston writes beautifully,” the president told his secretary, “and he’s a past master at catch phrases.”

The conference sputtered to an end without the wistful sense of brotherhood that had characterized Casablanca. Mutual confidence remained a sometime thing; the ideal of an epoch when good men dared to trust one another was still imperfectly realized. They were tired of arguing, tired of shouldering the burdens they shouldered, tired of the whole catastrophe. They knew the hard time had come, and that it would require hard men.

For the Americans, the first leg of the century’s most grueling race had come to an end, its emblem the Afrika Korps prisoners now trudging into camps in Kansas and Oklahoma. That leg, from Pearl Harbor through the capture of Tunisia, had required spunk and invention, unity and organizational acumen. Now the long middle leg of the race was about to begin, of uncertain duration, over an undetermined course, and few doubted that new virtues would be needed: endurance, impenitence, an obdurate will.

For the first time, the Allied high command had met with a clear sense that the war, at least in Europe, would be won—someday, somehow. “The mellow light of victory begins to play over the entire expanse of the world war,” as Churchill would tell the House of Commons in June. During the conference, daily reports of U-boat sinkings affirmed that the tide in that particular struggle had turned, dramatically and irreversibly. The joint communiqué drafted for TRIDENT by Roosevelt and Churchill evinced a bluff optimism while proferring a few white lies, such as the assertion that “there has been a complete meeting of minds” about all theaters, including “the war in the Mediterranean.”

Despite this glossing over, a plan now existed where there had been no plan. The British had succeeded in keeping the war centered in the Mediterranean, at least for a year, and in making the elimination of Italy from the Axis partnership an immediate goal. Churchill had again thwarted the American impulse to muscle up in the Pacific theater at the expense of the Atlantic (although, in the event, the U.S. war against Tokyo would be prosecuted almost as furiously as the European struggles). Assistance to China would continue, and Allied bomber fleets would grow ever larger, until they virtually blackened the skies over Germany and eventually Japan. The British had made extravagant claims—“over-egged the pudding,” as one critic put it—to overcome Yankee skepticism by asserting that Germany was unlikely to fight hard for mainland Italy; that the long-term Allied commitment in Italy was likely to call for only nine divisions and to require no substantial occupation; and that a hard fight in the Mediterranean could end the war in 1944. All of these prophesies proved false.

The Americans had managed to put brakes on the Mediterranean campaign: seven divisions would decamp for Britain in the fall, and no additional reinforcements would be sent south. They also extracted a pledge that the Allies would invade western France by a specific date. The deal, Roosevelt told an aide, was “the best I could get at this time.” Neither the president nor his warlords had answered the legitimate British questions about how, if the plug were pulled in the Mediterranean, German forces would be engaged during the many months until OVERLORD could be mounted in France; or how the Russians would be mollified if the Anglo-Americans took a powder for those many months; or whether it would not be prudent to draw Axis forces from the Atlantic Wall by making Berlin reinforce its southern flank.

The Allies had a plan where there had been no plan, but whether it was a good plan remained to be seen. Certainly it was vague. How Italy should be knocked out was left to the theater commander, General Eisenhower, and the concomitant goal of containing “the maximum number of German forces” implied a war of attrition and opportunism rather than a clear strategic objective.

The dispatch of Allied armies to North Africa and now to Sicily had created its own momentum, its own logic. In an effort to square the circle, a slightly cockeyed strategic scheme emerged that would guide the Anglo-Americans until the end of the war: a relentless pounding of Festung Europa from the air and from the southern flank, setting the stage for a cross-Channel invasion aimed at Berlin. Whether a meaningful Mediterranean campaign could be waged without endless entanglement, and whether the enemy reacted as Allied strategists hoped he would react also remained to be seen.

Perhaps the greatest achievement of the men meeting at TRIDENT was not the sketching of big arrows on a map but rather the affirmation of their humanity. This was their true common language: the shared values of decency and dignity, of tolerance and respect. Despite the petty bickering and intellectual fencing, a fraternity bound them on the basis of who they were, what they believed, and why they fought. It could be glimpsed, like one of Brooke’s beautiful birds, in Churchill’s gentle draping of a blanket on Roosevelt’s shoulders; and in their grim determination to wage war without liking it.

At four P.M. on Tuesday, May 25, precisely two weeks after his arrival, Churchill strode down the narrow corridors of the West Wing to the Oval Office. His departure by flying boat from the Potomac off Gravelly Point was set for the next morning, his luggage was packed, his farewells were bid or soon would be bid. The code name for the morning flight had been repeatedly amended in the past forty-eight hours from WATSON to REDCAR to STUDENT, and the prime minister, evidently finding none of those words suitably warlike, had lobbied in vain to get it changed again, to NEPTUNE.

Roosevelt sat in the armless wheelchair. Sunshine flooded the Rose Garden outside the French doors. Bulletproof glass had been installed in the windows facing south, but the president had rejected several of the more hysterical security proposals, including machine guns on the terrace and air locks on the outer doors to thwart a poison gas attack. With Churchill at his side, he gave a nod and an aide opened the office door to admit a large gaggle of reporters for the 899th press conference of Roosevelt's presidency.

"We are awfully glad to have Mr. Churchill back here," he told the scribes after they had shuffled in. "Considering the size of our problems, these discussions have been done in practically record time." Roosevelt swiveled toward the prime minister. "I think that he will be willing to answer almost—with stress on the *almost*—any question."

"Mr. Prime Minister," a reporter said, "can you tell us generally about the plans for the future, probably beginning with Europe?"

"Our plans for the future," Churchill replied, "are to wage this war until unconditional surrender is procured from all those who have molested us, and this applies equally to Asia and to Europe."

Roosevelt beamed. "I think that word 'molestation' or 'molesting' is one of the best examples of your habitual understatement that I know."

The reporters tittered. "I am curious to know," another asked, "what you think is going on in Hitler's mind?" The titter turned to boisterous laughter.

"Appetite unbridled, ambition unmeasured—all the world!" the prime minister said. "There is no end of the appetite of this wicked man. I should say he repents now that he did not curb his passion before he brought such a portion of the world against him and his country."

"Do you care to say anything about Mussolini and Italy?"

Churchill scowled. "I think they are a softer proposition than Germany."

On it went, query and response, and the reporters were so beguiled that by the end they had interrupted with laughter twenty-one times.

The Allies had no intention of keeping Italian territory after the war, or of matching Axis barbarities, Churchill added. "We shall not stain our name by an inhuman act." As for the Italian people, they "have sinned—erred—by allowing themselves to be led by the nose by a very elaborate tyranny." But they "will have their life in the new Europe."

Churchill rose to his full five feet, seven inches. "We are the big animal now," he said, "shaking the life out of the smaller animal, and he must be given no rest, no chance to recover."

The door opened and the reporters reluctantly began to file out. Seizing the moment with unsuspected agility, the prime minister climbed up onto his chair, tottered unsteadily for a moment, then stood above the popping flashbulbs and the grinning president and the applauding scribes, flashing the V-for-victory sign with his stubby fingers, over and over again.

Part One

1. Across the Middle Sea

Forcing the World Back to Reason

THE sun beat down on the stained white city, the July sun that hurt the eyes and turned the sea from wine-dark to silver. Soldiers crowded the shade beneath the vendors' awnings and hugged the lee of the alabaster buildings spilling down to the port. Sweat darkened their collars and cuffs, particularly those of the combat troops wearing heavy herringbone twill. Some had stripped off their neckties, but kept them folded and tucked in their belts for quick retrieval. The commanding general had been spotted along the wharves, and every man knew that George S. Patton, Jr., would levy a $25 fine on any GI not wearing his helmet or tie.

Algiers seethed with soldiers after eight months of Allied occupation: Yanks and Brits, Kiwis and Gurkhas, swabs and tars and merchant mariners who at night walked with their pistols drawn against the bandits infesting the port. Troops swaggered down the boulevards and through the souks, whistling at girls on the balconies or pawing through shop displays in search of a few final souvenirs. Sailors in denim shirts and white caps mingled with French Senegalese in red fezzes, and bearded *goums* with their braided pigtails and striped burnooses. German prisoners sang "Erika" as they marched in column under guard to the Liberty ships that would haul them to camps in the New World. British veterans in battle dress answered with a ribald ditty called "El Alamein"—"Tally-ho, tally-ho, and that was as far as the bastards did go"—while the Americans belted out "Dirty Gertie from Bizerte," which was said to have grown to two hundred verses, all of them salacious. "Sand in your shoes," they called to one another—the North African equivalent of "Good luck"—and with knowing looks they flashed their index fingers to signal "I," for "invasion."

Electric streetcars clattered past horsedrawn wine wagons, to be passed in turn by whizzing jeeps. Speeding by Army drivers had become so widespread that military policemen now impounded offenders' vehicles—although General Eisenhower had issued a blanket amnesty for staff cars "bearing the insignia of a general officer." Most Algerians walked or resorted to bicycles, pushcarts, and, one witness recorded, "every conceivable variety of buggy, phaeton, carryall, cart, sulky, and landau." Young Frenchmen strolled the avenues in their narrow-brimmed hats and frayed jackets. Arab boys scampered through the alleys in pantaloons made from stolen barracks bags, with two holes cut for their legs and the stenciled name and serial number of the former owner across the rump. Tatterdemalion beggars in veils wore robes tailored from old Army mattress covers, which also served as winding-sheets for the dead. The only women in Algiers wearing stockings were the hookers at the Hotel Aletti bar, reputed to be the richest wage-earners in the city despite the ban on prostitution issued by military authorities in May.

Above it all, at high noon on July 4, 1943, on the Rue Michelet in the city's most fashionable neighborhood, a French military band tooted its way through the unfamiliar strains of "The Star-Spangled Banner." Behind the woodwinds and the tubas rose the lime-washed Moorish arches and crenellated tile roof of the Hôtel St. Georges, headquarters for Allied forces in North Africa. Palm fronds stirred in the courtyard, and the scent of bougainvillea carried on the light breeze.

Vice Admiral Henry Kent Hewitt held his salute as the anthem dragged to a ragged finish. Eisenhower, also frozen in salute on Hewitt's right, had discouraged all national celebrations as a distraction from the momentous work at hand, but the British had insisted on honoring their American

cousins with a short ceremony. The last strains faded and the gunfire began. Across the flat roofs of the lower city and the magnificent crescent of Algiers Bay, Hewitt saw a gray puff rise from H.M.S. *Maidstone*, then heard the first report. Puff followed puff, boom followed boom, echoing against the hills, as the *Maidstone* fired seaward across the breakwater.

Nineteen, twenty, twenty-one. Hewitt lowered his salute, but the bombardment continued, and from the corner of his eye the admiral could see Eisenhower with his right hand still glued to his peaked khaki cap. Unlike the U.S. Navy, with its maximum twenty-one-gun tribute, the Army on Independence Day fired forty-eight guns, one for each state, a protocol now observed by *Maidstone*'s crew. Hewitt resumed his salute until the shooting stopped, and made note of yet another difference between the sister services.

With the ceremony at an end, Hewitt hurried through the courtyard and across the lobby's mosaic floor to his office, down the corridor from Eisenhower's corner suite. Every nook of the St. Georges was jammed with staff officers and communications equipment. Eight months earlier, on the eve of the invasion of North Africa, Allied plans had called for a maximum of seven hundred officers to man the Allied Forces Headquarters, or AFHQ, a number then decried by one commander as "two or three times too many." Now the figure approached four thousand, including nearly two hundred colonels and generals; brigades of aides, clerks, cooks, and assorted horse-holders brought the AFHQ total to twelve thousand. The military messages pouring in and out of Algiers via seven undersea cables were equivalent to two-thirds of the total War Department communications traffic. No message was more momentous than the secret order issued this morning: "Carry out Operation HUSKY."

Hewitt had never been busier, not even before Operation TORCH, the assault on North Africa. Then he had commanded the naval task force ferrying Patton's thirty thousand troops from Virginia to Morocco, a feat of such extraordinary success—not a man had been lost in the hazardous crossing—that Hewitt received his third star and command of the U.S. Navy's Eighth Fleet in the Mediterranean. After four months at home, he had arrived in Algiers on March 15, and every waking moment since had been devoted to scheming how to again deposit Patton and his legions onto a hostile shore.

He was a fighting admiral who did not look the part, notwithstanding the Navy Cross on his summer whites, awarded for heroism as a destroyer captain in World War I. Sea duty made Hewitt plump, or plumper, and in Algiers he tried to stay fit by riding at dawn with native spahi cavalrymen, whose equestrian lineage dated to the fourteenth-century Ottomans. Despite these efforts, his frame remained, as one observer acknowledged, "well-upholstered." At the age of fifty-six, the former altar boy and bell ringer from Hackensack, New Jersey, was still proud of his ability to ring out "Softly Now the Light of Day." He loved double acrostic puzzles and his Keuffel & Esser Log Log Trig slide rule, a device that had been developed at the Naval Academy in the 1930s when he chaired the mathematics department there. His virtues, inconspicuous only to the inattentive, included a keen memory, a willingness to make decisions, and the ability to get along with George Patton. *The Saturday Evening Post* described Hewitt as "the kind of man who keeps a dog but does his barking himself"; in fact, he rarely even growled. He was measured and reserved, a good if inelegant conversationalist, and a bit pompous. He liked parties, and in Algiers he organized a Navy dance combo called the Scuttlebutt Five. He also had established a soup kitchen for the poor with leavings from Navy galleys; he ate the first bowl himself. Two other attributes served his country well: he was lucky, and he had an exceptional sense of direction, which on a ship's bridge translated into a gift for navigation. Kent Hewitt always knew where he was.

He called for his staff car—among those privileged vehicles exempt from impoundment—and drove from the St. Georges through the twisting alleyways leading to the port. At every pier around the grand crescent of the bay, ships were moored two and three deep: freighters and frigates, tankers and transports, minesweepers and landing craft. Others rode at anchor beyond the harbor's submarine

nets, protected by patrol planes and destroyers tacking along the coastline. The U.S. Navy had thirty-three camouflage combinations, from “painted false bow wave” to “graded system with splotches,” and most seemed to be represented in the vivid Algiers anchorage. Stevedores swarmed across the decks; booms swung from dock to hold and back to dock again; gantry cranes hoisted pallet after pallet from the wharves onto the vessels. Precautions against fire were in force on every ship: wooden chairs, drapes, excess movie film, even bulkhead pictures had been removed; rags and blankets were ashore or well stowed; sailors—who upon departure would don long-sleeved undershirts as protection against flash burns—had chipped away all interior paint and stripped the linoleum from every mess deck.

Hewitt’s flagship, the attack transport U.S.S. *Monrovia*, lay moored on the port side of berth 39, on the Mole de Passageurs in the harbor’s Basin de Vieux. Scores of military policemen had boarded for added security, making her desperately overcrowded. Ten to twenty officers packed each cabin on many ships, with enlisted bunks stacked four high, and *Monrovia* was more jammed than most. With Hewitt’s staff, Patton’s staff, and her own crew, she now carried fourteen hundred men, more than double her normal company. She would also carry, in some of those cargo nets being manhandled into the hold, 200,000 rounds of high-explosive ammunition and 134 tons of gasoline.

The admiral climbed from his car and strode up the gangplank, greeted with a bosun’s piping and a flurry of salutes. *Monrovia*’s passageways seemed dim and cheerless after the brilliant African light. In the crowded operations room below, staff officers pored over “Naval Operations Order HUSKY,” a tome four inches thick. Twenty typists had needed seven full days to bang out the final draft, of which eight hundred copies were distributed to commanders across North Africa as a blueprint for the coming campaign.

Hewitt could remember his father, a burly mechanical engineer, chinning himself with a hundred-pound dumbbell balanced across his feet. Sometimes the HUSKY ops order felt like that dumbbell. Nothing was simple about the operation except the basic concept: in six days, on July 10, two armies—one American and one British—would land on the southeast coast of Sicily, reclaiming for the Allied cause the first significant acreage in Europe since the war began. An estimated 300,000 Axis troops defended the island, including a pair of capable German divisions, and many others lurked nearby on the Italian mainland.

More than three thousand Allied ships and boats, large and small, were gathering for the invasion from one end of the Mediterranean to the other—“the most gigantic fleet in the world’s history,” as Hewitt observed. About half would sail under his command from six ports in Algeria and Tunisia; the rest would sail with the British from Libya and Egypt, but for a Canadian division coming directly from Britain. Patton’s Seventh Army would land eighty thousand troops in the assault; the British Eighth Army would land about the same, with more legions subsequently reinforcing both armies.

Under the elaborate nautical choreography required, several convoys had already begun steaming: the vast expedition would rendezvous at sea, near Malta, on July 9. A preliminary effort to capture the tiny fortified island of Pantelleria, sixty miles southwest of Sicily, had succeeded admirably: after a relentless three-week air bombardment, the stupefied garrison of eleven thousand Italian troops had surrendered on June 11, giving the Allies both a good airfield and the illusion that even the stoutest defenses could be reduced from the air.

A map of the Mediterranean stretched across a bulkhead in the operations room. Hewitt had become the U.S. Navy’s foremost amphibious expert, with one invasion behind him and another under way; three more were to come before war’s end. One inviolable rule in assaults from the open sea, he already recognized, was that the forces to be landed always exceeded the means to transport them, even with an armada as enormous as this one. From hard experience he also knew that two variables remained outside his control: the strength of the enemy defending the hostile shore and the caprice of

the sea itself.

In HUSKY, not only did he have three times more soldiers to put ashore than in Operation TORCH, he also commanded a flotilla of vessels seeing combat for the first time: nine new variations of landing craft and five new types of landing ship, including the promising LST, an abbreviation for "landing ship, tank," but which sailors insisted meant "large slow target." Some captains and crews had never been to sea before, and little was known about the seaworthiness of the new vessels, or how best to beach them, or what draught they would draw under various loads, or even how many troops and vehicles could be packed inside.

Much had been learned from the ragged, chaotic preparations for TORCH. Much had also been forgotten, or misapplied, or misplaced. The turmoil in North Africa in recent weeks seemed hardly less convulsive than that at Hampton Roads eight months earlier. Seven different directives on how to label overseas cargo had been issued the previous year; the resulting confusion led to formation of the inevitable committee, which led to another directive called the Schenectady Plan, which led to color-coded labels lacquered onto shipping containers, which led to more confusion. Five weeks after issuing a secret alert called Preparations for Movement by Water, the Army discovered that units crucial to HUSKY had never received the order and thus had no plans for loading their troops, vehicles, and weapons onto the convoys. Seventh Army's initial load plans also neglected to make room for the Army Air Forces, whose kit equaled a third of the Army's total tonnage requirements. Every unit pleaded for more space; every unit claimed priority; every unit lamented the Navy's insensitivity.

Despite the risk of German air raids, port lights burned all night as vexed loadmasters received still more manifest changes that required unloading another freighter or repacking another LST. Transportation officers wrestled with small oversights—the Navy had shipped bread ovens but no bread pans—and big blunders, as when ordnance officers mistakenly sent poisonous mustard gas to the Mediterranean. By the time Patton's staff recognized that particular gaffe, on June 8, gas shells had been shipped with other artillery munitions; they now lay somewhere—no one knew precisely where—in the holds of one or more ships bound for Sicily.

Secrecy was paramount. Hewitt doubted that three thousand vessels could sneak up on Sicily, but HUSKY's success relied on surprise. All documents that disclosed the invasion destination were stamped with the classified code word BIGOT, and sentries at the HUSKY planning headquarters in Algiers determined whether visitors held appropriate security clearances by asking if they were "bigoted." ("I was frequently partisan," one puzzled naval officer replied, "but had never considered my mind closed.")

Soldiers and sailors, as usual, remained in the dark and subject to severe restrictions on their letters home. A satire of censorship regulations read to one ship's crew included rule number 4—"You cannot say where you were, where you are going, what you have been doing, or what you expect to do"—and rule number 8—"You cannot, you must not, be interesting." The men could, under rule number 2, "say you have been born, if you don't say where or why." And rule number 9 advised: "You can mention the fact that you would not mind seeing a girl."

One airman tried to comply with the restrictions by writing, "Three days ago we were at X. Now we are at Y." But the prevailing sentiment was best captured by a soldier who told his diary, "We know we are headed for trouble."

More than half a million American troops now occupied North Africa. They composed only a fraction of all those wearing U.S. uniforms worldwide, yet in identity and creed they were emblematic of that larger force. One Navy lieutenant listed the civilian occupations of the fifteen hundred soldiers

and sailors on his Sicily-bound ship: “farm boys and college graduates…lawyers, brewery distributors, millworkers, tool designers, upholsterers, steel workers, aircraft mechanics, foresters, journalists, sheriffs, cooks and glass workers.” One man even cited “horse mill fixer” as his trade.

Fewer than one in five were combat veterans from the four U.S. divisions that had fought extensively in Tunisia: the 1st, 9th, and 34th Infantry Divisions, and the 1st Armored Division, each of which was earmarked for Sicily or, later, for mainland Italy. “The front-line soldier I knew,” wrote the correspondent Ernie Pyle, who trudged with them across Tunisia, “had lived for months like an animal, and was a veteran in the fierce world of death. Everything was abnormal and unstable in his life.”

In the seven weeks since the Tunisian finale, those combat troops had tried to recuperate while preparing for another campaign. “The question of discipline has been very difficult,” the 1st Armored Division commander warned George Marshall. “There is a certain lawlessness…and a certain amount of disregard for consequences when men are about to go back.” In the 34th Division, “the men did not look well and seemed indifferent,” a visiting major general noted on June 15. Among other indignities, a thousand men had no underwear and five thousand others had but a single pair. “They felt very sorry for themselves,” he added. Thirteen hundred soldiers from the 34th had just been transferred to units headed straight for Sicily, leading to “incidents of self-maiming and desertion.” A captain in the 1st Division wrote home, “Too much self-commiseration, that is something we all must guard against.”

Even among the combat veterans, few considered themselves professional soldiers either by training or by temperament. Samuel Hynes, a fighter pilot who later became a university professor, described the prevalent “civilianness, the sense of the soldiering self as a kind of impostor.” They were young, of course—twenty-six, on average—and they shared a sense that “our youth had at last reached the place to spend itself,” in the words of a bomber pilot, John Muirhead.

They had been shoveled up in what Hynes called “our most democratic war, the only American war in which a universal draft really worked, [and] men from every social class went to fight.” Even the country’s most elite tabernacles had been dumped into a single egalitarian pot, the U.S. Army: of the 683 graduates from the Princeton University class of 1942, 84 percent were in uniform, and those serving as enlisted men included the valedictorian and salutatorian. Twenty-five classmates would die during the war, including nineteen killed in combat. “Everything in this world had stopped except war,” Pyle wrote, “and we were all men of a new profession out in a strange night.”

And what did they believe, these soldiers of the strange night? “Many men do not have a clear understanding of what they are fighting for,” a morale survey concluded in the summer of 1943, “and they do not know their role in the war.” Another survey showed that more than one-third had never heard of Roosevelt’s Four Freedoms, and barely one in ten soldiers could name all four. In a secret letter to his commanders that July, Eisenhower lamented that “less than half the enlisted personnel questioned believed that they were more useful to the nation as soldiers than they would have been as war workers,” and less than one-third felt “ready and anxious to get into the fighting.” The winning entry in a “Why I’m Fighting” essay contest declared, in its entirety: “I was drafted.”

Their pervasive “civilianness” made them wary of martial zeal. “We were not romantics filled with cape-and-sword twaddle,” wrote John Mason Brown, a Navy Reserve lieutenant headed to Sicily. “The last war was too near for that.” Military life inflamed their ironic sensibilities and their skepticism. A single crude acronym that captured the soldier’s lowered expectations—SNAFU, for “situation normal, all fucked up”—had expanded into a vocabulary of GI cynicism: SUSFU (situation unchanged, still fucked up); SAFU (self-adjusting fuck-up); TARFU (things are really fucked up); FUMTU (fucked up more than usual); JANFU (joint Army-Navy fuck-up); JAAFU (joint Anglo-American fuck-up); FUAFUP (fucked up and fucked up proper); and FUBAR (fucked up beyond all

recognition).

Yet they held personal convictions that were practical and profound. “We were prepared to make all sacrifices. There was nothing else for us to do,” Lieutenant Brown explained. “The leaving of our families was part of our loving them.” The combat artist George Biddle observed, “They want to win the war so they can get home, home, home, and never leave it.” A soldier in the 88th Division added, “We have got to lick those bastards in order to get out of the Army.”

The same surveys that worried Eisenhower revealed that the vast majority of troops held at least an inchoate belief that they were fighting to “guarantee democratic liberties to all peoples.” A reporter sailing to Sicily with the 45th Division concluded, “Many of the men on this ship believe that the operation will determine whether this war will end in a stalemate or whether it will be fought to a clear-cut decision.” And no one doubted that come the day of battle, they would fight to the death for the greatest cause: one another. “We did it because we could not bear the shame of being less than the man beside us,” John Muirhead wrote. “We fought because he fought; we died because he died.”

A later age would conflate them into a single, featureless demigod, possessed of mythical courage and fortitude, and animated by a determination to rebalance a wobbling world. Keith Douglas, a British officer who had fought in North Africa and would die at Normandy, described “a gentle obsolescent breed of heroes…. Unicorns, almost.” Yet it does them no disservice to recall their profound diversity in provenance and in character, or their feet of clay, or the mortality that would make them compelling long after their passing.

Captain George H. Revelle, Jr., of the 3rd Infantry Division, in a letter to his wife written while bound for Sicily, acknowledged “the chiselers, slackers, people who believe we are suckers for the munitions makers, and all the intellectual hodgepodge looking at war cynically.” In some measure, he wrote on July 7, he was “fighting for their right to be hypocrites.”

But there was also a broader reason, suffused with a melancholy nobility. “We little people,” Revelle told her, “must solve these catastrophes by mutual slaughter, and force the world back to reason.”

Across the great southern rim of the Mediterranean they staged for battle, the farm boys and the city boys, the foresters and the steelworkers and at least one horse mill fixer. Much of the American effort centered in Oran, two hundred miles west of Algiers on the old Pirate Coast, where billboards above the great port now advertised Coca-Cola and Singer sewing machines. Two of the five U.S. Army divisions that would participate in the HUSKY assault mustered in Oran. The 2nd Armored Division had begun loading on June 21 after traveling five hundred miles by rail across the Atlas Mountains from bivouacs in Morocco, where locust swarms had dimmed the sun and training began at four A.M. to avoid the midday heat: temperatures could reach 140 degrees inside a tank. Only a hundred flatcars in all of North Africa were sufficiently sturdy to carry a thirty-two-ton M-4 Sherman, and the division’s journey had taken a month; the erratic French colonial rail system so enraged one captain that he forced the engineer at gunpoint to keep moving.

Among HUSKY units, the 45th Infantry Division, comprising 21,000 soldiers in 19 ships, plus 46,000 tons of equipment—including 4 million maps—in 18 others, was unique in sailing directly from Hampton Roads to Sicily, with a one-week stop in Oran. Its embarkation in Virginia on June 8 had been beset by the usual SNAFUs, TARFUs, and JANFUs: a frantic, last-minute plea to the War Department for mine detectors; the diaspora of an engineer battalion across all nineteen troopships; and the stunned realization that the Army landing craft crewmen with whom the division had trained for weeks on the Chesapeake Bay had been abruptly ordered to the Pacific, to be replaced by Navy

crews unfamiliar with both the 45th Division and the boats they were to man. Also, by the time the nineteenth ship slipped her lines, AWOLs had become so numerous that one regimental stockade was dubbed Company J, for jailbird. Still, the passage was pleasant enough: Red Cross girls passing out paper cups of iced tea; "Happy Hour" boxing matches on the weather deck; messboys dancing on the fantail as steward's mates beat time with their hands on the taffrail; afternoon naps in lifeboats swaying from their davits. One officer played classical music over his ship's public address system; when the contralto Marian Anderson sang "Ave Maria," a sailor remarked: "God, but isn't it good to hear a woman's voice again?"

The 45th was a National Guard division, among eighteen that had been federalized early in the war. Some Regular Army officers sneered that "NG" stood for "no good," and most of the Guard's senior officers had been purged by the War Department for age or incompetence. But the Pentagon considered the 45th—known as the Thunderbirds—"better prepared than any division that has left our control to date." They were westerners, with one regiment derived from Colorado mining camp militias like the Wolftown Guards and the Queen's Emerald Rifles. Two other regiments hailed from Oklahoma, and their ranks included nearly two thousand Indians from fifty-two tribes, including Cherokee, Apache, Kiowa, Comanche, and Navajo. On the night before the departure from Virginia, an artillery captain had organized a spirited war dance around a roaring council fire.

Now their week in Oran was up and the Thunderbirds shuffled back to the ships, at least a few emerging from the red-light district known as Chancre Alley. "I know I have a fighting outfit," said their commander, Major General Troy H. Middleton. "I can tell that from the provost marshal's report." Up the gangplanks they trudged; at the top each man received a life vest and a tiny bottle of brandy against seasickness. Finance officers brought aboard $2 million for the division payroll, drawn from the Bank of Oran; when a sack stuffed with ten thousand dimes burst and scattered coins across the deck, a quick-thinking officer called the troops to attention while paymasters crawled around the immobilized soldiers, scooping up coins.

Along with the money and the ninety tons of maps, stevedores had loaded two hundred Silver Stars, six thousand Purple Hearts, and four thousand other decorations for valor; in the coming months those medals proved but a down payment on the courage required of the 45th. As the ships began to warp away from the Oran piers on the afternoon of July 4, some soldiers pulled out bricks to use as whetstones: General Patton had inspected the division a few days earlier and declared their bayonets too dull for the harsh work ahead.

Three hundred and forty crow-flying miles east of Algiers, more U.S. legions prepared for battle in the treeless flats around Lake Bizerte, a shallow bay south of Tunisia's second-largest city. In early May, the retreating Germans had scuttled a dozen ships atop one another like jackstraws across the bay's narrow neck; Navy salvage divers for weeks trisected the sunken vessels with saws and acetylene torches, then dynamited the sandy bottom beneath the hulks to blow the wreckage *down* and reopen the channel.

Now Lake Bizerte presented "a solid forest of masts": LSTs and LSIs (landing ship, infantry) and LCTs (landing craft, tank) and the eleven other species of amphibious vessels. Ancient French hydroplanes and rusting scows, destroyed in the Tunisian campaign, lay half submerged along the shore, cluttering the waterway so that cumbersome landing craft routinely "ran into sunken ships, each other, on the rocks, and into anchored vessels," one witness reported. Popular doggerel held that "Poems are made by fools like me, / But only God can steer an LST." Luftwaffe raiders sometimes sneaked across the Sicilian Strait before dawn, waking the sleeping camps but rarely inflicting much

damage. Alarms wailed, smoke generators churned out a thick gray blanket to hide the ships, and searchlight batteries impaled the planes on their beams as hundreds of antiaircraft guns threw up fountains of fire around the lake. Those on deck sheltered under the lifeboats from the spent fragments that fell like steel hail. On other occasions, German propaganda flights showered Tunisian villages with leaflets: "The day has come to fight against the Anglo-Americans and the Jews…. Bring up your children to hate them."

Here had gathered three of the Army's most celebrated units: the 1st and 3rd Infantry Divisions, and, farther south near Kairouan, the 82nd Airborne Division. In a scheme that would be replicated before Normandy, troops were assigned to areas coded by state and city: a regiment might bivouac in "Florida," with battalions at Miami, Daytona, and Jacksonville, or in "Texas," at Houston, Dallas, and Fort Worth.

None of the namesake camps were as pleasant as their originals. At first light the Arab vendors appeared, selling lemonade, or "wog wine," or haircuts, or ceramic "Roman" vases. By midmorning the heat was beastly, with Saharan winds "like a wall of fire" and tepid drinking water sprinkled with peppermint to make it palatable. Flies and mosquitoes infested the straddle-trench latrines and the mess tents where cooks made hash for tens of thousands on captured German field ranges. Commanders tried to occupy their men with morning hikes or full-contact volleyball. Anglers in the 19th Combat Engineers dropped half-pound blocks of TNT in Lake Bizerte, collecting enough belly-up fish in two hours to feed nearly two hundred men. Officers in the 82nd Airborne bought ten young bulls, a flock of sheep, and four thousand liters of beer for a preinvasion barbecue.

They were in an ugly mood, spoiling for a fight. Paratrooper marksmen "have practiced on some menacing looking Arabs," Colonel James M. Gavin, who commanded a regiment in the 82nd, wrote his daughter. "It makes [the Arabs] mad to get shot and we should stop it." Dummy tents and phony radio transmitters began to appear in Florida and Texas and Virginia and Kentucky, as the troops were trucked company by company to loading points around the lake. Herded by bellowing sergeants, they shuffled aboard the LSTs and LSIs and LCTs, every soldier's identity checked against a cumbersome passenger list; eight clerks assigned to each convoy kept twenty-three copies of the manifests, and a typical convoy—for reasons known only at echelons above reason—required more than six thousand pages of names.

Congestion and confusion remained the order of the day: truck drivers took wrong turns; sailors removed cargo from overloaded vessels only to have soldiers stow it back aboard; an ammunition dump caught fire, and flames jumped the firebreaks to consume two thousand tons of munitions in a spectacular series of explosions; novice boat crews fouled their anchors, and shouted curses carried across the water as they tried to free themselves with chains and hawsers and grappling hooks.

No wrong turn or fouled anchor could stop them, of course. Brute-force momentum—and ingenuity, and willfulness—had carried them this far and would carry them farther. One by one the vessels moved into the lake and assembled into color-coded convoys. Sweating soldiers settled belowdecks or found a patch of topside shade. Gazing north toward the open Mediterranean, they packed away their newly issued sulfa powder and battle dressings, wondering precisely where in this world they would need such things.

Still farther east the British made ready, from Benghazi to Haifa and Beirut. Eighth Army had fought across North Africa in various guises since 1940 and now resembled, one admirer wrote, "a vast gypsy camp on the move, or a tribal migration." Snatches of Arabic seeded the soldiers' palaver, notably *maleesh,* "no matter," and *bardin,* "in a little while." Many wore a mauve ointment on their

arms and faces as treatment for septic desert sores caused by prolonged exposure to dust and sand. War weariness also afflicted them—no ointment could soothe three years of fighting. One soldier confessed to "some disintegration of corporate purpose," a state of affairs given voice by the drunken veterans who strode through their battalion encampments barking, "Fuck the bloody fuckers, we're doing no more fucking fighting."

But fight they would, *bardin.* One armada gathered in the northern Gulf of Suez, with regiments such as the Dorsets and Devons and Hampshires aboard, respectively, the former liners *Strathnaver, Keren,* and *Otranto.* White-coated Indian waiters served four-course dinners and the men sang nostalgic Edwardian airs—"*Daisy, Daisy, give me your answer, do!*"—before cashing in their sterling for invasion currency. The fleet squeezed through the Suez Canal in early July, past sunken wrecks and the open-air cinemas at Ismailiya. At Port Said, one regimental history recorded, "a great bathing parade was ordered and all the troops were taken ashore to march through the town" to the beach, which soon was covered for miles with naked Tommies. The troops gathered "round a huge desert campfire, consuming as much beer as possible," then marched back to their ships behind kilted pipers in white spats and full skirl.

On July 5, the invasion armada assembled in the Mediterranean roads off the Egyptian coast. Some efforts to boost morale simply annoyed the men, for example the incessant playing of "The Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy of Company B" over the loudspeakers of the ship carrying the 2nd Inniskillings. Padres offered eve-of-battle prayers, asking a "special intercession…for the recapture of Europe." Signalmen in khaki shorts wigwagged their flags at departing ships from the quays at Tripoli and Alexandria. Sergeants hectored the men to take their antimalaria pills, prompting one soldier in the 1st Royal Tank Regiment to conclude, "Like fat cattle who are pampered to the very doors of the slaughterhouse, it was important that if and when we died we should be in good health."

Many regretted leaving Africa, where they had been "sleeping under great ripe stars." Here Eighth Army had found as much glory as perhaps could be found in modern war. Here, too, they would leave thousands of comrades in African graves. "Yet we went with light hearts," the tanker added, "for somewhere at the end of all this we could go home."

The *Monrovia* singled up her lines shortly after ten A.M. on Tuesday, July 6, heaved in the starboard anchor, and with the help of two tugs edged from the Basin de Vieux to the twelve-fathom line outside the Algiers port. To Kent Hewitt's chagrin, as the French harbor pilot stepped over *Monrovia*'s side to return to shore, he yelled, "Have a good trip to Sicily!" Counterintelligence officers ordered the pilot and his tug crews arrested and held incommunicado until the landings had begun.

Despite elaborate security precautions, Hewitt remained uncertain whether HUSKY's secrets still held. Sealed maps of Sicily and other classified documents had been delivered throughout the fleet by armed couriers, to be stored before sailing under lock and key. Not until the last minute were Italian-speaking interpreters sent to their respective Army units. Yet breaches had occurred; there was loose talk on the wharves, while on some ships the premature distribution had occurred of "The Soldier's Guide to Sicily," which featured a large silhouette of the island on the cover. A British officer in Cairo had even sent his gabardine uniform to be dry-cleaned with a notebook containing the HUSKY battle plan left in the pocket; security agents raided the shop and found that the incriminating pages had been torn out and used as scratch paper to write customer invoices.

As Hewitt paced *Monrovia*'s flag bridge, listening to the commotion of eight hundred men practicing abandon-ship drills, he had a thousand other details to contemplate besides whether the

Germans knew he was coming. The fleet included twenty LSTs carrying ten thousand gallons of water each. Was that enough? Seventeen hospital ships had been sent to North Africa, of which five now sailed toward Sicily. Was *that* enough? Six hundred miles of African coastline and the sea approaches to Malta had been swept for mines. Were they completely clean? What about enemy submarines? Hewitt had lost several ships and 140 men to U-boats after the landings in Morocco the previous November, and the memory still pained him.

As for the eighty thousand soldiers now in his custody, Hewitt could only take comfort in his favorite maxim: You do everything you can, then you hope for the best. Disagreements with the Army, which had begun a year earlier during the preparations for TORCH, had continued during the HUSKY planning. Some frictions were petty: Army and Navy supply officers had jacked up Algerian warehouse prices by bidding against each other, and the Army insisted on calling *Monrovia* a headquarters ship when any fool knew it was a *flagship.* Hewitt had been astonished, a few days earlier, to find sentries posted on Patton's orders outside *Monrovia*'s operations room, barring access to the admiral's own staff—*that* indignity had soon been corrected. More troubling had been Patton's months-long refusal to move his headquarters from Mostaganem, nearly two hundred miles from Algiers; the distance had made joint planning more difficult.

Still, Hewitt and Patton had found common ground and even mutual affection. The formality of TORCH, when they addressed each other as "Admiral" and "General," had yielded to a more intimate "Kent" and "Georgie." Patton was ecumenical enough to occasionally side with the Navy, as in one recent dispute when Army planners—contrary to Hewitt's advice—proposed to slip troops onto the Sicilian beaches in rubber boats. "Sit down!" Patton had finally snapped at his officers. "The Navy is responsible for getting you ashore and they can put you ashore in any damned thing they want." To celebrate their final evening on land, Hewitt on Monday night had invited Patton and several other generals to dinner at the admiral's quarters, a villa requisitioned from a Danish vintner. After several hours of convivial drinking Hewitt helped the generals to the staff cars that would take them to their ships; more sober than most, Patton on his way out the door studied the risqué wall frescoes of half-nude women and muttered, "Thank God I live in a camp."

At five P.M. *Monrovia* signaled anchors aweigh and moved into the swept channel, surrounded by warships and landing craft of every description. Panic briefly seized the fleet when radar showed an apparent swarm of hostile planes; the blips proved to be the ships' own barrage balloons, hoisted on tethers to discourage dive-bombers and strafing fighters. Semaphores blinked out Morse messages and the convoy began zigzagging, as previously agreed, at ten knots under sailing pattern number 35.

The white vision of Algiers fell behind. Hewitt studied the African mountains to starboard. Iron oxide in the scree was fired bloodred by the setting sun as it plunged into the purple sea. He had done everything he could, and now he would hope for the best.

Behind the bridge, in *Monrovia*'s spacious flag cabin, George Patton felt the ship's screws gnaw the sea as she picked up speed. The Navy had tried to make him feel like a wanted guest, greeting him with incessant piping when he came aboard and assigning two mess boys as his personal attendants. The cabin, opulent by warship standards, measured eighteen by fifteen feet, with a desk, bunk, table, and shower. Still, Patton harbored private reservations about both the sister service—"The Navy is our weak spot," he told his diary—and Kent Hewitt: "very affable and in his usual mental fog."

He was ready for battle and looked the part, immaculate in his whipcord breeches and tailored blouse, the famous pistols holstered and near at hand. He had lost weight in the last few months by running and swimming, and improved his fighting trim by cutting back on both liquor and tobacco.

For six weeks Patton had commanded American forces in Tunisia, following the debacle at Kasserine Pass and the sacking of the II Corps commander; since resuming his preparations for HUSKY in mid-April, he had pondered the checkered performance of U.S. troops and their officers. In a memo to his commanders in June, Patton offered twenty-seven tactical adages, distilled from the campaign experiences in Africa and thirty-six years in uniform. Number 7: “Always fire low”; number 13: “In mountain warfare, capture the heights and work downhill”; number 22: “In case of doubt, attack”; and his personal maxim, number 18: “Never take counsel of your fears.”

Yet fears possessed him—of failure, of flinching under fire. The sickly California infant had grown into a shy and sensitive boy, and then “a timid man by nature,” one of his oldest friends had noted on June 26 after seeing Patton in Mostaganem. Flamboyance compensated for his inner doubts, and provided the mask he believed a confident commander should wear. “I don’t like the whine of bullets any more than I ever did,” Patton wrote on July 1, “but they attract me just the same.” His superior officer in 1928 had concluded that Patton “would be invaluable in time of war but a disturbing element in time of peace.” Now his time had come. Patton himself had predicted as a young man, “Someday I will make them all know me.” That day had also come.

In recent weeks he had traveled from camp to camp, preaching violence and transcendent duty. “Battle is the most magnificent competition in which a human being can indulge. It brings out all that is best. It removes all that is base,” he told the 45th Division. To their officers he added, “You have a sacred trust to your men and to your country, and you are the lowest thing that lives if you are false to this trust.”

At a large outdoor amphitheater in Algiers, he strode onstage to “Ruffles and Flourishes,” his tunic ablaze with decorations. “There is no better death than to die in battle for a noble and glorious cause,” he told the troops. As for the Army’s policy against fraternization, he added, “That’s bullshit. An army that can’t fuck can’t fight.” The soldiers “howled, stamped [their] feet and whistled with approval,” one medic reported. Such profane performances, an observer said, were intended “to toughen them, to blood them with language.” In a letter on June 19, Patton’s aide wrote, “He is a great hate builder, and believe me, when the time comes, the Axis boys are going to be very sorry to meet him.”

Some GIs were already sorry. Upon discovering a 45th Division soldier asleep in a foxhole during a landing exercise, Patton jabbed the man in the ribs with his own rifle and bellowed, “You son of a bitch. You get out of there.” During another exercise near Oran, Patton yelled, “Captain, get these men off the beach and onto their objective.”

“But, sir,” the officer replied, “I am a chaplain.”

“I don’t give a damn if you are Jesus Christ himself,” Patton snapped, “get these men the hell off the beach.”

To a dilatory officer outside Bizerte, Patton shouted, “You son of a bitch. When I tell you to come I want you to run.” “Sir,” the soldier said, “I resent being called a son of a bitch. I think you owe me an apology.” Patton apologized and drove off. Such apologies were rare. “Chew them out and they’ll remember it,” he said. But if chastened soldiers remembered, so did his superiors. In late May, during a profane tirade against a squad of 1st Division infantrymen at Arzew, all within earshot of Eisenhower and the visiting George Marshall, one general whispered, “That temper of his is going to finish him yet.”

But the caricature of a raging martinet failed to capture Patton’s nuances. Few officers had studied the art of war with greater care. If he had virtually memorized G.F.R. Henderson’s biography of Stonewall Jackson, that it was to answer the inner interrogatory “What would Jackson do?” Patton had earned his pilot’s license to better understand air attacks, and he had mastered enough navigation to sail to Hawaii for a better comprehension of movement on the open sea, which resembled the open

desert.

He also was a loving if sometimes wayward husband, and as H-hour drew near his thoughts were with his wife, Beatrice, whom he had known since they were sixteen. In many ways she was more than his equal, the sort of woman to whom he could write in early May: “Read up on Cromwell and send me some ideas.” Intelligent and wealthy, she was an accomplished sailor and a successful novelist who gulped down a raw egg from a shot glass for breakfast before riding to hounds. He had proposed marriage, in the summer of 1909, by riding his own horse up the stairs and onto the terrace of her house; when her father objected to such a suitor, she feigned a hunger strike, deepening her pallor with rice powder until he relented. Of Georgie she had later written in her journal, “What a man. He is very great—[has] all the flash, and drama, and personality, and everything to back it up.”

“I have no premonitions and hope to live forever,” Patton had written Bea just before *Monrovia* sailed. In fact, he had intimations of the immortality that only glory could bring a battle captain. It awaited him, he sensed, in Sicily. “I believe in my fate,” he told his diary, “and, to fulfill it, this show must be a success.”

Patton had designed the last cavalry saber adopted by the Army, a straight, double-edged weapon of thrust. The blade embodied the man. “If you charge hard enough at death,” he claimed, “it will get out of your way.” Shortly before boarding the *Monrovia,* he summoned his generals to a final conference. At the end, with tears streaming down his cheeks, he dismissed them with a slash of his swagger stick. “I never want to see you bastards again,” he roared, “unless it’s at your post on the shores of Sicily.”

* * *

From east and west the convoys converged, gaining mass and momentum: here was Hewitt’s “most gigantic fleet.” Red and green navigation lights gleamed from horizon to horizon, reflected in the phosphorescence churned in a thousand wakes. The bright pellets of “flying elephants”—barrage balloons—floated overhead, and twin-tail P-38 escorts flew higher still.

At last the troops learned their destination, and shipboard betting pools paid off the clairvoyant winners. “We are sailing to Sicily,” the commander of the Oran convoy announced aboard U.S.S. *Ancon.* “We have bad news to deliver, but we are saving it this trip for Benito Mussolini.” Men gathered on the weather deck to recite the Twenty-third Psalm. Seamen warned anxious landlubbers that jumping overboard during an air attack was pointless: the concussion from detonating bombs would rupture a swimmer’s lungs and spleen at three hundred yards. Classicists tried to remember their Thucydides: few took comfort from his account of an Athenian expedition to Sicily twenty-five centuries earlier, in which the victors earned “the most brilliant of successes, the vanquished the most calamitous of defeats.”

The *Monrovia* steamed past Bizerte harbor early on the morning of July 8. Now she zigzagged at $12^{1}/2$ knots, under sailing plan number 10, making for Cap Bon and the sea-lanes to Sicily. A squadron of British destroyers screened the seaward flank. Other ships sortied from the harbor to join the fleet threading the swept Tunisian War Channel. Atop Bizerte’s battered custom house, an honor guard of American bluejackets and British tars stood at attention as the ships slid past. Sailors on the foredecks returned the salutes, then waved farewell. “Looking astern,” one officer recorded, “there was another convoy even greater than ours, spread so far back it had the appearance of columns of marching ants, dots blurred by distance.

“It seemed,” he added, “the whole world must be afloat.”

Calypso's Island

OVER the millennia, a great deal had happened on the tiny island the Allies now code-named FINANCE. St. Paul had been shipwrecked on the north coast of Malta in A.D. 60 while en route to stand trial in Rome for crimes against the state; he preached to the unconverted for three months, then continued on his fateful way. Successive waves of Vandals, Goths, Byzantines, Arabs, and Normans swept behind him, felling forests for farms and herds; the topsoil washed away to expose a parched, rocky knob, eight miles by eighteen. Some scholars believed that Malta was the place where the nymph Calypso had imprisoned wandering Odysseus as her love slave for seven years.

In 1530, Emperor Charles V garrisoned the island with the knights of Saint John of Jerusalem, a monastic order founded during the First Crusade and recently expelled from Rhodes by the Turks. After a siege, the Maltese knights spent years building complex battlements, with bastions and watchtowers and walls as much as thirty feet thick. Britain seized the fortress in 1800, taking also its fine harbor and the island's handsome capital, Valletta, built with ocher stone from local quarries. Most of the quarter million Maltese were illiterate peasants who scratched a living from the thin fields and pastures.

The first of 3,340 Axis air raids struck the island at dawn on June 11, 1940. During the next three years it became the most bombed place on earth, as the enemy tried to blast the British from their only harbor between Gibraltar and Alexandria and to neutralize the Maltese airfields, which expedited attacks on Axis supply convoys to North Africa. Some sixteen thousand tons of bombs fell on the island in attacks of exemplary viciousness: German pilots even heaved hand grenades from their cockpits. Valletta was reduced to ocher rubble, then to ocher powder. "Beauty was slain," wrote a Maltese poet, M. Mizzi, "and a great kingdom of terror was set up." More than beauty died: the number of casualties reached fifteen thousand. (Precise figures were elusive because it was common for families to conceal a fatality in order to keep drawing the victim's rations.) "Holy Mary," the Maltese prayed, "let the bombs fall in the sea or in the fields."

Those not killed or wounded simply suffered. Women prowled the wreckage after each raid in search of splintered furniture to burn as firewood. By July 1942, daily rations per person had been cut to four ounces of staples such as meat, fish, and cheese, and thirteen ounces of bread, often baked with sawdust filler. Newspapers printed articles on the virtues of "potato soup, potato puree, potato casserole." Public kitchens served "veal loaf," an odious confection of goat and horsemeat. The Maltese learned to live without soap, razor blades, toilet paper, shoelaces, or books. Contraceptives were fashioned from old inner tubes until people grew too exhausted for sex. To escape the bombs they used hand chisels to carve shelters from rock so obdurate that even experienced diggers rarely excavated more than eight inches a day. Maltese fishing boats called *dghajsa*s ferried food and kerosene from nearby islands, and on their return voyages carried off the dead for proper burial.

Thanks to the victory in North Africa, the first unopposed convoy since 1940 had reached the island on May 24, 1943. Food and other staples began to arrive, but Malta remained a gaunt, medieval wreck: sand flies swarmed in the ruins and white dust rose from every footfall. "Children, too thin and listless even to play in the bright sunshine, hung about the shabby, pitted streets," one visitor wrote. Valletta had not a single restaurant, and water flowed from the city's taps for only two hours in the morning and half an hour at night. Life in the British garrison was hardly easier, with beer rationed to a weekly pint, issued with "fifty inexpressibly foul Indian cigarettes." Axis bombers still pummeled the island; in the code used by Allied forces in early July, all BULLDOGS and UMPIRES (Americans and British) were advised to remain alert to POSTMAN TULIP AUCTION (German aircraft). Such jargon often drew the coded equivalent of a blank look: ICEBERG (signal not understood).

For all its woes, FINANCE had the virtue of lying only fifty-five miles due south of HORRIFIED—Sicily—and on the late afternoon of July 8, the island's fortunes abruptly revived. "Everyone was on tiptoe with excitement," one British officer said, for at five P.M. General Eisenhower arrived to make Malta his headquarters.

Motorcyclists with numbers pinned to their backs guided the Allied commander's aircraft and escort planes to blast shelters along the runway. Eisenhower had left Algiers on July 6 to spend two days at his Tunisian command post before flying to Malta. To screen his movements, a dummy Allied Forces Headquarters in Oran began broadcasting simulated radio traffic; the staff cars sent to pick him up at the Valletta airfield bore no rank insignia on their bumpers. During the final approach to the island, Eisenhower had seen the feverish preparations for HUSKY along Dockyard Creek and French Creek at Grand Harbour, as well as the ambulance parking lot built on the jetties at St. Paul's Bay; Allied planners anticipated evacuating thirty thousand battle casualties from Sicily to North Africa, and Malta had been converted into a hospital port and medical way station. Eisenhower fingered the lucky coins—including a silver dollar, a French franc, and an English crown piece—that he always carried in a zippered purse when traveling.

The small convoy wound through ruined Valletta before climbing a hill outside town to the Verdala Palace, a square, moated castle with towers at each corner, built in 1586 as a summer home for the Maltese grand master. Escorted by his British hosts, Eisenhower wandered through the great hall and an immense banquet room, where biblical frescoes adorned the walls. Beneath the palace, hooks set into the walls of a dim oubliette still held rusting chains; the reporter John Gunther, who accompanied the commanding general, noted, "There are several rooms, dungeons, which the servants believe to be haunted, and which even today they will not enter." Climbing a spiral marble staircase—the risers were only two inches high so that Maltese priests could ride up the steps on mules shod with sandals—Eisenhower was shown to his bedroom, a magnificent chamber with a thirty-foot ceiling. A whitewashed back passage led to another dungeon. "I think it'll do," he said, with a flash of his now famous grin. "I'll have room enough."

Nine months earlier, Eisenhower had taken command in another British redoubt, at Gibraltar, on the eve of Operation TORCH, which he was chosen to command over 366 more senior U.S. officers. Since then, he had survived battlefield setbacks, political missteps, and his own inexperience to become the Allies' indispensable man. The "only man who could have made things work was Ike," Churchill's chief of staff, Lieutenant General Hastings Ismay, said after the war. "No one else."

Victory in North Africa had enhanced his stature and his self-confidence. Perhaps the lucky coins helped, but so too did hard work and a gift for square dealing. General Bernard L. Montgomery, who would command British forces in HUSKY, considered Eisenhower "the very incarnation of sincerity," with "the power of drawing the hearts of men towards him as a magnet attracts bits of metal." Another senior British general said, "He was utterly fair in his dealings, and I envied the clarity of his mind, and his power of accepting responsibility." He listened well, and spoke well. "I am bound to say," Churchill confided to a British colleague, "I have noticed that good generals do not usually have such good powers of expression as he has." Few could resist that infectious smile, and his physical vigor proved a tonic to others. "Always on the move," the reporter Drew Middleton noted. "Walking up and down, pacing patterns on the rug, his flat, harsh voice ejecting idea after idea like sparks flung from an emery wheel."

"I'm a born optimist," Eisenhower once said, "and I can't change that." He told his son, John, a cadet at West Point, that effective leadership could be learned by "studious reflection and practice…. You must be devoted to duty, sincere, fair, and cheerful." At times he could nitpick, grousing that "not one officer in fifty knows how to use the English language," and supposedly cashiering an aide for failing to master the distinction between "shall" and "will." Still, he remained humble and balanced

despite having served seven years under a paragon of pretension, General Douglas MacArthur, whose refusal to ever acknowledge error and whose persistent references to himself in the third person baffled Eisenhower. Told that George Marshall proposed to nominate him for the Congressional Medal of Honor after TORCH, Eisenhower warned, "I would refuse to accept it." Just before leaving Algiers, he received a telegram from a publisher offering "at least $25,000" if he would allow any "nationally known writer" of his choosing to tell his story. "Too busy to be interested," Eisenhower replied.

His cosmology was simple. "You are fighting for the right to live as you please, providing you don't get in someone's hair," he told soldiers in Algiers on June 19. "We are fighting for liberty and the dignity of the human soul." He promised, if given the chance, to have Mussolini shot. "I'm not one who finds it difficult to hate my enemies." John Eisenhower, a shrewd observer of his father, noted that he pursued war with the same calculating intensity that made him an outstanding bridge and poker player, persuaded that "the Almighty would provide him with a decent set of cards…. He appeared not to share the metaphysical feeling that God-owed him anything specific, such as good weather on a given day."

Yet as a field marshal he had built a spotty record in North Africa, and his aptitude remained unproven. "A coordinator rather than a commander," one British general wrote. Another asserted that "he was not a soldier, he was just a compromiser." Marshall believed he was so preoccupied with the politics of coalition warfare that "he had little or no opportunity to keep in touch with the troops." In truth, he lacked a great battle captain's endowments: to see the field both spatially and temporally; to intuit an opponent's intent; to subordinate all resistance to an iron will.

He was indeed a compromiser, a coordinator, but that was precisely what this war—this total, global war—required. Eisenhower had long recognized that in such an existential struggle the most robust coalition would likely prevail; he also intuited that centrifugal forces, from national pride to personal vainglory, threatened every alliance. He was a master of the sensible compromise, convinced that an Allied commander must lead by considering disparate national viewpoints "to solve problems through reasoning rather than by merely issuing commands." John Gunther had noted that "lots of Americans and British have an atavistic dislike of one another"; a senior British general warned General Brooke at the TRIDENT conference that "there is going to be grave risk of open quarrels unless someone can go round daily with a lubricating can." Eisenhower carried that can, and nearly everyone trusted him to apply it judiciously. His British political adviser, the future prime minister Harold Macmillan, considered Eisenhower "wholly uneducated in any normal sense of the word," yet "compared with the wooden heads and dessicated hearts of many British soldiers I see here, he is a jewel of broadmindedness and wisdom."

The long summer twilight lingered in the west when Eisenhower finished a pot of tea and emerged from Verdala Palace for the short ride to his command post. His stomach, he confided to an aide, felt like "a clenched fist." For two decades he had been plagued with intestinal ailments linked to stress, ever since the death of his elder son from scarlet fever in 1920. Before the war he had been hospitalized repeatedly for enteritis and intestinal obstructions. (A disabling injury to his left knee in the 1912 West Point–Tufts football game had led to seven other hospitalizations.) A respiratory infection picked up at dank Gibraltar in November had never completely resolved, and Eisenhower's chain smoking—he was up to sixty or more Camels a day—was hardly salutary. Although he paid John $1.50 a week *not* to smoke at West Point, Eisenhower's habit had become so compulsive that he sometimes lit up in flight even when the crew of his B-17 Flying Fortress warned of gas fumes.

Cigarette in hand, he was escorted to the beetling walls above Grand Harbour. Landing craft and warships packed the port and inlets to the harbor's mouth at Fort St. Elmo. Tars scaled the superstructures on a pair of battleships—back at Malta for the first time in over two years—while Maltese waved from their precarious balconies above the docks; aboard H.M.S. *Nelson,* a band had been playing "Every Nice Girl Loves a Sailor." Eisenhower and his aides marched into the Lascaris Bastion, a tunnel complex originally dug by the Knights of Malta and now converted into a Royal Navy command post. Condensation glistened through whitewash on the limestone walls. Lascaris was bombproof, convenient, and wretched. Uniforms grew moldy in a day, and many staff officers suffered from lung afflictions or pappataci fever, passed by the biting sand flies. Portions of the citadel remained insufferably hot, while other chambers were so chilly that Eisenhower called for his overcoat. Even Admiral Andrew Browne Cunningham, the British naval commander in the Mediterranean who welcomed Eisenhower, conceded the place was "extremely smelly." Officers condemned to Lascaris fortified themselves at two o'clock each afternoon with gin and orange juice or banana cordials.

Eisenhower strode through Pinto Tunnel with Cunningham, past a gallery of sheds used by officers whose staff functions were denoted by cabalistic symbols scratched on their door placards. His own office measured fourteen by ten feet; the furnishings included a wicker chair and an oil stove burning next to a single table draped with a gray blanket. A rug tossed on the clay floor barely mitigated "a chill that had been gathering for four hundred years." Eisenhower found it hard to keep his cigarettes dry.

He shrugged off the discomfort and trailed Cunningham into a large war room with a forty-foot vaulted ceiling and enormous maps affixed to each wall. A twenty-by-thirteen-foot mosaic, compiled from five hundred photo reconnaissance missions, revealed all ten thousand square miles of Sicily. Gunther's jaw dropped at the cartographic display, and he marveled in his notebook at the "infinitude of detail, their extreme up-to-dateness, and the wonderful draftsmanship and lithography they represent. Have the Germans as good maps as these really super-maps, I wonder?"

Cunningham, his red-veined face florid above the white collar of his uniform, pointed out the colored lines that plotted the steaming Allied flotillas, from the Levant to the Pillars of Hercules. Collectively they represented 160,000 troops, 14,000 vehicles, and 1,800 guns aboard 3,000 vessels. Radio silence had been imposed across the fleets, the admiral added, so little was known about their progress except that three Canadian ships traveling from Scotland had been sunk by U-boats in the western Mediterranean; the Canadians had lost several dozen men, several dozen guns, five hundred trucks, and much of their communications gear. Under a relentless Allied air bombardment of Sicily—the detonations could be heard on Malta on quiet evenings—most surviving Axis planes had fled from the island to the Italian mainland. But precisely how alive the enemy was to the impending invasion was unknown. Cunningham cocked an eyebrow at the fancy maps, as if considering his favorite expression: "It's too velvet-arsed and Rolls-Royce for me." Son of an Edinburgh anatomy professor, Cunningham—who served as Eisenhower's chief naval deputy—had first come under fire in the Boer War, at age seventeen; now sixty, he remained fearless, pugnacious, and convinced that the optimum range in any fight was point-blank. Gunther noted that the underlids of his sailor's squint were "lined with bright red, like a bulldog's."

Eisenhower studied the central Mediterranean. Sicily, a triangular rock the size of Vermont, lay ninety miles north of Tunisia and only two miles off the toe of the Italian boot. Its eastern end was dominated by Mount Etna, an active volcano ten thousand feet high and twenty miles in diameter. "The coast is everywhere scalloped with wide, sweeping bights separated from each other by capes," an Allied terrain study noted. AFHQ planners had contemplated every inch of that three-hundred-mile coastline, scrutinizing thirty-two beaches as potential landing sites. Sicily had been overrun by even

more successive invaders than Malta had endured: Greeks, Romans, Vandals, Ostrogoths, Byzantines, Saracens, Normans, Spaniards, Bourbons. And soon, the Anglo-Americans. “Sicily in all ages seems to have taught only catastrophe and violence,” the American writer Henry Adams observed. “For a lesson in anarchy…Sicily stands alone and defies evolution.”

An amphibious landing on a hostile shore, Eisenhower knew, was the hardest operation in warfare: wading ashore under fire, building a secure lodgement beyond the beach, then breaking free to the interior. In the long history of combat, the amphibious art had been mastered by no one. For every successful landing—such as the American assault at Vera Cruz in 1847—there was an equivalent catastrophe, like the British debacle at Gallipoli in 1915. For every failure—as of the Spanish Armada, or the Mongols in Japan—there was a military leader too daunted even to try, including Napoleon and Hitler, both of whom declined to cross the English Channel.

If amphibious warfare was inherently difficult, the Allies seemed determined to make it harder. The Combined Chiefs had ordered Eisenhower to begin planning HUSKY on January 23; initial schemes focused on seizing Sicilian ports and airfields, with the intent of putting ten divisions ashore within a week of the first assault. Yet he and his lieutenants remained distracted by the Tunisian campaign; their various headquarters were so far-flung—from Cairo to Rabat—that couriers shuttled more than two thousand miles every day, delivering documents, maps, and messages. The main planning cell occupied the unheated *école normale* outside Algiers, where officers typed with their gloves on.

Eisenhower in March and again in April warned that HUSKY would fail if the landing forces encountered “well-armed and fully organized German forces,” which he defined as “more than two divisions.” The British chiefs in London accused him of “grossly exaggerating” enemy strength, and Churchill sputtered with indignation at “these pusillanimous and defeatist doctrines…. What Stalin would think of this, when he has 185 German divisions on his front I cannot imagine.” Duly chastened, Eisenhower forwarded a plan under which British troops invaded Sicily’s southeast coast to seize the ports at Augusta and Syracuse, while the Americans landed in the west to take Palermo.

This drew unexpected fire from Eisenhower’s flank. The Eighth Army commander, Bernard Montgomery, had resisted involvement in HUSKY planning while he was occupied with the Tunisian campaign: “Let’s finish this show first,” he snapped. When he eventually turned his attention to Sicily, Montgomery spread a large map of the island on the floor of his bedroom and mused aloud, “Well, now let’s see how it would suit us for this battle to go?”

The existing plan suited him not at all, and he promptly shoved a spanner in the works. “It has no hope of success and should be completely recast,” Montgomery declared. Falsely claiming that AFHQ planners had assumed that “opposition will be slight”—in fact, they presumed stiff resistance—Montgomery condemned all such “wooly thinking” and warned, “Never was there a greater error.” By late April, he was in full throat, forecasting “a first-class military disaster…. I am prepared to carry the war into HORRIFIED with the Eighth Army but must do so in my own way.” To his superiors, he proposed sliding Patton’s Seventh Army under his command; to his diary he was even blunter: “I should run HUSKY.”

Rather than divide the force, Montgomery argued, the attack should consolidate on the southeast coast, where American and British divisions could lend mutual support. With the invasion only two months away and the Combined Chiefs about to meet at the TRIDENT conference in Washington, Eisenhower convened another planning conference in Algiers on May 2. Over a lobster lunch—the lobsters cost AFHQ a thousand francs each—Montgomery pressed his point, then followed Eisenhower’s chief of staff, Lieutenant General Walter B. “Beetle” Smith, into the men’s latrine to continue the argument, first from an adjacent urinal and then with arrows sketched on a steamed mirror. “The Americans,” a senior British staff officer, Lieutenant General Sir Charles Gairdner, told his diary, “are beginning to feel that the British Empire is being run by Monty.”

A day later, Eisenhower broke the deadlock and accepted the Montgomery plan, shrugging off protests from Admiral Cunningham and others who preferred naval dispersion and the seizure of more airfields. Patton rebuffed Kent Hewitt's plea that he also contest the revised plan since American forces would no longer have the quick use of Palermo's port. "No, goddammit," Patton replied. "I've been in this Army thirty years and when my superior gives me an order I say, 'Yes, sir!' and then do my god-damnedest to carry it out."

To his diary, General Gairdner confessed, "I can't understand how democracies wage war." HUSKY now called for seven divisions—four British and three American—landing abreast across a hundred-mile span of southeastern Sicily. The seaborne force would also be preceded by portions of two airborne divisions, a wrinkle that required attacking in the second quarter of the July moon when it would be light enough for paratroopers to see but dark enough to cloak the approaching armada. Thirteen Allied divisions ultimately would be committed to the invasion.

Of the 300,000 Axis troops defending Sicily, the bulk were in Italian units of doubtful pluck. One American intelligence officer described the two German divisions as "strictly hot mustard"; as for the Italians, "Stick them in the belly and sawdust will run out." Thanks to Ultra, the extraordinary British ability to intercept and decipher coded German radio traffic, Eisenhower knew a great deal about his enemy's strength and disposition. An Ultra team—those admitted to the great secret were said to be "bathed in the blood of the lamb"—was at his disposal on Malta, as well as in Algiers. Since first breaking a radio message encrypted with a German Enigma machine in 1940, Ultra cryptologists at Bletchley Park, north of London, had intercepted and broken thousands of messages to provide "a panoramic knowledge of the German forces." By mid-1944 nearly fifty separate Enigma codes would be deciphered, including a new German army code called Albatross that had just been broken on June 2, and others named Hyena, Seahorse, Woodpecker, and Puffin.

Eisenhower also knew that the Italian navy—the only substantial Axis naval force in the Mediterranean, with six battleships and eleven cruisers—lacked radar, fuel, and aircraft carriers. The Italian air force had lost 2,200 planes in the past eight months and had little sense of the Allies' whereabouts. "No one," an Italian admiral complained, "can play chess blindfolded." Not least, Eisenhower had a good sense of Italy's social disintegration under the pressures of war and Allied bombing: coal and food shortages, labor strikes, rail disruptions, even a profound lack of lightbulbs.

What Eisenhower did not know was how vigorously the Italians would fight for their homeland, or whether the Germans—who were believed capable of shipping an additional division of reinforcements to Sicily every three days—would fight to the death for an arid island a thousand miles from the Fatherland. Even Ultra could not see that deeply into the enemy's soul.

The Combined Chiefs had approved the detailed HUSKY plan on May 12. Yet a feeling lingered in Washington and London that the scheme lacked bravura and that the Allies were missing a chance to exploit their triumph in North Africa. For his troubles, Eisenhower received another rebuke. "Your planners and mine may be too conservative," George Marshall told him; they lacked the audacity that "won great victories for Nelson and Grant and Lee."

Marshall was right. HUSKY would be the largest amphibious operation of World War II—the seven divisions in the assault wave were two more than would land at Normandy eleven months later—but it lacked imaginative dash. Preoccupied with Tunisia, commanders lost sight of the larger objective: to seal the Strait of Messina, preventing Axis reinforcement of Sicily and forestalling an Axis escape to the Italian mainland. Amphibious doctrine stressed the capture of ports and airfields to the exclusion of the battle beyond the dunes, and the final HUSKY plan petered out twenty miles past the landing beaches.

A "terrible inflexibility" characterized all big amphibious enterprises, in Beetle Smith's phrase. Fitting the pieces together, getting from here to there, synchronizing the attack—these tasks absorbed

enormous concentration and effort, leaving little time to consider the battle beyond the shingle. HUSKY also included the first sizable Allied airborne attack of the war. And Montgomery's revised plan meant that the Americans, lacking a port, would have to sustain a combat army over the beaches in ways never before attempted.

The die was cast, audacious or otherwise. In mid-June, Eisenhower gave reporters off-the-record details of the impending invasion in order to quell speculation about future operations. He asked them to keep the secret, and they did. "Don't *ever* do that to us again," one correspondent pleaded.

Feints and deceptions continued apace. An Anglo-American fleet of warships and cargo vessels steamed from Britain toward Norway to suggest a northern invasion. A British Mediterranean armada —four battleships, six cruisers, and eighteen destroyers—sailed toward Greece before reversing course in the dead of night to cover the sea-lanes near Malta. But in the clutter of prevarication could be found an occasional truth. Eight million leaflets fell on Sicily in early July. One message warned, "Germany will fight to the last Italian." Another contained a map showing the vulnerability of Italian cities to Allied bombers flying from North Africa. The caption read: "Mussolini asked for it."

A lustrous canopy of stars arched over Valletta as Eisenhower left the tunnel on the night of July 8. The briny scent of the midsummer Mediterranean was intoxicating after the Lascaris underworld. The blacked-out town gleamed in the blue starlight with a beauty denied the daylight ruins.

For all its size, the enormous bedchamber at Verdala Palace was furnished with the economy of a monastic cell: water pitcher, wash basin, soap dish, thunder mug, bathtub. Several small battle maps had been tacked up. Eisenhower at times lamented the countless details that required his attention —"folderol," he called it. "I used to read about commanders of armies and envied them what I supposed to be a great freedom in action and decision," he had written in a letter home on May 27. "What a notion! The demands made upon me that must be met make me a slave rather than a master."

Translators, for example. Two hundred Italian-speaking soldiers were to be sent to North Africa with the 45th Division and 82nd Airborne, but none had arrived with the 82nd. Where were they? Or prisoners: "We may have 200,000 prisoners of war from HUSKY," he had informed Marshall on June 28, but of the 8,000 guards required less than half that number could be combed from U.S. units. Did the Geneva Conventions permit using British or French guards in American camps? Or donkeys: an urgent plea to the War Department for pack saddles and bridles had drawn a query from Marshall: "How many hands high are these donkeys and what average weight?" On further investigation, Eisenhower told him, "Donkeys not now considered suitable. Limited number of native mules available, 14 to 16 hands high, average weight 850 pounds…. These mules accustomed to packs but very vicious."

And then there was AMGOT, the Allied Military Government of Occupied Territories, an organization preparing to establish postinvasion civil rule in Sicily. Wags claimed the acronym stood for "Aged Military Gentlemen on Tour," but Washington informed Eisenhower that AMGOT had an "ugly German sound" and also approximated a crude, explicit Turkish term for genitalia. "To change the name of AMGOT at this stage," the exasperated commander-in-chief told the War Department on June 1, "would cause great delay and confusion."

Not least, he worried about his wife. With John at West Point, Mamie lived alone in Washington. She suffered from a heart condition and was often bedridden. Her weight had dropped to 112 pounds, and she described herself as someone who "lived after sorts, read mystery thrillers through the night—and waited." Eisenhower wrote her frequently, by hand rather than employing his usual dictationist, with salutations of "my sweetheart" or "darling." Lately he had taken special pains to reassure her of

his constancy, because lately she had asked pointedly about Kay Summersby.

The rumors had intensified. Kathleen Helen Summersby, born in County Cork, had served as Eisenhower's driver in London and then in North Africa before being put in charge of his correspondence; she was adept at forging his signature on letters as well as on autographed photos. A model and film studio extra before the war, she was beautiful, athletic, and lively, often serving as her boss's bridge partner or riding companion. Eisenhower, twenty years her senior, struck her "as a man who had had very little comforting in his life." She had needed comforting herself in the past month: on June 6, her fiancé, a young U.S. Army colonel, had been killed by a mine in Tunisia. Grief and strain shattered her emotionally, and Eisenhower offered to send her home to London. Instead, she asked to remain in Algiers. No convincing evidence would ever prove a carnal relationship between the two, but the gossips gossiped anyway, including some who should have known better.

"Just please remember that no matter how short my notes I love you—I could never be in love with anyone else," Eisenhower had written Mamie on June 11. "You never seem quite to comprehend how deeply I depend upon you and need you."

Translators and donkeys, Mamie and Kay, Germans and Italians. And now one more trouble had appeared on the horizon. It was fortunate that Eisenhower never counted on God for good weather, as his son had observed. Earlier in the evening the meteorologists in the Lascaris Bastion had issued a disheartening forecast: a storm was brewing in the west.

"The Horses of the Sun"

THE convoys from Algeria and Tunisia hugged the African coast on July 8, joined by additional task forces from Sousse and Sfax. Ships stretched for sixty miles in a mile-wide corridor, strung on white wakes "like the buttons of an abacus." Smaller vessels made straight for Point X-Ray, the rendezvous east of Malta. To mislead German reconnaissance planes, the main fleet steamed close to Tripoli, then at eight P.M. wheeled north at thirteen knots.

Ships wallowed like treasure-laden galleons on the Spanish Main. The American convoys alone carried more than 100,000 tons of supplies: 5,000 tons of crated airplanes, 7,000 tons of coal, 19,000 tons of signal equipment. The expedition manifest was Homeric in scale and variety: 6.6 million rations, 27 miles of quarter-inch steel cable, rat traps, chewing gum, 162 tons of occupation scrip, and even 144,000 condoms, also known as "the soldier's friend." A ten-page glossary translated British terminology into proper American: "windscreen" to "windshield," "wing" to "fender," "regiment" to "battalion," "brigade" to "regiment."

Half the tonnage comprised munitions: the capture of Sicily was expected to take less than two months, but requisitions for ammunition and ordnance had overwhelmed the War Department without anyone knowing quite how to sort them out. Huge depots in Oran and Casablanca held a nine-month supply of munitions, triple the authorized stocks, because no one could say precisely what types of bullets and bombs had already been received: the inventory cards were kept by Algerian and Moroccan clerks who often spoke poor English.

The Army, one admiral concluded, invariably "doubled what they thought they needed, just in case." An emergency plea to Washington in June requested an extra 732 radios, plus 140,000 radio batteries. The Signal Corps complied, after a fashion, but for communications redundancy also shipped 5,000 carrier pigeons, a platoon of pigeoneers, and more than 7,000 VHF radio crystals. Intelligence units carried hydrographic charts; maps from the Library of Congress pinpointing Sicilian caverns; copies of the *Italian Touring Club Guide for Sicily;* coastal pilot studies; town plats; and shoreline silhouettes drawn with the help of a former New England rumrunner. Couriers from

Washington and New York had brought several dozen heavy wooden crates, each stamped BIGOT HUSKY and containing plaster of paris relief models of the Sicilian topography. But a handsome map detailing Sicilian historical monuments and art treasures, printed in New York and temporarily mislaid in Algiers, never reached Allied troops: a motorcycle courier belatedly hurrying it to the front would be captured in Sicily by the Germans.

Much had been learned through hard experience in Tunisia about caring for casualties, and the fleet was provisioned on the assumption that the assault force would suffer 15 percent wounded and sick in the first week. A chart distributed to medics helped assess what proportion of a man's body surface had been burned—4.5 percent if both hands were burned, 13.5 percent for both arms, and so forth; 500 cc of blood plasma would be administered for each 10 percent. For those beyond such ministrations, the convoys carried six tons of grave markers, as well as stamp pads to fingerprint the dead. A thirteen-page "graves registration directive" showed how to build a cemetery—"care should be taken so that graves are in line with one another, both laterally and longitudinally." A memo on the disposition of a dead soldier's effects advised, "Removal should be made of any article that would prove embarrassing to his family."

Not least important, because invading armies under international law bore responsibility for the welfare of civilians, were the vast stocks meant for the Sicilians: 14,000 tons of flour, evaporated milk, and sugar to feed half a million people for a month; 94 tons of soap; 750,000 cc of tetanus, typhus, and smallpox vaccines. Civil affairs authorities calculated that if Italy were to capitulate, the Allies would have another 19 million mouths to feed and bodies to warm south of Rome, requiring 38,000 tons of food and 160,000 tons of coal each month, a huge burden on Allied shipping. "Italy could not be expected to be self-supporting," one study concluded, "at any time during Allied occupancy."

Kent Hewitt spent the passage on the flag bridge or in his cabin, reading and working crossword puzzles. *Monrovia*'s operations room was small, stifling, and as overcrowded as the rest of the ship. To accommodate the extra staffs aboard, the signal bridge had been doubled in size, and the ship's carpenters had cobbled together three code rooms while expanding the radio rooms. But with radio silence imposed, Hewitt had nothing to say that could not be said by semaphore. He felt sanguine, convinced that his armada was giving battle against evil and that "God couldn't be very hard on a man or a country doing that."

When topside, Hewitt often trained his field glasses on the amphibious vessels, an eccentric fleet within the fleet. The 150-foot LCT carried five Sherman tanks and still drew barely three feet, earning the nickname "sea-going bedpan." (Vulnerable smaller landing craft were known generically as "ensign eliminators.") The bigger LSTs, originally designed by the British, had caught the fancy of U.S. military logisticians who had seen flatbottoms used to good effect by rumrunners along the Gulf of Mexico in the 1920s. Eleven hundred LSTs would be built during the war, mostly in river yards across the American Midwest. The square bow, with fourteen-foot hinged doors, made the vessel slow and ungainly, and the lack of a keel caused it to roll even in drydock—or so the sailors claimed. But each one could haul twenty tanks.

Hewitt knew that despite their shallow draft, the LSTs could be snagged on the sandbars protecting much of Sicily's south coast. The Army had proposed shoving tanks and vehicles overboard, dragging them with heavy chains through the runnel to shore, and then drying them on the beach. Navy engineers, aghast, countered with Project GOLDRUSH: a floating pontoon that could be towed or carried in sections on the LSTs, then bolted together to form an articulated bridge across the

water gap from sandbar to beach. Tests in Narragansett Bay had proved the bridge could bear a Sherman tank. But as with so much of HUSKY, the scheme had yet to be tested in combat.

Among Hewitt's disagreements with the Army, none had been more heated than whether to soften the beach defenses with naval gunfire before the landings. To catch the enemy by surprise, Patton insisted that the guns not open up until the assault boats were fifteen minutes from shore. He wanted, one naval officer reported, "to take his chances on his own fighting." Hewitt considered surprise "illusory." He listed eleven reasons why the enemy would likely be alert, including the frequent Allied photo-reconnaissance flights over the island and the sad fact that of fourteen officers clandestinely dispatched from submarines to survey Sicilian beaches that spring, all fourteen had been lost, along with a number of enlisted scouts. Patton waved away Hewitt's arguments. The guns would remain silent.

In his own cabin, Patton read, paced, napped, and paced some more. "I have the usual shortness of breath I always have before a polo game," he noted in his diary on July 8, then added an epigram from Napoleon: "Attack and then look." He simply no longer worried about the enemy defenders. "Hell, they've been there for four years," he told one of Hewitt's officers. "They can't keep alert all the time. We're going to land and all of a sudden we'll be on their necks." In a letter to his brother-in-law he wrote, "The horses of the sun have always been celebrated. Whoop ho! for a kill in the open!"

In Field Order No. 1, Patton had advised his commanders, "Attack both by day and night to the limit of human endurance and then continue to attack." For the troops he composed a gassy exhortation that now was read from quarterdecks across the fleet:

> When we land we will meet German and Italian soldiers whom it is our honor and privilege to attack and destroy…. The glory of American arms, the honor of our country, the future of the whole world rests in your individual hands. See to it that you are worthy of this great trust. God is with us. We shall win.

As he paced Patton brooded about his last meeting with Eisenhower, in Algiers on July 5. "You are a great leader," the commander-in-chief told him, "but a poor planner." Brood he might, but Patton had displayed a cavalier disdain for logistical niceties. To General Sir Harold Alexander, who would command all Allied ground forces on Sicily, he clicked his heels and said, "General, I don't plan—I only obey orders." To his civil affairs chief, who would be responsible for feeding and governing four million Sicilians, Patton asked simply, "Do you kill?" To Eisenhower himself he had once proposed the fatuous motto, "You name them, I'll shoot them." He was and would remain, as one old friend noted, "colorful, incorrigible, unexplainable."

In his slashing hand he scribbled Bea a letter, to be mailed only after the invasion had begun: "I doubt that I will be killed or even wounded, but one can never tell. It is all a question of destiny…. I love you."

Ernie Pyle was with them again, of course. He had shipped from Bizerte aboard the U.S.S. *Biscayne,* flagship for the nearly three hundred vessels carrying the 3rd Infantry Division. Each morning, as a favor to the skipper, he rose at three A.M. from his cot on the weather deck to edit the ship's mimeographed newspaper. Later he scratched away in pencil at his own copy for the Scripps-Howard papers, or read Joseph Conrad and marveled at the old sea dog's prose: "On fine days the sun strikes sparks upon the blue."

Pyle was forty-two now, but looked and felt "older and a little apart." He was drinking too much, and fretting about his alcoholic wife whom he had divorced, committed to a sanatorium, and then remarried. He quickly became a familiar figure on the *Biscayne*, a Mae West draped over his narrow shoulders, the fringe of hair like a graying halo around his triangular head. He rolled his own cigarettes and asked countless questions in a flat Hoosier twang. Pyle "only weighs about 100 pounds with a family Bible in his lap," another reporter noted; the artist George Biddle found him "ascetic, gentle, whimsical, shy…. His expression is fundamentally sad."

War made him sad. Pyle considered it "an unalleviated misfortune," and aspired to be the last combat correspondent. He had come to view soldiers—"the guys that wars can't be won without"—as "little boys again, lost in the dark." He was a bit lost himself, and it helped him to write—sometimes brilliantly—about other lost souls. "The years are dealing heavily with me," he wrote a friend on the eve of HUSKY. "No wine, no women, no song, no play—soon nothing will be left to me but my shovel and a slight case of athlete's foot." He wondered how anyone who survived war could "ever be cruel to anything, ever again."

His material—those guys that wars couldn't be won without—was all around him. War Department standards required that each berth on a transport have at least twenty-three inches of vertical clearance from other berths, with ventilation in the troop holds of thirty cubic feet of forced-draft fresh air per man per minute. Pyle knew better, and so did Private Paul W. Brown, sailing with the 1st Division. "No baths for over a week," Brown wrote in a letter home. "Dirty socks. Dirty underwear. Damned little ventilation. No portholes." Army inspectors also documented vermin in the food, pilferage, rampant black marketeering, filthy toilets, and a shortfall of vomit buckets. Little wonder that many soldiers already felt nostalgic for the tangerines and pomegranates of North Africa, to say nothing of "its vastness and its mystery."

They made do, with boxing and tug-of-war and, on one British ship, a mustache contest, judged after tea by a Royal Marine armed with a brush, a comb, and a magnifying glass. Officers gave lectures on Sicily, using mimeographed notes, which began, "Sicily has been conquered many times before and her history is largely one of successful invasions"; they also cautioned that the Sicilian murder rate was "seven times as high as that in other parts of Italy." Each man received "The Soldier's Guide to Sicily," which described the heat, filth, and disease in such detail that the 26th Infantry's regimental log concluded the island must be "a hellhole inhabited by folks who were too poor to leave or too ignorant to know that there were better places." Troops in the 45th Division practiced their Italian, producing, among other things, mangled conversational fantasies in which "*Bona sera, senorina*" was answered with "*Duo cento lira*."

They packed and unpacked and repacked their kit, trying to get the gas mask and the first aid kit and the sand-fly headnet into the 2.524 cubic feet prescribed for an Army assault pack. Each rifleman was supposed to carry 82.02 pounds, allocated ounce by ounce, from 10.2 pounds for a loaded M-1 rifle and .2 pounds for a towel, to .01 pounds for a spoon and .5 pounds for a Bible with a metal cover. Some lightened their load by nibbling away at the four ounces of "D rations," which were supposed to be saved for emergencies. Most of the soldiers had been in uniform long enough to be immune to surprise and would not have raised an eyebrow at the fact that the chocolate bar in the D rations had been developed after two years of Army quartermaster testing with three hundred recipes and flavors, including soy flour, potato, tapioca, pulverized coffee, and even a splash of kerosene.

"It's interesting to see the officers and men," Brigadier General Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., son of the former president and assistant commander of the 1st Division, wrote to his wife. Eleanor. In a letter written aboard the U.S.S. *Barnett*, he added, "They're not young anymore. They're not the fresh, smooth-cheeked boys you saw at a dance more than two years ago…. They've got a hard-bitten look." A few hours later he wrote, "The sea is mill-pond still…. Everything is battened down, portholds

closed, lights-doused, no smoking on deck. It becomes roasting. It's worst of course for the men. There's a sort of dead hush over the ship now. No one is moving on deck."

On the night of July 8, Roosevelt wrote Eleanor again, in the precise, level hand that displayed just enough ornamentation to imply a poetic sensibility:

> We've had a grand life and I hope there'll be more. Should it chance that there's not, at least we can say that in our years together we've packed enough for ten ordinary lives. We've known triumph and defeat, joy and sorrow, all that goes to fill the pattern of human existence…. We have no reason to be other than thankful come what may.

Since leaving Algiers, Hewitt's chief aerologist had been sketching weather maps and taking the wind's pulse with his anemometer. Lieutenant Commander Richard C. Steere was a 1931 Naval Academy graduate who had fenced on the U.S. foil team that won the gold medal in the 1932 Olympics by beating a storied French squad. Steere loved fencing, which he considered a "complex puzzle"; he loved weather for the same reason, and had earned his master's degree in meteorology at MIT in 1940. During Operation TORCH, when a ferocious Atlantic storm flung waves eighteen feet high onto the Moroccan coast, Steere's accurate prediction that the tempest would abruptly subside had convinced Hewitt to proceed with the landings. Patton had nicknamed the aerologist "Commander Houdini."

Now his skills would be tested again. On *Monrovia*'s bridge, Steere showed his calculations to Hewitt and Patton on Thursday afternoon, July 8. Normally few shores were more benign than those of southern Sicily in midsummer. But, as Eisenhower's forecasters on Malta had also recognized, a polar maritime air mass flowing across western Europe from the northwest was merging with a secondary cold front stretching from Sardinia across Italy to a low over Yugoslavia. That had tightened the pressure gradient in the central Mediterranean. High northwesterly winds and steep seas, Steere said, could be expected by Friday afternoon. The landings were scheduled for early Saturday.

Pressure gradients and barometric millibars interested Patton not at all. "How long will the storm last?" he demanded.

Summer blows in the Med typically were short-lived, Steere replied, and the fleet would be sheltered in Sicily's lee. "It will calm down," he added, "by D-day."

"It better," Patton said.

By noon on Friday, as the fleet drew near Malta, the wind had freshened from the west, turning the sea a forbidding hue and sculpting crests from the wavelets. Soon the halyards and the railings moaned, the nasty lop grew heavy with foam, and the bedpan LCIs—landing craft, infantry, denounced by one soldier as "flat-bottomed delight[s] of Satan"—began taking seas over solid. Barrage-balloon cables stretched on the horizontal as sailors in slickers tried to reel them in, cursing what was now widely decried as a "Mussolini wind." One by one the cables snapped, and soon two dozen balloons sailed up and east and out of sight. By late afternoon the wind reached a gale-force thirty knots—force 7 on the Beaufort scale—with green seas piled so high the smaller craft could no longer see one another and helmsmen struggled to avoid collisions. Gloomy, fearful soldiers clung to stanchions and ladders. "We could barely stand on deck," Ernie Pyle wrote aboard *Biscayne*, "and our far-spread convoy was a wallowing, convulsive thing."

Never had the amphibious vessels been tested in such seas. The LCTs, reduced to three knots, danced like corks on the spindrift. "Huge chunks of green water cascaded back over the flat open decks," one Navy lieutenant recorded. Many LCTs, he added, "had at least one engine out, so when

they lost steerage way they had to fall off to leeward and come around 180 degrees to get back on course." The square-bowed LSTs lurched up from the sea, then dropped into the next wave with a thud and a heavy shudder. An Army engineer colonel reported that his LST rolled "47 degrees each way as I watched the roll indicator…. The LST would be rolling, rolling, and rolling, the roll pendulum swinging so that we expected her to turn right over." Destroyers weaved among the smaller craft, signaling orders to compensate for the wind by steering "nothing to the right of north all night," rather than the planned course of 020 degrees. Several of the GOLDRUSH pontoons broke loose from their tow ships; two tugs lumbered through the gale to fetch them back. Twenty-ton landing craft swung on their davits like charms on a watch chain; aboard the transport *Florence Nightingale,* one boat broke free and smacked against the bridge and fantail with each roll of the ship until it too was lassoed.

"You probably enjoy the slow rise and fall of the deck, or even its more violent heaving if you happen to be in a storm," advised a paperback book for soldiers titled *What to Do Aboard the Transport.* Even "the sickest landlubber," the book added, soon "laughs at some other fellow with a green look about the gills."

No one was laughing. "All of us are miserable, anxious, jam-packed, overloaded and wet," a soldier in the 26th Infantry wrote. "No place to be sick except on one another. There are no heroes, just misery." "First I am afraid that I shall die," a soldier in the 18th Infantry noted, "then afraid that I won't." Soldiers had been issued a chemical concoction called Motion Sickness Preventative, but most still resorted to the items officially labeled "Bags, Vomit for the Use of," or hung their heads over the side, "moaning softly as if it were a secret shame." A private first class wrote his girlfriend in Brooklyn that these were "the most miserable moments ever spent in my life."

Some tried for a semblance of stability. Aboard H.M.S. *Strathnaver,* a dinner of clear soup and lamb cutlets was served to Welsh soldiers, who belted out "Land of My Fathers." But most troops "swung in their hammocks, green and groaning," a Canadian soldier wrote. "Everything that was not lashed down had come adrift: kitbags, weapons boxes, steel crates of ammunition, mess tins, tin helmets." On *LST 386,* the only unfazed passengers had four hooves: thirty African donkeys had been boarded until Eisenhower found sturdier mules. "Ship rolled thirty degrees and pitched fifteen," a naval officer recorded. "Donkeys were unconcerned, and seemed to enjoy their hay splashed with salt water." A Ranger sergeant who found his miserably ill platoon hiding in a lifeboat reflected that at least their emptied stomachs would reduce the chance of peritonitis from gut wounds. "When I get off this boat," one corporal vowed, "I'm going to walk and walk and walk."

"Some thought of the Spanish Armada," another Canadian wrote, "and some asked the question, 'Is God on our side or not?'" Those classical scholars who had tried recalling their Thucydides now remembered that Aeolus, the mythical Greek custodian of the winds, supposedly lived on a floating island near Sicily; they swapped stories of seafarers who had fallen foul of Mediterranean weather, beginning with the Spartan king Menelaus, whose homebound fleet had been blown from Troy to Egypt, and St. Paul.

Others held more practical colloquies. "It's goddam foolish, I tell you," an officer on the *Barnett* declared. "What's the use of going ahead with the invasion when your boats aren't even going to reach shore?" An Army captain agreed. "It's not fear. No, goddamit! It's not fear. There's just no sense in risking the whole invasion in this sea." Aboard the *Samuel Chase,* Rear Admiral John L. Hall, whose charges included the 1st Division, considered signaling Hewitt to recommend a delay, then told his staff, "We're not going to be the first to yelp." The fleet beat on.

On *Monrovia,* Hewitt stared at the heaving sea and listened to the wind tear at the rigging. The whitecapped Mediterranean looked as if it were dusted in snow. He pondered whether to break radio silence and contact Admiral Cunningham on Malta to suggest a postponement. Some smaller craft had no radios, so spreading word of any delay through the fleet would take at least four hours. As he

watched an LSI buck the waves, Hewitt observed that at least the wretched soldiers aboard would be "all the more willing to get ashore." Bad as this was, the Atlantic before TORCH had been worse.

Late on Friday afternoon, he summoned Commander Houdini to the bridge. Steere that morning had predicted winds of twenty-seven knots; they now had reached thirty-seven, with twelve-foot seas. Though nervous, the aerologist stuck to his forecast. The "whole wind structure" would ease after nightfall, he explained, even if strong winds persisted aloft. Steere had scribbled his H-hour forecast in longhand, like a racetrack tout posting odds: "Northwest winds 10–15 knots decreasing, with inshore breakers 3–4 feet or less."

Hewitt took the bet, nodding without a hint of emotion or even concern. They would continue toward Sicily unless ordered to the contrary.

"Always the vibration," a British soldier wrote in his diary, "the heaving and rolling, the dim blue lights below deck, and the masses of bodies, in bunks, or moving blindly to the lavatories awash with urine." Like many others, Captain Joseph T. Dawson of the 1st Division wrote a final letter to his family in Texas: "My heart is filled with unspeakable tenderness for you one and all…. We are trying to measure up. God grant that we may do our task."

By six P.M. the sea had grown so nasty, one naval commander observed, that "even the destroyers were taking it green." As daylight ebbed, the wind intensified. Officers of the deck throughout the fleet ordered smoking lamps extinguished. At 6:52 P.M., *Monrovia*'s log recorded the sighting of the tiny island of Gozo, nine miles off the starboard beam. Just beyond, through the gloom and flying spray, lookouts spied the sheer cliffs of Malta. The fleet beat on.

Seeking sanctuary from the folderol, Eisenhower had warned Marshall that during his stay on Malta "my communications with Washington and London will be almost nil…because of the need for reserving signal communications for operational matters." The gambit failed; Washington and London showed no reluctance to pepper the commander-in-chief with advice and queries, including a message from Marshall on Friday afternoon asking, "Is the attack on or off?" Eisenhower studied the cable and muttered, "I wish I knew."

Wind and weather dominated the discussion in Admiral Cunningham's office as the hours ticked by. Chagrined meteorologists appeared to report yet another increase in the Beaufort scale, which then was translated for Eisenhower from knots to miles per hour. Cunningham drove to a nearby airfield to see conditions with his own scarlet-lidded eyes; he reported that "all the winds of heaven" were "roaring and howling around the control tower." In Grand Harbour, another flotilla of British landing craft cast off with a piper on the lead ship braced in the bow playing "The Road to the Isles." Cunningham described the vessels "literally burying themselves, with the spray flying over them in solid sheets, as they plunged out to sea." At six P.M. a bottle of gin appeared in the Lascaris Bastion and was soon drained.

Eisenhower reviewed his options, lighting one damp cigarette from another. Staff officers calculated that if the invasion were postponed, two to three weeks would be needed to remount it. No doubt by then the enemy would be alert, and perhaps was already: the fighter control room inside the bastion reported a German reconnaissance plane near the fleet at 4:30 P.M. and another at 7:30. Like Lieutenant Commander Steere, forecasters on Malta believed the storm would soon pass. So too did Cunningham, who had sailed these waters for the better part of a half century, and who once cited "recklessness and callousness" as the most vital qualities of a commander.

Eisenhower was usually quick to make a decision, and he made one now. "The operation will proceed as scheduled," he cabled Marshall, "in spite of an unfortunate westerly wind." Cunningham

sent his own signal to the Admiralty in London: “Weather not favourable. But operation proceeding.”

With “rather fearful hearts”—in Cunningham’s phrase—they broke for dinner. Driving to Verdala Palace, Eisenhower eyed the spinning windmills above Valletta; the man who preached the importance of believing in luck now wondered aloud whether his had run out. “To be perfectly honest,” another British sea dog, the lanky Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten, told him over dinner, “it doesn’t look too good.”

After coffee, Cunningham rejoined them for a drive to Delimara Point, where an octagonal black-and-white-banded lighthouse crowned the island’s southeast corner. Half a dozen searchlight beams pointed straight up as a signal to the waves of transport planes—some towing gliders, others full of paratroopers—that now began to appear overhead. Cunningham counted sixty-four aircraft, while Eisenhower, neck craned, rubbed his lucky coins and murmured a prayer for “safety and success.” Had he watched more closely, he might have seen that many planes bucking the winds missed the vital turn at Delimara, continuing east rather than swinging due north.

Back in the Lascaris war room, the great wall maps charted the armadas as they inched toward Sicily: American convoys mostly west of Malta, the British mostly east. Cots and blankets had been dragged into an air-conditioned room nearby, but anxiety kept the men edgy and awake. Eisenhower prattled on about writing a book, perhaps an anthology that would profile two dozen public figures; he would “paint each one’s character” and “tell some stories.” Air Marshal Arthur Tedder, the senior air commander in the Mediterranean, reflected on the Punic Wars and previous invasions. “Fancy invading Italy from the south,” Tedder said. “Even Hannibal had the sense to come in with his elephants over the Alps.” Farther down the tunnel an officer shaving with an electric razor provoked a shrill protest that “some unmentionable noise” was making it “quite impossible for any signals to be picked up.”

At ten P.M., Eisenhower scribbled a note to Mamie. “I’m again in a tunnel, as I was at the beginning of last November, waiting, as I was then, for news.

> Men do almost anything to keep from going slightly mad. Walk, talk, try to work, smoke (all the time)—anything to push the minutes along…. Everything that we could think of to do has been done; the troops are fit; everybody is doing his best. The answer is in the lap of the gods.

Death or Glory

PATTON woke to a loud crash against his cabin porthole. He lurched from the bed, fully uniformed, momentarily convinced that a bomb had struck *Monrovia*. Cocking an ear topside to the clank of tackle being loosened, he soon realized that a broken davit had let a landing craft slip from its pulley and smack against the ship’s hull. One man had pitched overboard but soon was fished out. As the commotion subsided, two other sounds were conspicuous by their absence: the wind had died, and the flagship’s engines had stopped. An odd, portentous hush settled over *Monrovia.*

Patton hitched up his whipcord breeches and straightened his blouse. He had dozed off after inviting the ship’s chaplain in for a final prayer. Strange dreams had troubled his sleep, of a black kitten and then of many cats, spitting at him. “We may feel anxious,” he scribbled in his diary, “but I trust the Italians are scared to death…. God has again helped me. I hope He keeps on.”

He found Hewitt on the bridge. The quarter moon had set shortly after midnight, but stars threw down spears of light and the fleet stood in black silhouette against the gray horizon. Commander

Steere had been right, again: the wind had ebbed to below ten knots; there was good visibility and a moderate swell. *Monrovia*'s radar had detected the Sicilian coast at 22,000 yards—thirteen miles. Then several destroyers knifed forward until they spotted blue lights, flashing seaward from a scattered school of British submarines. With doughty, rule-Britannia names like *Unruffled* and *Unseen* and *Unrivalled*, the subs had been lurking off the coast for two days to serve as beacons guiding the invasion convoys to their proper beaches. The skipper of the submarine H.M.S. *Seraph* later recalled, "As far as my night glasses could carry, I saw hundreds of ships following in orderly fashion, each keeping its appointed station." *Monrovia* and her sisters dropped anchor in fifty fathoms six miles from the coast, on station and on time. Hewitt also had been right, again.

He and Patton now raked the shore with their field glasses. Allied bombing earlier in the evening had set fire to the stubble in Sicilian wheat fields near the sea. Patton watched "a mass of flames" engulf a two-mile corridor directly inland. "All the beach seems to be burning," a soldier noted. Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., a matinee idol with more than sixty film credits who was serving as a Navy Reserve lieutenant on *Monrovia*, jotted in his diary, "Apparently the big ships have not yet been seen from the shore."

The HUSKY commanders intended to land the equivalent of 67 assault battalions—each with approximately 800 men—on 26 beaches along 105 miles of coastline. The British beaches chosen for General Montgomery's Eighth Army lay to the east, from Cape Passero on the island's southeast tip up through the Gulf of Noto almost to Syracuse. Hewitt's armada had split near Malta into three prongs, which would land the three assault divisions in Patton's Seventh Army along a forty-mile crescent on the Gulf of Gela. Farthest west, the 3rd Division now lay off Licata; farthest east, and closest to the British, the 45th Division lay off Scoglitti; in the center, with *Monrovia,* the 1st Division prepared to seize Gela. The objective for each division was the Yellow Line, a notional demarcation ten to thirty miles inland that would push enemy artillery beyond range of captured coastal airfields. Patton estimated it would take five days for his army to reach the Yellow Line. Beyond that he had no orders.

Since landing at Cadiz in 1625, the British over the centuries had embarked on some forty overseas military campaigns, with fortunes ranging from glorious to catastrophic. The Americans were somewhat newer at the expeditionary game, but Yanks and Tommies concurred that, as a British official history warranted, "invasions from the sea were professionally recognized to be all-or-nothing affairs." Death or glory was back in fashion.

Now those Yanks and Tommies made ready; so, too, the Canadians. "You will find the Mediterranean still choppy," a lieutenant advised over the *Ancon*'s PA system, "but compared to what it was only a short time back, as quiet as if God had put his hand on it." Lights below burned blue or red to enhance night vision. Indonesian waiters in white coats struck little gongs to call British troops to an early breakfast; on *Strathnaver*'s E-deck, the Dorsets shared mugs of tea and fancied they could smell Europe. GIs wrapped their dogtags in black friction tape to prevent rattling. Some prayed, or hurriedly scratched the letters they had meant to write earlier. "I could not, with a clear conscience, ask God to take me safely through this war," Randall Harris wrote his family in Pocahontas, Iowa, "but I can ask Him for strength and courage to do my job."

They had reached "the victim coast of Sicily," a soldier in the 45th Division told his father. A naval officer transporting the same unit described "wild Indians still playing poker and sharpening knives, betting on who'll get the first Italian." One officer on the *Biscayne*'s weather deck later wrote, "The fellow standing next to me was breathing so hard I couldn't hear the anchor go down. Then I realized there wasn't anybody standing next to me."

Ted Roosevelt took time aboard the *Barnett* to finish his eleven-page letter to Eleanor: "The ship is dark, the men are going to their assembly stations…. Soon the boats will be lowered away. Then

we'll be off."

"Land the landing force!" The order echoed down the chains of command east and west. "Aye-aye. Land the landing force." Soldiers in the British 50th Division shuffled single file, company by company, from the dim hold to the assembly deck on *Winchester Castle*. Sailors handed stiff tots of rum to the Dorsets on *Strathnaver* and pumped bilge oil over the side to calm the sea. "Do you hear there? Serial one! To your boat stations, move now," an amplified voice called on *Derbyshire*. "Serial two! Stand by." A soldier in the Canadian 1st Division, Farley Mowat, heard clattering steam winches lower the landing craft; on deck each man "gripped the web-belt of the man ahead…. The dim glow of blue-hooded flashlights gave a brief and charnel illumination."

No oil could settle the swell in the American sector, which was more exposed to the westerly wind. Helmsmen maneuvered their ships to form a lee, lowering boats first on the sheltered side, then coming about to shelter and lower the other side. Troughs swallowed the vessels anyway. "The rocking of the small landing craft was totally unlike anything we had experienced on the ship," wrote the journalist Jack Belden, who had shipped aboard the *Barnett*. "It pitched, rolled, swayed, bucked, jerked from side to side, spanked up and down." Confused coxswains, no less seasick then the soldiers, shouted to one another, "Are you the second wave?" Most craft lacked seats or thwarts, forcing troops to sit on metal decks awash in seawater and vomit. The rumble of landing-craft engines reminded one bosun's mate of "a basso coughing into his handkerchief at church."

"Seasickness and fear make an interesting combination," a medic observed. "They vie for dominance." Some boats were loaded at the rail and lowered by block and tackle; but many ships required that soldiers climb down braided nets, now slippery with sea spray and puke. Officers stood by to pry loose the fingers of those who froze on the ropes. "Oh, Jesus, oh, Jesus," a soldier moaned after slumping to the bottom of a bobbing boat. "How I wish I was back in Chicago." Many would have agreed with a 1st Division scout who declared, "We were not meant to be sailors." Aboard *Joseph T. Dickman* attempts were made to inspirit the troops by piping Glenn Miller's "American Patrol" over the PA system to the circling boats. "If casualties are high, it will not be a reflection on your leadership abilities," the Ranger commander, Lieutenant Colonel William O. Darby, told a young captain preparing to step over the side. "May God be with you."

On the extreme left of Hewitt's task force, four sailors and thirty-four soldiers from the 7th Infantry had just settled into boat number 2 on *LST 379* when the forward davit snapped, spilling the men into the sea or crushing them against the ship's hull. Half were saved, half perished. It was on the right flank, however, that the wind and lop were worst; aboard ships transporting the 45th Division, cleats snapped, painters parted, booms carried away. Nearly every mother ship lost at least one landing craft. The heavy roll on *Thomas Jefferson* caused a boat carrying rockets to break loose as sailors hoisted her overboard. "We really started to swing," reported the boat's ensign. "We started hitting both the kingposts, the boom itself, the blocks and falls, and anything else in the way…. I believed that we were going to be killed and expended without ever seeing action. Our barrage rockets were rolling all over the deck." On another wallowing ship, the steadying lines tore free on both a bulldozer and a lighter being lifted over the rail; soldiers cowered against the bulkheads as the equipment swung and crashed about, "knocking steel and fire from everything they struck."

Somehow the cockleshell flotillas took shape. Boat crews stood ready with mallets to hammer wooden plugs into any bullet holes. Minesweepers worked the approaches, but no one knew whether the shallows would be clear; coxswains were advised that if the boat in front blew up they should "steer through the water, rather than shy off, because the blown boat has made that water safe." Coxswains also received a list of nineteen radio code words, from COCA-COLA ("Stop") and BIG MICE ("Need assistance") to TOTEM POLE ("Resistance encountered") and SWEET CHARIOT ("Enemy tanks"). No advice was given on how to remember this vocabulary under fire, although all radio operators were

ordered “to send or speak slowly, clearly, and distinctly.”

By two A.M. the first waves had turned toward shore, using the burning wheat straw as a beacon or following compass headings. Gunboats with blue lights stood in toward shore, hailing the first waves: “Straight ahead. Look out for mines. Good luck.” Now the Navy guns opened up, their concussive booms and smoke rings carrying on the wind. Shells glowed cherry red against the starlight. In graceful arcs they floated over the puttering boats before splattering in sprays of white and gold on the distant shore. Coxswains steered by the shells, but soldiers instinctively slumped in their vessels, peering over the gunwales.

Major General John P. Lucas, dispatched by Eisenhower as an observer of HUSKY, watched the spectacle from *Monrovia*’s bridge with Hewitt and Patton, then confided a small, filthy secret to his diary: “War, with all its terror and dirt and destruction, is at times the most beautiful phenomenon in the world.”



2. The Burning Shore

Land of the Cyclops

FEW Sicilian towns claimed greater antiquity than Gela, where the center of the American assault was to fall. Founded on a limestone hillock by Greek colonists from Rhodes and Crete in 688 B.C., Gela had since endured the usual Mediterranean calamities, including betrayal, pillage, and, in 311 B.C., the butchery of five thousand citizens by a rival warlord. The ruins of sanctuaries and shrines dotted the modern town of 32,000, along with tombs ranging in vintage from Bronze Age to Hellenistic and Byzantine. The fecund "Geloan fields," as Virgil called them in *The Aeneid,* grew oleanders, palms, and Saracen olives. Aeschylus, the father of Attic drama, had spent his last years in Gela writing about fate, revenge, and love gone bad in the *Oresteia;* legend held that the playwright had been killed here when an eagle dropped a tortoise on his bald skull.

Patton planned a different sort of airborne attack by his invasion vanguard. On the night of July 9–10, more than three thousand paratroopers in four battalions were to parachute onto several vital road junctions outside Gela to forestall Axis counterattacks against the 1st Division landing beaches. Leading this assault was the dashing Colonel James Maurice Gavin, who at thirty-six was on his way to becoming the Army's youngest major general since the Civil War. Born in Brooklyn to Irish immigrants and orphaned as a child, Gavin had been raised hardscrabble by foster parents in the Pennsylvania coalfields. Leaving school after the eighth grade, he worked as a barber's helper, shoe clerk, and filling station manager before joining the Army at seventeen. He wangled an appointment to West Point, where his cadetship was undistinguished. As a young officer he washed out of flight school; a superior's evaluation as recently as 1941 concluded, "This officer does not seem peculiarly fitted to be a paratrooper." Ascetic and fearless, with a "magnetism for attractive women," Jim Gavin was in fact born to go to the sound of the guns. "He could jump higher, shout louder, spit farther, and fight harder than any man I ever saw," one subordinate said.

His 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, part of the 82nd Airborne Division, had staged in central Tunisia. Gavin harbored private misgivings about the Sicilian mission—"many lives will be lost in a few hours," he wrote—and with good reason. The 82nd had received only roughly a third as much training time as some other U.S. divisions. The amateurish Allied parachute operations in North Africa had been marred by misfortune and miscalculation. No large-scale night combat jump had ever been attempted, and so many injuries had plagued the division in Tunisia—including fifty-three broken legs and ankles during a single daylight jump in early June—that training was curtailed. Much of the HUSKY planning had been done by officers who had no airborne expertise and whose notions were suffused with fantasy. Transport pilots had little experience at night navigation, but to avoid flying over trigger-happy gunners in the Allied fleets, the planes, staying low to evade Axis radar, would have to make three dogleg turns over open water in the dark. Airborne units had yet to figure out how to drop a load heavier than three hundred pounds, much less a howitzer or a jeep. An experimental "para-mule" broke three legs; after putting the creature out of its misery, paratroopers used the carcass for bayonet practice. Still, the ranks "generally agreed that training proficiency had reached the stage where the mission was 'in the bag,'" wrote one AAF officer, who later acknowledged "possible overoptimism."

At about the time that Hewitt's fleet neared Malta, Gavin and his men had clambered aboard 226

C-47 Dakotas near Kairouan. Faces blackened with burnt cork, each soldier wore a U.S. flag on the right sleeve and a white cloth knotted on the left as a nighttime recognition signal. Days earlier an 82nd Airborne platoon had circulated through the 1st Division to familiarize ground soldiers with the baggy trousers and loose smock worn by paratroopers. Parachutes occupied the C-47s' seats; the sixteen troopers in each stick sat on the fuselage floor, practicing the invasion challenge and password: GEORGE / MARSHALL. Dysentery tormented the regiment, and men struggled with their gear and Mae Wests to squat over honeypots placed around the aircraft bays. Medics distributed Benzedrine to the officers, morphine syrettes to everyone.

As the first planes began to taxi—churning up dust clouds so thick that some pilots had to take off by instrument—a weatherman appeared at Gavin's aircraft to affirm Commander Steere's prediction of lingering high winds aloft. "Colonel Gavin, is Colonel Gavin here? I was told to tell you that the wind is going to be thirty-five miles an hour, west to east," he said. "They thought you'd want to know." Fifteen was considered the maximum velocity for safe jumping. Another messenger staggered up with an enormous barracks bag stuffed with prisoner-of-war tags. "You're supposed to put one on every prisoner you capture," he told Gavin. An hour after takeoff, a staff officer heaved the bag into the sea.

The slivered moon cast little light, and at five hundred feet salt spray on the cockpit windows further cut visibility. Men dozed in the blacked-out planes during the three-hour flight, unaware that the gale had quickly deranged the formations. Some pilots found the critical turn at Malta, where Eisenhower stood craning his neck. Most did not. Soon the central Mediterranean was swarming with lost aircraft as crews tried to dead reckon their way north.

Nearly all found Sicily, or at least some corner of it. Pilot Willis Mitchell spied Malta and turned accordingly, only to approach the drop zone north of Gela without thirty of the thirty-nine planes that were supposed to be behind him. Leveling off at eight hundred feet, Mitchell flipped on the green jump light. More than a hundred paratroopers from the bobtailed formation landed within two miles of the DZ, but badly scattered and hobbled with jump injuries. Others—aware only that they were somewhere over land—jumped from fifteen hundred feet at two hundred miles per hour, rather than from the preferred six hundred feet at one hundred miles per hour. Smoke and dust from earlier bombing obscured key landmarks and further befuddled the navigators. Some mistook Syracuse for Gela, fifty miles to the west. Machine-gun and antiaircraft fire ripped through the formations and the descending paratroopers, killing some before they hit the ground. Plane number 42-32922 collided with its flight leader above the beach; with his right elevator gone, the pilot, George Mertz, wobbled back out to sea and ditched five hundred yards off Scoglitti. "I hit the master switch to cut off both engines, and we glided in," Mertz recounted. "One paratrooper came crashing through to the cockpit. The airplane settled, slightly nose low." Crewmen and soldiers lashed their life rafts together and paddled ashore to hide in the dunes.

Jim Gavin's Dakota also tacked north after missing Malta, eventually crossing an unidentified coast on an unidentified landmass shortly after midnight. A red light flashed in the bay. "Stand up and hook up," Gavin ordered. Braced in the open doorway, he recognized nothing in the dark terrain below. A pearly stream of machine-gun tracers drifted up. The green light flashed, and Gavin leaped into the slipstream. After landing hard and slipping off his harness, he managed to round up five comrades. For hours they stumbled through the darkness, whispering "George!" and straining for "Marshall," until the distant grumble of naval gunfire just before dawn confirmed that they were at least on the proper island.

"No one knew where they were, including themselves," the tart General Lucas noted aboard *Monrovia.* Gavin eventually discerned that he was south of Vittoria, thirty miles from Gela. Although Troop Carrier Command claimed that 80 percent of the paratroopers had jumped onto the proper drop

zones, even the Army Air Forces disputed that as "a prodigious overestimate." In fact, fewer than one in six had landed anywhere close to where they were supposed to land. Only one of Gavin's four battalions was intact, and it was twenty-five miles east of the correct DZ. More than 3,400 paratroopers were scattered across southeastern Sicily, as much as sixty-five miles off target. Some had jumped into the British sector, where—because no one had thought to impose identical passwords on the entire invasion force—they were greeted with gunfire. Eight planes were lost, none apparently to enemy fire, and the regiment's three-day casualty tally would reach 350, a literal decimation.

Certainly they wreaked havoc: slashing telephone wires, ambushing couriers, and causing the panicky Italians to inflate their numbers. They improvised, as paratroopers must. Captain Edwin M. Sayer, a company commander, mustered forty-five men to attack pillboxes near Niscemi with mortar, bazooka, and rifle-grenade fire; fifty enemy soldiers were captured, along with twenty machine guns and half a million rounds of ammunition. The operation, in Gavin's assessment, was "self-adjusting," a SAFU, as well as a TARFU and a JAAFU.

Still, only 425 paratroopers had landed in front of the 1st Division, and only 200 now occupied the vital high ground at Piano Lupo as a screen for the vulnerable units landing at Gela. The 82nd Airborne commander, Major General Matthew B. Ridgway, lamented the "miscarriage" that resulted from overweening ambition, deficient training, and bad luck. "At war's end," Ridgway later concluded, "we still could not have executed that first Sicily mission, as laid on, at night and under like conditions."

As paratroopers blundered hither and yon, the force they were intended to shield swept into the shallows off Gela. The 1st Division, bolstered by two Ranger battalions, closed on six beaches along a five-mile front shortly after three A.M. Their objective, beyond seizing the town, was the capture of Ponte Olivo airfield on Virgil's Geloan plain. Calamity struck quickly. Hardly had the strains of "American Patrol" faded when a Ranger lieutenant and sixteen of his men vaulted from their landing craft as it ground with a gritty jolt onto a sandbar; unaware of the runnel and deadweighted with those 82.02 pounds of kit, they sank to the bottom of the Mediterranean. Other men from the 1st Division dropped their life preservers into the forward hold as instructed by an LCI skipper, who assured them the water was only hip deep; scurrying down the dropped ramp they, too, sank and drowned.

The first Americans waded onto the beaches at 3:35 A.M. on Saturday, July 10, fifty minutes behind Patton's schedule. With a vicious *pop,* a mine tore open the chest of a Ranger company commander. "I could see his heart beating," said his first sergeant, Randall Harris. "He turned to me and said, 'I've had it, Harry,' then collapsed and died." Harris dashed forward only to have another mine shred his abdomen and legs; after flicking grenades into a line of pillboxes, he sprinkled sulfa powder on his protruding intestines, cinched his web belt to keep the innards in, and wandered down to the beach to find a medic. Harris would win a battlefield commission and the Distinguished Service Cross for gallantry.

If stunned by the Allied invasion, the defenders appeared unsurprised. With a great roar and a shower of masonry, Italian demolitionists blew up a long segment of the thousand-foot Gela pier. Italian gunners trained their fire on the 26th Infantry as the first wave closed to within a hundred yards of shore. "The water jumped and heaved" under the lashing bullets. Soldiers sheltered behind the LCT splinter plates and anchor winches, narrowing their shoulders and elbowing one another as rounds sang overhead or pinged off the hull. A barrage balloon torn free in the storm abruptly drifted overhead, weird and stately. "I've been wounded but there's so much blood I can't tell exactly where," one soldier muttered. As another boat dropped its ramp, a 16th Infantry rifleman felt a weight slump

against his leg. “Somebody left his pack,” he called out, then saw that the inert bundle was a sergeant who had been shot in the head.

Shouts and curses swept the beaches, swallowed by gunfire. A shower of Italian grenades landed around a 16th Infantry lieutenant, who escaped from the encounter with sixty-six small holes in his uniform shirt, a ruptured eardrum, and a pierced upper lip. Sappers chopped at the barbed wire with long-handled snips, and soldiers fell flat as trip flares bathed the shingle in magnesium brilliance. Searchlights swept the waterline, only to draw salvo after salvo from destroyers racing parallel to the shore like angry dogs along a fence. An Italian soldier “crept from a pillbox on all fours and ran down the hill, screaming and sobbing.”

Dawn sluiced the eastern sky before five A.M., but daylight only enhanced the chaos. The heavy swell jammed several LST bow ramps, breaking ramp chains and flooding the tank decks. Seamen struggled against the current to assemble the cumbersome pontoon bridges, and a 16th Infantry battalion—stranded aboard several LCIs that had been snagged on sandbars thirty yards from shore—began to ferry men and weapons to the beach in rubber boats. Nothing in the arsenal of democracy now proved more providential than another new amphibian, a two-and-a-half-ton truck with flotation tanks and twin propellers. Built by General Motors and awkwardly called the DUKW—pronounced “duck”—it was difficult to load, slow in the water, and susceptible to brake damage from salt and sand. But it could carry a rifle platoon or a howitzer and its gun crew from ship to shore, and then make fifty miles per hour on roads. The War Department had been persuaded of the DUKW’s merit the previous winter when a prototype rescued a foundering Coast Guard crew during a Cape Cod nor’easter. Eisenhower had been issued eleven hundred DUKWs for HUSKY; they scuttled through the Gela surf like a flotilla of horseshoe crabs.

Mines proved more galling than enemy guns. Rather than miles of good beach frontage, as intelligence reports had suggested, only a few hundred yards proved suitable, and exits through the dunes were sown with Teller mines planted a yard apart. DUKWs blew up, trucks blew up, five Navy bulldozers blew up. With no firefighting equipment at hand, they burned to the axles and blocked the beach exits. Many mine detectors remained buried in cargo holds; salt spray quickly shorted out those that made it to shore. “Everything on them goes bad,” a signal officer complained. Drivers ignored the engineer tape laid to mark cleared lanes: more vehicles blew up. Some crews left their DUKWs at water’s edge to collect souvenirs, or they were diverted by the Army for work elsewhere. Mines closed Yellow and Green Beaches in front of Gela, but boats diverted a bit south to Beach Red 2 found appalling congestion—“gasoline, ammunition, water, food, and assorted equipment were strewn about in a hopeless mass,” Hewitt later wrote. Shellfire soon closed that beach, too.

“The beach was a scene of the greatest confusion,” Lucas noted in his diary after an early-morning trip ashore. “Trucks bogged down in the sand. The surf filled with overturned boats and debris of all kinds.” Beachmasters bellowed into the din to small effect; few had been armed with bullhorns. Troops loitered in the dunes, or traded potshots with flitting Italian gunmen. Some LSTs steamed away to anchorages offshore without unloading an ounce of cargo—much less tanks—and the Navy would inadvertently return to North Africa with much of the signal equipment for the Gela assault still crated in the holds. Shore parties searching for fuel and ammo instead found boxes packed with athletic equipment and clerical records.

Dawn also brought the first enemy air attacks. Sixteen miles offshore, the U.S.S. *Maddox* was screening troop transports from enemy submarines when, for reasons unclear, she wandered away from the main destroyer pack. German pilots had learned to hunt stragglers by tracking the ship wakes, then gliding out of the rising sun with their engines cut. An officer on the *Maddox*’s bridge realized he was under attack only when he heard the whistle of falling bombs. The first detonated twenty-five yards astern; a second hit beneath the propeller guard, detonating depth charges aligned on

the aft deck.

Fire and steam boiled from the starboard main deck and the number 2 stack. The blast ripped open the aft deckhouse and catapaulted a 5-inch gun over the side. *Maddox* settled by the stern, with power gone and the engine room annunciators dead. As she lost steering and headway, the ship listed slightly to port, then righted herself for an instant before capsizing to starboard and sinking to the perpendicular. She paused momentarily, as if for a last look around, her forward gun pointing vertically from the sea. Bulkheads collapsed with a groan. Then the powder magazine detonated.

"A great blob of light bleached and reddened the sky," reported a lieutenant, miles away aboard *Ancon.* "It was followed by a blast more sullen and deafening than any we have so far heard." More prosaically, a sailor on *Ancon*'s bridge added, "Look, they got one!" Two minutes after she was hit, *Maddox* vanished. In three hundred fathoms the ship sank, dragging down 212 men, their captain among them. A nearby tug rescued 74 survivors.

Past the charred DUKWs and discarded mine detectors, two regiments from the 1st Division bulled through the dunes east of Gela. Succeeding waves followed the spoor of abandoned gas masks, blankets, life belts, snarled signal wire, and artillery shells packed in black cardboard cloverleafs. Gray stone houses with tile roofs stood beside the parched fields beyond the beach. Wheat and barley sheaves lay on threshing floors in the side yards, where beanstalks had been stacked for winter fuel. Grapevines snaked between olive groves, and peach trees were heavy with fruit that hung "like red-and-yellow lamps." The tintinnabulation of sheep bells sounded above the *pock-pock-pock* of rifle fire.

Force X—two of Bill Darby's Ranger battalions—pushed into Gela town. Darby, a rugged thirty-two-year-old West Pointer from Arkansas, had proved his worth and that of his 1st Ranger Battalion in Algeria and Tunisia—they were the "best damned combat soldiers in Africa," according to Patton—and in consequence the force that spring had tripled in size. Posters recruited volunteers who had "no record of trial by court-martial" and who were "white; at least five feet, six inches in height; of normal weight; in excellent physical condition; and not over thirty-five years old." Recruiters also swaggered into Algerian bars, tendered a few insults, and signed up soldiers pugnacious enough to pick a fight. Already eclectic, the Rangers now included a jazz trumpeter, a professional gambler, steelworkers, a hotel detective, coal miners, a church deacon, and a recruit named Sampson P. Oneskunk. El Darbo, as the men called him, would twice reject promotion to full colonel in order to stay with his Rangers. They returned his devotion with a jody call: "We'll fight an army on a dare, we'll follow Darby anywhere, Darby's Rangers…Fightin' Rangers."

The Fightin' Rangers now fought their way through Gela. Naval gunfire had shattered houses along the corniche and "ranged through the town, tearing roofs off or blowing in whole streets," a 1st Division soldier recorded. Blue-uniformed Italians from the Livorno Division made a stand at the cathedral. Gunfire echoed through the nave and up the winding tower steps, punctuated by the burst of grenades in the sacristy. Soon bloody bodies carpeted the altar and the front steps, where Sicilian women in black keened over their dead. Two other redoubts fell quickly: a naval battery on the northwest edge of town, which surrendered after thunderous salvos from the cruiser *Savannah*, and a barricaded schoolhouse from which fifty-two Italians surrendered after a brief firefight. A blue column of Livorno prisoners tramped toward the beach, where without evident dismay they wolfed down C rations and awaited the LST that would carry them away from the war.

More Italians counterattacked at 10:30. A column of thirty-two light Renault tanks with infantry pushed south from Niscemi, eight miles inland, only to be bushwacked by a hundred of Gavin's paratroopers and further discouraged by screaming salvos from the cruiser *Boise.* Twenty tanks

managed to wheel onto Highway 115 toward Gela, but a smoking broadside from the 16th Infantry stopped the advance and sent the survivors fleeing north into the Sicilian interior.

On Highway 117, two dozen more tanks from Ponte Olivo airfield clanked toward town through 5-inch fire from the destroyer *Shubrick.* Several burning hulks soon littered the road, but ten Renaults reached Gela. Rangers scampered behind stone walls and along rooftops, firing bazookas, flinging grenades, and dropping blocks of TNT from the ramparts. With a .30-caliber machine gun mounted on his jeep, Darby hammered away as his driver darted through narrow alleys around the piazza. Seeing his slugs bounce like marbles off the armor plates, Darby raced to the beach, commandeered a 37mm antitank gun, split open a box of ammo with an ax, then hurried back into town. His second shot halted a Renault, and he flushed the surviving crew with a thermite grenade laid atop the hatch. “Soon the metal was red hot,” the journalist Don Whitehead reported, “and the crew scrambled out screaming in surrender.” As the remaining Italian tanks retreated, Italian infantrymen arrived in parade-ground formation west of Gela. Bracketed with mortar fire, they were cut to ribbons. Survivors “fled in disorder.” Hewitt summoned the jut-jawed monitor H.M.S. *Abercrombie* to harass other enemy forces sheltering in Niscemi; a shift of ballast cocked the ship’s guns higher to obtain the requisite range, and 15-inch shells the width of tree trunks soon rained down.

By late morning, Gela, the town of Aeschylus and Saracen olives, had fallen. Darby pulled an American flag from his pack and tacked it to the front wall of the Fascist party headquarters. A sergeant from the Bronx strolled the streets, quoting Thomas Paine in Italian. An angry crone cursed from her balcony, but other townfolk—perhaps sensing the strategic direction of the young campaign—huzzahed the invaders with “*Viva, America.*” Civil affairs officers eventually counted thirteen hundred demolished houses, of Gela’s fourteen thousand. They also counted 170 corpses. Geloans refused to touch the bodies, and prisoners were press-ganged to haul the dead on donkey carts to the cemetery. By noon on July 10, U.S. patrols were four miles inland, well toward the Yellow Line objective. Still, the ranks felt unsettled: the assault, they agreed, had been too easy. The real enemy, those with panzers and coal-scuttle helmets, had not yet been met.

Fifteen miles west, it was easier still. The 3rd Infantry Division, bolstered by another Ranger battalion and tanks from the 2nd Armored Division, had appeared in the early morning off the coast at Licata, where the stink of sulfur, asphalt, and fish implied the local delicacies. As the flagship *Biscayne* dropped anchor just four miles off the town’s breakwater, five searchlights from shore swept the sea, quickly fixing the vessel in their beams. “All five of them,” wrote Ernie Pyle, who stood on deck, “pinioned us in their white shafts as we sat there.” Then one by one the lights blinked out until a single beam still burned, lingering for a moment like the ghost light in a theater until it, too, was extinguished. “Not a shot had been fired.”

No one was more relieved than the craggy officer standing near Pyle aboard *Biscayne*. He wore a russet leather jacket, cavalry breeches, high brown boots, a lacquered two-star helmet, and an expression that married a squint with a scowl. His front incisors were gapped and tobacco stained; one admirer wrote that his heavy-boned face had been “hewn directly out of hard rock. The large protruding eyes are the outstanding feature.” Around his neck he had knotted a paratrooper’s white silk escape map of Sicily, which soon would become his much-mimicked trademark. He had a blacksmith’s hands, and the iron shoulders of a man with a four-goal polo handicap. His “rock-crusher voice” derived, so it was said, from swallowing carbolic acid as a child; for the past month he had been painting his vocal cords, inflamed from smoking, with silver nitrate. Many considered him the finest combat commander in the U.S. Army.

Major General Lucian K. Truscott, Jr., led the 3rd Division and was charged with protecting Seventh Army's far left flank. Now forty-eight, he was embarking on his second invasion, for he had also commanded Patton's left flank in Morocco. Born into a country doctor's family in Texas, Truscott for six years had taught in one-and two-room schoolhouses in Oklahoma and attended Cleveland Teachers Institute before enlisting in the cavalry. The schoolmaster never left him—"You use the passive voice too damn much," he once chided a subordinate—and he wrote long, searching critiques of subordinates' performances. Even in combat, he cherished cut flowers on his desk and enjoyed ontological inquiry: a staff meeting might begin with Truscott asking the division chaplain, "What is sin?" His kit bag included *War and Peace*, *Webster's High School Dictionary*, and perhaps a liquor bottle; some subordinates thought he drank too much. A stern disciplinarian, he had imposed fifty-year sentences on soldiers who maimed themselves in North Africa to avoid combat; lesser miscreants got "an application of corncob and turpentine," an aide said. Truscott had learned much in Morocco, about "the loneliness of the battlefield" and the need for physical vigor. Each 3rd Division battalion was required to master the "Truscott trot": marching five miles in the first hour and four miles an hour thereafter, for as long as necessary.

Nothing revealed more of him than his letters home to Sarah Randolph Truscott, which began, invariably, "Beloved Wife." Aboard *Biscayne* on July 7 he had written:

> Do you remember how you used to get after me for working so hard and how I answered that I had to be ready—prepare myself—for any responsibility that came to me? I am only sorry that my limitations were such that I could not accomplish more, because responsibilities are certainly falling on me. Your calm confidence in me is always with me and when doubt falls upon me—as it must on all—that thought soon restores that confidence. I can do only the best I can.

At Licata, his best was good enough. A few desultory Italian artillery shells greeted the invaders, who found the beaches unmined. Booby traps on the docks were still in their packing crates. Air attacks proved less intense here than elsewhere on the HUSKY front; only the star-crossed minesweeper U.S.S. *Sentinel* was lost. Hit four times by dive-bombers at five A.M., wrecked and abandoned, with sixty-one dead and wounded, she capsized and sank five hours later.

Infantrymen drowned or were gunned down without ever setting foot in Europe, but not many. *Biscayne*'s sisters poured shells into the town—"scorched wadding came raining down on the deck," Pyle reported—and destroyers screened the landing craft with heavy smoke. Ten battalions made shore in an hour, with tanks. They soon captured two thousand Italian soldiers—some insisted on leading their pet goats into captivity—while many others bolted for the hills in what the Italian high command called "self-demobilization." Dry grass used to camouflage gun batteries caught fire, smoking out the gunners; others ran from German shepherds trained in Virginia to clear pillboxes and lunge for the throat. "Every time one of the poor Dagoes would wave a white flag over the edge, the tank gunner would shoot at it," an armor captain wrote his wife, "so I finally stopped him and ran them out with my pistol…. They were the most scared men I have ever seen."

Dawn revealed a U.S. flag flapping on a hill above Licata. Troops in olive drab scuttled through town, drawing only smiles from children who made "V for victory" signs with their upraised arms. At 9:18 A.M. the fleet signaled, "Hold all gunfire. Objective taken." Those seaworthy mules aboard *LST 386* flatly refused to cross the pontoon causeway to shore; exasperated sailors finally heaved them overboard and let them swim.

Truscott came ashore with greater dignity, by launch at noon. Fishing boats bobbed in the tiny harbor, their triangular lateen sails "white as sharks' teeth," one journalist wrote. Staff officers scurried about, settling a division command post in the Palazzo La Lumia and cleaning up a new bivouac. No amount of scrubbing could eradicate the reek of sulfur or the millennial grit. "Hell," a soldier complained within Pyle's earshot, "this is just as bad as Africa." Truscott recorded his impressions in another letter to Sarah. "I find this country interesting but distasteful to me," he wrote. "I certainly do not like the accumulated poverty and filth of the ages." *Responsibilities are falling on me*, he had told her. Licata was but the beginning.

Across the Gulf of Gela, the third and final prong of Seventh Army's invasion found the sea on Patton's right flank a more ferocious adversary than enemy soldiers. Twelve-foot swells and six-foot surf still bedeviled the convoys bearing the 45th Division to Scoglitti, where westerly winds chewed at the exposed bight. The destroyers *Knight* and *Tillman* laid down white-phosphorus naval shells for the first time in combat; the blinding flashes and dense smoke terrified Italian defenders in their pillboxes and gun batteries. Big cruiser shells followed on a flatter trajectory, three at a time, and fires soon danced along the shoreline.

The first assault wave hit the wrong beach, and from that point the invasion deteriorated. The eleventh-hour transfer to the Pacific of coxswains who had trained on the Chesapeake with the 45th now haunted the division. Their callow replacements, overmatched by rough surf, sandbars, and sporadic gunfire, veered this way and that along the coast, shouting across the water for directions to Blue Beach or Yellow Two. At Punta Braccetto, two boats in the second wave collided while sheering away from the rocks. Four sputtering GIs struggled to shore; thirty-eight others drowned, and 157th Infantry bandsmen pressed into service as grave-diggers swapped their instruments for picks and shovels. Companies landed far from their designated beaches, and soon battalions and then finally an entire regiment—the 180th Infantry—had been scattered across a twelve-mile swatch of Sicilian shingle. "This," a regimental history conceded, "played havoc."

Dozens of landing craft broached or flooded—"a most deplorable picture throughout D-day," the official Army history observed—and soon two hundred boats stood stranded on beaches or offshore bars. The scattered vessels reminded one Navy lieutenant of "shoes in a dead man's closet." Landing and unloading operations were as inept as they had been in Morocco, where a sad standard for amphibious incompetence had been set eight months earlier. Among those coming ashore with the 180th Infantry was a puckish left-hander from New Mexico who had a knack for cartooning and whose impious characters Willie and Joe would soon become the unshaven, bleary-eyed icons of a million infantrymen. "My first practical lesson about war" came at Scoglitti, Sergeant Bill Mauldin later said. "Nobody really knows what he's doing."

"The beach was in total confusion," reported the senior Army engineer on the scene. "There had been no real planning. The beachmaster was not in control." Not least, pilferage of supplies and barracks bags by Army shore parties was common; their commanding colonel was subsequently court-martialed. Congestion grew so desperate that beaches Green 2 and Yellow 2 were closed below Scoglitti, and beaches Red, Green, and Yellow above the town would soon shut down, too. Later waves diverted to six new beaches where engineers blew exits through the dunes with bangalore torpedoes and laid steel-mesh matting for traction. As shore operations bogged down, the captains of some ships, fearing air attack, weighed anchor for North Africa without unloading. The 45th Division commander spent his first night on Sicily in a rude foxhole a mile inland, wrapped in a parachute. "To make it less comfortable," Major General Troy H. Middleton reported, "the friendly Navy shelled the area."

Still, as D-day drew to a close the Americans were ashore on their narrow littoral crescent. From Licata to Scoglitti more than fifty thousand U.S. troops and five thousand vehicles had landed, with more of each waiting offshore for first light on Sunday. Casualties had been modest, and the enemy seemed befuddled. Italian coastal-defense units had surrendered in such numbers that Sicilian women lined the sidewalks, jeering as their men shuffled into captivity. Yet neither the prisoner columns nor the stacks of enemy dead awaiting mass burial included many men wearing German field gray, and every GI on Sicily expected that soon the invaders would encounter a more formidable foe.

That left the British. Except for the saving grace of calmer seas, all the confusion that bedeviled the Americans in the Gulf of Gela also plagued the Eighth Army landings thirty-five miles away on the island's eastern flank. Commandos came ashore first, crossing the beach where some speculated that Odysseus, after leaving Calypso's island, would have made landfall in Sicily, "the land of the high and mighty Cyclops." The Canadian 1st Division anchored the army's left wing on a ten-thousand-yard front of the Pachino Peninsula, while the British 51st, 50th, and 5th Divisions beat for the beaches east and north.

"Some confusion and lack of control," the 50th Division acknowledged off Avola. "Many craft were temporarily lost and circled their parent ship more than once…. It was exceedingly dark. Most naval officers were uncertain as to their whereabouts." Transports unwittingly anchored twelve miles off the coast rather than the expected seven, confounding runs to the beach and putting shore parties beyond radio range. Some landings "were in no way carried out to plan," a British intelligence report noted. "Army officers had to take a hand in navigation, and had they not done so, many craft would have beached still further from the correct places." A Canadian captain was more direct. "Get on, you silly bastards!" he roared at his men. "Get on with it!"

Landing craft ground ashore in the early light. Voices sang out: "Down door!" Then: "Sicily, everybody out!" Fire from shore batteries proved modest, except of course for those it actually struck. "The water had become a sea of blood and limbs, remains of once grand fighting men who would never be identified," wrote Able Seaman K. G. Oakley, who saw a landing craft shattered in the 50th Division sector. From the surf Oakley pulled "a man whose arm was hanging on by a few bits of cloth and flesh. He cried, 'My arm! Look, it's hit me.'" Like tens of thousands of others on that Saturday morning, Oakley reflected, "So this is war."

Ashore they swarmed, scrambling through the dunes and across the coastal highway. A Scots regiment entered Cassibile skirling, in defiance of orders that bagpipes remain on the ships. A pungent smell briefly triggered gas alarms and fumbling for masks, until more sophisticated noses realized that the odor came from wild thyme churned by bombs. While some troops built makeshift jetties with stones salvaged from a beachfront vineyard, others darted between doorways, shouting the Eighth Army challenge—"Desert Rats!"—and listening for the proper parole: "Kill Italians." A Sicilian peasant charged from his house and fired an ancient shotgun at approaching Commandos, who killed him with return fire. "Sorry we had to shoot that farmer," a British soldier remarked. "He had the right spirit."

Eighth Army had prepared for up to ten thousand casualties during the first week of combat on Sicily; in the event, they would sustain only 1,517. But even those who escaped without so much as a sunburn shared a Royal Engineer corporal's view:

> We had learned our first lesson, mainly that fate, not the Germans or Italians, was our undiscriminating enemy. With the same callousness as Army orders, without fairness or

judgement, “You and you—dead. The rest of you, on the truck.”

More than a third of Eighth Army’s casualties were sustained in one misadventure, code-named LADBROOKE, which was intended to complement Colonel Gavin’s jump but which bore the signature traits of so many airborne operations in the Second World War: poor judgment, dauntless valor, and a nonchalant disregard for men’s lives. LADBROOKE had a coherent purpose: 1,700 soldiers were to capture the Ponte Grande, a graceful highway bridge that arched above the river Anapo just south of Syracuse. After preventing demolition of the span, troops would push into the city, capture the docks, and give Eighth Army a vital port. Under General Montgomery’s plan, the assault was to be made late Friday night by 144 gliders.

There was the rub: the only pilots available to fly the tow planes had little experience at night navigation and even less at towing a seven-ton glider full of infantrymen on the end of a 350-foot nylon rope. Skilled glider crews were also in short supply, as were the gliders themselves. So rudimentary was the art of combat gliding that jeeps had been tried—unsuccessfully—to tow gliders into the air that spring. Not least, the landing zones near the Ponte Grande appeared to be seamed with stone walls and stippled with rocks. Protests by subordinate officers proved unavailing. Once made, the daring plan could not be unmade; naysayers risked the appearance of timidity and the threat of removal from command. Again, senior officers with little airborne experience and unrealistic expectations held sway.

Several dozen Horsa gliders arrived in Tunisia in late June after a harrowing 1,400-mile tow from England. The wood-frame craft had “huge flaps, like barn doors.” To supplement the Horsas, the Americans donated a fleet of smaller, metal-framed Wacos; each arrived in North Africa in five crates and required 250 man-hours to assemble. British airmen believed that every pilot needed at least 100 hours of flight training on the Waco for proficiency; in the event, they averaged less than 5 hours in the cockpit, including a single hour of night flying. Many had barely qualified for solo flights. Of 150 gliders used in training, more than half were destroyed, even though novices flew almost exclusively in daylight and a dead calm. Most of the tugs would be U.S. C-47 Dakotas, but not until mid-May were the tug pilots released from their duties flying freight in order to train with the gliders.

Pilots and passengers were doomed, of course. From six Tunisian airfields on that windswept Friday night, the gliders soared into the air, towed by 109 American Dakotas and 35 British Albemarles. Confronting “conditions for which we were completely unprepared,” as the glider force commander conceded, they headed for Malta at five hundred feet, fighting the gale, as well as lingering turbulence from the day’s thermal currents and the tow rope’s nauseating tendency to act as a pendulum. Many inexperienced navigators quickly grew confused; some had the wrong charts or none at all. Strain on the tow ropes snapped the communication wires between many tugs and gliders. A Horsa’s tow line parted north of Malta, and thirty men plummeted to their deaths; when a Waco’s line also broke, fifteen more followed. One glider cast off from its tug and landed smartly, only to have a soldier pull up in a jeep and announce, “We are sorry to inform you that you are not in Sicily, but on the main airstrip at Malta.” Another glider team, surprised to find Sicily so sandy, discovered that they had landed near Mareth, in southern Tunisia. Investigators later concluded: “Navigation generally was bad.”

Ninety percent of the aircraft made the Sicilian landfall at Cape Passero, to be greeted moments later along the Gulf of Noto by flak, flares, searchlights, and dust clouds, which rattled the pilots and obscured their vision. “I guess that’s Sicily,” said one squinting captain. Formations disintegrated, and soon tugs and gliders were “milling in a blind swarm.” Some tug pilots, shying from antiaircraft fire that seemed closer than it actually was, released their gliders too early. Plans called for all gliders to

be cut free within two miles off the coast, but an optical illusion, magnified by the pilots' inexperience, made the shoreline appear to be directly below when the planes were thousands of yards out to sea. From altitudes of 2,000 to 4,000 feet, the scattered Horsas and Wacos cast off along a thirty-mile front and immediately found that gliding west into a thirty-knot wind was "unsound," as one account concluded.

"As we lost height it seemed as if a great wall of blackness was rising up to meet us," an officer wrote. For many, that blackness was the Mediterranean. A cry went up: "Prepare for ditching!" Dozens of gliders careered across the water like skipping stones. Some splintered and sank quickly; others would float for hours. Frantic passengers kicked at the fabric walls or hacked away with hatchets. "We went under almost instantly," Flight Officer Ruby H. Dees recalled. "When I reached the surface the rest of the fellows were hanging on the wreckage." An officer clinging to another fractured wing murmured to a British major, "All is not well, Bill." At least sixty gliders crashed into the sea, and ten more vanished—somewhere—with all hands lost. Men flailed and struggled and then struggled no more. In some instances Italian machine-gun fire raked survivors clinging to the flotsam.

Fifty-four gliders made land, often with equally fatal results. "Heavy tracer, left wing hit, flew over landing zone and landed sixteen miles southwest of Syracuse, hitting a six-foot wall," a survivor reported. "Left wing burning, also seventy-seven grenades ignited inside glider. Two pilots and twelve other ranks killed, seven wounded." Horsa number 132—among the dozen gliders that found the Ponte Grande—crashed into a canal bank four hundred yards from the bridge, killing all aboard but one. Another Horsa hit a treetop and flipped; a jeep was later found inside with the driver behind the wheel, dead.

Rather than five hundred or more British soldiers holding Ponte Grande, a mere platoon seized the bridge, ripping out demolition charges from the abutments. By Saturday dawn the force had grown to eighty-seven, with only two Bren machine guns among them, and little ammunition. Italian mortar fire and infantry counterattacks whittled the little band, killing troops on the span and in the muddy river below. By midafternoon the bridgehead was held by just fifteen unwounded Tommies, and Italian machine-gunners had closed to forty yards. At four P.M. the survivors surrendered. They were marched away toward Syracuse by "a pompous little man with a coil of hangman's rope around his shoulders," only to be promptly freed by a Northamptonshire patrol that had landed with the 5th Division. At the same time, Royal Scots Fusiliers bulled through from the south and easily recaptured the bridge.

The British high command would proclaim LADBROOKE a success because the Ponte Grande had been spared. But rarely has a victory been more pyrrhic. Casualties exceeded six hundred, of whom more than half drowned. Bodies would wash ashore on various Mediterranean beaches for weeks. If the courage of those flying to Sicily that night is unquestionable, the same cannot be said for the judgment of their superiors in concocting and approving such a witless plan. Anger and sorrow seeped through the ranks; British fury at American tow pilots grew so toxic that surviving Tommies who arrived back in Tunisia were confined to camp to forestall a fraternal bloodletting. A memo to George Marshall concluded, "The combat efficiency for night glider operations was practically zero." But the most trenchant summary of LADBROOKE appeared in a British Army assessment: "Alarm, confusion and dismay."

The Loss of Irrecoverable Hours

IF much had gone wrong for the Allies during HUSKY's first twelve hours, almost nothing had gone right for the Axis defenders. Miscalculation and mischance, those handmaidens of military

misfortune, dominated the initial response to the invasion and "irrecoverable hours were thus lost," as a German commander later acknowledged. The Anglo-Americans had a toehold, which soon became a foothold, and dislodging them from the island became more difficult with the arrival of every DUKW and LST. Among the alarums sounded that Saturday, in fact, was a report by an incredulous Italian officer of "amphibious contrivances" capable of beaching and then advancing inland "under their own power."

For weeks, Axis reconnaissance had deflected hints of invasion, including the presence of half a dozen hospital ships at Gibraltar on July 1—Italian pilots eventually counted sixteen in the Mediterranean—and the massing of landing craft and gliders in Tunisia. Yet Allied deception efforts for months had kept Axis intelligence off balance and befuddled. The British, for example, had created a fictional "Twelfth Army," supposedly based in Cairo, with the notional mission of invading the Balkans through Greece in the early summer of 1943. Particularly successful was Operation MINCEMEAT, which featured a corpse later celebrated as "the man who never was." A British submarine had dumped the body, dressed as a major of the Royal Marines, off the southern coast of Spain in late April. Manacled to the dead man's wrist was a briefcase containing forged documents; these, it was hoped, the Spanish authorities would share with the Germans. The Spanish duly obliged. Subsequent Ultra intercepts revealed that German intelligence, convinced that the "major" had drowned in a plane crash, considered the documents further evidence that the main Allied blow would fall on Sardinia and Greece rather than Sicily.

Six immobile and badly armed Italian coastal divisions now guarded the Sicilian shore, backed by four Italian infantry divisions positioned inland with two capable German units: the 15th Panzer Grenadier Division in western Sicily, and the Hermann Göring Panzer Division in the east. The first unequivocal alert had been issued on Sicily at 6:40 on Friday evening, July 9. Allied bombs had shattered the rudimentary Sicilian telephone system, so some units got the word but others did not. A few Italian commanders, presuming that no fool would attack in such foul weather, went to bed. Exhortations at one A.M. Saturday to defend "this most precious piece of Italian soil" fell on deaf or sleeping ears. British Spitfires, using signals intelligence to pinpoint the German Luftwaffe headquarters, shot up the San Domenico Palace—a grand hotel in Taormina, once favored by D. H. Lawrence—and unhinged the Axis air defenses just as invaders approached the island.

Little was expected from the Sicilian coastal divisions, and that expectation was fully met. Training had recently been reduced because of footwear shortages, and Italian coastal artillery was limited to the pea-shooter range of nine thousand yards, further impaired by morning glare that blinded defenders facing south and east. The Syracuse garrison commander was killed in the invasion's first minutes, and his skittish counterpart in Augusta spiked his guns without a fight. Italian foot soldiers surrendered by the thousands, or peeled off their uniforms and melted into the refugee hordes streaming inland.

The German response in those first irrecoverable hours, if less timid, was hardly impressive. Sicilian communications were so crude that the commander of the Hermann Göring Division first learned that he was under attack in a radio alert from Frascati, the German headquarters near Rome. Orders to subordinate commanders proved tardy or contradictory. The repositioning of one regiment was delayed when a courier carrying the movement orders died in a car wreck. Efforts to fling seventeen big Tiger tanks into the fight near Gela on Saturday were beset by mechanical breakdowns, poor leadership, naval gunfire, and the difficulty of picking a path through the olive groves. Fantasy prevailed over hard fact: Comando Supremo, the Italian high command in Rome, announced at noon on July 10 that the Gela and Licata landings were "almost cleaned up"; some Anglo-American troops were even said to have reembarked in their amphibious contrivances. A subsequent dispatch from Rome asserted that "the enemy is still actively landing but he is constantly in crisis."

Such fairy tales did not deceive the man who would ultimately direct the defense of Sicily. For now he remained at his Frascati headquarters, sifting through the fragmentary reports, rumors, and mendacities arriving from the island. But his tactical influence could already be felt on the young campaign, as well as his unquenchable optimism and a gift for battlefield improvisation. The Allies knew Field Marshal Albert Kesselring all too well. As the senior German commander in the Mediterranean—in effect, Eisenhower's counterpart—Kesselring had thwarted a quick Allied victory in Tunisia, fought the Anglo-Americans to a bloody draw for months, then dodged both capture and recrimination when Hitler's no-retreat decree consigned Axis forces in Africa to destruction. Ostensibly, he served under Italian authority, as a sop to the Pact of Steel signed in 1939, and to Mussolini's proprietary claim on the Mediterranean; in reality, he answered to Berlin and had few equals in any army. Kesselring was loyal to Hitler as "Germany's savior from chaos," and he had long found it "possible to ignore the less pleasing things" in the Nazi regime. Hitler repaid the loyalty with a field marshal's baton, which an aide carried in a zippered leather case.

Now fifty-seven, he had a face full of flashing teeth, which expressed both his Bavarian bonhomie and the nickname—"Smiling Albert"—coined by his soldiers. "Kesselring is a colossal optimist," Hitler had said on May 20, "and we must take care that this optimism does not blind him." An artilleryman who in midcareer had learned to fly and transferred to the Luftwaffe, he had a knack for the narrow escape, demonstrated most recently during an Allied bombing raid on Marsala in May that killed two staff officers; Kesselring fled the upper floor of a shattered building by rappeling down a rope to the street, badly skinning his palms.

For six months he had pondered how to defend southern Europe, and for six weeks he had believed that the next Allied blow would likely fall on Sicily. Kesselring's overarching strategic concept involved keeping the war as far from the Fatherland as possible for as long as possible; as an airman, he had a vivid understanding of what Allied possession of bomber bases in Italy would mean for Munich, Vienna, and Berlin. Unlike many German generals—including his rival, Erwin Rommel—he considered all of Italy defensible, *if* the Italians would fight. Kesselring believed they would, although his Italophilia was tempered with sardonic disdain. "The Italian is easily contented," Kesselring said. "He actually has only three fashionable passions—coffee, cigarettes, and women." As for the Italian man of arms, he was "not a soldier from within."

Kesselring in late spring had dismissed Sicilian defenses as "pretty sugar pastry," but reports on July 10 that entire Italian divisions were evaporating disheartened even the "colossal optimist." If Allied forces also landed in Calabria, on the toe of the Italian boot, Sicily could become a "mousetrap," with the result that another Axis army would be annihilated. To forestall this calamity, Kesselring realized, German forces on the island must strike before Allied troops consolidated their beachheads. The 15th Panzer Grenadier Division was too far west to attack quickly, because the field marshal, against Italian advice, had just shifted the grenadiers across 155 miles of bad roads to meet landings in western Sicily that now seemed unlikely. That left the Hermann Göring panzers to take the fight to the enemy. Badly mauled in Tunisia, the division had been hurriedly rebuilt and now mustered nine thousand combat troops with ninety Mk III and Mk IV tanks, in addition to the seventeen Mk VI Tigers.

From Frascati, Kesselring dictated an order to the division commander, General Paul Conrath: counterattack Gela at first light on Sunday, July 11, and drive the invaders into the sea. "Herr Feldmarschall," Conrath had told Kesselring, "immediate advance on the enemy is my strength!"

Brigadier General Ted Roosevelt had insisted on splashing ashore in Gela with the first assault

wave from the U.S.S. *Barnett.* On Beach Green 2 before dawn on Saturday, he sent a heartening dispatch back to the ship—"The Romans are fleeing inland"—then spent the rest of the day helping the 1st Division make land behind him. As the sun rose and concussion waves from the naval guns shimmered across the sea, Roosevelt scuttled about on his stubby, puttee-wrapped legs with "the twinkling walk of a sandpiper on the beach." He wore no tie and often no helmet, and his rumpled uniform fit him like an olive-drab sack. The artist George Biddle described him in four adjectives: "bald, burnt, gnarled, and wrinkled." Despite congenitally weak vision, Roosevelt often disdained eyeglasses, and more than once he had given a tactical briefing with a map tacked upside down by practical jokers on the division staff. Occasionally he burst into verse—an admirer deemed him "one of the world's most fluent reciters"—and "in a rhythmic state of mind" he spouted passages of Kipling, *Pilgrim's Progress,* and the iambic pentameter of his favorite poet, Edwin Arlington Robinson. A bum knee and a rheumatic hip forced Roosevelt to carry a cane, which he wielded as if it were a rapier, slicing the air and pointing at exits through the dunes. Rarely did he speak at any volume lower than a bellow, and now in his foghorn voice he roared, again and again, "Get into the battle!"

"I will always be known as the son of Theodore Roosevelt," he had written in 1910, at the age of twenty-three, "and never as a person who means only himself." He spent the subsequent three decades proving himself wrong. Decorated for valor in the 1st Division during the Great War—he had been gassed at Cantigny and wounded at Soissons—young Ted then amassed both a fortune and a reputation independent of his father. A wealthy investment banker by age thirty, he lost the 1924 New York gubernatorial race to Al Smith by 100,000 votes, then pressed on in various public and private roles: as the governor of Puerto Rico and the Philippines; as the author of eight books; as a senior executive at American Express and Doubleday; as an early activist in the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; and as an explorer and a hunter, whose trophies for the Field Museum in Chicago included the rare mountain sheep *Ovis poli* and a previously unknown deer subsequently named *Muntiacus rooseveltorum.* He was plainspoken—"I'm anti-bluff, anti-faker, anti-coward, that's all"—and unaffected. "Do fill your letters with the small beer of home, the things we knew in the kindly past," he had written his wife, Eleanor, on June 5. "Also gossip. I love gossip." A week later he wrote her a poem that began, "This dark, grim war has swallowed all / That I loved."

Perhaps not quite all, for certainly he loved the Big Red One, as the 1st Division styled itself. "Ted Roosevelt is perhaps the only man I've ever met who was born to combat," wrote the veteran war correspondent Quentin Reynolds, and soon after returning to active duty in 1941, Roosevelt became the division's assistant commander. "Whenever you write a message, remember you're writing it for a damned fool," he advised junior officers. "Keep it clear and simple." Troops adored his bluff pugnacity and considered him "an intellectual because he carries a considerable stock of books in his blanket roll," observed the journalist A. J. Liebling. A 26th Infantry medic recalled, "When he got up to leave, we willingly got up and saluted." In the Tunisian campaign, he again demonstrated extraordinary valor, winning the Distinguished Service Cross at the battle of El Guettar. Patton in his diary in late June deemed Roosevelt, now fifty-five, "weak on discipline and training but a fine battle leader…. There are too few."

That he was "weak on discipline" was hard to dispute, and in that deficiency lay controversy and consternation. When another general complained that Roosevelt and the 1st Division commander, Major General Terry Allen, "seem to think the United States Army consists of the 1st Division and eleven million replacements," Roosevelt quipped, "Well, doesn't it?" In Tunisia he told the troops, "Once we've licked the Boche, we'll go back to Oran and beat up every M.P. in town." The division's return to Algeria after the Tunisian campaign had indeed left a "trail of looted wineshops and outraged mayors." Some troops fired at Arab peasants from troop train boxcars "just to see them jump,"

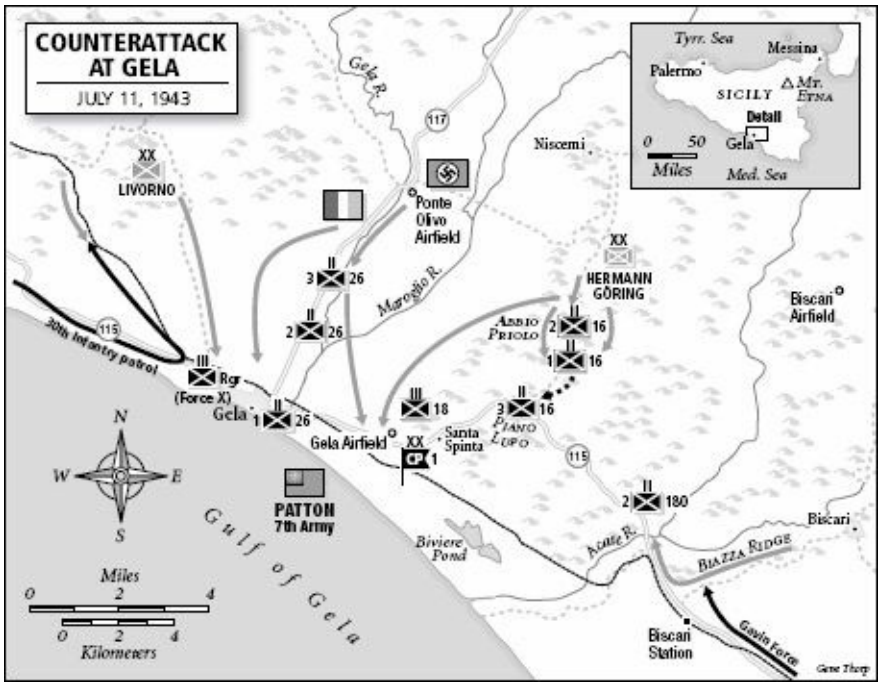
admitted a 26th Infantry soldier, who added, “Too much vino, too cocky, and too much steam to blow off…. We just plain didn’t give a damn for anyone or anything.”

Toxic rumors that the 1st Division would be sent home from Africa—regimental bookies offered even money that they would be back in the States by August 1—simply fueled resentment when Patton instead requisitioned the Big Red One for his Sicilian spearhead. Grievances large and small accumulated: at being kept in filthy if durable wool combat uniforms when rear-echelon troops were switched to cooler khaki; at seeing men who had never heard a shot fired in anger sport the new brown-and-green African campaign ribbon; at service troops hoarding Camels and Lucky Strikes while sending inferior cigarettes to the frontline units. Patton’s taunting helped not at all. “The yellow-bellies of the First Division don’t need khakis,” he told Terry Allen; most of the troops, Patton added, likely would be “killed trying to invade Sicily.”

By late May, when the division bivouacked in a sere, shadeless camp outside Oran, not far from the TORCH invasion beaches of 1942, the troops agreed that the city should be liberated again. Swaggering eight abreast down Oran sidewalks, they shoved the khaki-clad into the gutters and ripped the campaign ribbons from khaki blouses. One group, slapping three months’ pay on the bar of the Florida Club, told the barkeep, “Let us know when this is up.” A division memo decried “excessive drunkenness” and the troops’ “disheveled appearance”; brass knuckles and contraband German Lugers were confiscated, and a five P.M. curfew was imposed in the city’s taverns. Still the “second battle of Oran” raged on, featuring “lively brawls in which sides were chosen by the cloth worn.” An 18th Infantry soldier noted: “Truckloads of gun-toting GIs and cocky junior officers take over Oran… scaring civilians indoors and bringing M.P.s.” Roosevelt inflamed the men by implying they need not salute officers outside the division, and an unconfirmed rumor put Terry Allen in the middle of an 18th Infantry scrap with MPs.

Higher authority was “bitched, buggered and bewildered,” Roosevelt acknowledged. General Lucas told his diary on June 27, “The division has been babied too much. They have been told so often that they are the best in the world that so far as real discipline is concerned they have slipped.” Eisenhower was furious, and ordered Allen’s immediate superior, Lieutenant General Omar N. Bradley, to expel the 1st Division from Oran. For a prim sobersides like Bradley, the Oran rampage was yet another black mark in the ledger of black marks he had kept since Tunisia on the division and its commanders, whom he considered “freebooters.” The 1st, Bradley sniffed, “was piratical at heart.”

Now the hour for pirates and freebooters had come round. Just after dawn on Sunday, July 11, Roosevelt drove in his jeep, *Rough Rider*, from the division command post in a lemon grove beyond Beach Green 2 to the 26th Infantry sector east of Gela. The mild Sabbath morning kissed the vineyards and orchards of the plain, which stretched north for eight miles to a crown of low hills beyond Ponte Olivo airfield. The division since first light had been making for those hills on a six-mile front: the 26th Infantry up Highway 117 on the left, and the 16th Infantry on the right up Highway 115 and the gravel road to Niscemi.



Roosevelt hopped out of the jeep and hurried to the regimental radios clustered beneath a camouflage net. Reports from the lead battalions were fragmented and unnerving: advancing U.S. infantrymen had smacked into advancing Axis tanks. German panzers were driving south from Ponte Olivo, southwest from Niscemi, and west from Biscari. Italian troops from the Livorno Division had massed farther west for an attack on Gela. At 6:40 A.M., at least a dozen German tanks swept past the pinned-down 3rd Battalion of the 26th Infantry on Highway 117, midway between Gela and Ponte Olivo. Swerving southeast across the wheat fields, the panzers were rolling toward the landing beaches.

Through his field glasses, Roosevelt squinted at the amber dust boiling on the northern horizon. A pair of Mk IV tanks with gray camouflage splotches bolted cross-country at top speed in an attempt to draw fire; to one officer they resembled "setters trying to flush quail." Other panzers worked the subtle folds and creases in the plain. Muzzle flashes stabbed the dust. Soon the morning air thickened with shouts and cackling machine guns and the scarlet gash of tank fire.

Shortly before seven A.M., Roosevelt rang the 1st Division command post on the field phone. "The 26th on our left has had a tank attack. Don't know how bad as yet," he told a staff officer. "Let me speak to General Allen." Upon hearing Allen's voice, Roosevelt wasted no time. "Terry, look. The situation is not very comfortable out here. The 3rd Battalion has been attacked by tanks and has been penetrated. The 2nd Battalion is in support, but that is not enough. No anti-tank protection. If we could get that company of medium tanks it sure would help."

Each battle report seemed more dire than the last. Panzers had infiltrated the rear of the 3rd Battalion, firing into foxholes and trenches. Low on bazooka and mortar rounds, the American rifle platoons leapfrogged south, pulling back three miles to the outskirts of Gela. "The 26th here is catching hell," Roosevelt told a division staff officer shortly after eight A.M. "What about a company of medium tanks? Not unloaded yet? Goddamn it, I'll come and pull those tanks out myself. We don't want them tomorrow." An hour later he told Allen, "Situation not so good."

Between phone calls he stumped about with his gamecock gait, brandishing his cane to rally the riflemen in their holes. "These guys can't hit me! They've been trying through two world wars. And if they can't hit an old grandfather like me, they surely can't hurt you," he barked. "Do you know who those bastards are? The Hermann Göring Division. We beat their asses in North Africa and we're going to do it again." Later he would tell Eleanor: "The old man still can fight."

In the lemon grove near Green 2, the 1st Division command post was identifiable only by a small sign—"Danger Forward"—and the radio antennas poking out from behind a stone wall. Here another old soldier also had his blood up. He was saddle-nosed and leathery, and deep pleats framed his brown eyes. Gray flecked the blue-black hair that bristled beneath his helmet rim, and he walked, one observer wrote, with "the slightly rolling gait of a man who has spent a great deal of time on horseback." Like Ted Roosevelt, he had been annealed in the Great War: a bullet through the face in the Argonne had perforated both cheeks and at times still caused him to emit a curious, leaky-tire hiss. Like Ted Roosevelt he also cherished the Big Red One, with that unconditional loyalty unique to comrades; their rivalry for the division's affections had contributed little to good order and discipline.

Yet neither order nor discipline had ever loomed large for Terry de la Mesa Allen. Before flunking out of West Point, he had amassed demerits for tardiness, bathing at midnight, yawning in class, yelling during a fire drill, and breaking ranks to pet a dog. As a young officer he "loved horses, women, dancing, and drinking," and as a major he graduated at the bottom of the staff college class in which a certain Major Eisenhower finished at the very top. Yet he knew how to fight and he knew how to lead, and the Army valued both enough to make Allen the first among his former West Point classmates to wear a general's stars. Now he wore a pair, the insignia of a major general.

"The soldier's greatest nightmare is to think he is being sent up to death foolishly," an aide later wrote. "Men didn't feel that way under Allen." A devout Roman Catholic, he regretted missing mass on this eventful Sunday morning, but he had privately prayed, as he always prayed before battle, for the souls of his men. As for generalship, he believed that "tactics are nine-tenths audacity," and his favorite military adages had a primitive simplicity: "Find 'em, fix 'em, and fight 'em," for example, and "You win or die." Allen's political philosophy was no more sophisticated. "It's crazy, this war," he said with a shrug. In June he advised his men, "Do your job. We don't want heroes—dead heroes. We're not out for glory. We're here to do a dirty, stinking job." At the same time he wrote his young wife, Mary Fran, "I feel sure that my luck will continue to hold in the future."

That luck had been sorely tested already this morning. "Couriers dashed in and out of the grove," wrote the reporter Don Whitehead. "Field telephones rang and men shouted into radios. Shells whined over." An agitated staff officer appeared and Allen said, "Don't tell me. I can guess. They've attacked from the east and west." The officer nodded. On the division's right flank, the 16th Infantry was even more deeply embattled than the 26th Infantry on the left. The 16th Regiment's 2nd Battalion held for two hours against forty panzers at Abbio Priolo on the Niscemi road before at least two companies broke, shoving past officers trying to stop them. "The men felt utterly frustrated because they had nothing with which to fight the tanks. Some of them were crying," a captain reported. By late morning, the survivors had dug in under scorching fire along a ridge at Piano Lupo, where their advance had begun at midnight. "Hell, let's not wait for them to attack us. Let's attack them first," a lieutenant said, then fell dead with a bullet in the head.

At 10:10 A.M., the 3rd Battalion reported thirty panzers northeast of the Gela-Niscemi road junction, before adding: "We are in heavy conflict with tanks." By now the regiment had lost six of nine antitank guns, and two battalion commanders had been badly wounded. Officers were reduced to sniping at observation slits with their .45-caliber pistols. The few artillery tubes ashore had begun firing furiously at nine A.M. with powder charge 5 for a range of 6,000 yards; by 10:30, as retreating riflemen streamed past, the gunners had cut their powder to charge 1 for targets less than a mile away. "Situation critical. We are being overrrun by tanks," the 16th Infantry commander told Allen. "We have no idea what is going on to the east of us."

Allen climbed to the crest of a dune behind the command post, cheeks hissing, a map tucked

under his arm. “The plain,” an artilleryman later wrote, “was a mass of bursting shells, burning tanks and confusion.” Behind Allen, the beach was hardly more orderly. Italian dive-bombers had struck the roadstead at dawn; since then, scarcely half an hour had passed without another Axis air attack. Of Allen’s ten requests for air support missions on Saturday and Sunday, only one was met: Allied fighters—flying from North Africa and Pantelleria Island—were too busy protecting the fleet. Patton had ordered his floating reserve ashore early that morning, but the four 18th Infantry battalions landed with little more than they could carry. Some heavy weapons mistakenly landed in the 45th Division zone to the southeast, forcing the gun crews to plod for miles up the shingle; antitank guns for the 26th Infantry were lost when *LST 313* took an Axis bomb in the tank deck and burned to the keel. Two 1st Division signal trucks had also been destroyed, including one carrying thirty miles of phone wire, and a third, full of radio equipment, lay in seven feet of water. The Gela beaches remained so crowded that several dozen landing craft circled offshore or returned to their mother ships, unable to penetrate the broached vessels and supply crates heaped along the water’s edge. Mortarmen borrowed fishing dinghies to row their ammunition ashore.

“I want tanks and I don’t give a damn where they come from,” Allen said. More than sixty M-4 Shermans would make land on July 11, but only a platoon—four tanks—made it beyond the dunes and into the battle on Sunday morning. Others were stopped by broken pontoons, congestion, and confusion, to say nothing of the complete dearth of functioning radios on armor vehicles ashore. Shermans crossing the beach found that the steel matting laid for traction snarled in their tracks and bogey wheels, requiring extensive pruning with large shears. Tanks that skirted the mats bogged down in the steep dunes, throwing one or both tracks.

Allen could hardly have dared to hope that comparable woes afflicted General Conrath at the Hermann Göring command post in Priolo, but they did. On the German left, grenadiers attacking from Biscari had blundered about in the dark, then lost their regimental commander, who left his post to explain himself to Conrath, only to be relieved and court-martialed. The leaderless troops panicked and pelted back toward Biscari before officers finally brought them to heel on the north bank of the Acate River. This “deficient inner cohesion,” as a German staff officer put it, exposed the German left wing and forced the panzers to advance without enough infantry to chivvy the American riflemen from their knolls and gullies. Another German regimental commander was relieved for ineptitude, casualties mounted, the Tigers continued to break down—blocking roads and trails since they were too large to tow away—and Conrath had no inkling what the Italians were doing on his right. “The Italians practically are no longer cooperating,” his operations officer complained. “They have not cooperated from the start.” In fact, the Livorno Division had been ordered by the Italian high command to attack Gela “with utmost determination,” though no one thought to tell the Germans. The Axis front by midday stretched on an eighteen-mile arc, without coordination or coherence. No matter: Comando Supremo in Rome announced that Gela had been recaptured and that the Americans were “returning to their ships.”

From his sandy perch above the lemons and the panoramic chaos, Allen knew that to be untrue, but he also knew that it *could* be true if the tide did not turn soon. As he watched the panzers edge closer to the beach, a mob of 18th Infantry soldiers scampered back through the dunes. “They are carrying armloads of blankets, shovels, binoculars, and weapons in what seems like complete disorder,” an 18th Infantry lieutenant reported. A staff officer asked Allen whether other troops should also retreat. “Hell, no,” Allen replied. “We haven’t begun to fight. They haven’t overrrun our artillery yet.”

Patton came ashore on Whiskey Knoll near Gela at 9:30 on Sunday morning, wading the last few yards from Hewitt's borrowed barge in thigh-deep water. Timing his own pulse, he was disgusted to find it slightly elevated. "You had better come now," he had called to a reporter on *Monrovia,* "or my men will have killed all the bastards." Slapping a leather swagger stick in his palm, he looked "beautiful and battle-fevered in boots and whipcords," the reporter noted. Binoculars and a camera hung from his neck, and in place of his trademark pair of pistols, a single Colt Peacemaker .45 hugged his hip. Crossing the beach, Patton studied a pair of mine-wrecked DUKWs as several German shells exploded in the water thirty yards from shore. "Get your asses off this beach," he yelled at loitering soldiers in his odd, high-pitched voice, "and go kill those Kraut bastards."

Aides stripped the waterproofing from his scout car and unfurled a three-star flag on the bumper. Patton intended to drive three miles east on Highway 115, now known as Adolf's Alley, to see Allen at Danger Forward, but the U.S. flag Darby had tacked onto the Fascist party headquarters in Gela caught his eye and he swerved into town. Darby was off in the killing fields somewhere, but the rooftop offered Patton an Olympian view. Thirty hours into HUSKY, he had only a sketchy notion of how the invasion was progressing: the code rooms on *Monrovia* had been hopelessly swamped since H-hour, with many urgent messages from Seventh Army units backlogged for eight hours; more routine dispatches were backed up for two days. At least here, Patton could see for himself.

Dust and gray smoke smeared the landscape north and east of town. German tanks pushing past the 26th Infantry on the eastern edge of Highway 117 had crossed the shallow Gela River to menace Adolf's Alley and Allen's sanctuary. Italian tanks west of the highway had nosed within a mile of Gela. Patton shouted to a naval ensign with a walkie-talkie in the street below. "Hey, you with the radio! If you can connect with your goddam Navy, tell them for God's sake to drop some shell fire on the road." Minutes later thirty-eight shells from the cruiser *Boise* rushed over the rooftops. Explosions blossomed among the Italian tanks, and a syncopated thunder rolled across town. More blossoms opened, this time from white-phosphorus mortar shells falling among enemy infantrymen. The burning fragments, Patton noted, "seemed to make them quite crazy as they rushed out of the ravine, shrilling like dervishes with their hands over their heads." A Ranger captain added that "enemy troops could be seen staggering around as if thoroughly dazed…. There were human bodies hanging from trees." A column of prisoners snaked through the street below. "Make it double time," Patton barked at the military police escorts. "Kick 'em in the ass." Under Patton's glare, the prisoners stumbled into a ragged trot.

The Italian thrust stalled before noon, but now German artillery ranged the town. Two 88mm shells gouged the Fascist headquarters in a spray of steel shards and masonry, and a third holed the roof across the street. "No one was hurt except some civilians," Patton noted. "I have never heard so much screaming." The panic intensified with the appearance of two German warplanes. The heavy footfall of approaching bombs, Patton later wrote, caused the locals "to behave in a most foolish manner, running up and down the street…. It was necessary for us to use MPs and rifle butts to solace them."

If the Italians had been stopped, the Germans had not, and by midday Terry Allen's right wing faced obliteration. German infiltrators menaced the flank of the lemon grove, where the stink of cordite commingled with the citrus. Panzer fire had begun sweeping the beaches, causing casualties and consternation. German tanks near Santa Spina controlled Highway 115 and stood barely a mile from the waterline; landing craft had taken fire and enemy troops threatened the 26th Infantry supply dumps only seven hundred yards inland. Riflemen pried up slabs of dried mud to build pathetic adobe

parapets. On the beach a naval officer "struck a heroic pose, shouting, 'To arms, to arms!'" Navy yeomen, electricians, and carpenters tittered even as they scrambled for their rifles. Men burned both personal and official papers, including maps, and a radar set was blown up for fear of capture.

Crouched in a trench at the aptly named Danger Forward, Allen—bleary-eyed and gray with fatigue—sifted through battle reports and pleaded for more firepower. Firepower arrived, and with it salvation. Four artillery battalions, with a dozen guns each, as well as the platoon of Sherman tanks and half a dozen cannon and antitank companies, finally trundled across the beach and into the dunes. "There's plenty of good hunting up there," the 1st Division artillery chief, Brigadier General Clift Andrus, told the arriving gunners. Smoking his pipe and polishing his spectacles, Andrus—a Cornell University civil engineer known to the troops as Mr. Chips—evinced the same sangfroid he had displayed at Kasserine Pass and El Guettar. Strolling from battery to battery, he pointed at targets with his walking stick and ordered the gunners to try ricochet fire, which had proved particularly lethal to enemy foot soldiers in Tunisia. Behind a battery of 155mm Long Toms, firing over open sights at the approaching panzers, a lieutenant reportedly drew his .45 and threatened to shoot any man who abandoned his gun.

Then, above the whine of artillery shells, came the locomotive shriek of *Boise*'s shells: fifteen 6-inch airbursts every six seconds, ripping up wheat fields and vineyards and Germans alike. She nearly sat on the beach, edging to within three thousand yards of the waterline as leadsmen took soundings in the chains; another cruiser, U.S.S. *Savannah,* joined the barrage, along with four destroyers that drew even closer at twelve hundred yards.

German tanks began to burn: first two, then six, then a dozen and more. U.S. infantrymen heard trapped crews screaming half a mile away, until the ammunition cooked off and the screaming stopped. "I was hit on the left side of the turret," an officer in a Tiger unit later recalled. "Fortunately it didn't penetrate, but rivets flew about our ears." A grenadier shot by a 16th Infantry rifleman tumbled beneath the tracks of tank; later, upon inspecting the body, the rifleman "took hold of his hair to pull his face around but he was melted right into the ground."

At two P.M., Conrath called off the attack. The panzers pulled back, slowly at first, then gathering speed when the naval shells thickened until they were rushing to the rear as if the landscape had somehow tipped northward. At four P.M. the Hermann Göring Division headquarters reported, "The counterattack against the hostile landings has failed." Terry Allen urged his exhausted troops to "sock the hell out of those damned Heinies before they can get set to hit us again." As for the day's events, the twinkle returned to his red-rimmed eyes. "The situation could have been critical," he told Don Whitehead. "As it was, it was merely embarrassing."

Patton returned to the beach late in the day, still in full throat and still impeccable despite having been bombed, strafed, and shelled. During the afternoon he had tracked down Ted Roosevelt in Gela—rebuking him for failing to seize Ponte Olivo airfield already—and later he smoked a victory cigar while visiting Allen's command post. He ate his K ration lunch with a portly, white-haired brigadier general named William J. Donovan, a millionaire Wall Street lawyer whose résumé also included the Medal of Honor and three Purple Hearts in World War I and whose friend Franklin Roosevelt had appointed him director of the Office of Strategic Services. Donovan had come ashore from the *Samuel Chase* and spent the day shooting at Italians, "happy as a clam," a 1st Division captain reported. "You know, Bill," Patton said, "there are two things in life that I love to do—fucking and fighting." Donovan nodded. "Yes, George, and in that order, too."

Patton's cigar was fairly won. Two Axis divisions had been repulsed and were now skulking off

into the Sicilian hinterland. “I had the bitter experience to watch scenes during these last days that are not worthy of a German soldier,” Conrath fulminated in a July 12 field order that threatened summary executions for cowardice and rumor-mongering. On the Seventh Army left, Truscott’s 3rd Division was pushing inland; on the right, paratrooper Gavin repulsed a sizable armor and infantry force at Biazza Ridge. As for casualties, Andrus counted 43 enemy tanks destroyed, including 6 by bazooka, a figure similar to a tally by the Hermann Göring Division. Conrath reported 630 men killed or wounded in the first three days of HUSKY; 10 of 17 Tigers had been knocked out. American casualties in the Sunday counterattack totaled 331. After two days of fighting, Seventh Army reported 175 dead, 665 wounded, and nearly 2,600 missing, most of whom were in fact lost. Nearly 9,000 prisoners had been bagged, almost exclusively Italians. Once again horse carts hauled dead civilians to a mass grave outside Gela.

Patton prowled the beach, waiting for his barge. Spying several soldiers digging foxholes amid stacks of five-hundred-pound bombs, he advised them that “if they wanted to save Graves Registration burials that was a fine thing to do, but otherwise they better dig somewhere else.” At that moment German planes strafed the beach and the men plunged back into their lairs; Patton strutted and clucked until he had shamed them from the holes. By the time he regained *Monrovia*, the sun was sinking in the western Mediterranean and he was drenched with sea spray. “This is the first day in this camapign that I think I earned my pay,” he told his diary. “I am well satisfied with my command today.”

“Tonight Wear White Pajamas”

KENT Hewitt had spent his Sunday fighting the naval war, a few thousand yards seaward of Patton’s terrestrial battle. Pillars of black smoke and a faint clamor carrying from the beach implied the tumult ashore, but Hewitt had been far too busy to do more than cast an occasional glance inland.

His own losses were modest if worrisome: Axis air attacks kept intensifying as enemy pilots evaded Allied radar by sneaking through valleys notched across the coastal plain. The battleship H.M.S. *Nelson* had been attacked three times on July 10 but fourteen times today. A bomb detonated under the *Barnett*—Ted Roosevelt’s ship—ripping a hole in hold number 1 and killing seven men. The hospital ship *Talamba*, illuminated and bedizened with huge red crosses, was sunk five miles offshore. “With a cracking, hissing sound her stern went under, her bows reared up and she began to slide under,” a British lieutenant reported. “People were jumping off her sides.” The loss of *LST 313* and twenty-two souls at Gela on Saturday had been equally grim. An Me-109 attacked out of the late afternoon sun so stealthily that not a defensive shot was fired until bombs were falling. Trucks loaded with mines and ammunition blew up, catapaulting men from the main deck a hundred feet into the air; flaming axles and fenders rained across the beach. Fires raged, flash-burned men lay on the bow ramp reciting the Lord’s Prayer, and all engines were stopped so that those who had leaped overboard might not be sucked into the propellers. *LST 313* settled on the bottom with a final, delphic distress call: “This goddamn thing isn’t working.”

At noon on Sunday, Hewitt boarded the minesweeper U.S.S. *Steady* and steamed west to inspect Truscott’s landings. No sooner had the admiral arrived off Licata than ten dive-bombers hit the quays and beaches, straddling half a dozen LSTs with bombs and setting fire to another. By three P.M., when *Steady* came about to return to Gela, Hewitt had witnessed five more attacks.

Each successive raid vexed him more. Nearly five thousand Allied planes had been amassed for HUSKY, but Hewitt had little idea where they were or what they were doing. For months he and Patton had hectored the U.S. Army Air Forces for what the admiral decried as an “almost complete lack of participation in battle planning” and for drafting an air plan “unrelated to the military attack plan and

naval attack plan." Neither he nor Patton knew which Sicilian targets would be bombed, or "what, when, or where fighter cover would be provided."

Air Force commanders, wary of "parceling out" their aircraft or giving "personal control over the air units" to their Army and Navy brethren, countered that to neutralize Axis airpower they must concentrate Allied planes on targets—such as enemy airfields and supply lines—often invisible from the battlefront. Because the Navy insisted on deploying all aircraft carriers to the Pacific, not enough fighters were available in the Mediterranean to protect the beachheads during sixteen hours of daylight. Firing from Allied ships on friendly planes had become so promiscuous that air patrols originally planned for altitudes of five thousand feet had been forced up to ten thousand.

Considering that the Navy had been prepared to lose up to three hundred ships on July 9 and 10, actual sinkings by air attack through Saturday night—a dozen vessels—had been light indeed. That hardly appeased those under incessant bombardment on the beach and in the anchorage. Hewitt was angry, Patton was disgusted—"We can't get the goddamn Air Force to do a goddamn thing"—and a young soldier, when told of the impenetrable air umbrella ostensibly provided by Allied fighters, rolled his eyes to the heavens and said, "Only the good people can see them."

Back at the Gela roads aboard *Steady,* Hewitt was on the minesweeper's bridge when the Liberty ship S.S. *Rowan*—stuffed with ammunition and gasoline—caught a pair of bombs in the number 2 hold and another next to a gun tub. After twenty minutes of futile firefighting she was abandoned and an hour later, as Hewitt watched, blew up with a roar seen and heard halfway to Africa. One eyewitness described "a flat sheet of crimson fire in a frame of black smoke…. Pieces of the twisted metal and flaming wood hissed into the water as far as a mile distant." Broken in half, *Rowan* refused to sink despite 5-inch destroyer shells pumped point-blank below her waterline. She settled in just seven fathoms and would burn for two days as a beacon for enemy pilots. By twilight's last gleaming on Sunday, German planes sprinkled magnesium parachute flares to make the roadstead even brighter. They drifted like tiny suns over the fleet, reminding every swab and soldier—and admiral—of his vulnerability.

Just across Highway 115, a few hundred yards east of Terry Allen's command post, another major general stood on a makeshift landing strip and eyed the glowing night sky with trepidation. Matthew B. Ridgway was handsome, graceful, and charismatic. He was "hard as flint and full of intensity, almost grinding his teeth from intensity," in James Gavin's description, to the point that George Marshall had once counseled Ridgway to "cultivate the art of playing and loafing." Vaulting from major to brigadier general in eighteen months, Ridgway as a two-star now commanded the 82nd Airborne. Soldiers later dubbed him "Old Iron Tits" for his affectation of attaching a hand grenade and a first-aid kit to his chest harness. "There's a right way," they said, "a wrong way, and a Ridgway." He was "brave under fire to the point of being exhibitionistic," Gavin recalled, and so despised the Germans that in battle "he'd stand in the middle of the road and urinate…. Even with his penis he was defiant." God, he believed, would preserve him at least until the final defeat of the Third Reich.

He was less certain how the Almighty felt about the 82nd on this Sunday night. One of his regiments, under Gavin, was already scattered across half of Sicily, and another was now en route to the island. At 8:30 this morning, on orders personally issued by Patton, Ridgway had summoned the 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment from Tunisia with a coded radio message: "Tonight wear white pajamas." Twenty-three hundred men were to reinforce the Big Red One by jumping from 144 planes before midnight. Some planners had advocated a daylight drop, or, now that German troops had retreated, simply landing the C-47s near the beach to discharge the paratroopers. Yet, once again,

plans had been made, orders had been issued, and a cruel inflexibility gripped both plans and orders. Patton before leaving *Monrovia* this morning had drafted a notification to his four divisions of the impending jump, adding, "It is essential that all subordinate units be cautioned not to fire on these friendly planes." Although Patton signed the order at 8:45 A.M., congestion in *Monrovia*'s signal room kept it from being coded and dispatched until 4:20 P.M. Ridgway this afternoon had traipsed among antiaircraft batteries along Green 2 asking whether the gunners knew that "aircraft bearing friendly parachute troops" would soon be overhead: five crews had in fact heard, while a sixth had not.

"There's always some son-of-a-bitch who never gets the word," a Navy axiom held. In this instance the word failed to reach thousands, at sea and on land. Smaller vessels in particular knew nothing of the jump. Hewitt—who was living on the same ship with Patton—later stated that he first learned the mission had been authorized at 5:47 P.M. on Sunday, too late to spread the warning and too late to protest. None of the three regiments in the 45th Division sector to the east, where the planes would first make landfall, received notification until after ten P.M.; signal officers struggled to decode the messages by moonlight.

Ridgway for six weeks had warned of fratricide, and in late June he advocated scrubbing the proposed jump because the Navy refused to guarantee safe passage for the transport planes over the fleet. A flight corridor had at last been grudgingly promised; but final aircraft routes had not been apportioned by the high command until July 5, and disseminating knowledge of those routes through the invasion forces took several days. After two days of Axis attacks, all troops around the Gulf of Gela were jumpy, and few were skilled at distinguishing friend from foe, especially at night. "Every plane that came over us was fired upon because we could not identify it," one corporal explained. A particularly vicious raid, the twenty-third of the day, hit the anchorage at 9:50 P.M., narrowly missing *Boise* and scattering ships to all points.

If Ridgway was anxious ashore, Patton aboard *Monrovia* was hard pressed to heed his own advice to eschew the counsel of his fears. His afternoon bravado melted away as he realized that he was sitting on a tinderbox. At eight P.M., he tried to abort the mission only to learn that the 504th was already airborne and beyond recall. In his cabin late that night, Patton confided to his diary, "Found we could not get contact by radio. Am terribly worried."

No one ever knew who fired the first shot. The lead C-47 arrived at 10:40 P.M. in the preternatural calm that drifted over the beachhead following the departure of the last enemy raiders of the evening. Amber belly lights flashed the prescribed recognition signal from a thousand feet up. Crossing the coastline thirty miles east of Gela, the planes banked left and the first stick of sixteen paratroopers leaped from the open door onto the airstrip where Ridgway stood craning his neck. Then the rapping of a single machine gun broke the tranquillity, and a stream of the red tracers used by U.S. forces floated up, and up, and up.

The contagion spread in an instant. Fountains of red fire erupted from the beaches and the anchorage. "I looked back," reported a captain in one of the lead planes, "and saw the whole coastline burst into flame." Pilots dove to the deck or swerved back to sea, flinging paratroopers to the floor and tangling their static lines. Men fingered their rosary beads or vomited into their helmets. Bullets ripped through wings and fuselages, and the bay floors grew slick with blood. "The tracers going by our plane were so thick that I think I could have read a newspaper," one lieutenant later reported.

Formations disintegrated. Some pilots flipped off their belly lights and tried to thread a path along the shore between fire from the ships and fire from the beach. Others fled for Africa, chased by tracers for thirty miles. Half a dozen planes were hit as paratroopers struggled to get out the door. "Planes tumbled out of the air like burning crosses," recalled a soldier in the 1st Battalion. "Others stopped like a bird shot in flight." A few pilots refused to drop their sticks, considering it tantamount to murder, although one crew chief told a 504th battalion commander, "It's a hell of a lot safer out

there than it is in here." Nowhere was safe, of course. Men died in their planes, men died descending in their parachutes, and at least four were shot dead on the ground by comrades convinced they were Germans. Men also died for saying the wrong thing: the paratroopers had been given challenge and parole passwords—ULYSSES / GRANT—at odds with those in the 45th Division sector where the fire was heaviest: THINK / QUICKLY.

Those watching from the ground would be imprinted with a horror hardly matched through the rest of the war. "No! Stop, you bastards, stop!" the correspondent Jack Belden shrieked above the din. None stopped. Parachutes collapsed or failed to open, and men struck the earth with a sound like "large pumpkins being thrown down." Others with chutes aflame candlesticked into the sea. Ridgway stared at the carnage in tears, aghast. But it was a young sergeant, Ralph G. Martin, who gave voice to all: "I feel sick in body and soul."

Colonel Reuben H. Tucker, the thirty-two-year-old commander of the 504th, managed to jump onto the proper landing zone despite gunfire that killed his crew chief and put a thousand holes through his C-47. After rolling up his chute, Tucker stomped from tank to tank ordering the crews to stop shooting at his men with their .50-caliber machine guns. Too late. The final formation of two dozen planes was hit hardest, with half shot down. One pilot dropped his paratroopers, then took fire from eight ships as he banked back to sea; hit by more than thirty shells that left the cockpit instruments in his lap, he managed to ditch and escape in a rubber raft. The C-47 carrying Tucker's executive officer, Lieutenant Colonel Leslie G. Freeman, crashed five hundred yards from shore after being struck in the right engine by gunfire that also wounded three troopers. Marksmen on nearby ships sprayed the sinking wreckage with bullets. "Eleven more men were wounded or killed after we landed on the water," Freeman reported, including a lieutenant shot in the face after swimming to the beach.

At last the shooting ebbed, the guns fell silent, and an awful epiphany seeped across the beachhead and through the fleet, that men-at-arms had done what men-at-arms most fear doing: they had killed their own. Twenty-three planes had been destroyed, and another thirty-seven were badly damaged. Investigators put the casualties at 410, although the actual number long remained in dispute. That the mission had been a fiasco—among the worst friendly fire episodes in modern warfare—was beyond haggling. "The safest place for us tonight while over Sicily," one pilot said, "would have been over enemy territory." As late as July 16, Ridgway would report that he could account for only 3,900 of the 5,300 paratroopers who had left North Africa for Sicily on the ninth and eleventh.

Those who survived that Sunday night would never forget, even as they looked for ways to forgive. As he was carried away on a stretcher with a bullet in his shoulder, one paratrooper told an officer, "I was glad to see that our fellows could shoot so good."

Eisenhower arrived at the beachhead on Monday morning, July 12, ignorant of the previous night's fratricide. No one during his daylong visit thought to enlighten him. For the past two days on Malta he had been both giddy at HUSKY's apparent early success—"By golly," he exclaimed, "to think we've gone it again!"—and splenetic at the absence of hard news, particularly from Patton. He studied Cunningham's maps, rocked in a wicker chair in his Lascaris office, cadged dry cigarettes from reporters, and paced on the beach. "Ike had the fidgets," his naval aide, Commander Harry C. Butcher, wrote in his diary. "Lay on sand awhile, then got up and dug holes in the sand with a stick." To John Gunther he complained, "They treat me like a bird in a gilded cage." To see the battle for himself, he had boarded H.M.S. *Petard* in Valletta harbor and at two A.M. Monday set sail for Sicily at twenty-six knots.

The destroyer made landfall at Licata just as a lovely Mediterranean dawn tinted the distant hills with orange and gold. Columns of greasy smoke spiraled above the beach, but from two miles out the prevailing impression was "complete serenity," wrote a British officer aboard *Petard.* "More like a huge regatta than an operation of war." Shortly after six A.M., the destroyer's captain, dressed in a blue turtleneck and shabby white shorts, pointed to *Monrovia,* anchored five miles off Gela. Eisenhower crossed to the flagship in a bouncing launch to be greeted by the usual bosun's trill—"I never know what to do when they pipe me on," the commander-in-chief had muttered—as well as a smiling, saluting Kent Hewitt and a smiling, saluting George Patton.

Patton led the way to his cabin, where blue and red battle lines had been neatly drawn on a large map of Sicily. The Allies now had eighty thousand troops ashore, with seven thousand vehicles, three hundred tanks, and nine hundred guns spread on a hundred-mile arc across an island the size of Vermont. The British Eighth Army had captured Syracuse, and Augusta would fall soon. A tumultuous welcome from Sicilian civilians cooled when it became clear that the Tommies had little extra food to share. But instead of the anticipated ten thousand British casualties in the first week, there would be only fifteen hundred. General Montgomery had begun to wheel toward Catania, only twenty miles north of Augusta and the last sizable city before Messina on the island's northeast tip. Brash as ever, Montgomery confidently predicted he would reach Catania as soon as Tuesday night.

As for his own Seventh Army, Patton pointed to Truscott's 3rd Division on the left—already across the Yellow Line and nearing Canicattì, fifteen miles inland—and Middleton's 45th Division on the right, a bit scattered but pressing toward the upland town of Vizzini. Comiso airfield had fallen Sunday afternoon, and 125 enemy planes had been captured, 20 of them still flyable. American troops had seized Ragusa, which technically stood in the Canadian sector, and amused themselves there by answering phone calls from anxious Italian garrisons further up-country. In the center, Patton reported, the Hermann Göring Division counterattack had forestalled Allen's 1st Division, but Ponte Olivo airfield would surely fall this morning. The enemy's distress was apparent in a message found banded to a homing pigeon, which on Sunday had landed on a U.S. minesweeper instead of flying to the Italian XII Corps headquarters. From an Italian coastal division, it read, "Heroic infantry and artillery still doing their duty after fifteen hours of fighting against tremendous odds…. Send more pigeons." A Royal Navy officer had advised: "Cross-examine in pigeon English, and release."

Hardly had the briefing ended than Eisenhower rounded on his army commander, and Patton's smile vanished. During the TORCH landings, Patton had earned a rebuke for failing to notify Eisenhower at Gibraltar of his progress in Morocco, and now he had repeated his sin. The high command in Washington and London wanted information, Eisenhower complained, and what was an ignorant commander-in-chief to tell them? How should he know whether Seventh Army needed help, particularly in the air? Harry Butcher, who witnessed the tongue-lashing, wrote, "When we left General Patton I thought he was angry. Ike had stepped on him hard. There was an air of tenseness."

Forty-five minutes after boarding *Monrovia*, Eisenhower climbed down to the barge for the return trip to *Petard*. "Patton stood at the edge of the rope ladder looking like a Roman emperor carved in brown stone," Gunther wrote. "He waved goodbye." Thirty minutes later, the *Monrovia* radio room decoded a message confirming that nearly two dozen "of our own troop transport planes [were] shot down last night." The report never caught up with Eisenhower. He spent the morning cruising the Sicilian shore, stuffing cotton in his ears during a brief exchange of salvos with a German shore battery, then riding a DUKW through hundreds of naked Canadian soldiers bathing in the creamy surf near Cape Passero. "I have come to welcome Canada to the Allied command," he declared, sweat beading on his broad forehead.

Eisenhower ended the day with a tumbler of gin, courtesy of the Royal Navy, and the conviction that HUSKY was unfolding rather well. "Provided everything goes satisfactorily," he privately informed

reporters, “we should have Sicily in two weeks.” Given limp Italian resistance, he had begun to believe that Allied forces should carry the fight to mainland Italy. Still, he was irked at Patton. Notwithstanding their twenty-year friendship, he told Butcher, he wished that Seventh Army for the rest of the Sicilian campaign could be commanded by his West Point classmate Omar Bradley, whom he considered “calm and matter-of-fact.”

Only after returning to his dank command post in the Lascaris Bastion late Monday night did Eisenhower learn of the airborne calamity. His irritation at Patton now turned to fury. Face flushed, lips pursed, he dictated a scathing message to the army commander at 11:45 P.M., the syllables popping like whip cracks: “You particularly requested me to authorize this movement into your area. Consequently ample time was obviously available for complete and exact coordination of the movement among all forces involved.” Such a catastrophe implied “inexcusable carelessness and negligence on the part of someone.” Patton was to initiate an “exhaustive investigation with a view to fixing responsibility.”

Investigations would go forth, sins of omission and commission would be duly documented, but no blame was ever formally assigned. Pentagon censorship kept the incident secret until many months after the Sicilian campaign ended. Hewitt angrily denied any culpability, as did everyone else involved. Eisenhower’s air chief deemed the mission “not operationally sound,” although the top AFHQ airborne adviser, fatuously determined to fashion a silk purse from the sow’s ear, declared himself “well pleased with the entire operation” in Sicily.

Patton considered the 504th’s misfortune “an unavoidable incident of combat.” But as he moved into the marble-floored, bedbug-ridden Geloan villa that would become his first headquarters ashore, he felt the sting of Eisenhower’s castigation. “If anyone is blameable, it must be myself, but personally I feel immune to censure,” Patton wrote in his diary on July 13. “Perhaps Ike is looking for an excuse to relieve me…. If they want a goat, I am it.”

“The Dark World Is Not Far from Us”

THEY pressed inland on their hundred-mile front, past Sicilians shouting “Viva, Babe Ruth!” or “Hoorah, King George!” and waving homemade U.S. flags with too many stripes and too few stars. The July heat came on, and they knotted bandanas across their noses, marching invisible from the waist down because of the dust that beat up as if they were scuffing through flour. “After the first mile we were so worn out we barely had enough breath to bitch,” a mortarman recalled, “but we managed.” Salt stained their shirts, and their boots squished, and they denounced their steel helmets as “brain furnaces.” They nibbled on grapes and green tomatoes and Benzedrine, or bartered one cigarette for eight oranges. By midday, the journalist Alan Moorehead wrote, “everything had turned into strident color—red rocks, green vineyards, a blaring cobalt blue in the sky.” The troops were less vivid: sweat and dust blended to coat them with a gray paste. Occasional shells fell about, and they dove for a ditch or at least a dimple in the sun-hammered earth. “I put my face in the dirt,” one soldier said, “and tried to dig deeper with my knees.”

Jeeps returned from the front with dead soldiers trussed to the hood, threading a path through the columns heaving forward. “Right of way!” the drivers bellowed. “Right of way.” The living moved aside, looking away as if they were Sicilians avoiding the evil eye. Many troops carried amulets, perhaps a St. Christopher medal or a smooth stone to rub whenever the tracers whizzed past. One soldier held a tiny carved wooden pig, murmuring as the shells thickened, “Pig, this one is not for us,” or, “Pig, you know that the one that gets me, gets you.” The novelist John Steinbeck, who had joined the press corps for the invasion, noted a belief that “the magic must not be called on too often. The

virtue of the piece is not inexhaustible." This atavism, Steinbeck concluded, reflected a reasonable conviction in the ranks that "the dark world is not far from us."

They tramped through a land as exotic as North Africa, a land of village witches and exorcists, where the sick swallowed powdered amber or drank the dust of St. Rita's bones. Big-wheeled carts clattered on iron rims over the cobblestones; the scenes painted on their sides showed the martyrdom of Christ or cinema stars from the 1920s. Dray horses with blinkers "depicting the life and death of a saint, right and left respectively," clopped past women combing nits from their children's hair and old men pouring drinks from five-cornered canvas wine flasks splotched with purple stains.

Walls and public buildings were upholstered with Fascist slogans—"Few words, many deeds" or "Mussolini is always right"—which "after a while even ceased to be ridiculous," Moorehead wrote. A few had been freshly whitewashed, or overwritten with new scrawl, including "Finito, Benito." Military policemen hunted Fascist officials by scrutinizing the locals for store-bought shoes or unfrayed trousers; denunciation and betrayal soon became cottage industries. Blue butterflies and hoopoes and bee-eaters flew about, and the scent of honeysuckle and jasmine mingled with the stink of manure and human offal to produce the precise odor of poverty. "A carton of cigarettes would buy you a whole province here," an American officer reported, "and a suit of clothes would get you the whole island."

Dead enemy soldiers lay by the roads with their arms flung out as if making snow angels. They were hastily buried in graves marked "E.D."—enemy dead. Dead civilians lay about too, some next to painted carts flipped on their sides with disemboweled donkeys still in the traces to form a death tableau at a 90-degree angle from life. A grave-diggers' strike in some provinces complicated sanitation, as did a shortage of wood for coffins, which were necessarily reused. "Bury the dead and feed the living," a 1st Division civil affairs officer advised. That too was complicated. Food riots soon erupted, including one in Canicattì quelled by MPs who fired over the rioters' heads to no effect. "When they lowered their fire," an AMGOT report added, "the mob lay down in the streets and continued to scream." General Truscott ordered looters executed; when civilians stealing soap from a warehouse tried to flee, an officer "shot at some of the men in the crowd and the infantry rounded up others and shot them. Six men were killed." Also shot were seven alleged saboteurs accused of filching military signal wire.

Sometimes the living simply needed to be comforted. Seaman First Class Francis Carpenter, a former Broadway actor pressed into service as a beachhead scout because he had twice vacationed in Sicily, came upon eight terrified peasants hiding in a cornfield. Carpenter, whose credits included the 1938 revival by Orson Welles of *The Shoemaker's Holiday*, handed around his pack of cigarettes, then cleared his throat and sang "La donna è mobile," a winsome aria from *Rigoletto*.

No one was more eager to get inland than the lieutenant general who commanded most of the American troops now in Sicily. Omar Nelson Bradley, who as the II Corps commander ranked just under Patton, had battled adversity and affliction throughout his fifty years: the early death of his father; the extraction of his teeth after a skating accident; a near fatal bout of flu; the loss of a stillborn son. For the first thirty-six hours of the HUSKY invasion, Bradley's personal trials persisted. "Feeling worse than I have ever felt in my life," he had been confined to the U.S.S. *Ancon* after emergency surgery for hemorrhoids, known in the Army as cavalry tonsils. Still in agony, and seasick to boot, he eventually came ashore in his command car, cushioned on a life preserver and feeling slightly ridiculous. On Monday morning, July 12, he set up his headquarters in a sultry grove three miles north of Scoglitti.

Graying since his cadet days, Bradley wore an unadorned field jacket and "might have passed as an elderly rifleman" lugging his favorite 1903 Springfield rifle. Round, steel-frame GI spectacles magnified "his rural manner," wrote the historian Martin Blumenson, "and his hayseed expression gave him a homespun look." Nearly anonymous in Tunisia, although he had commanded U.S. forces during the triumphant coup de grâce, Bradley had recently been discovered by journalists and the public. They found his demeanor compelling—"as unruffled as an Ozark lake on a dead-calm day," *Life* gushed—and his personal story irresistible: the Missouri sodbuster boyhood without running water; the widowed mother, a seamstress, cooking game killed by young Omar—squirrels, quail, rabbit, and big green frogs; the .383 batting average and deadly throwing arm on the West Point baseball squad; the sharpshooter who could hit a pheasant on the fly with a .22 rifle and who eyed German planes overhead as if he were "shooting at the number 8 post at skeet." At Eisenhower's urging, Ernie Pyle would spend several days with Bradley in Sicily, writing a hagiographic six-part profile that forever sanctified him as the GI General. "He is so damn normal," Pyle wrote. "He has no idiosyncrasies, no superstitions, no hobbies."

Perhaps. But he also had depths beyond even Pyle's plumbing. "Underneath the mask was a cold and ruthless mind," Martin Blumenson concluded. He was "calculative"—the adjective appeared in his high school yearbook—and often intolerant. His distaste for the piratical Terry Allen, who considered Bradley "a phony Abraham Lincoln," had grown so toxic that he was looking for a chance to sack the 1st Division commander. He also was increasingly disaffected with Patton's flamboyance, his bullheaded tactics, and his penchant for issuing orders directly to the divisions, rather than through Bradley. "He's impetuous," Bradley later wrote. "I disliked the way he worked…. Thought him a rather shallow commander."

Among the most pressing problems facing II Corps was the floodtide of Italian prisoners: on Sicily, more enemy soldiers were captured in a week than were bagged by the U.S. Army in all of World War I. They came in skipping pairs from the villages, or in stolen trucks, or in long, chattering columns out of the hills, nervously glancing over their shoulders for muzzle flashes from disapproving Hermann Göring grenadiers. Wearing long-billed caps and the coarse-cloth uniforms the Germans called asbestos, they surrendered "in a mood of fiesta…their personal possessions slung about them, filling the air with laughter and song," as one soldier wrote. Some U.S. units were so overwhelmed that they posted signs in Italian—"No prisoners taken here"—or advised enemy troops to come back another day. "You can't work up a good hate against soldiers who are surrendering to you so fast you have to take them by appointment," Bill Mauldin observed.

Off they went in the LSTs, herded like livestock but singing as though caged in an aviary. An OSS officer who interrogated a captured Italian machine-gun crew reported that Axis officers had spread atrocity tales in a vain effort to halt the defections.

"When are you going to start?" one prisoner had asked.

"Start what?"

The prisoner cringed. "Cutting off our balls."

Told that they would not be harmed, the men sobbed in relief.

"A queer race these Italians," a lieutenant wrote his mother. "You'd think we were their deliverers instead of their captors."

Yet the dark world was not far removed. And now it intruded.

Operation HUSKY had exacted a particularly grievous toll from the 180th Infantry Regiment, the pride of Oklahoma and one of three National Guard infantry regiments in the 45th Division. During

the 45th's brief interlude in Oran, en route from Norfolk to Sicily, Patton had lavished his attention on the unit, urging officers to "kill devastatingly," to be wary of white-flag ruses, and, if enemy soldiers surrendered only when nearly overrun, to "kill the sons of bitches." The 45th should be known as the "Killer Division," Patton told them, because "killers are immortal."

Despite these admonitions, not much had gone right for the killers in the 180th. On D-day the regimental commander, Colonel Forrest E. Cookson, was dumped by a confused coxswain on a 1st Division beach and failed to rejoin his men for thirty hours. Evincing "anxiety and indecision"—he tended to shake his head and mutter, "Not good"—Cookson seemed so overmatched that Patton had offered his command to Bill Darby, who opted to stay with his Rangers. With no suitable replacement in sight, Cookson kept his job for the moment but soon lost his most aggressive battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel William H. Schaefer. A former West Point football player known as King Kong, Schaefer was "the ugliest looking man in the U.S. Army, maybe the Navy and Marines as well," one lieutenant said. He had repeatedly lectured his 1st Battalion officers against risking capture because "a captive can't fight." Several hours into the landings, Schaefer had been cornered by German grenadiers, who took him prisoner in a vineyard. "Dear General," he wrote the division commander, Troy Middleton, on a scrap of brown paper, "I'm sorry I got captured."

The 180th's chance for redemption came at remote, impoverished Biscari, which the regiment had attacked late Sunday afternoon, July 11. Hermann Göring troops fell back behind the high yellow walls of the town cemetery, sheltering among the cedars and marble tombs set into a hill. American mortar rounds rooted them out, brown smoke foaming over the mausoleums and machine-gun slugs chipping the seraphim. Again the Germans fell back, skulking north across the Acate River toward an airfield five miles north of Biscari town. In broken country the gunfight continued through Tuesday, July 13.

By early Wednesday morning, the airfield was at last in American hands. Bodies lay like bloody throw rugs on a runway gouged by more than two hundred bomb craters. The charred cruciforms of ruined warplanes smoldered near the hangars; enemy snipers had hidden in the cockpits, taking potshots until a platoon of Sherman tanks exterminated them, fuselage by fuselage. Flames crackled in the grain fields east and west of the airfield. Through the billowing smoke U.S. soldiers could be seen like wraiths in olive drab, dragging wounded comrades to safe ground or snatching first-aid kits and ammunition from abandoned packs.

Sniper fire still winked from the shadows along the packed-dirt Biscari road. Companies A and C of the 180th's 1st Battalion had landed five days earlier with nearly 200 men each and now counted 150 between them; the battalion casualties included King Kong's replacement, wounded, and the Company A commander, captured. "We had the killing spirit," one sergeant later observed. Another rifleman wrote his father that the summer dust "tasted like powdered blood," then added, "Now I know why soldiers get old quick."

By midmorning on Wednesday, the 1st Battalion had pushed through the smoke and dancing flames, flushing German and Italian laggards from caves along the thready Ficuzza River. Soon Company A had rounded up forty-six prisoners, among them three Germans. Frightened and exhausted, the captives sat naked but for their trousers on a parched slope above the Ficuzza, all shirts and shoes having been confiscated to discourage escape. A major separated nine prisoners for interrogation—the youngsters were considered most likely to talk—then turned both them and the other captives over to Sergeant Horace T. West with a small security detachment for removal to the rear.

West proved a poor choice. Born in Barron Fork, Oklahoma, he had joined the Army in 1929, then switched to the National Guard, training on weekends and working as a cook in his antebellum civilian life. Now thirty-three, he had two young children, earned $101 a month, and had gained a

reputation, one superior said, as the "most thorough non-com I ever saw in the Army." But the past few days had badly frayed Sergeant West. "It was something sitting on me," he later said, "just to kill and destroy and watch them bleed to death."

In two shuffling columns, the prisoners marched four hundred yards down the road toward a stand of olive trees above the creek. West halted his charges—without being told, they executed a ragged left-face—and separated out the smaller group designated for interrogation. Turning to the company first sergeant, Haskell Brown, he asked to borrow his Thompson submachine gun "to shoot the sons of bitches." Brown handed him the weapon with an extra clip. "Turn around if you don't want to see," West advised, and opened fire.

They fell, writhing and jerking in the dust, then lurched to their knees, begging, only to be shot down again. Cries filled the morning—"No! No!"—amid the roar of the gun and the acrid smell of cordite. Three prisoners broke for the trees; two of them escaped. West stopped to reload, then walked among the men in their pooling blood and fired a single round into the hearts of those still moving. When he was done, he handed the weapon back to Brown. "This is orders," he said, then rousted the nine chosen for interrogation to their feet, wide-eyed and trembling, and marched them off to find the division G-2. Thirty-seven dead men lay beside the road, and their shadows shrank beneath the climbing sun as though something were being drawn up and out of them.

Five hours later, it happened again. As Sergeant West herded his surviving charges to the rear, German tanks and half-tracks counterattacked, recaptured the Biscari airfield, and drove the 180th across a ravine south of the runway. The brawling would continue throughout Wednesday afternoon until the enemy was again routed, this time for good. During the fight, Company C of the 1st Battalion swept down a deep gulch, taking a dozen casualties from machine-gun fire before white flags waved from an expansive bunker carved into the slope. At one P.M., three dozen Italians emerged, hands up, five of them wearing civilian clothes. Ammunition boxes, filthy bedding, and suitcases lay strewn about the bunker.

In command of Company C was Captain John Travers Compton. Now twenty-five, he had joined the Oklahoma Guard in 1934. Compton was married, had one child, earned $230 a month—minus a $6.60 deduction for government insurance—and had been consistently rated "excellent" or "superior" on performance evaluations. Standing on the hillside, bleary with fatigue, he ordered a lieutenant to assemble a firing squad and "have these snipers shot." The squad soon formed—several men volunteered—and Compton barked the commands even as the Italians pleaded for his mercy: "Ready. Aim. *Fire.*" Tommy-gun and Browning Automatic Rifle fire swept down the gulch, and another thirty-six men fell dead.

The next day, at 10:30 A.M., Lieutenant Colonel William E. King drove his jeep up the Biscari road toward the now secure airfield. It was said that King had been temporarily blinded during World War I, and that the ordeal had propelled him into the ministry as a Baptist preacher. He now served God and country as the 45th Division chaplain, admired for his generosity and the brevity of his sermons. A dark mound near an olive grove caught his eye, and he stopped the jeep, mouth agape, to investigate.

"Most were lying face down, a few face up," King later recalled. "Everybody face up had one bullet hole just to the left of the spine in the region of the heart." A majority also had head wounds; singed hair and powder burns implied the fatal shots had come at close range. A few soldiers loitering nearby joined the chaplain, protesting that "they had come into the war to fight against that sort of thing," King said. "They felt ashamed of their countrymen." The chaplain hurried back to the division command post to report the fell vision.

Omar Bradley had already got wind of the massacre, and he drove to Gela to tell Patton that fifty to seventy prisoners had been murdered "in cold blood and also in ranks." Patton recorded his reaction

in his diary:

> I told Bradley that it was probably an exaggeration, but in any case to tell the officer to certify that the dead men were snipers or had attempted to escape or something, as it would make a stink in the press and also would make the civilians mad. Anyhow, they are dead, so nothing can be done about it.

Two war correspondents who had seen the bodies also appeared at Patton's headquarters to protest these and other prisoner killings. Patton pledged to halt the atrocities, and the reporters apparently never printed a word. To George Marshall on July 18, Patton wrote that enemy troops had booby-trapped their dead and "have also resorted to sniping behind the lines"; such "nefarious actions" had caused "the death of quite a few additional Italians, but in my opinion these killings have been thoroughly justified."

Bradley disagreed and, Patton told his diary, "feels that we should try the two men responsible for the shooting of the prisoners." An investigation by the 45th Division inspector general found "no provocation on the part of the prisoners…. They had been slaughtered." Patton relented: "Try the bastards."

Captain Compton contracted malaria soon after the Biscari killings, and not until he had recuperated in late October would he be secretly court-martialed. The defense argued that Patton's pep talk in Oran had been tantamount to "an order to annihilate these snipers." "I ordered them shot because I thought it came directly under the general's instructions,"

Compton testified. "I took him at his word." The military prosecutor asked not a single question on cross-examination. Compton was acquited and returned to the 45th Division.

Killers are immortal, Patton had declared, but that too was wrong: Compton would be killed in action in Italy on November 8, 1943. A fellow officer in the 45th provided his epitaph: "Good riddance."

Sergeant West's case proved more convoluted. Like Compton, he was examined by psychiatrists and declared sane. He, too, claimed that Patton's rhetoric had incited him to mayhem, while conceding that he "may have used bad judgment." His conduct, he told the court-martial, "is something beyond my conception of human decency. Or something." The tribunal concurred and ruled that he had "with malice aforethought, willfully, deliberately, feloniously, unlawfully and with premeditation, killed 37 prisoners of war, none of whose names are known, each of them a human being."

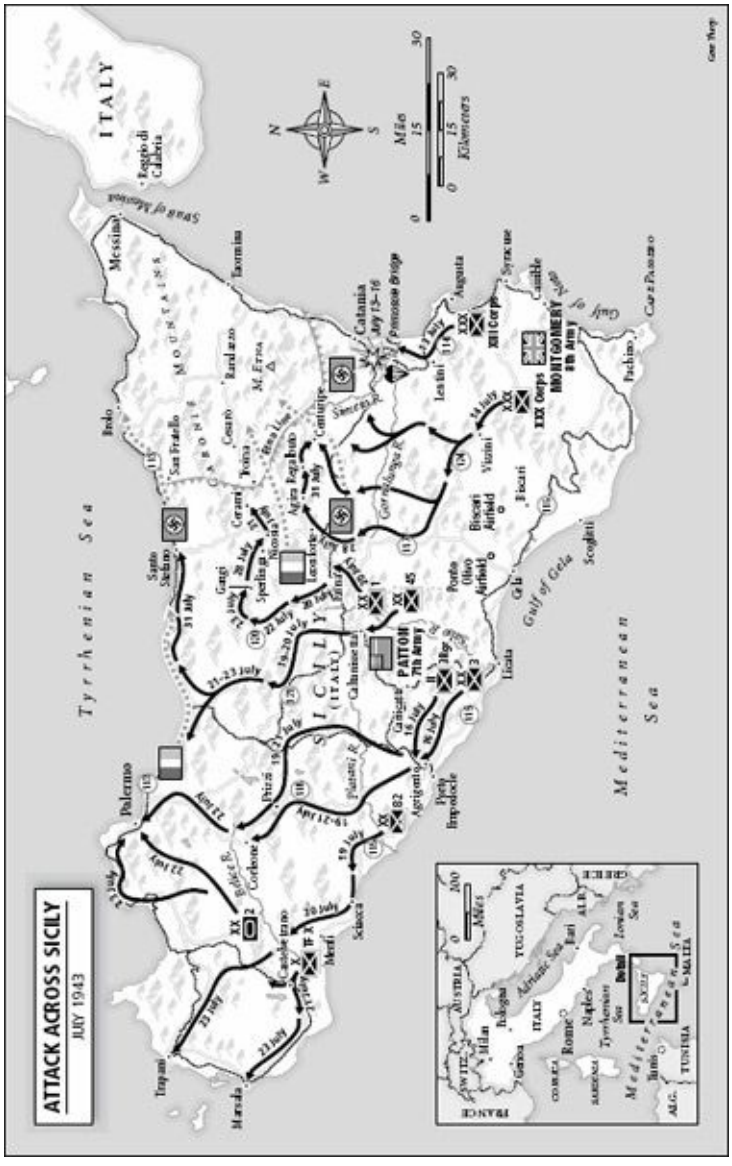
West was sentenced to life in a New York penitentary. Yet he never left the Mediterranean during the war, nor was he dishonorably discharged, and he continued to draw his $101 a month, plus various family allowances. Colonel Cookson, the 180th regimental commander, later said, "The whole tendency in the thing was to keep it as quiet as possible." A few weeks after West's conviction, Eisenhower reviewed the case. If West were sent to a federal prison in the United States, the Biscari story likely would become public; if he were kept confined in North Africa, perhaps the enemy would remain ignorant of the massacre. Eisenhower "feared reprisal to Allied prisoners and decided to give the man a chance," Harry Butcher wrote in his diary. "[West] will be kept in military confinement… for a period sufficient to determine whether he may be returned to duty."

That period amounted to a bit more than a year. West's family and a sympathetic congressman began pestering the War Department for news of "the most thorough non-com" in the U.S. Army. On November 23, 1944, he was granted clemency on grounds of temporary insanity and restored to active duty, though shorn of his sergeant's stripes. Classified top secret, the records of the courts-martial

would remain locked in the secretary of the Army's safe for years after the war lest they "arouse a segment of our citizens who are so distant from combat that they do not understand the savagery that is war."

Those who knew of the killings tried to parse them in their own fashion. Brigadier General Raymond S. McLain, the 45th Division artillery commander, concluded that in Sicily "evil spirits seemed to come out and challenge us." Patton wrote Beatrice, "Some fair-haired boys are trying to say that I killed too many prisoners. The more I killed, the fewer men I lost, but they don't think of that." And a staff officer in the 45th wrote, "It was not easy to determine what forces turned normal men into thoughtless killers. But a world war is something different from our druthers."

Nobody really knows what he's doing, Bill Mauldin had written of his first week in combat with the 180th Infantry. Yet other primal lessons also could be gleaned, from Licata to Augusta. For war was not just a military campaign but also a parable. There were lessons of camaraderie and duty and inscrutable fate. There were lessons of honor and courage, of compassion and sacrifice. And then there was the saddest lesson, to be learned again and again in the coming weeks as they fought across Sicily, and in the coming months as they fought their way back toward a world at peace: that war is corrupting, that it corrodes the soul and tarnishes the spirit, that even the excellent and the superior can be defiled, and that no heart would remain unstained.



3. An Island Redoubt

"Into Battle with Stout Hearts"

THE command car purred through the thronging soldiers, the big open car with three compasses salvaged from crashed Messerschmitts. Heedless of the raised dust, the troops pressed close, not just to snatch at the cigarette packs tossed from the backseat by their commanding general, but for a glimpse of the great man himself. At 147 pounds and just five foot seven even in his chukka boots, General Bernard Law Montgomery offered little to see: a black beret hid his thinning hair, and the khaki shirt—sleeves rolled to the elbows, tail tucked into his baggy shorts—was unadorned but for the Eighth Army flashes stitched to both shoulders. The Sicilian sun accented every cusp and serif in his narrow face, and made the luminous blue eyes even icier. Perhaps aware that he resembled "a rather unsuccessful drygoods shopkeeper," as a Canadian correspondent wrote, the general preferred sitting alone in back so "there won't be any doubt which one is me." As he flicked his Egyptian fly whisk, one observer thought him "tense as a mousetrap," but when the car stopped and he stood on the seat his raspy voice carried with the authority of a man accustomed to being heard. "I advise all of you to leave the Eyetie wine alone. Deadly stuff. Can make you blind, you know." He flicked the swish. "I will make good plans. I wouldn't be here today if I didn't make good plans," he said. "The campaign is going well. The German in Sicily is doomed. Absolutely doomed. He won't get away." Tossing out a few more packs of Lucky Strikes and handing lighters to his senior officers, Montgomery waved with both hands and gestured to the driver to move on in search of others to kindle. The men barked and bayed and doffed their soup bowl helmets. He knew they would.

If the campaign against the Axis was going well enough, a new front had opened between the British and the Americans; this battle had already hindered the struggle for Sicily and would impinge on Allied amity for the rest of the war. Montgomery was in the middle of the brouhaha, of course: on Tuesday, July 13, the Eighth Army commander had unilaterally ordered his troops to cut across Patton's front and into the American sector on Highway 124, a vital route that ran westward from Syracuse through Vizzini toward the central Sicilian crossroads town of Enna. Axis resistance had begun to clot south of Catania, so Montgomery chose to divide his army, with one corps butting north along the coast, and another looping west around Mount Etna via Highway 124.

Montgomery presented this maneuver as a fait accompli to General Harold R.L.G. Alexander, the senior ground commander for HUSKY and Eisenhower's British deputy, even though U.S. troops stood within half a mile of the highway and were much nearer to Enna than the British. Alexander accepted the impetuous deed without demur, and late Tuesday night he instructed Patton to get out of the way: "Operations for the immediate future will be Eighth Army to continue on two axes." Eisenhower declined to review the issue, much less intervene. Offering Eisenhower criticism of the British, General Lucas observed, "is like talking to a man about his wife."

Baleful consequences followed. Only two roads, hugging the island's east and north coasts, led to the ultimate prize of Messina, and the British now claimed both. Had the Yanks seized Enna by Friday, July 16, they might have severed the main escape route for Axis forces hurrying from western Sicily toward the bridgehead now forming on Mount Etna's flanks. Instead, Patton's army would be relegated to the role of flank guard for the British. The 45th Division began trudging back to the beach for a shift to the west, and Omar Bradley scrambled to regroup his corps engineer, medical, ordnance,

quartermaster, and signal units. Montgomery now was driving on divergent axes toward objectives forty-five miles apart—coastal Catania and inland Enna—with half his army trundling into poor tank country beyond support of the Royal Navy. Any hope for a quick Allied triumph had vanished, as soon became evident to every man with a map.

The Americans were furious. “My God,” Bradley told Patton, “you can’t allow him to do that.” But stung by Eisenhower’s rebuke aboard *Monrovia* and reluctant to raise Cain after the paratrooper debacle, Patton remained docile, confining his anger to a slashing diary entry—“What fools we are”—and muttering private imprecations: “Tell Montgomery to stay out of my way or I’ll drive those Krauts right up his ass.” An enraged Bradley later declared the pilferage of Highway 124 “the most arrogant, egotistical, selfish and dangerous move in the whole of combined operations in World War II.” The British move “tends to sell us down the river,” Patton’s deputy, Major General Geoffrey Keyes, wrote in his diary.

Beyond any tactical impact, the episode inflamed chauvinistic tensions in the British and American camps. “The feeling of discord lurking between the two countries…has increased rather than decreased,” Harry Butcher had noted after the Tunisian victory. “It is disheartening and disconcerting.” Alexander, for one, remained imprinted with the disagreeable image of fleeing U.S. troops during the Kasserine Pass rout six months earlier; like Montgomery and many British officers, he harbored a supercilious disdain for American fighting qualities. Yank resentment at that hauteur fueled the anglophobia afflicting the American high command. Patton already believed that Eisenhower was “a pro-British straw man” and that “allies must fight in separate theaters or they will hate each other more than they do the enemy.” Now attitudes hardened, and mistrust threatened to mutate into enmity. “At great expense to ourselves we are saving the British empire,” Lucas complained, “and they aren’t even grateful.” Another American general suggested celebrating each July 4 “as our only defeat of the British. We haven’t had much luck since.”

“What a headache, what a bore, what a bounder he must be to those on roughly the same level in the service,” a BBC reporter wrote of Montgomery. “And at the same time what a great man he is as a leader of troops.” That contradiction would define Montgomery through Sicily and beyond, confounding his admirers and infuriating his detractors. “A simple, forthright man who angered people needlessly,” his biographer Alan Moorehead concluded. “At times a real spark of genius…but [he] was never on an even plane.” Even the official British history of the Mediterranean war would acknowledge his “arrogance, bumptiousness, ungenerosity…[and] schoolboy humour.” American disdain for Montgomery tended toward dismissive condemnation: “a son of a bitch,” declared Beetle Smith, Eisenhower’s chief of staff. His British colleagues, whose scorn at times ran even deeper, at least tried to parse his solipsism. “Small, alert, tense,” said Lieutenant General Brian Horrocks, “rather like an intelligent terrier who might bite at any moment.” Montgomery so irritated Andrew Cunningham—“he seems to think that all he has to do is say what is to be done and everyone will dance to the tune he is piping”—that the admiral would not allow the general’s name to be uttered in his presence. “One must remember,” another British commander said of Montgomery, “that he is not quite a gentleman.”

That he had been raised in wild, remote Tasmania explained much to many. Son of a meek Anglican bishop and a harridan mother who conveyed her love with a cane, Montgomery emerged from childhood as “the bad boy of the family,” who at Sandhurst severely burned a fellow cadet by setting fire to his shirttail. “I do not want to portray him as a lovable character,” his older brother said, “because he isn’t.” Mentioned in dispatches six times on the Western Front, he carried from World

War I the habits of meticulous preparation, reliance on firepower, and a conception of his soldiers "not as warriors itching to get into action, which they were not, but as a workforce doing an unpleasant but necessary job," in the words of the historian Michael Howard. He also accumulated various tics and prejudices: a habit of repeating himself; the stilted use of cricket metaphors; an antipathy to cats; a tendency to exaggerate his battlefield progress; "an obsession for always being right"; and the habit of telling his assembled officers, "There will now be an interval of two minutes for coughing. After that there will be no coughing." No battle captain kept more regular hours. He was awakened with a cup of tea by a manservant at 6:30 A.M. and bedtime in his trailer—captured from an Italian field marshal in Tunisia—came promptly at 9:30 P.M.

In Africa he had seen both glory, at El Alamein, and glory's ephemerality, in the tedious slog through Tunisia. Montgomery much preferred the former. Now the empire's most celebrated soldier, he received sacks of fan mail, including at least nine marriage proposals, lucky charms ranging from coins to white heather, and execrable odes to his pluck. Professing to disdain such adulation, he had a talent for "backing into the limelight," as one observer remarked. On leave in London after Tunis fell, still wearing his beret and desert kit, he checked into Claridge's under the thin pseudonym of "Colonel Lennox," then took repeated bows from his box seat at a musical comedy as ecstatic theatergoers clapped and clapped and clapped. "His love of publicity is a disease, like alcoholism or taking drugs," said General Ismay, Churchill's chief of staff, "and it sends him equally mad."

Success in snatching Highway 124 would encourage Montgomery to disregard both peers and superiors, especially the indulgent Alexander. "I do not think Alex is sufficiently strong and rough with him," General Brooke wrote of Montgomery in his diary, adding, "The Americans do not like him and it will always be a difficult matter to have him fighting in close proximity to them." If audacious among allies, Montgomery became ever more cautious with adversaries. "The scope of operations must be limited to what is practicable," he advised John Gunther in Sicily. "The general must refuse to be rushed." Still, his own men cherished his ability to convince them "to believe in their task, to believe in themselves, and to believe in their leader." Sailing about in the big command car, he stopped to ask a Canadian unit, "Do you know why I never have defeats?"

> Well, I will tell you. My reputation as a great general means too much to me…. You can't be a great general and have defeats…. So you can be quite sure any time I commit you to battle you are bound to win.

In a printed broadside to Eighth Army he asserted that thanks to "the Lord Mighty in Battle," the enemy had been "hemmed in" on the northeast corner of Sicily. "Now let us get on with the job," Montgomery urged. "Into battle with stout hearts." To Brooke in London he later added, "All goes well here…. We have won the battle."

Neither assertion was true. On the third day of the invasion, Field Marshal Kesselring had arrived in Sicily from Frascati, and while wistfully abandoning hopes of flinging the Anglo-Americans into the sea, he soon began to reinforce the two German divisions on the island with two more, the 29th Panzer Grenadiers and the 1st Parachute Division. Thousands of Axis troops in western Sicily also hied east; Kesselring recognized that a stout bastion could be built around Etna's slopes, either to hold the Messina Peninsula indefinitely or at least to keep open the main escape route to mainland Italy. The task now was "to win time and defend," even though tension and misery gnawed at soldiers who

feared being trapped on Sicily as so many comrades had been trapped in Tunisia. German attempts to commandeer Italian military vehicles led to internecine gunplay, with two Italians and seven Germans killed in one three-hour firefight. Still, Kesselring radiated his usual bonny optimism. As soldiers dug hasty fortifications along the Simeto River south of Catania, an elderly Italian nun dished out food and Holy Virgin medals.

Montgomery had expected the Catanian plain beyond Augusta to provide a flat alley for his armor, much as the desert had. Instead, he found "a hole-and-corner area, full of lurking places," in one soldier's description, with irrigation ditches and stone farmhouses perfect for concealing antitank weapons. "This is *not* tank country," a British officer lamented. Another Tommy complained that Sicily was "worse than the fuckin' desert in every fuckin' way."

Eighth Army's attempt to break through along the coast was first checked by yet another airborne fiasco, a mission patched together on short notice to seize the Primosole Bridge, seven miles south of Catania. Paratroopers and glider infantry on the night of July 13–14 ran into the now familiar hellfire from confused Allied ships, some of which mistook cargo racks on the aircraft bellies for torpedoes. Those managing to reach the coast met sheets of Axis antiaircraft fire. Fourteen planes were lost, a couple of dozen turned back to Tunisia without dropping, and 40 percent of the surviving planes suffered damage. By mischance, German paratroopers also jumped at the same time on adjacent drop zones. "One shouted for comrades and was answered in German," a paratrooper recalled. Of nearly two thousand men in the British parachute brigade, only two hundred reached the bridge, which they held with a few reinforcements for half a day until being driven off. By the time Tommies recaptured the bridge at dawn on Friday, July 16, the Germans had cobbled together a defensive belt just to the north that would halt Eighth Army for a fortnight. "It was yet another humiliating disaster for airborne forces," said Lieutenant Colonel John Frost, a much decorated battalion commander, "and almost enough to destroy even the most ardent believer's faith."

The XXX Corps, dispatched by Montgomery to the northwest on Highway 124, hardly fared better. Here hills were stacked on more hills in a Sicilian badlands, and hill fighting never suited Eighth Army: Montgomery "seemed to mislay his genius when he met a mountain," his biographer Ronald Lewin observed. The terrain's constricted visibility "makes for general untidiness," a British officer complained, and exposure to the July sun "is like being struck on the head." Every road and goat path was mined; soldiers perched like hood ornaments above the front bumpers of their creeping vehicles, scrutinizing the track for telltale disturbances. Artillery crashed and heaved, day and night. "We break the farmer's walls, trample his crops, steal his horses and carts, demand fruit and wine," a soldier wrote in his diary. "If he is unlucky he gets his home smashed by shells, his crops devoured by fire." Canadian troops howled with outrage upon finding their dead disinterred and robbed of their boots. Refugees desperate for meat could be seen wrapping dead dogs in butcher paper.

Pitched fighting persisted south of Catania along the Simeto River, where Hermann Göring troops and German paratroopers battled with backs-to-the-wall fury. "The enemy is tough. A real lot of sods," a British officer said. "When we kill them they have sneers on their faces." John Gunther described Tommies lying in "foxholes, sucking lemons. The earth is khaki-colored here, and they melt into it." All things white were hidden to avoid attracting Luftwaffe marauders; at the first hint of an air raid, shavers even toweled the lather from their faces. "Get down, Jock," a Scots officer called to an exposed soldier. "You'll get pipped."

Many were pipped anyway. Dead men shored the reedy banks of creeks and irrigation ditches, and a grisly sunken road dubbed Stink Alley was "paved with bodies." Medics jabbed the moribund with morphine and waited for them to die. "It would seem hard to tell the dead from the living," a regimental commander wrote. "I realized that you *could* tell them apart, because the flies walked on the faces of the dead." Close combat proved especially confusing in Sicilian vineyards, now in full

leaf; enemy machine-gunners fired on fixed lines a few inches above the ground, raising welts of dust and wounding many in the feet and legs. At night in the moonlight, “shadows cast by the vines looked like moving men.”

By Sunday morning, July 18, Montgomery conceded that his coastal thrust had sputtered into stalemate. Eighth Army casualties approached four thousand, including seven hundred dead. Efforts to burn the enemy out with RAF incendiaries failed when Sicilian flora proved disappointingly fire-resistant. Ordering a single division to hold the Simeto front, Montgomery shifted forces from his XIII Corps to the west in another effort to flank Axis defenses by further dividing his army. “I am pushing the offensive hard on the left, where the resistance is not so strong. The enemy is now hemmed in at the northeast corner,” he wrote the 51st Highland Division commander on July 21. “I am sending you 50,000 cigarettes as a present to the division.” Eisenhower, who had predicted the fall of Sicily by late July, began to grumble in Algiers. “Why doesn’t Monty get going? What’s the matter with him?” Gunther could have told him: “Both sides are tired, and whereas we are exposed in the plain, the Germans are high up, with good cover.”

The Germans are high up, with good cover. Here in Sicily was revealed a ground truth that would obtain until the war’s end twenty-two months hence: on no battlefield did topography dictate fate more than in vertical Italy. Officers pondered their 1-to-50,000 maps and realized that the compressed contour lines signified not only slope and steep ascent, but plunging fire and enemy omniscience. A *Gefreiter* with Zeiss binoculars and a field telephone could rain artillery on every living creature in sight.

For now the whitewashed houses and tile roofs of unattainable Catania shimmered in the midday haze, five miles to the north, down a road lined with fluttering poplars and hidden guns. Beyond the town loomed the pyramidal mass of Mount Etna, mysterious and indifferent.

“How I Love Wars”

PATTON had been sulking outside Gela in a confiscated Fascist villa notable for its wardrobe of black shirts and a squawking menagerie of tropical birds in gilded cages. Fine tapestries covered the walls and the Seventh Army commander slept in a sturdy four-poster. “We can sit comfortably on our prats while Monty finishes the goddam war,” a staff officer said bitterly. That was unlikely. On Saturday morning, July 17, Patton rose from his prat, grabbed a map, and flew to Tunisia, determined to get his army back into the battle.

He found General Alexander at his headquarters in the village of La Marsa, on the northern lip of the Gulf of Tunis. A chapel nearby consecrated the spot where Louis IX of France died of typhoid in 1270 while leading the Eighth Crusade. Across the blue bay loomed the jagged silhouette of Cap Bon, where the final fragments of the Axis armies had sought refuge before surrendering two months earlier. Alexander and staff officers of his 15th Army Group—the nomenclature reflected the sum of his subordinate Seventh and Eighth Armies—occupied tents in the white-walled garden and orangery of a villa deeded to Queen Victoria by the bey of Tunis. German commanders had used the manor house during their seven-month occupation; they absconded with the furniture but left untouched the English books, including a set of Benjamin Disraeli’s novels. Senior British officers now messed in the dining room beneath a domed ceiling and arabesque traceries. “No fuss, no worry, no anxiety—and a great battle in progress,” Harold Macmillan, the ranking British diplomat in North Africa, noted in his diary that weekend. “This is never referred to, except occasionally by some of the American officers on Gen. Alex’s staff, but is understood to be going on satisfactorily.”

Not in Patton’s view. He unfolded his map and came to the point with a jabbing finger. “Have I

got to stay here and protect the rear of Eighth Army?" he asked Alexander. "I want to get on with this and push out." The enemy was "back on his heels." Sixty thousand Italian troops remained in western Sicily, but Ultra two days earlier had revealed German plans to abandon half the island; demolitions were ordered for Trapani, the little port on Sicily's northwest coast where Aeneas' father had died. The best way to shield Montgomery's flank, Patton said, would be to sunder the island by driving Seventh Army north, toward Palermo. A gleam lit his gaze as he pointed to Sicily's largest city on the north coast, eighty miles from Gela. In his mind's eye, American tanks swept from the rolling hills and into Palermo's central piazza with a panache even Erwin Rommel had never achieved. "The glamour of capturing Palermo," Lucian Truscott later noted, "attracted Georgie Patton."

Harold Alexander studied the map, his head swiveling from Catania in the east through the still uncaptured inland crossroads at Enna to the Sicilian west. Except for a fascination with Kesselring—he devoured a biographical sketch compiled by Ultra intelligence analysts—Alexander's generalship lacked intellectual depth or even curiosity, relying more on his legendary sangfroid. "He's bone from the neck up," one British general insisted, and even Brooke conceded that he "had no ideas of his own." Yet Alexander possessed a sterling reputation, built at the cannon's mouth, and he looked the part: immaculate, unfazed, in command. His steep-peaked Guardsman's cap, high boots, and breeches "conveyed an air of Czarist Russia," one admirer said, and in fact he had once fought the Bolsheviks in Latvia as a volunteer in a unit of ethnic Germans. "He looked as though he had just had a steam bath, a massage, a good breakfast and a letter from home," wrote one journalist. "His well-shaped face, with its fine thin-nostriled nose, level eyes and well-trimmed mustache, was plainly pinkish under its tan." The "chestnut hair was sleekly brushed and parted high on the left side." Only a touch of gray at the temples, and the violet pouches beneath his eyes, hinted that Alexander was fifty-one and responsible for several hundred thousand souls.

It was said that he was "a born leader, not a made one." It was said that he "was an English country gentleman, almost uneducated, who never read a book." It was said that he could not write his name before the age of ten, but now spoke French, Italian, German, Russian, and Urdu. It was also said that he "might have been a greater commander if he had not been so nice a man and so deeply a gentleman." And it was said that he had gone over the top thirty times in the Great War before being wounded, and that, in hopes of sharing his good fortune, Irish Guardsmen liked to tread in his footsteps when crossing no-man's-land. Churchill's physician, Lord Moran, even said of him, "To be clever is not everything." Whatever Alexander's shortcomings, Macmillan observed, "he has the great quality of seeing the point." Patton, unbeguiled, noted in his diary that Alexander "has an exceptionally small head. That may explain things."

Oblivious to the anguish that his July 13 order had caused the Americans, Alexander nevertheless sensed the tension in Patton's voice. He wondered, he later confessed, whether the impetuous American might simply strike off on his own, declaring, "The hell with this." True, he doubted that the Yanks could pull their weight. As he had written Brooke, even Eisenhower, Patton, and other U.S. commanders "are not professional soldiers, not as we understand that term." Yet Alexander saw no harm in allowing them to give it a go. With a nod of that solid-bone, beautifully coiffed, exceptionally small head, he turned Patton loose.

Off Patton's forces went at a gallop, west by north, an army unreined. In truth, many had slipped their fetters in advance of Alexander's approval. Patton on Friday had dispatched a huge reconnaissance force ten miles up the coast to Agrigento, "loveliest of mortal cities," in the opinion of the poet Pindar, where men once slept on ivory beds and interred their favorite horses in lavish tombs,

and where the apricot-tinted Doric temples still had few equals outside Greece. Darby's Rangers assembled in an almond orchard a mile north of Agrigento's harbor, Porto Empedocle, then attacked with five companies in skirmish lines, followed by three battalions from Truscott's 3rd Infantry Division. Sweeping over strongpoints, they routed the defenders and took six thousand prisoners.

Unaware that Agrigento and the port had fallen, the light cruiser *Philadelphia* unlimbered her guns until frantic soldiers on the docks arranged oil barrels to spell YANK and U.S. ARMY for a spotter plane overhead. Sailors recased the guns, and several giddy Rangers, fortified with local cognac, emerged from a haberdashery wearing stovepipe hats and black wedding togs. Of greater value were three safes found in an Italian naval headquarters; after heaving them out of a second-story window, soldiers cracked them with farrier tools, crowbars, hand grenades, and rocks. Inside they found charts of enemy minefields, code books, and demolition plans for Palermo and Messina.

Axis troops not captured or killed drew back. "During the night of 17/18 July," Seventh Army's log recorded, "enemy withdrew from contact along the entire line." Truscott summoned his regimental commanders, ordered them to reach Palermo in five days or less, then hoisted a bottle of scotch for a toast: "To the American doughboy."

Off they went again at a gallop, again west by north. Among those American doughboys was the nineteen-year-old son of a Texas sharecropper who in the next two years would become the most celebrated soldier in the U.S. Army. A fifth-grade dropout, he had picked cotton, worked in a filling station, and fixed radios. Until enlisting, he had never been a hundred miles from the four-room shack in Hunt County that housed eleven children. The Army had issued him a uniform six inches too long in the sleeves and tried to make him a cook. In basic training, he balked at buying GI insurance because "I don't intend to get killed any way and it costs pretty high"; he still owed money for his mother's funeral. Bunkmates in the States had called him Baby—he weighed 112 pounds—but the nickname disappeared as he added muscle. This week he had been promoted, so he was now *Corporal* Audie Leon Murphy.

He had a slow, stooped gait, as if stalking prey. Audie Murphy's marksmanship derived from squirrel hunting, but he would learn to stalk Germans by the smell of their tobacco smoke. Hunt County had put a flinty edge on him. "There never was a peace time in my life, a time when things were good," he later said. "I can't remember ever being young in my life." When a chaplain tried to nudge him closer to God, Murphy replied, "You do the prayin' and I'll do the shootin'." As the 1st Battalion of the 15th Infantry Regiment plunged through the Sicilian interior, he did his first real shootin' while leading a patrol. Two Italian officers bolted from an observation post, and as they mounted a pair of white horses, Murphy dropped to a knee. "I fire twice," he recalled. "The men tumble from the horses, roll over and lie still." Many more would lie still before Murphy could return to Texas festooned with medals, but he had already shed any illusions. "Ten seconds after the first shot was fired at me by an enemy soldier," he said, "combat was no longer glamorous."

Unlike Tunisia, where hills were named by their height in meters, "here there was usually a small town on top with some Dago name that no one could pronounce," an artillery sergeant wrote. One by one they fell, often without a skirmish: Sciacca and Lercara Friddi and Castelvetrano. Cheering locals greeted them with figs, almonds, and sometimes a stiff-armed Fascist salute. "Kiss your hand! Kiss your hand!" obeisant peasants yelled with such fervor that an annoyed major banned the phrase. White bedsheets fluttered from every house in Prizzi, where Truscott bought a fine Italian saddle as a trophy for Patton. Italian troops from the Assietta and Aosta Divisions surrendered by the thousands, grousing at German betrayal. "One never seemed to be able to do enough to please them," an Italian POW explained.

Emulating Stonewall Jackson's foot cavalry, Truscott's infantry covered thirty miles or more a day in blistering heat and through dust said to be "composed of a mixture of chalk and cattle dung."

“We are walking at the rate of 4.5 miles an hour,” a private in the 15th Infantry told his diary. “Boy are my dogs barking now.” The surging ranks reminded Truscott of “waves beating on an ocean beach.” Alexander made a halfhearted effort from La Marsa to moderate the advance, but Seventh Army staff officers ignored his message. “Mount up and continue,” Patton told his armor crews. “Don’t stop except for gas.” Omar Bradley conspicuously displayed in his II Corps headquarters a map of Sicily upon which the territory seized by U.S. troops was shaded in blue, sharply contrasting with the smaller, red-hued area held by the British.

From a roadcut in the ridge above Palermo, Truscott squinted through the midday haze at the ancient city on Thursday, July 22. Houses and apartment buildings spilled down the slope to the sea in a terra-cotta jumble redolent of blood oranges and smoke. Fires danced on the lowering hills as far as Monte Pellegrino, sparked by artillery or rearguard Italians burning munitions. Thousands of hungry refugees now camped in these highlands; judging by the desperate faces Truscott had seen while driving from his command post in Corleone, no cat in Palermo was safe from the carving knife.

Belisarius in A.D. 535 had captured the city from the Goths by hoisting archers to the mastheads of his fleet with ropes and pulleys so they could shoot over the harbor ramparts. Such tactics were hardly needed now. Palermo was defenseless, ripe for plucking. Comando Supremo a few hours earlier had ordered port demolitions to begin, and Truscott could hear the echo of explosions along the quays. Two infantry regiments stood poised above the city, but Patton forbade further advance until tanks arrived to spearhead the procession. “Everything was arranged so that Georgie could make a grandstand entry with tanks and what-not,” Truscott wrote Sarah.

Hours passed. Italian envoys in shabby suits came and went under flags of truce, pleading for someone to accept the city’s surrender. At six P.M., Seventh Army authorized reconnaissance patrols to enter the city and secure the docks. Truscott sent two battalions.

Into the city they clattered, into a cadaverous and ruined city, dismembered by months of Allied bombing. “Street after street of crumbled houses,” one officer wrote in his diary.

> Whole blocks of shapeless rubble. Parlor, bedroom, and bath exposed…by the fantastic projectile that strips away the façade and leaves intact the hat on the bureau, the mirror on the wall, the carafe on the night table.

More than sixty churches had been damaged. At the National Library, “stacks full of rare books lay open like a sliced pomegranate.” Drifts of rubble stood so deep near the waterfront that streets could no longer be recognized as streets, though a marble plaque still affixed to one battered house noted that Goethe had lived there in 1787. Forty-four ships had been sunk along masonry quays smashed to powder. The explosion of an ammunition freighter had raised a wave powerful enough to toss two other vessels onto the moles. Wreckage from hundreds of smaller craft cluttered the port. Salvage teams soon would find tons of unexploded land mines and other ordnance washed by tidal currents along the muddy harbor floor. In the Piazza Vigliena, a small army of bedraggled Italian soldiers stood in ranks, waiting to surrender. Priests in black soutanes genuflected and urchins on the Via Maqueda offered to sing Verdi arias for candy. American troops seized two large trucks, one full of new typewriters and the other full of sweet Sicilian nougat. In the coming days, they would find half a million tons of naval stores at Palermo, including crated matériel addressed to Herr Rommel in Alexandria, Egypt, his destination until Alamein had reversed his course.

Major General Geoff Keyes, Patton's deputy, arrived in Palermo's western outskirts at 7:15 P.M. He found an Italian general, Giuseppe Molinero, blotting his damp brow after fruitless hours of trying to capitulate. Searching for a translator, Keyes fastened on a Hungarian-born news photographer named Endre Friedmann, better known as Robert Capa. That Capa spoke no Italian hindered the negotiations—"Stop that jabbering, soldier!" Keyes demanded at one point, "I want unconditional surrender and I want it immediately!"—but the gist soon emerged. "General Molinero says he is through and will fight no more." Sadly, the general lacked the power to surrender all forces in Palermo. Keyes bundled Molinero into his scout car; a white pillowcase requisitioned from a Sicilian housewife and tied to the radio antenna hung too limply, so an aide held a bedsheet lashed to a fishing pole as they drove to the Royal Palace on Via Vittorio Emanuele. Italian soldiers cheered and civilians tossed flowers and lemons. The proper general could not be found—Truscott's efficient men had arrested him earlier—so the weary Molinero agreed to exceed his authority. Palermo fell at last, formally and finally. Keyes checked into the Hotel Excelsior Palace, took a bath, and went to bed.

Patton woke him at ten P.M., flask in hand, giddy at his own flowers-and-lemons entry. "It is a great thrill to be driving into a captured city in the dark," he jotted in his diary. Patton moved into the king's apartment in the Royal Palace, dining on captured German champagne and K rations served on House of Savoy china. Built by Saracens and enlarged by the Normans in the twelfth century, the palace was a fit if dusty abode for a conquering hero. "All sorts of retainers live in holes about the place and all give the Fascist salute," Patton noted.

"The occupation of western Sicily must be considered as complete," Kesselring sourly advised Berlin on July 24. From the assault at Agrigento through the capture of the Trapani naval commander—who surrendered his sword and field glasses—American casualties totaled less than 300; some 2,300 Axis troops had been killed or wounded, and another 53,000 captured, nearly all of them Italian. Yet it was a slender triumph, strategically insignificant, and Patton's gaze soon swiveled east, where the real fight for Sicily must occur. Over highballs in the palace on July 26, he confided to Truscott that he would "certainly like to beat Montgomery into Messina."

Still, they savored the moment. "You will have guessed where I am and what I have been doing," Truscott wrote Sarah. "It has been a grand experience and we have opened lots of eyes." Patton summarized his sentiments in four words to Bea: "How I love wars."

Snaring the Head Devil

AFTER months of procrastination and discord, the Allied high command had yet to agree on what to do with the million-man Anglo-American army in the Mediterranean once the campaign ended in Sicily. At the TRIDENT conference in Washington, the Combined Chiefs—with the approval of Roosevelt and Churchill—had instructed Eisenhower to devise a plan "best calculated to eliminate Italy from the war and to contain the maximum number of German forces." The prime minister believed any such plan must include an invasion of mainland Italy. He hectored Eisenhower to that end, as he had hectored the president.

"No objective can compete with the capture of Rome," Churchill insisted. In a whirlwind visit to Algiers after TRIDENT, and in countless messages since, he had argued that if Berlin were uncoupled from its staunchest ally, German troops would be forced to supplant several dozen Italian divisions occupying the Balkans and southern France; that, in turn, would weaken Hitler's defenses in western Europe before the Allied cross-Channel attack, tentatively planned for the spring of 1944. If more Allied soldiers were needed for an Italian campaign, Churchill would strip British forces in the Middle East. If more ships were needed to transport and supply that invading army, he would snatch food

from British tables by diverting cargo vessels. “It would be hard for me to ask the British people to cut their rations again, but I would gladly do so,” he vowed. When Eisenhower balked at such blandishments, Churchill lamented that the Allied commander was “sicklied o’er with the pale cast of thought.”

As the prime minister’s rhetoric grew febrile, metaphors piled up. On July 13, urging bold action as far up the Italian boot as possible, Churchill declared, “Why should we crawl up the leg like a harvest-bug from the ankle upwards? Let us rather strike at the knee…. Tell the planners to throw their hat over the fence.” He privately acknowledged that “the Americans consider we have led them up the garden path in the Mediterranean—but a beautiful path it has proved to be. They have picked peaches here, nectarines there. How grateful they should be!”(“Many of the Italian peaches,” a U.S. Army commander later commented, “had gonorrhea.”)

Eisenhower in May had leaned toward carrying the fight to the Italian mainland. But George Marshall’s wariness, Churchill’s chronic fixation on the Balkans, and the imminent return to England of seven British and American divisions, as agreed at TRIDENT, gave him pause. So too did contradictory assessments from his staff. An intelligence study in late June concluded that the Italian “population is war weary and apathetic, sees little hope of victory…and is becoming increasingly hostile to the growing German control.” Bombing, amphibious landings, and a quick march toward Rome “might well cause a collapse in civilian will to resist”; if Italy collapsed, German forces “will withdraw and resistance met will be slight.” Yet Eisenhower’s intelligence chief warned on June 25 “that present indications are that Germany intends to reinforce Italy.” Three days later, his operations chief cautioned that “the terrain through which we shall then have to force our way north is very mountainous and difficult in the extreme.”

Success in Sicily tipped the scale. Having gained their first foothold in occupied Europe, sober men in Washington, London, and North Africa felt the euphoric impulse to roll the dice again. On July 17, shortly after Patton had left his meeting in Tunisia with Alexander, Eisenhower convened a conference of senior commanders at La Marsa. Without excessive deliberation, they agreed to advise the Combined Chiefs—Eisenhower called them the Charlie-Charlies—that “operations should be carried onto the mainland of Italy.” Eisenhower sent the recommendation a day later, and at the same time canceled a proposed invasion of Sardinia. On July 20, the Charlie-Charlies consented, and another die had been cast.

Vital issues remained unsettled, and much dickering followed. Where in Italy should the invading host land? Capture of the great port at Naples was paramount, but Naples Bay had been heavily fortified with fifty big guns and lay just beyond range of Spitfires flying from Sicily. Air cover for the invasion fleet was considered indispensable. Memos flew back and forth across the Atlantic, and to and from North Africa, bearing accusations of conservatism, orthodoxy, and tactical tomfoolery. Absent was a searching inquiry into the strategic calculus: What if the Germans fought for every Italian hill and dale? How far up the boot should the Allied armies go? What benefit would the capture of Rome bring, besides big headlines? Was it possible to defeat Germany by fighting in Italy? Could Italy become a strategic cul-de-sac?

For now, analysis went begging. As to where the attack should fall, Eisenhower focused on a broad bay 30 miles southeast of Naples and precisely 178 miles from northeast Sicily: a Spitfire outfitted with an extra gas tank had a range of 180 miles, which permitted ten minutes’ combat time before the pilot was forced to return to base for refueling. “If it is decided to undertake such operations,” the AFHQ staff recommended on July 24, “the assault should be made in the Gulf of Salerno.” Two days later the Charlie-Charlies concurred, authorizing an invasion at Salerno “at the earliest possible date” after the conquest of Sicily.

Churchill was delighted. “I am with you heart and soul,” he cabled Marshall. But the prime

minister had his eye on a bigger prize than Salerno or Naples. “Rome,” he advised Eisenhower, “is the bull’s-eye.”

The man in the middle of that bull’s-eye was a specter of the once mighty Duce, to whom even Hitler had displayed deference and affection. His ashy pallor and sunken cheeks made Benito A. A. Mussolini look older than his fifty-nine years and hardly the “head devil” that Roosevelt now called him. He still shaved his head, but more to hide his gray than in a display of Fascist virility. Because of his vain refusal to wear eyeglasses, Mussolini’s speeches were prepared on a special typewriter with an enormous font. Duodenal ulcers—some claimed they were “of syphilitic origin”—had plagued him for nearly two decades, and his diet now consisted mostly of stewed fruit and three liters of milk a day. A German officer in Rome reported, “Often in conversation his face was wrenched with pain and he would grab his stomach.” Once he had demonstrated vigor to photographers by scything wheat or by rubbing snow on his bare chest. Now, wary of assassins, he lolled about the Palazzo Venezia, in a back room with tinted windows and the signs of the zodiac painted on the ceiling. Sometimes he lolled with his mistress, Clara Petacci, the buxom, green-eyed daughter of the pope’s physician, whose wardrobe was filled with negligees and goose-feather boas personally selected by Mussolini.

He had risen far since his modest boyhood as a blacksmith’s son in the lower Po Valley, and he would fall even farther before his strutting hour on the stage ended. As a young vagabond he had been an avowed socialist, stalking the streets with brass knuckles in his pocket and reciting long passages from Dante. His politics devolved to ultranationalism and the Fasci di Combattimento, which he founded in Milan in 1919 and which was the precursor to the Fascist party he rode to power in 1922. By the late 1920s, he had extirpated Italian parliamentary government to become an absolute tyrant —*il Duce*, the Leader—cleverly accommodating both the Vatican and the popular monarchy of King Victor Emmanuel III. With an autodidact’s quick mind and bombastic oratory, he raised national confidence, stabilized the lira, built a modern military, and boosted farm production by reclaiming vast tracts of swampland. The trains, famously, ran on time. His invasion of Ethiopia in 1935 helped destroy the League of Nations; he empowered Hitler by showing how easily Western democracies could be cowed and by condoning Germany’s *Anschluss* with Austria. The Führer’s gratitude led to the Pact of Steel in May 1939. “Believe, Obey, Fight,” the Fascist motto advised, and hundreds of thousands of Italian women surrendered their wedding rings to be melted down for Mussolini’s war effort. In Italian cinemas, moviegoers rose as one when the Duce strode across the screen in newsreels; he also required Italians to stand during radio broadcasts of armed forces communiqués, often delivered at one P.M. to ensure a captive audience in restaurants.

Lately the country was getting to its feet mostly for bad news. Italy’s colonial adventures in Eritrea, Somaliland, Abyssinia, and North Africa had been ruinous. Without informing Berlin, Mussolini also had invaded Greece, only to require German help to stave off catastrophe. Rome declared war on supine France in 1940, but thirty-two Italian divisions failed to overwhelm three French divisions on the Alpine front. The Italian air force had been gutted in Libya; two-thirds of the Italian army fighting in Russia had been destroyed; 40 percent of Italian soldiers on Crete reportedly lacked boots; and three-quarters of the merchant fleet had been sunk in the lost-cause effort to resupply North Africa. Raw materials, from cotton to rubber, were now dispensed by the Germans, who even provided the fuel that allowed Italian warships to leave port. About 1.2 million Italian soldiers served on various foreign fronts, along with 800,000 in Italy; but few had the stomach to defend the homeland, much less fight a world war. A German high command assessment on June 30 concluded, “The kernel of the Italian army has been destroyed in Greece, Russia, and Africa…. The

combat value of Italian units is slight."

Since December 1942, Mussolini had vainly urged Hitler to draw back from the Eastern Front, or even to forge a separate peace with Moscow. With combat casualties approaching 300,000, Italy found itself in the "ridiculous position of being unable either to make war or to make peace." On July 18, the Duce cabled Berlin: "The sacrifice of my country cannot have as its principal purpose that of delaying a direct attack on Germany." A day later, in a hastily organized meeting in Feltre, fifty miles from Venice, that sacrifice grew starker. At eleven A.M., Hitler launched into a gadding monologue in which he acknowledged being "of two minds" about how to defend Sicily, while insisting that HUSKY must become "a catastrophic defeat, a Stalingrad" for the Anglo-Americans. Thirty minutes later an Italian officer, said to be "white with emotion," interrupted to inform Mussolini in a stage whisper that a massive air raid had just ripped up Rome.

Months in the planning, this first attack on the capital targeted the Littorio rail yards, a sprawling hourglass-shaped network through which flowed most train traffic to Sicily and southern Italy. "It would be a tragedy if St. Peter's were destroyed," General Marshall had said in late June, "but a calamity if we failed to knock out the marshaling yards." More than five hundred bombers carrying one thousand tons of high explosives flew from bases in North Africa and Pantelleria. Roman Catholic aviators had been offered the option of skipping the mission; red stickers on navigation maps highlighted the Vatican and various historic sites with "Must Not Be Harmed" warnings. Even so, a Catholic chaplain stood on one runway and bellowed at departing B-26s, "Give them hell!"

Hell they got. As Pope Pius XII watched through binoculars and the Italian king peered through a telescope—"Look!" the monarch exclaimed. "Perfect formation!"—bombs tore up the Littorio yards, but also struck an adjacent working-class neighborhood. "It was the Americans," a mortally wounded boy screamed, "the sons of bitches." (A BBC broadcast the next day infuriated the Yanks by stressing that the raid had been exclusively American.) Estimates of the dead ranged from seven hundred to three thousand, with many more injured. A single thousand-pound bomb struck the Basilica of San Lorenzo, first built in the fourth century and considered among Rome's finest churches. The explosion destroyed the façade, damaged the twelfth-century frescoes, and left roof trusses, splintered beams, and bricks heaped in the nave. Priests strolled through the flaming streets, flicking holy water on the rubble.

At Feltre, Hitler rambled on for two hours to a stupefied Mussolini as courtiers scurried in and out with grim updates from Rome. At length the Duce took leave to return to his capital. "We are fighting for a common cause, Führer," he said.

A week later, on Sunday, July 25, Mussolini arrived at his enormous office in the Palazzo Venezia at eight A.M. He granted clemency to two condemned partisans and studied his daily compendium of telephone intercepts and informant reports. Over a lunch of broth and stewed fruit, he reassured his unsettled wife that "the people are with me," then changed from the gray-green uniform of the First Marshal of the Empire into a dark blue suit and fedora. The king had asked to see him.

Rarely had the Duce faced such challenges as now besieged him. For ten hours the previous day he had battled the Grand Council of Fascism, a phony parliament of his own creation whose members had last met in 1939. Mussolini's efforts to shrug off reverses in Sicily and elsewhere provoked reproachful glares. Dressed in black Saharan bush shirts, the councilmen had voted nineteen to seven, with one abstention, to ask the king to take command of the Italian armed forces. "When tomorrow I shall relate to him what has happened tonight, the king will say, 'The Grand Council is against you but the king will stand by you,'" Mussolini warned before stalking from the chamber. "Then what will happen to you all?"

Shortly before five P.M., the Duce's three-car convoy sped up the Via Salaria in northern Rome to the great eighteenth-century hunting estate at Villa Savoia. Here the king now lived in a handsome

yellow palace set among pines and holm oaks. Mussolini climbed from his Alfa Romeo sedan and gestured to his bodyguards to wait outside the gate. He failed to notice several dozen carabinieri hiding behind hedges near the palace.

A millennium of royal inbreeding had disserved Victor Emmanuel III. Barely five feet tall, with malformed legs and a stunted intellect, he was said to be "taciturn and diffident," "as indifferent as marble under a flow of running water." Mussolini, his partner for more than two decades, privately called him "the little sardine." Now seventy-three, he preferred to talk of hunting ibex in the Alps, or how he once shot twenty-eight woodcock on the estate of the king of Naples. But on this Sunday afternoon the discussion must necessarily turn to politics; Victor Emmanuel ushered the Duce into his corner study, where an aide stood with an ear pressed to the outer door.

After a few rambling sentences, interspersed with phrases in Piedmontese dialect, the king came to the point. Mussolini must resign. He would be replaced by Marshal Pietro Badoglio, a former chief of the armed forces. "Dear Duce, the situation is beyond remedy. At this moment you are the most hated man in Italy. You have not a single friend left, except for me," the king said, then shrugged. "I am sorry, but the solution could not be otherwise."

Even at five feet, seven inches, Mussolini towered over his monarch. "You are making an extremely serious decision…. The blow to army morale will be great." Before turning on his heel he added, "I am perfectly aware that the people hate me." In the entry foyer, the king shook Mussolini's hand and shut the door, looking more shriveled than ever. "That," Queen Helena observed, "was not at all nice."

Mussolini strode across the courtyard toward his car only to be intercepted by a captain of the carabinieri. "Duce, I have been ordered by the king to protect your person." An ambulance backed up from the foot of the drive, its rear door yawning. The officer took Mussolini's arm. "You must get into this." Soon the vehicle careered down the Via Salaria and through the streets of central Rome. Across the Tiber they sped to a police barracks in Trastavere, where guards stood with bayonets fixed. Mussolini emerged to stand with arms akimbo, fists on his hips, staring at the slogan painted on a courtyard wall: "*Credere, Obbedire, Combattere.*"

A few minutes later, he was bundled back into the ambulance and driven to another barracks, in Via Legnano. Escorted to a small room, he refused dinner and complained of stomach pains. "My physical person interests me no longer," Mussolini told a physician summoned to examine him, "only my moral personality." At eleven P.M., he switched off the lamp but could still see a light burning in the adjacent room where a sentry kept watch. A nearby telephone rang and rang. No one answered.

A radio bulletin at eleven P.M. sent delirious Romans spilling through the blacked-out streets in their pajamas and nightgowns. "Citizens, wake up!" they yelled in the Via del Tritone. "Mussolini is finished!" Strangers embraced and danced in the cobblestone piazzi. Tricolors flapped from passing trucks, soldiers sang political songs not heard for twenty years, and a mob—"shouting all the invectives in the Roman vocabulary"—kicked and punched the darkened Palazzo Venezia as if the building itself had caused their misery. Torch beams played across the now vacant balcony where the declaiming peacock had struck so many poses. Bonfires crackled with furniture ransacked from the Fascist party headquarters. *"Viva l'Italia!"* they roared, and a few German soldiers, assuming that the war was over, joined the celebration.

"One did not see a single person in Rome wearing the Fascist badge," wrote Marshal Badoglio, who succeeded Mussolini as head of state. "Fascism fell, as was fitting, like a rotten pear." Even Mussolini's own newspaper on Monday morning replaced the usual front-page photograph of the Duce with one of Badoglio.

The new regime quickly assured Berlin that the Pact of Steel endured, and that Italy would prosecute the war against the Anglo-Americans with vigor. Few believed it. "The Duce will enter

history as the last Roman, but behind his massive figure a gypsy people has gone to rot," Joseph Goebbels told his diary. "The only thing certain in this war is that Italy will lose it."

But in Rome a young woman spoke for a nation when she confided to her own diary on July 26: "Italy has had enough of heroes."

Fevers of an Unknown Origin

PATTON had settled comfortably into Palermo's flat-roofed Royal Palace. Long tongues of scarlet carpet rolled through corridors lined with silk-upholstered chairs and gilt mirrors etched with the Savoy coat of arms. Half a dozen vaulted antechambers separated Patton's bedroom from the immense state dining room, and heroic oils of Hercules' labors decorated an assembly hall the size of a basketball court. During mass in the Palatine Chapel—the writer Guy de Maupasssant had likened walking through the chancel to entering a jewel—Patton knelt beneath the coffered wooden ceiling and prayed to Christ Pantocrator.

He asked for strength—"I know I have been marked to do great things," he wrote his brother-in-law—but his heart's desire was Messina, 147 tortuous miles to the east. The coup in Rome, while a pleasant surprise, had little impact on the Sicilian battlefield: no Germans had been deposed, and it was mostly Germans who blocked the roads to Messina. On July 23, having recognized that Eighth Army needed help, Alexander authorized the Americans to attack eastward on two roughly parallel roads: Highway 113, which hugged the north coast, and Highway 120, an inland route. Patton mailed Franklin Roosevelt a tattered Corps of Engineers map of Sicily, with a thick green line showing that Seventh Army occupied more than half the island "as of July 26." Above a tally of prisoners captured and guns seized, an arrow pointed to Messina with a blue crayon notation in Patton's jagged hand: "We hope!" In his reply the president proposed "that after the war I…make you the Marquis of Mt. Etna."

With victory in western Sicily, the fame Patton so ardently craved was finally his. Both *Time* and *Newsweek* had featured him on their covers this month. "Monty hardly figures at all in the papers," Bea told him on July 30. "Everyone wonders what he is doing and why he doesn't go ahead." Patton's army now exceeded 200,000 men, but true glory required audacity. "I have a sixth sense in war as I used to have in fencing," he told her. "Also I am willing to take chances." If taking chances cost lives, *c'est la guerre*. He advised Bradley, whose II Corps had met stiffening German resistance in central Sicily, that if he could reach Messina a single day earlier "by losing additional men," then he must "lose them." To Middleton, the 45th Division commander, he added on July 28, "This is a horse race, in which the prestige of the U.S. Army is at stake. We must take Messina before the British." When soldiers captured a fleet of Volkswagen staff cars, Patton offered to share them with Hewitt's officers if the Navy helped him reach Messina first.

Each morning his armored cavalcade bolted out of Palermo, trailing banners of dust across the Sicilian outback. On Highway 113 or Highway 120, Patton would hop from the command car with its radios and map boards, clasping his hands high like a prizefighter and urging his legions eastward. When enemy shells burst nearby he again timed his pulse, reproaching himself for the slightest upward tick. "You have killer eyes, just like I have," he told a wounded artillery captain in a hospital ward near Palermo. "Get back up to the front as soon as you can." At another ward, full of amputees, an orderly found him sobbing in the latrine. "It is hard to be an army commander and a hero at the same time," he told Bea.

Stress frayed him. Always irascible when his blood was up, he now seemed erratic and even abusive. Happening upon a narrow bridge where 2nd Armored Division tanks had been delayed by a

peasant with a mule cart, Patton broke his swagger stick over the man's head, ordered an aide to shoot the mule, then had carcass and cart shoved into the creek bed below. When a gun crew took cover in a stand of trees during a German air attack, Patton reportedly charged them with his pistol drawn. "Get back on that gun, you yellow bastards," he roared. "And if you leave it again, I'll shoot you myself." When a company commander in the 16th Infantry who had refused medical evacuation despite badly infected leg boils was fined by Patton for removing his chafing leggings, the story quickly spread through the vexed ranks. "You son of a bitch," he yelled at one of Truscott's best battalion commanders, "why the goddam hell aren't you moving?" Unauthorized headgear particularly aggravated him. Men from the 12th Weather Squadron attempting to free the jammed bow door on an LST in Palermo harbor were nonplussed when Patton snatched the fatigue caps from their heads and flung them into the water. Spotting a 26th Infantry soldier wearing a watch cap beneath his helmet, Patton barked, "Take that goddam hat off and let my killers through."

At night he returned to his palace, to the Savoy china and the bloodred carpet, where he charmed staff officers at the long mess table with amusing tales of campaigns past. Then, abruptly drawing himself up, he said, "Let's talk about tomorrow." And after they had talked about tomorrow and drafted their battle plans, he would step onto the balcony behind the huge rosewood desk in his office. Below lay his fiefdom, the cruel city where for more than a century the Inquisition had its headquarters, where mafiosi had forced paupers to pay for the right to beg on the church steps, where for sport African immigrants had been doused in tubs of whitewash. Old men sat at green baize tables in the steamy night, playing cards and sipping ink-black wine.

"Wars are not won by apparent virtue," Patton observed, "else I would be in a hell of a fix."

Meticulous and even finicky in his warfighting, Patton was casual to the point of indifference about the more prosaic elements of running an army. Logistics snarled repeatedly in Sicily. In some sectors gunners ran desperately short of artillery shells, while mountains of small-arms ammunition accumulated. Lessons learned in North Africa were forgotten in Sicily, including the need for a disciplined air-raid warning system; at Palermo, a single gunshot caused a "wholesale exodus of dock workers" stampeding to shelters. Patton "never bothers his head about such things," John Lucas noted in his diary.

Nothing in Seventh Army was more SNAFUed, TARFUed, and FUMTUed than the vital issue of medical logistics. "It resembles a maniac driving a machine at high speed without pausing to oil or service the machine," a senior AFHQ surgeon reported. A combat force exceeding 200,000 had only 3,300 hospital beds, a number so inadequate that many minor cases were evacuated to North Africa for treatment and the 23,000 soldiers admitted for hospitalization during HUSKY tended to be stacked atop one another. Medics had only half as many ambulances as they needed; blankets and splints were scarce. Breakage and misplacement of medical supplies were enormous.

Sicily proved unforgiving. Many soldiers lost a pound per day to heat, dehydration, and intestinal miseries: Seventh Army appeared to be melting away. A chronic reluctance of cuts and bruises to heal was known simply as "Sicilian disease." AFHQ adopted an elaborate code for the various afflictions for patients' general condition: "RNS" meant "recovery not satisfactory"; "SR," "sinking rapidly." Soldiers evacuated to the United States were "Z.I.'ed," for "Zone of Interior," and government-issue insurance policies provoked much sardonic banter. "I'll have to write the old lady tonight," said one soldier after a close call, "and tell her she missed out on that $10,000 again." Truscott's troops learned to ink their names and serial numbers on their leggings, which proved more durable in explosions than dogtags. The lucky extolled their good fortune. "Perhaps it will relieve you right at the start to know

that I am still in one complete piece and *no* parts missing," a badly wounded soldier wrote his wife in late July.

The unlucky relied on the heroic efforts of doctors and nurses working in dreadful conditions. Surgeons operated by flashlight, with white sheets hung in the operatory for more reflected light. After watching surgeons lop off limbs for an hour, Frank Gervasi, a reporter for *Collier's* magazine, recalled Erasmus's astringent epigram "*Dulce bellum inexpertis*": Sweet is war to those who never experience it. "How am I doing, nurse?" a wounded eighteen-year-old in the 3rd Division asked. She kissed his forehead and replied, "You are doing just fine, soldier." He smiled faintly. "I was just checking up," he said, and then died. A physician described burn victims reduced to "cindery masses of burnt cloth and skin and hair." One charred soldier told him, "I guess I've lost my sunburn." For many, treatment consisted of a quarter-grain syrette of morphine and an "M" daubed on the forehead with iodine.

Now "M" took on another, more sinister connotation. In 1740, the writer Horace Walpole noted "a horrid thing called *mal'aria*" that afflicted Italy every summer. Before the war, the Rockefeller Foundation had published a sixteen-volume study on where the disease, which killed three million people each year, was most prevalent; Italy, infested with the mosquito *Anopheles maculipennis*—soon shortened to "Ann" in GI slang—had the highest malaria rates in the Mediterranean. Quinine had been used for centuries to suppress malaria's feverish symptoms, but U.S. supplies came almost exclusively from cinchona trees in the East Indies, now controlled by the Japanese. American scientists seeking a substitute examined fourteen thousand compounds, including dozens tested on jailhouse volunteers; the best replacement proved to be a substance originally synthesized by the German dye industry and given the trade name Atabrine.

Soldiers detested the stuff, which they dubbed "yellow gall." It tasted bitter, upset the stomach, turned the skin yellow, and was rumored to cause impotence and even sterility. Many soldiers stopped taking it, prophylactic discipline grew lax, and proper dosage levels were misunderstood. Moreover, some malaria control experts failed to reach Sicily until weeks after the invasion. Soldiers also grew careless about covering exposed skin in the evening. Protective netting was in short supply, and insect repellent proved ineffective: troops agreed "the mosquitoes in Sicily enjoyed it very much."

More than a thousand soldiers afflicted with malaria in North Africa on the eve of HUSKY had been left behind when the fleets sailed. On July 23, doctors detected the first case contracted in Sicily. By early August thousands of feverish, lethargic soldiers had been struck down. Ten thousand cases would sweep through Seventh Army, and nearly twelve thousand more in Eighth Army. (The swampy Catania Plain was particularly noxious.) All told, the 15th Army Group sustained more malaria casualties than battle wounds in Sicily. A medical historian concluded that "the disease record of the Seventh Army on Sicily was one of the worst compiled by any American field army during World War II." With soldiers also suffering from dengue, sandfly, and Malta fevers, distinguishing one malady from another became so difficult that many patients were diagnosed simply with "fever of unknown origin," soon known to soldiers as "fuo."

Among the ailing at a 45th Division clearing station was "a frail little fellow in Army fatigue coveralls, carrying a bedroll." Doctors originally diagnosed Ernie Pyle with malaria, then with dysentery, and finally settled on "battlefield fever," which ostensibly resulted from "too much dust, bad eating, not enough sleep, exhaustion, and the unconscious nerve tension that comes to everybody in a front-line area." Like so many others, Pyle had witnessed sights that gnawed at him, body and soul. Particularly grim was a field strewn with the bodies of two hundred Italian and German soldiers whose penises, swollen by rigor mortis, had "become hugely erect, some of them protruding through the buttons of their soiled trousers."

Nearly a week in a field hospital brought more awful visions. "Dying men were brought into our

tent, men whose death rattle silenced the conversation and made all of us thoughtful," Pyle wrote. A trench outside a surgical tent was "filled with bloody shirt sleeves and pant legs the surgeons had snipped off wounded men." Pyle noted "how dirt and exhaustion reduce human faces to such a common denominator. Everybody they carried in looked alike." Among litter patients only "an extreme blond" seemed distinct, "like a flower in a row of weeds." Doctors covered the faces of the moribund with thin white gauze. Pyle would long remember one patient in particular:

> The dying man was left utterly alone, just lying there on his litter on the ground, lying in an aisle, because the tent was full…. The aloneness of that man as he went through the last minutes of his life was what tormented me.

* * *

Under such circumstances Patton arrived at the 15th Evacuation Hospital, near Nicosia, for a visit shortly past noon on Tuesday, August 3. His morning had begun well, with a message from Eisenhower that Patton would receive the Distinguished Service Cross for his heroics at Gela during the July 11 counterattack. Driving on Highway 113 from Palermo before turning inland to Nicosia, Patton observed that "the smell of the dead along the road is very noticeable."

A different smell wafted from the hospital receiving tent, an odor of disinfectant and blood and oozing wounds. Green light filtered through the canvas, and the sound of labored breathing filled the ward as if the tent walls themselves suspired. General Lucas, who accompanied Patton while visiting from AFHQ, noted the "brave, hurt, bewildered boys" on their cots, including one who "had lost his right arm at the shoulder. He was still suffering from shock and was in tears…. A general has to develop a thick skin if he can, but it is sometimes hard to do."

On a stool midway through the ward slouched a private from the 26th Infantry, Charles H. Kuhl. A carpet layer from Indiana in civil life, Kuhl had been a soldier for eight months and in the 1st Division since early June. Examined at a battalion aid station the previous day, he received sodium amytal—a barbiturate to induce sleep—before being moved back to the 15th Evac, where an initial diagnosis concluded: "Psychoneurosis anxiety state—moderate severe. Soldier has been twice before in hospital within ten days. He can't take it at the front, evidently." A more discerning evaluation would reveal that Kuhl had malaria, chronic diarrhea, and a fever of 102.2 degrees.

Patton asked Kuhl where he was hurt. The soldier shrugged. He was "nervous" rather than wounded, Kuhl said. "I guess I can't take it," he added. To the astonishment of doctors and patients alike, Patton slapped the man across the face with his folded gloves. "You coward, you get out of this tent!" he shouted. "You can't stay in here with these brave, wounded Americans." Grabbing Kuhl by the collar, he dragged him to the tent entrance and shoved him out with a finishing kick from his cavalry boot. "Don't admit this sonuvabitch," he bellowed. "I don't want yellow-bellied bastards like him hiding their lousy cowardice around here, stinking up this place of honor." Alternately barking at the doctors and the quailing Kuhl, Patton said, "You send him back to his unit at once. You hear me, you gutless bastard? You're going back to the front."

His rage spent, Patton returned to his command car and drove off, already composing the message he would send his subordinates: "A very small number of soldiers are going to the hospital on the pretext that they are nervously incapable of combat. Such men are cowards, and bring discredit on the Army and disgrace to their comrades." Private Kuhl would be evacuated for treatment in North

Africa; returning to the 26th Infantry, he landed at Normandy eleven months later and after the war worked in a South Bend factory before dying of a heart attack in 1971 at age fifty-five. Lucas, who saw "nothing serious" in the incident, soon returned to Algiers and neglected to mention it to Eisenhower. In his diary, Patton wrote of Private Kuhl, "I gave him the devil…. One sometimes slaps a baby to bring it to."

A week later, on August 10, a similar outburst would occur under nearly identical circumstances at the 93rd Evacuation Hospital, near Santo Stefano on the north coast. Private Paul G. Bennett, a gunner from South Carolina who had enlisted before Pearl Harbor, had been evacuated from the 17th Field Artillery despite pleading with medics to remain with his unit. Dehydrated, feverish, and unsettled by the severe wounding of a comrade, he appeared "confused, weak, and listless." At 1:30 P.M., during an impromptu visit to the receiving tent, Patton came upon the trembling Bennett, who tried to sit at attention on his cot. "It's my nerves," Bennett said. "I can hear the shells come over, but I can't hear them burst."

"What's this man talking about? What's wrong with him?" Patton demanded. The attending physician reached for a chart but before he could reply, Patton erupted. "Your nerves, hell. You are just a goddamned coward, you yellow son-of-a-bitch!" he shouted. "You ought to be lined up against a wall and shot. I ought to shoot you myself right now, goddam you." Tugging a pistol from his holster, he waved the gun in Bennett's face, then struck him with the flat of his hand. A nurse lunged toward Patton but was restrained by a doctor. "I want you to get that man out of here right away," Patton told the hospital commander, Colonel Donald E. Currier, who had been drawn to the tent by the commotion. Patton turned to leave but then whirled on Bennett again, smacking him with enough force to knock the soldier's helmet liner from his head. A few moments later, in an adjacent ward, Patton broke into sobs. "I can't help it. It breaks me down to see you brave boys." His voice rose nearly to a shriek. "It makes my blood boil to think of a yellow bastard being babied."

As he returned to his car, Patton told Currier, "I won't have these cowardly bastards hanging around our hospitals. We'll probably have to shoot them sometime anyway, or we'll raise a breed of morons." A reporter for the London *Daily Mail* who arrived at that moment heard Patton add, "There's no such thing as shellshock. It's an invention of the Jews." The fuming army commander drove to Omar Bradley's II Corps headquarters. "Sorry to be late, Bradley. I stopped off at a hospital on the way up. There were a couple of malingerers there." He had struck one, Patton added, "to put a little guts into them."

Few acts of corporal punishment would be more scrutinized, analyzed, and condemned than the two slapping incidents on Sicily in August 1943. If it seems likely that Patton suffered his own stress-induced breakdown, that makes his conduct no less "inexcusable and asinine," in Colonel Currier's words. He had brought shame on himself and on the Army he cherished, and for decades his name could hardly be uttered without conjuring not only his battlefield panache but also his reprehensible behavior, unworthy of an American.

For now, the occurrences in those two hot, malodorous tents remained hidden from public view, although whispers soon spread through the ranks. Private Bennett returned to the front after a week's rest and pastoral counseling. "Don't tell my wife!" he pleaded. Bradley took the initial report from the 93rd Evac and ordered, "Lock it up in my safe," a derelict act of misguided loyalty. No safe was likely to hold the secret for long.

As for Patton, he exhibited neither remorse nor introspection. After thrashing Private Bennett, he told both his staff and his diary, "I may have saved his soul, if he had one."

A Great Grief

WHILE Patton fought his own demons, the battle for Sicily raged on, or rather up. “Christ!” a British officer exclaimed. “What a steep hill this is.” That complaint encompassed the entire Sicilian badlands of washboard inclines, limestone pinnacles, and volcanic scarps. “Someday I hope we shall be able to fight downhill for a change,” a captain in the 16th Infantry wrote his family on July 30. Cactus blanketed slopes seamed with ravines and razorback ridges. Highland grass fires—set with napalm flamethrowers to flush German infantry, on at least one occasion—tinted the sky red and perfumed the air with burning cork oaks.

Enemy demolitions made the bad terrain much worse. An estimated 160 bridge spans were blown up in the American sector alone, usually “the whole damned bridge, from abutment to abutment.” Ernie Pyle noted that “the Germans were also more prodigal with mines than they had been in Tunisia.” Iron ore in the volcanic soil around Mount Etna played hob with metal detectors, and German engineers displayed an ingenuity—placing Teller mines in road potholes, for instance, and covering them with asphalt—that grew ever more diabolical. True, Italian units fought with even less heart after Mussolini’s overthrow. “Troops are tired and have lost faith,” an Italian general advised Rome on July 31. But the forty thousand Germans now on the island showed no sign of flagging. The chatter of pneumatic drills and jackhammers could be heard in the hills along the Etna Line, an arc of fortified strongpoints stretching from San Fratello on the north coast around the volcano’s southern flank to the Ionian Sea above Catania.

Allied air and naval superiority counted for little in the mountains. Rather, the mule became the upland equivalent of the indispensible DUKW. Troops scoured the countryside for forage, pack saddles, and scrawny Sicilian mounts; a single infantry battalion fighting a weeklong battle in the roadless outback might need several hundred mules to haul food, water, and ammunition. A British officer, praising the beasts’ “sharp hearing [and] their sagacity over the choice of ground,” grew weepy with admiration: “They shared men’s dangers and hardships unsustained by ideals and hopes, and without even a sex life as compensation.” Others remained wary: a U.S. Army manual advised that the mule is “restless and ugly,” and “would probably want to know what he is to die for.” Typical was a creature named Trouble, described by a 45th Division handler as “the orneriest piece of leather in Sicily.” Bill Darby’s personal mount, Rosebud, nipped him in the buttocks “every time I tried to mount him.” (Ranger pranksters fed a handful of Benzedrine tablets to a fleabag named Whitey, who subsequently was renamed War Admiral.) Gifted mule skinners soon were more prized than sharpshooters. “The way to make a mule behave,” one soldier urged, “is to bite his ears.” A former veterinarian in the 45th Division organized his mule train with serial numbers and identifying brands, and even rewarded “outstanding performance” by promoting worthy animals to corporal or sergeant. Still, an insuperable language barrier confounded many soldiers. “The mules couldn’t talk English,” a 180th Infantry officer complained. “We actually had to rustle up some Italian mule interpreters so we could manage the beasts.”

“Hills and then more hills, and dust, clouds of it,” Ted Roosevelt wrote Eleanor in late July. “At the moment it’s white and the men look like clowns at a circus.” Kesselring continued to shove new units onto the island, Roosevelt added.

> They are fresh and we are worn…. The soldier who has climbed and hiked and fought days on end is completely done up. That’s the case with some of our units now…. As Nicias said when the Athenians commenced their retreat on this same island [in 413 B.C.]: “Man does what he can and bears what he must.”

With the British right flank still blocked at Catania, and Montgomery's main force crawling up the Etna foothills southwest of the volcano, the American advance toward Messina followed the two parallel axes ordered by Alexander. On Seventh Army's left, Truscott's 3rd Division on July 31 relieved the 45th Division along coastal Highway 113. Farther south, Terry Allen's 1st Division had taken Enna, which the Germans abandoned after Canadian forces threatened to outflank the town, and had advanced to Highway 120. There the division wheeled sharply to the east, capturing Gangi, Sperlinga, and Nicosia, where ax-wielding enemy troops vandalized shops and even churches before retreating. With a carbine across his lap, Roosevelt rode into Nicosia in *Rough Rider* to join his officers for wine and cheese in the mayor's office. A mortar fragment had chipped two of his teeth, but, wrote George Biddle, he "mumbled and rumbled to himself snatches of song and bits of poetry in French, in Latin and in English," while lamenting the lack of scholarship "in this hurried world."

Each town took a toll. The 1st Division had suffered nearly sixteen hundred casualties since HUSKY began three weeks earlier, about one soldier in ten. A 16th Infantry lieutenant who had lost most of his right elbow to a grenade walked all night until challenged by a sentry near an aid station; unable to recall the day's password, the lieutenant "simply started swearing like an American trooper until I was recognized and taken in." John Hersey, of *Time*, listened in Nicosia as a soldier whose shoulder had been shot away told a blinded comrade, "Let's go back there and get those bastards." The blind man hesitated. "Eyes," he said, "are very delicate things."

Wagging his cane as he stumped among the troops, Roosevelt noted "the sag of their clothes and their tired faces." Reports spread of nineteen men killed in a German white-flag ruse; anger and bloodlust spread, as well as an odd rumor that B-17s would bomb Etna's crater to bury the enemy in lava. Artillery boomed around the clock and muzzle flashes rippled like chain lightning along the gun lines. "Shelling these hills," Hersey wrote, "was like shaking lice out of old clothes." Every foot soldier approved of the lavish shooting. "I don't care if I'm paying taxes the rest of my life," one GI said, "just so they throw that stuff at them instead of throwing me at them."

Bread trucks brought up nine hundred loaves from a bakery near Gela each morning, then hauled bodies back to the makeshift cemetery at Ponte Olivo. At night the troops huddled close for warmth under blanket tents fashioned to hide their cigarette embers from enemy patrols. "Here we live and fight and die together in a bond of fellowship unequalled anywhere," Captain Joseph T. Dawson of the 16th Infantry wrote his family on July 31. But with camaraderie also came the solitude and self-doubt that haunted every battlefield. "I find myself jumping at any excuse that will keep me out of the danger zone," a quartermaster officer told his diary on July 27. "Hell, I'm disgusted with myself. If I knew how, I'd get myself transferred to a really dangerous job, just to see if I could take it."

Man does what he can and bears what he must. Patton believed an infantry division declined in efficiency after two weeks of sustained combat "due to the loss of riflemen and fatigue"; the 1st Division was entering its fourth week. "When this is over," one soldier mused, "I won't mind going back to Wisconsin and looking at cows the rest of my life." Like so many, Ted Roosevelt also drew comfort from thoughts of a different place. "Has the Boston ivy covered the front of the house? How are the yews?" he asked Eleanor. "Do put in fruit trees. The old trees are bound to die soon."

Sicilian towns "perched on hilltops like ragged caps stuck on the hoary heads of gray old men," wrote Don Whitehead, of the Associated Press. No ragged cap perched higher than Troina, fourteen miles northeast of Nicosia on Highway 120 and the highest town in Sicily. Here the 15th Panzer Grenadier Division had halted after the retreat from western Sicily that began three weeks earlier. Torrential rain on July 29 swelled streams and flooded roads, slowing the American pursuit. Grenadier

regiments used the respite to dig strongpoints and lay mines in the high ground north and south of Troina, which became a linchpin in the Etna Line. Four artillery batteries occupied gullies east of town, and spotters in field gray climbed the twin spires of the Norman church above the piazza for a panoramic view of Mount Etna. For an armed defender, the westward vista was even more breathtaking: any attacker from that direction would be canalized into a treeless, three-mile stretch of Highway 120. Troina's twelve thousand citizens fled to the hills or barricaded themselves in their squat stone houses.

Five miles to the west, in the hilltop hamlet of Cerami on Saturday evening, July 31, Terry Allen followed that exposed stretch of highway with his field glasses until it vanished into the hazy, twin-spired redoubt on the next ridge. The sharp scents of eucalyptus and oleander wafted through the decrepit school that now served as a 1st Division command post. Fascist slogans covered classroom walls that shook from the concussive roar of the 155mm Long Tom battery nearby. Within goose eggs drawn on a tactical map, Allen scribbled the letter "E" wherever he thought the enemy had holed up. "This was about as stubborn as any resistance we've enountered so far," he had told reporters. "The fall of Nicosia"—he rendered the name as Nicodemus—"probably means that the Germans will have to retire to their next road net, at Troina."

With luck, Allen hoped, the enemy would counterattack before the attack began this evening, exposing himself to those Long Toms and other guns. But U.S. intelligence now believed the Germans would continue falling back through Troina toward Messina. "Germans are very tired, little ammo, many casualties, morale low," the 1st Division G-2 concluded on July 29. II Corps today had reported, "Indications are Troina lightly held"; refugees also claimed that few German soldiers occupied the town. Allen had planned to envelop Troina with two infantry regiments supported by 165 artillery tubes, but these heartening reports and the easy seizure of Cerami caused him to pare back the attack to a single regiment, the 39th Infantry, which had been loaned to him from the 9th Division several days earlier. Air reconnaissance could have revealed the true extent of German fortifications, but the latest film had been flown to North Africa for processing, and printed photos had not yet returned to Sicily. "You give your orders and the division will execute them," Allen told reporters. "The rest is chance." A soft hiss escaped from his perforated cheeks.

With his saddle-hardened gait, Allen strode to a secluded olive grove a hundred yards from the command post. "This war is really a very disagreeable job," he had written his wife, Mary Fran, two days before, "with long periods of tough going and the relaxation periods for the 1st Division are few and far between." Still, a break was in sight. Bradley planned to supplant the Big Red One with the rest of the 9th Division, which had recently arrived from North Africa. Tempting as it might be to let the newcomers carry the fight immediately, Allen would remind his officers of "our moral obligation to capture Troina before being relieved."

He sank to his knees beneath the gray-green boughs of an ancient olive. Asking God to spare the division "unnecessary casualties," he prayed that "tonight no man's life will be wasted." Upon rejoining his troops, a grizzled sergeant told him, "Hell, Terry, stop worrying. We'll take the goddam town for you."

As the long summer twilight faded in the west, three thousand soldiers from the 39th Infantry shuffled across the broken ground on either side of Highway 120 below Cerami. Their fatigue pockets bulged with toilet paper, K ration cans, and extra ammunition. Don Whitehead watched the columns snake toward Troina, jaggedly silhouetted on the horizon. "Every time I have watched troops plod into battle," he wrote, "I have choked back a desire to sob."

Coordinating the attack from an orchard command post was a thirty-five-year-old lieutenant colonel named John J. Toffey III. Sweat soaked his wool shirt, and tiny dust devils boiled beneath his boots as he paced between the map boards and radio transmitter. “Can you put mortar fire in the vicinity of 492-140?” Toffey asked, clutching the handset. “I want to get every goddamned weapon you’ve got and put them on 492-140. Do you understand? Okay. Get going.”

He was a big man, six foot one and two hundred pounds, with such sporty good looks that he had once appeared in an amusing cover picture for *Collier’s* magazine outfitted in a bathing suit and polo helmet while carrying a baseball glove, tennis racket, fishing rod, and golf clubs. His educational pedigree included Phillips Exeter Academy and Cornell. His father had fought with Pershing in Mexico and eventually retired as a major general in command of the New Jersey National Guard. His grandfather had earned the Medal of Honor for valor at Missionary Ridge in 1863. “It is very nice to read of a battle,” John Toffey, Sr., had written, “but to be near to one is not so nice and I never want to be near one again.” On April 14, 1865, while recuperating from battle wounds in Washington, D.C., he had attended the play at Ford’s Theatre and witnessed Lincoln’s murder. According to family lore, Toffey testified at the conspirators’ trial—he had corraled a runaway horse possibly used in the crime—and watched them hang.

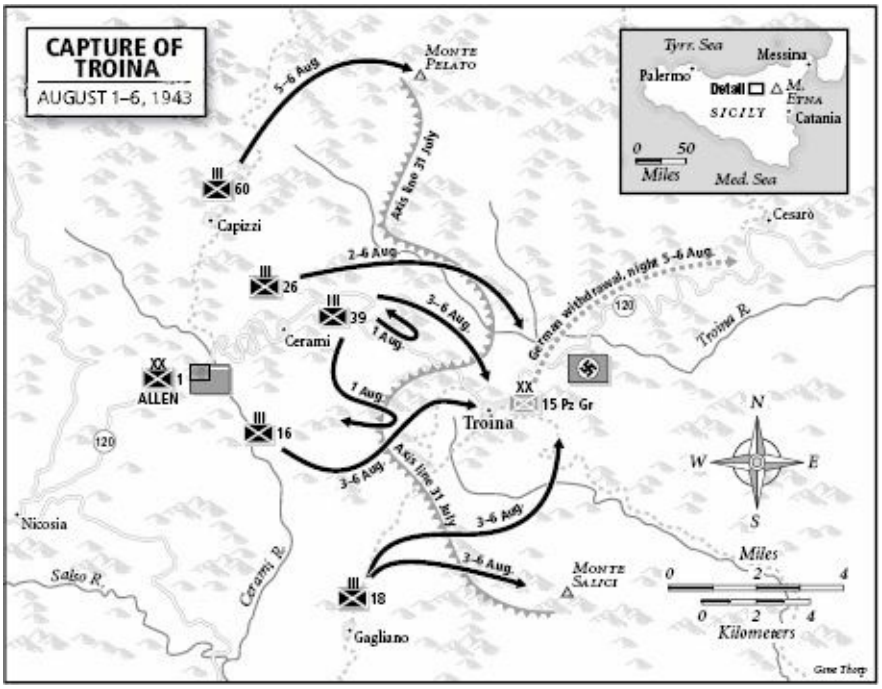
Young Jack Toffey, who had sold bottle caps in Ohio during the Depression, had proved worthy of his military lineage. Called to federal service from the National Guard in 1940, he landed with Truscott’s force in Morocco during TORCH, then commanded a battalion through the Tunisian campaign until shot in the knee at Maknassy in late March. “Missed all bones,” he wrote his wife, Helen. “Don’t worry about a thing.” After two months’ recuperation, he limped back to duty as executive officer of the 39th Infantry, just in time for Sicily. Toffey’s eventful fortnight on the island had already included a one-week stint commanding the regiment after his superior was injured in an air attack, and the capture of at least seven thousand prisoners.

Nine months at war had also aged him beyond his years. Both battle-wise and battle-weary, he was emblematic of the field-grade officers—major through colonel—who had learned much through hard combat and whose influence on a hundred European battlefields would be both decisive and disproportionate to their numbers in the U.S. Army. It was Toffey and his breed who would have to fix the tactical shortcomings the Army had revealed in Tunisia, such as the failure to seize high ground or to anticipate the German penchant for immediate counterattack; the defects in patrolling and map reading that got entire battalions ambushed or lost; and the inability to coordinate infantry, armor, and the other combat arms.

He now made war without illusions and certainly without pleasure. “War is as Sherman says and has no similarity with cinema or storybook versions,” Toffey had written in North Africa. He tried simultaneously to care for his family, to care for his men, and to study the military art even as he practiced it: sending money orders and war bonds to Helen, who waited for him in Columbus with their two children; procuring thirteen hundred steaks for a holiday dinner in the unit mess; subscribing to *Infantry Journal;* reading *War and Peace*. “Every day is that much nearer the end,” he wrote. “I still miss you terribly—a condition which will not improve.” The wound in Tunisia sharpened his senses of irony and mortality. Three generations of Toffeys in uniform was enough, he told Helen; he hoped that John IV, age twelve, “will be a doctor or lawyer and stay the hell out of the army & if he does go in the army let him stay out of the infantry.” To be near to a battle is not so nice, his grandfather had written, *and I never want to be near one again.* Jack Toffey understood that perfectly, though for now he had a job to do. “Been feeling a little rocky lately—but the knee is okay and feels better tonite,” he wrote before Troina. “Short on sleep and tired but today was a good day for us.”

The next six days, however, would be bad for all of them. The 39th Infantry's right wing edged to within a mile of Troina on Sunday, August 1. But lacerating mortar and machine-gun fire greeted the regimental left, and by midnight counterattacking grenadiers had shoved much of the regiment back to the high ground near Cerami, even whittling one battalion to three hundred men. "There is a hell of a lot of stuff there," a 1st Division officer warned. "We'll be moving right into the teeth of the enemy." Allen seemed to concur, and directed two additional regiments to loop north and south in a double envelopment. But then, perhaps hoping to avoid those "unnecessary casualties" he had prayed over, Allen rescinded his order and chose to let the 39th Infantry again try to take Troina alone.

The regiment's new commander—Jack Toffey's superior—was a wizened, dish-faced, Vermont-born legend, Colonel Harry A. "Paddy" Flint, whom Patton deemed the "bravest goddam soldier in the whole goddam Seventh Army." At fifty-five, Flint had survived innumerable polo injuries and, in 1940, an apparent stroke; as his men tried to winkle the Germans from their strongpoints, he stood on a prominent rock, stripped to the waist, with a black bandana knotted around his neck, rolling a Bull Durham cigarette with one hand and bellowing, "Hell's bells. Lookit them lousy Krauts. Couldn't shoot in the last war. Can't shoot in this one." Later in the battle, a young artillery commander, Lieutenant Colonel William C. Westmoreland, found Flint and Ted Roosevelt playing mumbletypeg with a jackknife. Advised that half of Westmoreland's ancient howitzers had broken recoil systems, "so you can expect half the firepower you've received before," Flint replied, "It don't make no difference. Just fire them twice as fast." Not to be outdone, Roosevelt upon being told that the division had fired a million dollars' worth of ammunition, ordered, "Spend another million."



Bravado would not win the day, or the next day, or the day after that. Allen finally recognized the need for a full-throated attack, ordering his 26th Infantry to loop north, the 18th Infantry to drive from the south, and the 16th Infantry to slice straight toward Troina with the weary 39th. "Troina's going to be tougher than we thought," he told Bradley by phone. "This will mean we can turn over to the 9th Division a tight zone. If it's all right with you, we can do this."

Hills were won and lost, won again and lost again. By now the Germans had dug in so deep that even the observers droning overhead could not spot the smokeless powder from their artillery and antitank guns. To break the stalemate, Allen ordered a renewed assault in the early minutes of August

3, with the attack weighted in the south. At daybreak, the 16th Infantry was pinned down by gashing German fire; when the enemy counterattacked with panzers and infantry, only deft shooting by Clift Andrus's division artillery kept the regiment from being overrun. By late afternoon, attackers and defenders had become so intermingled in the gullies southwest of Troina that American guns fell silent for fear of hitting friendly troops. When grenadiers infiltrated within a stone's throw, riflemen called out the day's challenge—"Chocolate"—and listened for the authorized parole: "Bon-bon."

Progress was no better in the north. Troops from the 26th Infantry fought with grenades, pistols, and rifle butts up and down a bitter knoll known as Hill 1035. The sharp *pops* of detonating mines were often followed by the howl that signified another severed foot or leg. Not until full dark, at eleven P.M., could the wounded be evacuated. Brush fires made the scorching days hotter still, and putrid German bodies polluted a creek trickling through a ravine. "Something is burning out front," a 16th Infantry battalion radioed. "We are running low on ammunition." Mule trains brought some supplies, but bundles dropped from aircraft fell mostly into enemy hands, and men chewed wheat straw to quell their hunger. Repeated air strikes by AAF planes beginning late Wednesday afternoon, August 4, cheered every GI except those bombed by mistake. A sergeant whose troops came under attack ordered his men to peel off their undershirts and spread them along a ditch embankment. "For some reason, the pilots were supposed to recognize the shirts as those of friendly troops," wrote Don Whitehead, who was among those stripping. "By the laundry mark, I suppose."

At dusk on Thursday, rifle companies throughout the 1st Division had been reduced by two-thirds, to sixty or seventy men; Company I of the 26th Infantry reported seventeen fit for combat. The commander of Company F in the same regiment lay with a radio a mile north of Troina as his unit was overrun, calling in barrages within fifty yards of his foxhole. "Perhaps," he wrote his father, "my luck won't hold up forever." Recovered from battlefield fever, Ernie Pyle showed up in Cerami to begin working on another bout. "Through our glasses the old city seemed to fly apart," he wrote after watching Troina bombarded. "Great clouds of dust and black smoke rose into the sky until the whole horizon was leaded and fogged." Dressed in his "usual collapsible style," Pyle was caught in an air attack without his helmet and covered his head with a shovel. He regretted "the terrible weariness that gradually comes over everybody…. You just get damned sick of it all."

Terry Allen was damned sick of Troina, and he meticulously planned a final assault for Friday, August 6, to outflank the town and obliterate any remaining Germans. Only when the first patrols crept into the outskirts after dawn did it become clear that the enemy had pulled back, fearful of encirclement. In launching two dozen counterattacks during the past week, the 15th Panzer Grenadier Division had lost more than sixteen hundred men. As the grenadiers scuttled down Highway 120 toward Cesarò and Randazzo, leaving the prints of their hobnailed boots in the dust, Kesselring also authorized Hermann Göring troops to pull out of Catania, on the coast. The Etna Line had snapped, to be replaced by a succession of defensive bulwarks across the Messina Peninsula.

"Town clear of enemy," a patrol reported shortly before ten A.M. Only misery remained. Troina was "found to be in a greatly destroyed condition," an Army after-action report noted. Reporters creeping into town were more explicit. They found "a town of horror, alive with weeping, hysterical men, women and children," wrote Herbert Matthews of *The New York Times;* he described a scene that would recur all the way to Bologna: on "torn streets, heaps of rubble that had been houses, grief, horror and pain." Dead soldiers, German and American, were "covered with a carpet of maggots that made it look as though the corpses were alive and twitching," a 16th Infantry officer reported. "You couldn't get the smell of the dead out of your hair, and all you could do with your clothes was burn them." A 26th Infantry captain, Donald V. Helgeson, stared at a charred German mortar crew. "This ain't very good for the troops' morale," Helgeson said. His first sergeant disagreed. "It's *great* for morale. They're German, aren't they?" A GI sliced the Wehrmacht belt buckle from a dead grenadier

and declared that "*Gott mit Uns* changed sides."

Some 150 bodies lay in the streets and inside a feudal tower. A nauseating stench seeped from Troina's cellars. Broken water mains bubbled, and an unexploded bomb blocked a church aisle. At city hall, wounded civilians sprawled "naked on shutters or stretchers. Their skin was gray," George Biddle reported. An infant found in the ruins clutched his dead mother's hair so desperately that rescuers had to snip away a few locks. Whitehead pushed through a massive oak door leading into the fetid cathedral crypt. In the feeble light he found hundreds of refugees living in their own filth. "Men, women and children crouched like animals over their little hoards of food and piles of belongings," he wrote. A young girl told him in English, "We've been miserable but now everything is changed."

"Troina was the toughest battle Americans have fought since World War I," General Lucas concluded, "and there were very few in that war which were its equal." The 1st Division had suffered more than five hundred casualties, with scores more in the 39th Infantry. "Really could use a bit of an ocean voyage to your shores about now," Jack Toffey wrote Helen after the shooting stopped on August 6. He wondered, with that ironic sensibility that grew tauter with each battle, whether New York would choose to stage the city's postwar victory parade up Fifth Avenue, or *down*. But in a note to his young son, Toffey showed that hope still lined his heart: "The Krauts must now know they are licked and their days numbered…. Just pray me home & we'll be all set."

Two more casualties could now be added to the 1st Division tally. As gunfire ebbed at Troina, three telegrams arrived at the division headquarters. The first relieved Terry Allen as commanding general. The second relieved Ted Roosevelt as assistant commander. The third announced Allen's successor, Major General Clarence R. Huebner, a highly decorated Kansan who had commanded a regiment in World War I before the age of thirty. "Terry read the thing, said nothing for a while, and then burst into tears like a high-strung school girl," Clift Andrus recalled. "It came as a terrible shock."

Ever the ardent hunter, Omar Bradley had long held Allen in his sights before squeezing the trigger. He later claimed that "the hardest thing in war was to relieve people I knew," but Bradley seemed unruffled by the dismissal of Allen, whom he considered "temperamental, disdainful," and "too full of self-pity and pride." In a handwritten note to Eisenhower on July 25, Bradley described the 1st Division as "battle weary. I suspect that it is more Terry and Ted than it is the division as a whole." At Bradley's urging, Patton three days later formally requested the change in a message carried by Lucas to Algiers. In his diary, Patton described both men as "suffering from battle fatigue," a malady whose existence he himself denied.

Neither Bradley nor Patton ever offered a fuller explanation for the dismissals; at heart, the action reflected the corps commander's personal animus toward Allen. But prevarications soon followed. Patton and Bradley both claimed they were following a War Department policy of rotating senior commanders. Patton hinted that Allen would return home to command a corps. Bradley later claimed that he "personally took over the tactical planning" after Allen "flubbed badly" at Troina. But Allen's efficiency report for April 16 through August 5, 1943, written and signed by Bradley, asserted that "the division plans of attack" for Nicosia and Troina "were well planned, [well] executed and obtained decisive results." Bradley made no mention of the faulty intelligence from his headquarters, or of his own belief that the Germans would retreat through Troina to Cesarò, or of his endorsement of the initial single-regiment attack.

As the orders became public once Troina had fallen on August 6, anger and disbelief roiled the division. "Even shaggy old Regular Army sergeants weep unashamedly," an 18th Infantry soldier

reported. By cruel coincidence, Allen appeared on the August 9 cover of *Time;* the article detected in him "a special mark of war and history." In a note to Marshall, he thanked the chief for the chance to command the 1st Division for fifteen months; to Eisenhower, he conceded that he "may have appeared over solicitious, regarding the needs of the infantry." In truth he was exhausted, his denials notwithstanding: in a letter to his young son, he wrote not only the wrong date but the wrong month. "It is a wrench to leave the division," he told Mary Fran, "but such is the luck of the service." Later he would grow angry over rumors that he had suffered a breakdown, and he wondered if anti-Catholicism or his lack of a West Point commission played a role; back in Texas, he fled a welcome-home party in tears. But soon enough he bucked up, perhaps sensing that neither the Army nor the war was finished with him. As he prepared to leave the division near Troina, he sat for a sketch by George Biddle, a pen-and-ink that captured the boxer's nose, the ropy neck muscles, the wide-set eyes, and the sparse hair neatly combed across his crown; he even wore a slight smile. Glancing at his watch, Allen called to his driver, "Tell them to phone down to General Bradley that I'll be fifteen minutes late."

As for Ted Roosevelt, the blow left him "hurt, despondent and mentally in a black cloud," one officer said. In an open letter to the division he wrote, "I have been ordered away. It is a great grief to me." In a personal farewell to the 26th Infantry, which he had commanded in the Great War, "he broke down and wept. And the men kept silent." To Bradley he wrote, "Brad, we get along a helluva lot better with the Krauts up front than we do with your people back here in the rear." Beetle Smith told him that he was not qualified to command a division; instead, he would move to the newly created Fifth Army as a liaison to French forces. "Of course I was heartbroken," he told Eleanor, adding with a touch of self-pity, "Everyone loves me but our own high command." Perhaps trading on her name, she privately wangled an audience at the Pentagon with Marshall, who bluntly told her that Ted "still behaved like a regimental commander" and "did not grasp the full scope of the responsibilities and duties as a brigadier general in an infantry division."

But Roosevelt also sensed that a larger fate awaited him. Sharing a ride to Palermo with Robert Capa, he recited poetry with his usual fluency while his aide sang cowboy songs. Clues could be found in the dog-eared copy of *The Pilgrim's Progress* carried in his kit bag: "I do not repent me of all the trouble I have been at to arrive where I am…. My marks and scars I carry with me." To Eleanor he later wrote, "The longer I live the more I think of the quality of fortitude—men who fall, pick themselves up and stumble on, fall again, and are trying to get up when they die."

"In a Place Like This"

RIDGE by ridge, road by road, town by town, the island fell to the advancing Allied armies. Montgomery's right wing, stalled for more than two weeks at Catania, finally lurched forward again, and Tommies sang, "We're Shoving Right Off." An Allied battlefront that had meandered for 170 miles inexorably contracted to 45 miles as 100,000 enemy soldiers retreated past Mount Etna into the long funnel of the Messina Peninsula. "I am enjoying this campaign," Montgomery wrote in his neat black script on August 4. "The Boche is getting very stretched and he cannot possibly stand up to my thrusts." Others were skeptical of Montgomery's claim to have cornered the Germans "in queer street." Air Marshal Sir Arthur Tedder, Eisenhower's air chief, wrote a colleague on August 7, "Napoleon insists on his usual frontal attack with no risks."

But although they were moving in fits and starts—nine thousand yards one day, three thousand the next—moving they were, despite mines, despite booby traps, despite snipers with telescopic sights hiding in baroque hillside tombs. The mayor of Catania surrendered his town with a theatrical affixing of signatures. Of 100,000 houses, only one in five was habitable. Germans had looted everything from

beds to dinner forks, blowing up the Bank of Sicily and the Hotel Corona for good measure; British soldiers and hungry Sicilians picked through the leavings. Refugees fought over packets of British biscuits, while old women in black squatted in their doorways as if "they knew that all life was evil," wrote the reporter Christopher Buckley.

Often enough, the Allied air force solution for interdicting the retreating Germans was to obliterate Sicilian towns, which barely impeded Axis withdrawals but killed thousands of civilians and complicated the Anglo-American advance. Thirty unexploded bombs lay in the rubble at Adrano, on the southwest slope of Etna, a town so battered that combat engineers needed thirty-six hours to carve a single-lane path through the drifted wreckage. "Troops will refrain from shooting Italian carabinieri," advised signs posted by British officers. "They are entitled to carry rifles." Battalions leapfrogged one another through thistles and cornflowers, dodging the slap of enemy artillery. A local orchestra greeted Canadian troops in one town, alternately striking up "God Save the King" and "Deutschland über Alles." In Bronte, on Etna's northwest shoulder, welcoming civilians chanted "Lord Nelson! Lord Nelson!," and General Alexander added his name below Kesselring's in the visitors' book at an eleventh-century Norman castle that had once belonged to the British naval hero. Across the Catania plain and down the volcano's lower slopes, British graves dotted the landscape like small mastabas. Identity disks dangled from wooden crosses, and comrades manning the burial details scrubbed their hands with kerosene and collected the dead men's helmets for reissue.

Above them all loomed Etna, the mythical forge of Vulcan, scarred with charcoal furnaces and logging roads that were fenced with brush to corral the cattle. Refracted colors danced at sunset above the reeking crater: the air was tinted with sulfates and sublimated chlorides. By August 13, Tommies had nearly circumnavigated the cone, twenty-five miles in diameter. Still, a British colonel scrutinizing a map of territory occupied by the Seventh and Eighth Armies was said to have complained, "That bloody Patton. He has us surrounded."

Pleased as he would have been to surround Montgomery, Patton in fact was trying to encircle at least part of the retreating Axis army. The U.S. 9th Division, supplanting the 1st, bulled its way down Highway 120 from Troina to Randazzo, where only five houses in a town of fourteen thousand people remained livable. So many dead littered Randazzo—perhaps the most damaged place in Sicily—that "after a conference with the priest it was decided to burn the bodies in gasoline," an Army report noted. "I feel like crying lots of times," a soldier wrote his family, "but I don't think it would help me much in a place like this."

To exploit the flanking opportunities afforded by his command of the sea, Patton on August 10 ordered Bradley to mount an amphibious end run the following morning by landing a battalion twelve miles behind German lines, on Sicily's north coast. In seizing Monte Cipolla, which loomed above coastal Highway 113 near Brolo, U.S. troops could sever the escape route for the 29th Panzer Grenadier Division rear guard and give Truscott's 3rd Division a direct avenue to Messina, forty miles to the east. If bold, the plan was undermanned, as Allied amphibious operations so often were, and it led to another of the ugly confrontations that bedeviled Patton across Sicily.

Truscott, who was to provide a battalion from his 30th Infantry Regiment for the landing, requested a day's postponement to position artillery and infantry support closer to Brolo. Bradley agreed; he considered the operation "trivial" and even "foolhardy," and he resented Patton's meddling with the corps commander's tactical prerogatives simply to beat Montgomery into Messina. But the delay irked Patton: after several testy phone calls on Tuesday evening, August 10, he drove to the 3rd Division command post at 9:45 P.M., flushed with anger.

He found Truscott in an olive oil plant outside Terranova, pacing with a map in his hand. “What’s the matter with you, Lucian?” Patton said. “Are you afraid to fight?”

“General,” Truscott said, his carbolic growl in sharp contrast to Patton’s shrill pitch, “you know that’s ridiculous and insulting.”

“General Truscott, if your conscience will not let you conduct this operation, I will relieve you and put someone in command who will.”

“General, it is your privilege to reduce me whenever you want to.”

“I don’t want to,” Patton said. “You are too old an athlete to believe it is possible to postpone a match.”

“You are an old enough athlete to know that sometimes they are postponed.”

“This one won’t be,” Patton said. “Remember Frederick the Great: *L’audace, toujours l’audace!* I know you will win.”

Having pulled rank to settle the matter, Patton looped an arm around Truscott’s shoulder. “Let’s have a drink—of your liquor.” Returning to Palermo and his bed in the Royal Palace, Patton confessed to his diary, “I may have been bull-headed.”

It went badly. Lieutenant Colonel Lyle A. Bernard, a wiry thirty-three-year-old, arrived two miles off Brolo at one A.M. Wednesday with his understrength 2nd Battalion in nine vessels, protected by the cruiser *Philadelphia* and six destroyers. As an orange quarter moon set in the west, the men climbed into their DUKWs and landing craft. The strains of “Night and Day,” played on a harmonica, carried across the water. “Why don’t we do this more often?” someone quipped. Shortly before three A.M. the first wave scooted across the shingle and into a lemon grove. “Watch the fucking barbed wire!” a voice called. Two rifle companies held the coastal flats while two more scaled Monte Cipolla, clutching at tuft grass to avoid pitching backward. But five tanks and a battery of self-propelled howitzers found that the underpasses in a railroad embankment along Highway 113 were too narrow to squeeze through from the beach; before long, each tank was stuck in a ditch or immobilized from butting into stone orchard walls. Eight Germans had been captured in their sleep atop Cipolla, but soon enough the alarm sounded. Colored flares drifted overhead, and German tracers flailed the hill, the beach, and the sea. Don Whitehead, among several reporters with Colonel Bernard, noted the “sense of absolute confusion that falls over every amphibious landing.”

Daybreak brought death, as German gunners began to see their targets. Fifteen soldiers died stringing phone wire uphill, along with thirteen of fifteen mules hauling ammunition. *Philadelphia* opened fire at 10:25 A.M., then steamed for Palermo with her escorts for fear of a Luftwaffe attack; an urgent plea from Truscott brought the cruiser back for another forty minutes of shooting before she sailed away again.

“Situation still critical,” Bernard radioed Truscott from his hilltop command post. Grenadiers in coal-scuttle helmets crept through the purple shadows below. Puffing on his red pipe, Bernard told Whitehead, “We’ll catch hell this afternoon.” Panzer shells ignited grass fires that burned through the phone wire linking Bernard to his troops and to naval gunfire observers on the flats below. Water and ammo ran short, and men laid fir boughs across their slit trenches for shade from the molten sun. At four P.M., lusty cheers greeted seven U.S. attack planes as they roared over the hill; the cheering stopped when two bombs fell on Bernard’s command post in a cauldron of flame and whizzing metal, killing or wounding nineteen. Other errant bombs hit the artillerymen below, wrecking the four remaining howitzers. Men swore, and wept, and swore some more. A wounded medic tried to amputate his own shattered arm with a pocketknife. German tank and machine-gun fire intensified. “Enemy counterattacking fiercely,” Bernard radioed Truscott. “Do something.”

At five P.M. *Philadelphia* again reappeared from the dreamy sea mist, firing a thousand shells in fifteen minutes and battling Focke-Wulf marauders before once more sailing for Palermo, this time

for good. Bernard sent runners to summon survivors on the flats to join him in what he now called "our little old last stand circle." A few on the beach instead escaped by swimming westward. Dusk soon brightened the tracers. Wind tossed the olive boughs below, and bullets sang all about. Bernard pulled on his dead pipe. Men hacked at their foxholes with entrenching tools.

At dawn on Thursday, August 12, a sentry came running. The Germans had vanished, falling back to Cape Calavà, where they would blow a 150-foot mountainside section of Highway 113 into the sea, and then to Messina. "There are troops moving on the road with vehicles, sir," he told Bernard. From the west, soldiers of the 30th Infantry soon wheeled into view. Greasy smoke spiraled above the lemon grove. The morning air stank of cordite and sweat and burning fuel.

An open command car flying three-star pennants pulled up on the highway. Patton stood in the rear, his helmet gleaming in the sun. "The American soldier is the greatest soldier in the world," he proclaimed. He pointed to Monte Cipolla with his swagger stick. Men and mules lay like stepping stones up the blackened slope. *L'audace* had cost Bernard's battalion 177 casualties, to little effect. "Only American soldiers can climb mountains like those," Patton said. Listening near the road, Whitehead jotted in his diary, "The whole little tableau sickened me."

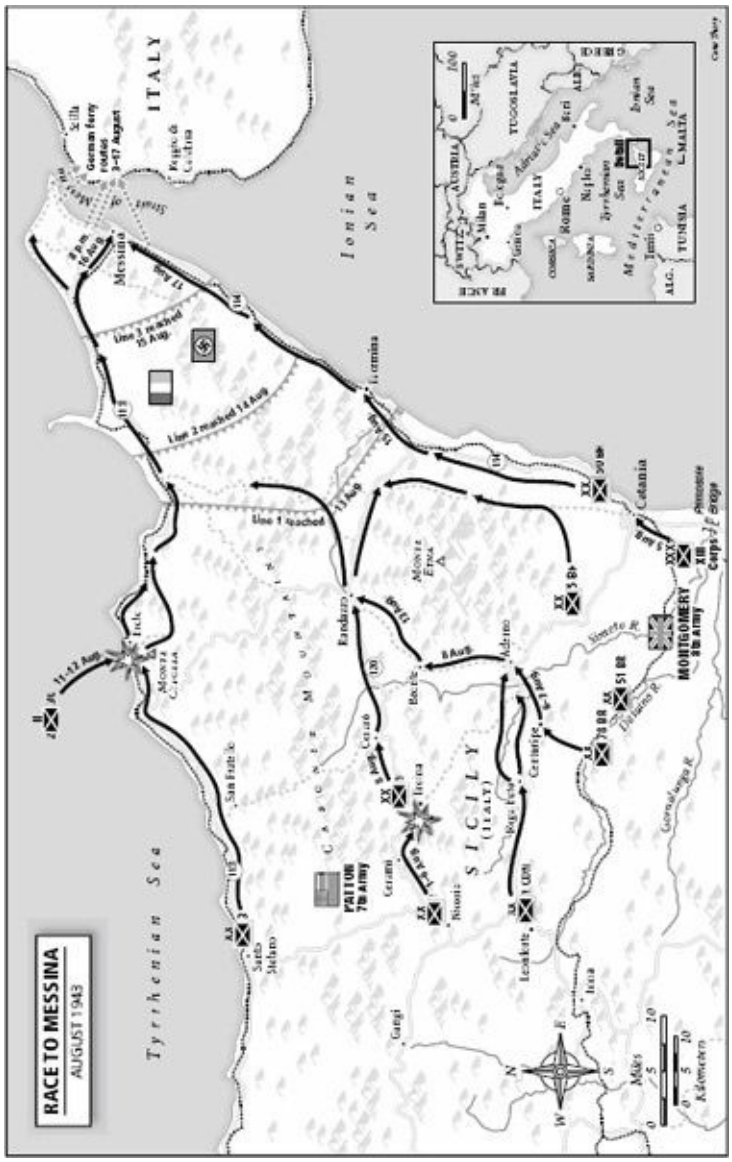
Field Marshal Kesselring had long realized that Sicily would be lost even as he insisted that his forces on the island could tie up a dozen Allied divisions for some time. Berlin wondered who was tying up whom. Mindful of Stalingrad and Tunis, the high command had insisted as early as July 15 that "our valuable human material must be saved." On July 26, Berlin ordered preparations made for the island's evacuation; the message was hand-carried to Kesselring in Frascati to avoid alerting the Italians. With Mussolini deposed, Hitler feared that the Badoglio regime would use the abandonment of Sicily as an excuse to renounce the Pact of Steel.

The defense of the Strait of Messina fell to an unorthodox colonel from Schleswig-Holstein named Ernst-Günther Baade. A devotee of Aristotle and Seneca who printed small volumes of verse for his friends, Baade favored a kilt rather than trousers, with a holstered Luger worn instead of a leather sporran. By August 10, he had made Messina perhaps the most heavily defended spot in Europe. Five hundred guns bristled on the Sicilian shore and on mainland Calabria, two miles across the strait. Engineers prepared a dozen camouflaged ferry sites on both sides of the water and assembled thirty-three barges, seventy-six motorboats, and a dozen Siebel ferries, big rafts with twin airplane engines mounted on pontoons and originally designed in 1940 for an invasion of England. Baade even cached food, brandy, and cigarettes for the rear guard.

Twelve thousand German supernumeraries and more than four thousand vehicles quietly left Sicily in early August; Kesselring calculated that five nights would be needed to evacuate the rest. With precise choreography, combat units fell back on five successive defensive lines, a retreat aided by the tapering shape of the Messina Peninsula. Vehicles that could not be evacuated were sabotaged by bashing fuel pumps and distributors with hammers and hatchets. "The hand grenade is especially effective," one directive advised. Enormous bonfires consumed surplus matériel, with German troops "yelling as they hurled it into the flames: crates, chairs, tents, camp beds, telephones, tools…all doused with petrol."

Italian commanders quickly got wind of the evacuation scheme and began their own measured withdrawals on August 3. Without informing Berlin or awaiting Hitler's approval, Kesselring authorized Operation LEHRGANG—"Curriculum"—to begin at six P.M. on Wednesday, August 11, just as Bernard's battalion was fighting for survival at Brolo. The Hermann Göring Division went first, under a flotilla commanded by the former skipper of the airship *Hindenburg;* hundreds of shivering

malaria patients also huddled on the ferries for the thirty-minute ride across the strait at six knots. Oil lamps flickered on the makeshift piers. Overhead screens shielded the glare from Allied pilots, but every anxious *Gefreiter* stared upward and listened for the sound of the B-17 bombers that would blow them to kingdom come.


RACE TO MESSINA
AUGUST 1943
ITALY
SICILY (ITALY)
Ionian Sea
Tyrrhenian Sea
Messina
Catania
Enna
Troina
Randazzo
Adrano
Bronte
Biancavilla
Paternò
Misterbianco
Augusta
Syracuse
Gela
Licata
Agrigento
Sciacca
Marsala
Trapani
Palermo
Cefalù
Milazzo
Mount Etna
Monte Cerasa
Monte Soro
Monte Scuderi
Monte Ruggero
Monte Pellegrino
Monte Inici
Monte Kumeta
Monte Genuardo
Monte Rose
Monte Cammarata
Monte Saraceno
Monte Carcaci
Monte Scalpello
Monte Lauro
Monte Casale
Monte Judica
Monte Turcisi
Monte Arcibessi
Monte Iudeo
Monte Soro
Monte Cerasa

Montgomery to belabor the obvious: "The truth of the matter is that there is *no* plan." Not until ten P.M. on August 14, four days into the evacuation, did Alexander signal Tedder, "It now appears that [the] German evacuation has really started." Only a few hours earlier, AFHQ had again reported "no evidence of any large-scale withdrawal."

Allied pilots had reason to fear the "fire canopy" that Baade's guns could throw over the strait. But his antiaircraft guns, if plentiful, lacked range. The entire initial production run of the new German 88mm Flak 81, which could reach the rarefied altitude of 25,000 feet and higher where the B-17 Flying Fortresses flew, had been lost in Tunisia. Yet air commanders were reluctant to divert the Allied strategic bomber force, which included nearly a thousand planes, from deep targets in Naples, Bologna, and elsewhere. To be sure, swarms of smaller Wellingtons and Mitchells, Bostons and Baltimores, Warhawks and Kittyhawks raked the strait. Little sense of urgency obtained, however: of ten thousand sorties flown by bombers and fighter-bombers in the Mediterranean from late July to mid-August, only a quarter hit targets around Messina. B-17s attacked the strait three times before LEHRGANG began; yet, as the Axis evacuation intensified on August 13, the entire Flying Fortress fleet was again bombing Rome's rail yards.

Naval commanders had equal reason to shy from Baade's ferocious shore batteries and "the octopus-like arms of searchlights." Admiral Cunningham in Tunisia had famously decreed, "Sink, burn, and destroy. Let nothing pass"; here, he issued no such commandment. "There was no effective way of stopping them, either by sea or air," Cunningham said, and Hewitt agreed. Patrol boats and small craft staged nuisance attacks, but both British and American admirals declined to risk their big ships. "The two greatest sea powers in the world," the strategist J.F.C. Fuller wrote, "had ceased to be sea-minded."

Not once did the senior Allied commanders confer on how to thwart the escape. Increasingly preoccupied with the invasion of mainland Italy in September, they never urged Eisenhower to divert his strategic bombers and other resources for a supreme effort. Nor did he force the issue. On August 10, alarmed at signs of exhaustion, the commander-in-chief's doctors ordered him to bed. There he remained for three days, "as much as his nervous temperament will permit," Butcher noted. Perhaps sensing the missed opportunity, Eisenhower on Friday morning, August 13, "hopped in and out of bed, pranced around the room, and lectured me vigorously on what history would call 'his mistake,'" Butcher added—the failure to land HUSKY forces "on both sides of the Messina Strait, thus cutting off all Sicily."

"It is astonishing that the enemy has not made stronger attacks in the past days," the commander of the Messina flotilla, Captain Gustav von Liebenstein, told his war diary on August 15. The evacuation was so unmolested that crossings soon took place by day, exploiting "Anglo-Saxon habits" during the early morning, lunch hour, and tea time. The Italian port commander departed Messina on August 16 after setting time bombs to blow up his docks. Two hundred grenadiers held a crossroads four miles outside the city, then fell back to board the last launches; German engineers cooled a wine bottle by towing it in the sea, and drank a toast as they neared the Calabrian shore. An eight-man Italian patrol inadvertently left behind was plucked from the shore by a German rescue boat at 8:30 A.M. on Tuesday, August 17, just as Allied troops converged on Messina.

They were among 40,000 Germans and 70,000 Italians to escape. Another 13,500 casualties had been evacuated in the previous month. German troops also carried off ten thousand vehicles—more than they had brought to Sicily, thanks to unbridled pilferage—and forty-seven tanks. The Italian evacuees included a dozen mules. "The Boche have carried out a very skillful withdrawal, which has

been largely according to their plan and not ours," a British major noted.

Kesselring declared the German units from Sicily "completely fit for battle and ready for service." That was hyperbole; since July 10, Axis forces had been badly battered, by the Allies and by malaria. But those escaping divisions—the 15th Panzer Grenadier, the 29th Panzer Grenadier, the 1st Parachute, and the Hermann Göring—would kill thousands of Allied soldiers in the coming months. "We shall now employ our strength elsewhere," Captain von Liebenstein wrote as he reached the mainland, "fully trusting in the final victory of the Fatherland."

* * *

At ten A.M. on August 17, Patton arrived on the windswept heights west of Messina where Highway 113 began a serpentine descent into the city. Waiting on the shoulder, Truscott tossed a welcoming salute. As in Palermo, he had been ordered not to enter the town before his army commander, and Truscott earlier this morning had rejected the surrender proffered by a delegation of frock-coated civilians. A platoon from his 7th Infantry had reached central Messina at eight o'clock the evening before, swapping shots with stay-behind German snipers, until a Ranger battalion and other U.S. troops arrived with orders "to see that the British did not capture the city from us." By the time a colonel from Montgomery's 4th Armoured Brigade arrived, with bagpipes and a Scottish broadsword in the back of his jeep, the Yanks had staked their claim. Bradley was furious upon hearing that Patton had organized his own hero's entry even as some enemy troops remained on Sicily. "I'll be damned," he said. "Now George wants to stage a parade into Messina."

Patton had a fever of 103 from a lingering case of sandfly fever, and Bradley's sentiments concerned him not at all. The race to Messina was won; the campaign for Sicily was over. On a concrete wall above the highway the word "DUCE" was painted in white letters big enough to be seen from the Italian mainland. Hazy Calabria lay across the strait, whose waters were home to Scylla, twelve-footed, six-headed, barking like a puppy while she devoured half a dozen of Odysseus' oarsmen. German shells fired from the far shore spattered into Messina below or raised towering white spouts in the harbor. "What in hell are you standing around for?" Patton demanded.

Down they raced through the hairpin turns at breakneck speed, an armored car and Patton's command vehicle leading the cavalcade. "Doughboys were moving down the road towards the city," noted Lucas, who had arrived with Patton's entourage. "They were tired and incredibly dirty. Many could hardly walk." A shell slammed into the hillside above the highway, wounding a colonel and several others in the third car of the procession. Patton sped on.

Messina was a poor prize. Sixty percent of the city lay in ruins, the cathedral roof had collapsed, and German troops had booby-trapped door handles, light switches, and toilet cisterns. Enemy fire whittled the buildings still standing. Shells dislodged caskets from their wall niches in one cemetery, scattering skeletons among the Rangers who had bivouacked there. American artillery now answered, and a 155mm gun named Draftee fired the first Allied shell onto the Italian mainland. Millions would follow.

Although three-quarters of Messina's 200,000 citizens had fled the city, a throng lined the streets to greet Patton. Clapping solemnly, they tossed grapes and morning glories. At the city hall piazza, in a ragged ceremony expedited by howling shell fire, the mayor formally tendered Messina to the conquerors.

"By 10 A.M. this morning, August 17, 1943, the last German soldier was flung out of Sicily," Alexander cabled Churchill, "and the whole island is now in our hands."

A deflated Patton was more prosaic in his diary entry that Tuesday afternoon: “I feel let down.”

He soon would feel worse. At noon on the same day, as the Messina ceremony concluded, Eisenhower in Algiers was rereading a detailed account of the slapping affair that had been sent directly to the AFHQ surgeon general by a medical officer in Sicily. Corroboration soon came from several incensed reporters who had quickly pieced together the story and alerted Harry Butcher and Beetle Smith. “There are at least fifty thousand American soldiers who would shoot Patton if they had the slightest chance,” Quentin Reynolds of *Collier’s* advised Butcher. Ushered into the commander-in-chief’s office at the Hôtel St. Georges, Demaree Bess of the *Saturday Evening Post* told Eisenhower, “We’re Americans first and correspondents second.” But striking a subordinate was a court-martial offense. “Every mother would figure her son is next” to be slapped, Bess added. Sympathetic to Eisenhower’s dilemma over how to handle his most aggressive field commander, the reporters agreed to kill the story “for the sake of the American effort.” British hacks showed similar restraint; of the sixty Anglo-American reporters in Sicily and North Africa, not one wrote a word.

Eisenhower agonized through several sleepless nights. Patton was selfish, he declared while pacing in Butcher’s bedroom one evening, and willing to spend lives “if by so doing he can gain greater fame.” Still, he added, “in any army one-third of the soldiers are natural fighters and brave. Two-thirds inherently are cowards and skulkers. By making the two-thirds fear possible public upbraiding such as Patton gave during the campaign, the skulkers are forced to fight.”

Such dubious arithmetic hardly excused reprehensible behavior, and Eisenhower’s five-paragraph letter of censure, delivered to Patton by the AFHQ surgeon, was harsh:

> I must so seriously question your good judgment and self-discipline as to raise serious doubts in my mind as to your future usefulness…. No letter that I have been called upon to write in my military career has caused me the mental anguish of this one.

On Eisenhower’s insistence, Patton was to apologize to the individuals he had offended; Lucas, who flew to Palermo on August 21 to hand Patton the Distinguished Service Cross won at Gela, also suggested that he publicly voice contrition for his “intemperate language.” No other punishment was meted out, for now. A secret inspector general’s report warned that the affair would likely leak and “result in embarrassment to the War Department.” But Eisenhower chose not to tell Marshall; he offered only a vague allusion to the army commander’s “habit of impulsive bawling out of subordinates.” Patton, he added, “has qualities that we cannot afford to lose unless he ruins himself.”

Patton groveled in his reply to Eisenhower, voicing “my chagrin and grief at having given you, a man to whom I owe everything and for whom I would gladly lay down my life, cause for displeasure with me.” Privately, he vacillated between penitence and defiance. “I admit freely that my method was wrong,” he told his diary. But to a friend he wrote, “If I had to do it over again, I would not make a single change.” Using his private nickname for Eisenhower, he wrote Bea on August 22: “I seem to have made Divine Destiny a little mad, but that will pass.”

As ordered, he apologized to Private Kuhl, who subsequently posited that Patton “was suffering a little battle fatigue himself.” After a similar session with Private Bennett on August 21, Patton hosted a dinner in the royal palace for the entertainer Bob Hope and his troupe, who “sang and carried on until after midnight.” When the singer Frances Langford finished crooning “Embraceable You,” Patton cornered Hope and threw an arm around his neck. “You can do a lot for me,” Patton said. “I want you to go on radio when you get back. I want the people to know that I love my men.”

His oblique public confessions, delivered to five divisions over a week beginning on August 24,

used a script of nineteen paragraphs, punctuated with much extemporaneous cussing. “I have been guilty on too many occasions, perhaps, of criticizing and of loud talking,” he said, speaking from a makeshift stage. “I am sorry for this.” Some units rejected even such a mild self-reproach. “No, General, no!” troops in Truscott’s 60th Infantry shouted. Exuberantly tossing their helmets, they thundered “Georg-ie! Georg-ie!” with such passion that Patton could not make himself heard. “The hell with it,” he said, then drove off in his command car, standing and saluting as tears streamed down his cheeks.

Others were less indulgent. Before noon on Friday, August 27, a day “hotter than the hinges of Hades,” the entire 1st Division marched into a natural amphitheater along the Palma River. “Arms will not be carried,” a division directive advised, and officers added, “There will be no booing.” Massed regimental bands played martial airs as Patton’s car pulled to the stage, siren wailing, through a sea of olive-drab wool. After speaking for twenty minutes, he concluded with an accolade—“Your fame shall never die”—then saluted the colors and sped away.

Fifteen thousand men sat in stony silence. “That has got to be the weirdest speech ever made by an American general,” a 26th Infantry captain muttered. Patton “used so much profanity that it wasn’t clear to me what he was talking about,” one soldier said, while another complained, “That fucking fucker of a general swears too fucking much.” Some wondered whether he was apologizing for sacking Allen and Roosevelt. Most did not care. They were silent “to express our rejection of his presence here,” explained an artillery sergeant, who added, “We despise him.”

Patton returned to the palace. His exile had begun, and he could only hope that it would end before the war did. “I shall be very glad to get out of this infernal island,” he wrote a friend. “It is certainly the most desolate and dreary place that I have ever been in.” To Beatrice he mused, “I have been a passenger floating on the river of destiny. At the moment I can’t see around the next bend, but I guess it will be all right.”

The thirty-eight-day campaign had ended, and another ten thousand square miles of Axis-held territory shifted to the Allied ledger. Patton deemed HUSKY “a damn near perfect example of how to wage war,” and without doubt clear benefits obtained. Mussolini’s downfall had been hastened. Mediterranean sea-lanes were further secured, along with southern supply lines to the Soviet Union and southern Asia via the Suez Canal. Allied air bases sprouted on Sicily as quickly as engineers could build them. German pressure had eased on the Russian front, where Hitler in July canceled a major offensive at Kursk after only a week, in part to divert forces to Italy and the Balkans.

American confidence, so badly battered at Kasserine Pass, was fully restored; four more Army divisions had become combat veterans, joining the four annealed in Tunisia. Cooperation between naval and ground forces had improved, and the many lessons learned, in mountain warfare and sniping tactics, in the arts of camouflage and combat loading, would be useful in Italy and beyond. The experience of launching a vast amphibious invasion against a hostile shore would be invaluable for the invasions yet to come, notably at Normandy. “We know we can do it again,” said Brigadier General Ray McLain, artillery commander of the 45th Division, “because we have succeeded.”

The butcher’s bill was dear for both sides. American battle casualties totaled 8,800, including 2,237 killed in action, plus another 13,000 hospitalized for illness. The British battle tally of 12,800 included 2,721 killed. Axis dead and wounded approached 29,000—an Italian count found 4,300 German and 4,700 Italian graves on Sicily. But it was the 140,000 Axis soldiers captured, nearly all of them Italian, who severely tilted the final casualty totals.

For the Allies the campaign had been “a great success, but it was not complete,” as a German

admiral put it. Barely fifty thousand Germans had overcome Allied air and sea supremacy, and the virtual collapse of their Italian confederates, to hold off an onslaught by nearly half a million Anglo-Americans for five weeks. Kesselring considered much of the American effort misspent on seizing "uninteresting territory" in western Sicily; he detected an aversion to risk in Allied commanders, and now believed that he had a clear sense of his foes for future battles. HUSKY also exposed lingering combat shortcomings and revealed a few new ones. Rugged terrain could annul the advantage of a highly mechanized but roadbound army. "Vertical envelopment," whether by parachute or glider, had yet to prove its value; in 666 troop carrier sorties flown over Sicily, the Allies lost 42 planes and had another 118 badly damaged, many from friendly fire. The meshing of infantry, armor, artillery, air, and other combat arms into an integrated battle force—the essence of modern combat—remained ragged; at times it was unclear whether Allied air and ground forces were even fighting the same campaign. Eisenhower claimed that the "international and interservice spirit" was now "so firmly established…that it was scarcely necessary any longer to treat it as a problem." This was sheer fantasy. Relations between flyboys and ground-pounders were almost as badly strained as those between Brits and Yanks. As the historian Douglas Porch later wrote, "Sicily demonstrated the many limitations of interservice and inter-Allied cooperation, ones that foreshadowed problems that the Allies would encounter in Italy."

If hundreds of combat leaders at all ranks proved their mettle under fire, others failed to measure up. The sorting out of the capable from the incapable continued, and Truscott's critique in relieving a regimental commander in August showed how ruthless that sifting could be: "You lack clear, calm judgment and mental stability under stress of battle, and you are unduly influenced by rumors and exaggerated reports."

But it was at higher echelons that leaders had yet to prove themselves entirely worthy of the led. Montgomery showed signs of being "a superb leader but a mediocre manager of armies in battle," as the historian Geoffrey Perret put it, "unable to tell a sufficiency from a superfluity." Patton had retired to the royal palace with his demons. Alexander had been conservative, unimaginative, and easily bamboozled by subordinates; his generalship in Sicily was "feeble from beginning to end," the British biographer Nigel Hamilton concluded. As for Eisenhower, notwithstanding his growth since TORCH ten months before, all too often he still failed to grip the reins of his command, day by day and hour by hour. He had yet to become a great commander because he had yet to demonstrate the preeminent quality of a great captain: the ability to impose his will on the battlefield.

Still, they owned the island. Rome was closer; Berlin was closer. An enemy who a year earlier had been ascendant was now in retreat, everywhere. Half a million German soldiers lay dead, with as many more captured or missing. After Sicily, a Luftwaffe commander wrote, few could doubt "that a turning point had come and that we were on the road to final defeat."

The troops stood down. Many would soon decamp to prepare in Britain for OVERLORD, including Omar Bradley and the 1st, 9th, 2nd Armored, and, eventually, 82nd Airborne Divisions, as well as three British divisions. Others were consigned to the long Mediterranean campaigns ahead. Patton's sense of deflation was a common malady. "Have been in the dumps," Truscott wrote Sarah on August 25. "War would be OK if it was all fighting. It's these interims that give one the heebie-jeebies."

Perhaps the heebie-jeebies came from reflection, the rare chance to consider what they had been through and what they still faced. Audie Murphy, already describing himself as "a fugitive from the law of averages," wrote, "I have seen war as it actually is, and I do not like it." Paratrooper Jim Gavin lectured himself in his diary: "I have many more battles ahead of me…. Fight intensely, smartly, and

tough. Take chances personally and in matters of decision." In a note to his daughter, he dreamed of taking a postwar pastorate, "with nothing to do but care for the flowers and meditate on the wickedness of the world."

Ernie Pyle found melancholy harder to shake than battlefield fever. "Yesterday is tomorrow," he wrote, "and Troina is Randazzo and when will we ever stop and, God, I'm so tired." Noting that "I couldn't find the Four Freedoms among the dead men," he wrote to his wife, Jerry, in New Mexico, "The war gets so complicated and confused in my mind; on especially sad days it's almost impossible to believe that anything is worth such mass slaughter and misery." Zealous MPs ticketed Pyle three times in one day for not wearing his helmet and leggings. A provost marshal commuted the $40 fines when Pyle agreed to recite ten times: "I'm a good soldier and will try to conduct myself as such by wearing my helmet and leggings at all times." After four hundred days overseas, he needed a long rest.

Several hundred thousand soldiers found at least a brief respite in the benign late-summer Mediterranean. Jack Toffey wrote Helen in mock complaint that he had "gotten fat and lazy and bored during the past 10 days since the battle ended here." His gimpy knee often stiffened; on August 31 he would turn thirty-six. Although much fighting remained, "we are certain now we can lick this guy," he told her, "and lick him we intend to"—but he permitted himself a postwar reverie, pondering whether "our new car should be a Buick, Oldsmobile, Cadillac, or what?" Someday, peace would return. "I'll get all cleaned up and never get disheveled again," he wrote. "What a dude I intend to be."

Battalions set up wineshops and charged ten cents for a canteen cup of "Dago red." "Migrant women" plied their trade in fleabag bordellos; some, for privacy, carried their own doors from room to room. The rates of venereal disease soared and the 82nd Airborne opened a medically certified brothel in Trapani under a supervising officer soon known as the Madam; Gavin noted in his diary, "Rates at 25 lire per piece." Troops stocked up on souvenirs, including overpriced hankies with "Sicilia" embroidered in the corner. At night they watched movies on bedsheet screens, visible from both sides, and sang new camp ditties, including "Luscious Lena from Messina" and "Filthy Fannie from Trapani." "I haven't seen a spigot since I left the United States," a 1st Division soldier commented. "It's a little thing, but it means a great deal." Snippets of Italian entered the soldier patois, including "*Prego*, Dago" and "*Grazie*, Nazi."

On Sunday morning, August 29, Eisenhower flew from Algiers to Catania, escorted on the final leg by four Spitfires. In the resort town of Taormina, he joined Montgomery for a sumptuous lunch. The table was set with linen, silver, and bone china in the dining room of an elegant Fascist villa from which the Eighth Army commander hiked down to the sea for a daily swim. Later in the afternoon, the two generals drove north to Messina and stood on the corniche, scrutinizing the Calabrian shore with their glasses. The spoor of the departed enemy littered the beach. On a sunny veranda nearby, a British artillery chief invited his guests to select targets on a map brought with their afternoon cocktails; pushpins marked the chosen aim points and a few minutes later, as the gin drained from their tumblers, a salvo of several hundred shells arched across the strait toward the Italian toe. "It was most spectacular," one guest exulted.

Soon the idyll would end. As Gavin subsequently wrote his daughter, "We in our hearts know of the hunger, heartaches, and graves yet ahead of us." Also scanning the Calabrian coast, the reporter Alan Moorehead mused:

> One was hardly prepared for its nearness…. When one looked across at that other shore, the mainland of Europe, the vineyards and village houses were utterly quiet and all the coast seemed to be gripped in a sense of dread at what inevitably was going to happen.

Part Two


THE ITALIAN BATTLEFIELD
SEPT. 1943 – JUNE 1944
Ancona
Pescara
Ortona
Rome
Frascati
Cassino
Terracina
Anzio
Gaeta
Caserta
Capua
Naples
Salerno
Capri
Sorrento
Foggia
Bari
Brindisi
Taranto
Adriatic Sea
Tyrrhenian Sea
Ionian Sea
Gulf of Taranto
Gulf of St. Eufemia
ITALY
SICILY (ITALY)
Palermo
Messina
Reggio di Calabria
Catania
Mediterranean Sea
Bernhardt Line
Gustav Line
Hitler Line
Rapido R.
Garigliano R.
Sangro R.
Pescara R.
Sele R.
Volturno R.
Miles
Kilometers
N
S
E
W

4. SALERNO

"Risks Must Be Calculated"

A gentle breeze barely riffled the sea, and a clement sun climbed through the early hours of Friday, September 3, 1943. Sicilian mongers peddled lemons and gladioli to British soldiers in battle kit queued up along the beaches. Three hundred DUKWs and other vessels swarmed between island and mainland "like so many gnats on a pond," a witness reported, and this first invasion of continental Europe—an all-British operation code-named BAYTOWN—had proved so placid that Tommies soon called it the Messina Strait Regatta. Only massed artillery broke the tranquillity: more than five hundred guns stood barking wheel-to-wheel on the slopes above Messina. Royal Navy ships, now steaming with impunity through the straits, added another hundred tubes to the cannonade. Rockets arced toward the Calabrian shore like "a kind of upward flowing yellow waterfall," wrote Alan Moorehead. "The noise was monstrous."

Just eight thousand Germans still occupied the entire foot of the Italian boot, and orders had long ago been issued to abandon Calabria—although again without notifying the Italians. Allied intelligence since August 30 had detected ample signs that Axis troops would retire northward rather than fight for the toe, but the ponderous invasion preparations continued, including a creeping barrage reminiscent of the Somme. British guns would fire 29,000 rounds on this Friday morning; the enemy in reply fired none.

General Montgomery sipped his morning tea in a seaside olive orchard and scanned the first reports from Eighth Army's vanguard, now poking through the battered streets of Reggio di Calabria on the opposite shore. German troops had melted into the hills. Montgomery lingered at a sound truck parked by the Messina beach to offer his thoughts to the BBC and to record a suitably lionhearted proclamation for Eighth Army. "I think that's all right, don't you?" he asked, listening to himself. "Good recording. Good recording." Then he called for his boat, "much as one would set out for a picnic on the Thames," and sang in his reedy voice, "Now, let's go to Italy."

To Italy he went, standing erect and khaki-clad in the DUKW's bow, his sharp chin lifted like a ship's figurehead. Several hundred cartons of cheap Woodbine cigarettes had been stacked along the hull. His batman would bring Montgomery's twittering aviary of parakeets and canaries, kept in cages outside his trailer; he hoped to find a pair of lovebirds for sale, although another feathered camp follower—a handsome peacock—had appeared at last night's dinner table on a platter, roasted and garnished. Several hundred yards from shore, the DUKW nuzzled up to a Royal Navy corvette. Scrambling aboard, Montgomery descended to the cramped wardroom, where he drank three cups of coffee and nibbled on cookies while telling reporters how he planned to wage war in Italy:

> You must never let the enemy choose the ground on which you fight…. He must be made to fight the battle according to your plan. Never his plan. Never…. You must never attack until you are absolutely ready.

Returning topside, he waved to the hooting troops packed to the gunwales in a passing landing craft. The Italians would likely fold "within six weeks," Montgomery predicted, but the Germans "will

fight." As for this invasion, BAYTOWN, "it's a great satisfaction." His black-and-red pennant snapped from the corvette's mast.

In truth, he was peeved and disgruntled, and already had begun sulking in his trailer. Alexander had brushed aside his advice on how to fight the Italian campaign and Eighth Army was relegated to a supporting role; BAYTOWN had even shrunk to a mere four battalions until Montgomery's protests restored his invasion force to two divisions, the British 5th and the Canadian 1st. No effort had been made to coordinate Eighth Army with Fifth Army, now scheduled to land three hundred tortuous road miles north at Salerno in less than a week. To beach an army in the toe made little sense, even as a diversion; Montgomery thought it "daft." Alexander's instructions on whether to simply open the Messina Strait or to begin tramping up the length of Italy had been vague; when pressed to name an objective, he simply urged Montgomery to do what he could. Mounting BAYTOWN meant that AVALANCHE, the Salerno invasion, would be smaller and would comprise mostly inexperienced units and commanders. Eisenhower had prodded Montgomery to jump the strait sooner, but Eighth Army "wanted everything fully prepared" before moving. Again Eisenhower did not insist.

Strategic guidance was no more enlightened. Roosevelt and Churchill had convened another conference in mid-August, this time in Quebec. They reaffirmed the OVERLORD invasion of western Europe for the following spring, but the British still considered an extended campaign in Italy vital to that cross-Channel attack because it would siphon German reserves from the Atlantic Wall. The Americans disagreed, incessantly reciting Napoleon's maxim that Italy, like a boot, should be entered only from the top. Eight hundred miles long, it was the most vertebrate of countries, with a mountainous spine and bony ribs. No consensus existed on what to do if the Germans fought for the entire peninsula, or whether this was a worthwhile battleground if Italy quit the war.

A shout rose from the shingle just north of Reggio as the corvette drew close and troops ashore realized that Montgomery had come to join them. Clambering back into another DUKW, he rolled onto the continent at 10:30 A.M., goggles around his neck and beret cocked just so, tossing cigarettes with a grin. Hundreds of Italian soldiers also rushed to the beach "with hands upraised, shouting, laughing," eager to help unload enemy stores. Montgomery made straight for the local Fascist headquarters, where he purloined a sheaf of stationery on which he would scribble his correspondence for months. That evening he ate an early dinner and retired to bed with a novel. In a note to General Brooke in London before he drifted off, Montgomery wrote, "The only person who does not get tired is myself."

The next days passed with little sense of urgency. German demolitionists had wrecked bridges and road culverts, but active resistance was mounted only by a puma and a frightened monkey, both fugitives from the Reggio zoo. Fuel and ammunition dumps swelled in size. Eighth Army scouts pushed from the toe to the instep, at times conducting reconnaissance from the passenger carriages of local trains. Wild orchids and golden gorse grew in the uplands where for centuries Greek and Roman shipwrights had cut their timber. Women with scarlet petticoats beneath black skirts glided through the little villages, bundles of firewood balanced on their heads. The scent of crushed fennel sweetened the air, and nights grew chill as the soldiers tramped away from the Jasmine Coast and into the mountains. Canadian troops shivered in their khaki drill shorts, and some rifled through the abandoned uniform closets of the Blackshirt Legion for warmer garb.

Alexander advised London on September 6 that the Germans were resisting Eighth Army "more by demolition than by fire." In fact, as Brooke acknowledged the same day, "no Germans troops have been met so far." On the night of September 7, in a modest effort to flank the enemy, several battalions sailed from Messina with the intent of landing near Pizzo, on the Gulf of St. Eufemia, twenty-five miles northeast of the toe. "Everything went wrong," a Royal Hampshire account conceded. The wrong battalions landed on the wrong beaches in the wrong sequence. "Our exact

whereabouts was not known to our naval friends," the Dorsetshires reported. "It was a pitch black night with no moon." Commando landing craft went astray; among the first Dorsets finally ashore was "an NCO with a bag of mail over his shoulder." A light drizzle of German mortar shells turned into a deluge, with "many casualties suffered by those in the craft or trying to land." The expedition accomplished little. A German war diary several days later noted that, in Calabria, "the enemy is not crowding after us."

Montgomery meanwhile made himself comfortable. He offered visiting journalists glasses of spiked lemonade and tours of the new shower and tub in his personal trailer, "happy as a youngster with a new electric train." The birds chirped in their cages. Was it true, he asked the reporter Quentin Reynolds, that fashionable girls in New York now wore Monty berets?

On Sunday, September 5, Eisenhower hosted a small bridge party at his seven-bedroom estate in Algiers, the Villa dar el Ouard: Villa of the Family. Often to relax he played Ping-Pong on the green table in his library, or sang old West Point songs at the grand piano in the music room. But cards remained his favorite pastime, and for this game he rounded up three skilled players: Harry Butcher, Lieutenant General Mark W. Clark, and the chief of staff for Clark's Fifth Army, Major General Alfred M. Gruenther. Tricks were taken, tricks were lost, and between hands there was little palaver. Clark seemed preoccupied and failed to count trump properly; he and Butcher lost the rubber to Eisenhower and the formidable Gruenther, who as a young lieutenant had supplemented his Army pay by refereeing professional bridge tournaments in New York.

Reluctantly, they threw in their cards. Summoning his limousine, Eisenhower bundled Clark and Gruenther in back and rode with them to the port, now alive with the usual embarkation frenzy of shouting stevedores and swinging booms. The commander-in-chief gripped Clark's hand—they had been close friends for three decades, since the academy—and wished him godspeed, then watched the two officers stride up the gangplank to join Kent Hewitt on his new flagship, the U.S.S. *Ancon.* Antennae wrapped her superstructure like a spider's web. Thirty staff officers of Fifth Army soon boarded, as well as a few commanders who had come to bid Clark good luck. Among the well-wishers was Truscott. "Hell, Lucian," Clark told him. "You don't have to worry about this operation. This will be a pursuit, not a battle."

Exhausted from the long weeks of preparing his army, Clark soon retired to his cabin, where the bunk barely accommodated his six-foot-three-inch frame. Before flicking off the light, he opened a small volume called *The Daily Word.* "With Thee I am unafraid, for on Thee my mind is stayed," read the entry for September 5. "Though a thousand foes surround, safe in Thee I shall be found." Just in case, Clark had tucked several four-leaf clovers into his wallet.

"The best organizer, planner and trainer of troops that I have met," Eisenhower had written of Clark to Marshall two weeks earlier. "In preparing the minute details…he has no equal in our Army." It was precisely these attributes that had led Eisenhower to choose Clark for the immensely complex challenge of flinging an army onto a hostile shore, a task that would make him the senior American field commander in Italy. Long-limbed and angular, with a thick lower lip and prominent Adam's apple, Clark had dark eyes that constantly swept the terrain before him. To a British general, he evoked "a film star who excels in Westerns." When speaking, Clark often paused to purse or lick his lips; the ears flattened against his skull accentuated a long, aquiline nose that suggested a raptor's beak. "A fine face, full of bones," George Biddle observed. "An intelligent face and an expression of kindliness about the mouth."

He had been born into the Army and grew into a frail, skinny officer's son whose father let him

attend “the college of your choice, providing it’s West Point.” As the youngest member of the entering class of 1917, Clark was promptly powdered, diapered, and put to bed early. Descended from immigrant Romanian Jews on his mother’s side, he had himself baptized as an Episcopalian in the academy chapel. At age twenty-two, soon after graduation, he was commanding a battalion in the Vosges Mountains when German shrapnel tore through his shoulder and ended his war. Promoted twice during his first four months of service, he thereafter remained a captain for sixteen years, battling both national indifference to the Army and poor health: he suffered from a heart murmur, ulcers, a diseased gallbladder, and various infections. In 1923, he met the widow of a West Point classmate who had committed suicide two years earlier. Four years older than Clark and a graduate of Northwestern University, Maurine Doran, known as Renie, was petite, lighthearted, and his equal in intelligence and ambition; they married a year later.

Now forty-seven and known to his friends as Wayne, Clark had skipped the rank of colonel altogether and was among the youngest three-star generals in the Army’s history. Still, he had last commanded troops in combat a quarter century earlier. If Biddle detected “kindliness about the mouth,” he missed a few other traits. “He thought of himself as destined to do something unusual in this war,” a Fifth Army staff officer said, “and so he carried himself with a dignity commensurate with that.” An Anglophobe, he hid his disdain from both Eisenhower and the British; only within his inner circle would he rail against “these goddamned dumb British,” or recite the Napoleonic maxim “Don’t be an ally. Fight them.”

He professed to “want my headquarters to be a happy one,” but Clark was too short-tempered and aloof for easy felicity. One staff officer considered him “a goddamned study in arrogance,” while another saw “conceit wrapped around him like a halo.” Perhaps only in his correspondence with Renie did the sharp edges soften. He wrote of a yen to go fishing, of the rugs and silver dishes he was sending her, of his small needs from home, like vitamin pills and gold braid for his caps. From her apartment in Washington she cautioned him about flying too much, and complained of his infrequent letters, of difficulties with his mother, of how much she missed being kissed. She had sent him the clovers.

Clark’s compulsive self-promotion already had drawn sharp rebukes from Marshall and Eisenhower, but he still instructed photographers to snap his “facially best” left side. The correspondent Eric Sevareid considered him fixated on “personal publicity without which warmaking is a dull job, devoid of glamour and recompense.” Clark at times encouraged Renie to cooperate with the reporters in Washington who wrote profiles of him; at other times, he chastised her for extolling his virtues too vigorously. “From what I have told you about publicity,” he wrote, “you should begin to put two and two together and see the picture.” His public relations staff would grow to nearly fifty men, with each news release preferably carrying Clark’s name three times on the first page and at least once per page thereafter. Reporters were encouraged to adopt the commanding general’s preferred nomenclature: “Lieutenant General Mark W. Clark’s Fifth Army.”

That army would need his lucky clovers. Operation AVALANCHE was to land at Salerno, seize nearby Naples, and eventually establish air bases “in the Rome area, and if feasible, further north.” As in HUSKY, preparations suffered from the diaspora of Allied planners across the ancient world. Instead of the three to five months needed to thoroughly plan a major amphibious expedition, Clark got forty-five days. Rehearsals were minimal and disheartening. Owing to the belated discovery of minefields in Salerno Bay, Hewitt would have to lower the landing craft nine to twelve miles from the beaches in order to avoid endangering his troop transports. Clark on August 24 also accelerated H-hour by thirty

minutes, “upsetting all the detailed timings of convoys and assault waves.” “Men of calm dispositions,” one commander noted, “became quite irritable.” Quartermasters struggled to overcome shortages of hospital beds, bakeries, laundry units, and—because planners had simply forgotten to requisition it—100-octane aviation fuel.

Only three assault divisions were available for AVALANCHE, so the operation would have less than half the heft of HUSKY. Clark had pleaded for at least four divisions, but, as usual, force size was determined by shipping capacity rather than battlefield needs. Even as Clark boarded *Ancon* it was unclear to Hewitt how many ships and landing craft he had in his fleet; some vessels still required refurbishing after duty in Sicily, and much shipping had been diverted to support Montgomery in BAYTOWN. Adding to Clark’s burden, Eisenhower on September 3 told him he could no longer count on the 82nd Airborne Division in reserve, a blow that Clark likened to “cutting off my left arm.”

Eisenhower had his own disappointments. Three times he asked Washington and London to temporarily double his heavy bomber force for AVALANCHE, and three times the Combined Chiefs refused to divert planes from the growing air campaign in Britain. A separate request—to ferry another infantry division to Salerno by borrowing ten LSTs bound for India through the Mediterranean—was rejected by the Charlie-Charlies in late August. Eisenhower advised his superiors that the invasion would proceed apace with “whatever forces we have at the moment,” but that “risks must be calculated.” To bolster fighter protection for Hewitt’s ships, the Royal Navy had added a light fleet aircraft carrier—H.M.S. *Unicorn*—and four smaller escort carriers known as Woolworths. Allied air strength was roughly thrice that of the Axis, but most U.S. and British fighters would fly from distant Sicilian bases. Air planners estimated that they lacked about a third of the strength required to provide maximum protection for the invasion force, a shortfall Eisenhower found “rather disquieting.” He told the Charlie-Charlies in early September that the Allied air forces could not, as they had done in Sicily, prevent the enemy from reinforcing the invasion beachhead with substantial reserves.

But would the Germans fight for Salerno? Ultra provided a detailed portrait of the sixteen German divisions now in Italy, including the four withdrawn from Sicily; those forces had grown steadily since Mussolini’s overthrow in late July. (“Treachery alters everything,” Hitler declared.) AFHQ intelligence still believed that, given limp Italian resistance, the German high command would fall back to a defensive line across northern Italy from Pisa to Rimini, blocking Allied occupation of the Po Valley, where three-quarters of Italy’s industry was located. Yet “if and when the Germans realize that our assault is not in very great strength they may move to the sound of the guns,” the Combined Chiefs were told at Quebec. An estimated 40,000 enemy troops would oppose the Salerno landings on D-day, but that number could grow to 100,000 within four days; the Germans may “attack us with up to six divisions some time during September,” while Clark would not have that many troops ashore until late fall. The key in amphibious landings was not the size of the landing force, but whether invaders could build up the beachhead faster than the defenders.

Salerno would be a poor place to fight outnumbered. As an invasion site it offered nearly perfect hydrography, with few sandbars, a negligible tide, a small port in a sheltered bay, and twenty-two miles of gorgeous beaches. “This is the finest strip of coast in the whole of Italy, perhaps anywhere in the Mediterranean,” one British planner noted. But, he added, it had the misfortune of being “hemmed in by mountains.” Mostly rugged limestone, those mountains encircled an alluvial plain traversed by a pair of modest rivers, the Sele and the Calore. A terrain study for AVALANCHE warned, “The mountainous terrain completely surrounding the Sele plain limits the depth of the initial bridgehead and exposes this bridgehead to observation, fire and attack from higher ground.” Salerno’s topography, a U.S. Navy planner added, was like “the inside of a cup.”

Risks had been calculated. At 6:30 A.M. on September 6, *Ancon* cast off her lines and steamed from Algiers at twelve knots in a convoy of seventy ships that included three cruisers and fourteen

destroyers. Sailors awake but not on duty watched an early showing on the boat deck of *Strange Cargo*, with Joan Crawford. Hewitt and Clark, fellow Freemasons who had known each other since they were both stationed near Puget Sound in the 1930s, chatted on the flag bridge and scrutinized an immense map of Salerno Bay. Belowdecks, a ten-by-twenty-foot map in the war room charted the position of every Allied ship between Gibraltar and Tripoli. In forty-eight hours, six hundred vessels sailing in sixteen convoys from six ports would converge on "an enchanted land," as Longfellow had called it, where "the blue Salernian bay with its sickle of white sand" awaited them.

What else awaited remained to be seen. A British commander had told Clark he had "high hopes of being in Naples the evening of D+2," or Saturday, September 11. "Boldness must be the order of the day," Eisenhower proclaimed. He was already planning to move his headquarters from Algiers to Naples in late September. "The time has come to discontinue nibbling at islands and hit the Germans where it hurts," he told reporters. "Our object is to trap and smash them."

Bravado was easier in Algiers than on the high seas steaming north. As Clark's gaze swiveled from horizon to horizon, he felt an unnerving fatalism. "I realized I might as well be on a raft, no control, no nothing," he later recalled. "If it wasn't going to work now, it wasn't going to work." The solitude of command—that "forlorn feeling," he called it—had set in. Surrounded by his army, with a great fleet fore and aft, he was alone.

Plots, Counterplots, and Cross-plots

EVEN as the invaders bore down on Salerno, hope persisted that diplomacy might spare Italy from being dragged lengthwise by what Churchill called "the hot rake of war." Since Mussolini's arrest in late July, the Italian government had repeatedly sworn fealty to the Pact of Steel. Both the king and his new plenipotentiary, Marshal Badoglio, vowed to preserve the Axis. Rome decried—with huffy assertions of Italian honor—any notions of a separate peace. In truth, the Italians had been making diplomatic overtures to the Allies since early August—in Tangiers, Madrid, and Vatican City—in a surreptitious tangle of "plots, counter-plots and cross-plots," as diplomat Harold Macmillan put it.

Wary but intrigued, the Combined Chiefs had instructed Eisenhower to send two AFHQ officers to neutral Portugal for a clandestine rendezvous with an ostensible Badoglio emissary. On August 19, Beetle Smith and the AFHQ intelligence chief, Brigadier Kenneth W. D. Strong, flew via Gibraltar to Lisbon with forged papers in "an atmosphere of amateur theatricals," in Macmillan's phrase. Discomforted by chronic ulcers, Smith wore "an appalling Norfolk jacket which he had somehow purchased in Algiers and some grey flannel trousers which fitted him very ill"; only with difficulty was he persuaded to remove "a dubious hat with a feather in it," but he insisted on toting two pistols under his armpits, with another pair holstered on his hips. "I envisaged a desperate gunfight in the best Western manner," Strong confessed. The two envoys were chauffered around Lisbon in a rattletrap Buick by a young American diplomat named George F. Kennan.

Their Italian counterpart proved to be a short, swarthy character of Sicilian descent, with thinning hair, a hooked nose, and a loathing of the Germans matched only by his affection for political skulduggery. General Giuseppe Castellano had come to Lisbon to ask "how Italy could arrange to join the united nations in opposition to Germany"; as a token of good faith, he offered a stack of secret documents detailing the military dispositions of 400,000 Germans now in Italy. Castellano quickly discerned that the Allies were in no mood to forgive and forget. In an all-night session at the British ambassador's house, fueled by whiskey and soda, Smith made it clear that Italy's only choice was surrender or the ruination of total war. Paragraph by paragraph he read the proposed capitulation agreement aloud.

"We are not in a position to make terms," Castellano admitted. In contrast to the clumsy U.S. negotiations with Vichy French officials in North Africa a year earlier, Smith displayed admirable dexterity in mixing tact with resolve. Castellano slipped from the house at seven A.M., carrying an American radio and ciphers with which Rome could secretly contact AFHQ; his government was given until the end of August to accept the Allied terms. Smith, who privately began referring to Castellano as "my pet Wop," advised AFHQ, "The Italians expect bitter reprisals from the Germans, whom they both hate and fear."

If Rome was in no position to make terms, Eisenhower could hardly let an Italian surrender slip away. Admitting to feeling "very anxious," he told the Combined Chiefs on August 28 that the risks at Salerno "will be minimized to a large extent if we are able to secure Italian assistance." Alexander feared that without such assistance AVALANCHE "might fail," perhaps causing the fall of Churchill's government and "seriously compromising Britain's determination to remain in the war." Coded messages flew between Rome and Algiers with no real agreement on surrender terms. In a letter to Roosevelt, the diplomat Robert Murphy reported that the Italians seemed to be debating "whether we or the Germans will work the most damage and destruction in Italy."

The plots, counterplots, and cross-plots thickened. On September 1, an ambiguous radio signal from Badoglio declared, "The reply is affirmative." Castellano flew to Sicily a day later and was escorted to a private tent in the thirty-acre olive and almond orchard at Cassibile, south of Syracuse, where Alexander now kept his headquarters. In quizzing Castellano inside the tent, Macmillan and Murphy were distressed to learn that he still lacked authority from Rome to sign an armistice. Leaving the envoy to bake beneath the hot canvas, they rushed off to find Alexander in his trailer.

More amateur theatricals followed. Hearing a commotion through the nut trees, Castellano pushed back the tent flaps to find a British honor guard in parade order, smartly presenting arms as the commanding general's staff car roared up with flags flying. Alexander emerged in his finest dress uniform, "cut breeches, highly polished boots with gold spurs, and gold peaked cap." Medals and campaign ribbons spilled down his chest. "I have come to be introduced to General Castellano," he boomed. "I understand he has signed the instrument of surrender."

Macmillan stepped forward, his face a study in regret. "I am sorry to say, sir, but General Castellano has *not* signed the instrument, and says that he hasn't the authority from his government to sign such a document."

Alexander swiveled slowly. His icy gaze locked on the abject Castellano.

"Why, there must be some mistake!" Alexander said. "I have seen the telegram from Marshal Badoglio stating he was to sign the armistice agreement." Alexander's eyes widened, as if suddenly seeing the awful truth. "In that case, this man must be a spy. Arrest him!"

A dreadful fate would befall Italy as well as Castellano, Alexander intimated. Within twenty-four hours, Rome would be destroyed in reprisal for Italian recalcitrance. As the diplomats counseled moderation, Alexander seemed to reconsider. Perhaps, if Castellano telegrammed Rome, asking Badoglio to confirm his authority to sign the surrender, calamity might be avoided. That, Alexander said slowly, was "the only way out of this." Alexander turned on his heel, the guard again presented arms, and off he stalked, "booted, spurred, and bemedaled," a gold-capped avatar of imperial wrath.

The telegram was sent posthaste, and at four P.M. on September 3, explicit permission arrived from Rome. Seventy-five minutes later, beneath a gnarled olive tree on a scarred wooden camp table hastily upholstered with napkins, Castellano and Smith signed Italy's capitulation using a borrowed fountain pen. Eisenhower, who flew in for the occasion, looked on with Alexander. Someone produced a whiskey bottle and dirty glasses for a toast, and each witness plucked an olive sprig for a memento.

The surrender was to be jointly announced in Rome and Algiers on the eve of D-day. Castellano pressed to learn that precise date, but Smith in a low voice replied, "I can say only that the landing

will take place within two weeks." Castellano soon advised his government that there was still a fortnight to prepare. "Today's event must be kept secret," Eisenhower cabled the Charlie-Charlies, "or our plans will be ruined."

Those plans grew more convoluted by the hour. Smith had rejected Italian demands that fifteen Allied divisions land north of Rome; had the Anglo-Americans possessed such a capability, he archly noted, they would not be treating with Castellano. But as an earnest of the Anglo-American commitment, the Allies would consider dropping the 82nd Airborne Division on Rome to help Italian forces secure their capital. With little consideration, Eisenhower and his lieutenants approved the scheme "to stiffen Italian formations"; the 82nd was thus plucked from Clark's reserves at Salerno. "They all thought the risk was worth taking," Murphy wrote Roosevelt, "even if the [division was] lost."

The scheme was cockamamie—"perfectly asinine," as Clark put it, and "tactically unsound," according to the AFHQ staff. In the course of the AVALANCHE planning, Major General Ridgway for more than a month had been ordered to prepare his 82nd for one ill-conceived mission after another, including a proposed amphibious landing north of Naples, although "not one individual in the entire division, officer or enlisted man, had ever had any experience or instruction in amphibious operations." Nothing, apparently, had been learned from the airborne disasters in Sicily. One 82nd Airborne officer, echoing Macmillan's phrase, lamented the "remarkable series of orders, counter-orders, plans, changes in plans, marches and counter-marches, missions and remissions, by air, water, and land."

GIANT II, as the drop on Rome was code-named, was the most "harebrained" notion yet, in Ridgway's estimation. The division would arrive piecemeal—because of an aircraft shortage, only two battalions could jump the first night—on a pair of airfields twenty miles northwest of Rome and nearly two hundred miles from the Salerno landings. Before leaving Cassibile, Castellano had rashly promised that Italian forces would silence all antiaircraft weapons; outline the runways with amber lights; block approach avenues to the drop zones; and provide vital matériel that included 355 trucks, 12 ambulances, 500 laborers, 50 interpreters, 100 miles of barbed wire, picks, shovels, switchboards, fuel, and rations.

The more Ridgway heard, the less he believed. The Italians, he warned Smith, "are deceiving us and have not the capability for doing what they are promising." Smith disagreed, insisting that inflamed Romans would assist the 82nd by dropping "kettles, bricks, [and] hot water on the Germans in the streets of Rome." Alexander was equally cavalier, crediting "full faith" to Italian guarantees. "Don't give this another thought, Ridgway," he added. "Contact will be made with your division in three days—five days at the most." But when Ridgway persisted, warning of the "sacrifice of my division," Alexander agreed to let him gauge Italian resolve by infiltrating a pair of American officers into downtown Rome.

As the sun sank into the Tyrrhenian Sea on Tuesday, September 7, the Italian corvette *Ibis* rounded the headland at Gaeta, a scruffy port midway between Naples and Rome where, Virgil recounted, Aeneas had buried his beloved nurse. As the helmsman eased through a minefield and into the harbor, two American officers on the corvette's lower bridge deranged their uniforms, tousled their hair, and splashed themselves with seawater. "Look disconsolate," an Italian admiral advised them. Dockworkers watched from the quay while bawling Italian tars prodded the men down the gangplank and into a naval staff car, apparent prisoners-of-war bound for an interrogation cell.

In truth they were the Italians' guests, having been plucked from a British patrol boat after a

secret rendezvous north of Palermo early that morning. A handsome, graceful Missourian was the ranking officer of the pair. Brigadier General Maxwell D. Taylor had been first captain of his West Point class and now, at age forty-two, commanded the 82nd Airborne's artillery. A gifted linguist who had taught French and Spanish at the academy, Taylor evinced a diplomatic bearing that, together with his study of "Italian in Twenty Lessons," sufficiently qualified him for this secret mission. Beneath his Army field jacket he carried 70,000 lire—equivalent to $700—in a money belt borrowed from the photographer Robert Capa, who had won it in a poker game. Colonel William T. Gardiner, junior in rank but senior in age at fifty-one, wore his Army Air Forces dress uniform with ribbons earned in both this war and the last one. A former lawyer who was also fluent in French, Gardiner had served as the speaker of Maine's house of representatives and then, for four years, as governor. Both men knew intimate details of the Salerno invasion, set to begin in hours, and before leaving Sicily they had been advised: "If you get captured, put your forgetter to work."

Through Gaeta the staff car rolled, slowing to yield the right-of-way to military trucks packed with German soldiers in flanged helmets. On a remote road outside Gaeta, the vehicle lurched to a halt beside a waiting ambulance with frosted side windows. The Americans climbed in back with their luggage, including a radio in a fine leather case. North they sped, hugging the coast as far as Terracina, then veering inland at twilight on the ancient Via Appia, through the Latin countryside and the drained polders of the Pontine Marshes, past the walled vineyards and the roadside tombs and the stone highway markers that counted down the distance to Rome.

By 8:30 P.M., Taylor and Gardiner had been deposited at the Palazzo Caprara, a four-story mansion opposite the Italian war office at the intersection of Via Firenze and Via XX Settembre in central Rome. In a wainscoted suite on the palazzo's second floor, Italian waiters set a table with linen and silver, then served consommé, veal cutlets, and crêpes Suzette catered by the Grand Hotel. Italian staff officers came and went, shrugging off Taylor's requests to meet with the high command. "It appeared to me that they were attempting to stall," Gardiner later noted.

The excellent crêpes notwithstanding, Taylor's protests grew shrill; finally, at 9:30 P.M., the door swung open for the magisterial entrance of General Giacomo Carboni, commander of the four divisions responsible for Rome's outer defenses. In buffed boots and immaculate tunic, with pomaded hair and a thin sliver of a mustache, Carboni struck Taylor as "a professional dandy." Unfurling his map, he pointed to the German positions encircling the capital: 12,000 paratroopers bivouacked along the coast, from the south bank of the Tiber halfway to Anzio; another 24,000 men and 200 tanks in the 3rd Panzer Grenadier Division holding a crescent-shaped area to the north; still more forces around Frascati, to the southeast.

Italian garrisons had been virtually immobilized and disarmed, Carboni continued. The Germans had stopped supplying fuel and ammunition. Some artillery batteries had only twenty rounds per gun. The Italian air force needed another week to make arrangements for the 82nd Airborne's seizure of the two airfields; among other shortfalls, few trucks could be arranged to move the division. In a battle for Rome against the Germans, Carboni estimated, his forces would last just five hours. Some units had enough ammo to fight for only twenty minutes.

"If the Italians declare an armistice, the Germans will occupy Rome, and the Italians can do little to prevent it," he said. The arrival of U.S. paratroopers would simply "provoke the Germans to more drastic action." Carboni spread his manicured hands in a gesture of helplessness.

Clearly, Castellano's blithe assurances were shaky; so, it seemed, was the surrender signed at Cassibile four days earlier. Stunned and alarmed, Taylor and Gardiner demanded to be taken to see Marshal Badoglio. Carboni temporized. The marshal was an old man, fast asleep. Surely this could wait until morning. More demands, more demurrals, but at length the Americans found themselves speeding across Rome in Carboni's car to Badoglio's villa. A midnight air raid had already roused the

household; servants with flashlights and officers in pajamas flitted across the veranda and through the lush garden. Carboni vanished across the foyer, leaving the Americans to pace the vast carpets, studying the statuary and the oil landscapes hung on the white marble walls.

Fifteen minutes later the marshal appeared, dressed in a charcoal-gray civilian suit and low brown shoes. Bald, aging, and cordial, he reminded Gardiner of "an old hound dog" as he invited the men to take chairs in his study. The conqueror of Ethiopia, Badoglio had resigned as chief of Italy's armed services in 1940 after the debacle in Greece. He passed his days playing cards and medicating himself with champagne from a wine cellar said to hold five thousand bottles. Only Mussolini's arrest and the king's summons had brought him from retirement. "I was a Fascist because the king was a Fascist," he later explained with a shrug. "I do what the king tells me."

Taylor asked in French whether Badoglio agreed with Carboni that "an immediate armistice and the reception of airborne troops" were impossible.

The marshal nodded. "Castellano did not know all the facts. Italian troops cannot possibly defend Rome." Stepping to a large map, he pointed to the "natural defenses across Italy" that aided the Germans. "Supposing, just for the sake of discussion, landings were made at Salerno," he continued with a knowing look. "There would be many, many difficulties."

"Are you more afraid of the Germans than you are of us?" Taylor asked. "If you fail to announce the armistice there will be nothing left for us to do but to bomb and destroy Rome ourselves."

Badoglio's voice thickened. "Why would you want to bomb the city of people who are trying to aid you?"

Would General Taylor return to Algiers and explain this predicament to General Eisenhower? he asked. General Taylor would not. But perhaps Marshal Badoglio should write a message describing his "change in attitude." Badoglio nodded, took up a pen, and drafted a single paragraph in Italian, which included the fatal phrase: "It is no longer possible to accept an immediate armistice." Taylor drafted his own concise message, dated September 8 at 0121 hours: "GIANT TWO is impossible." An aide took the cables to be encrypted and dispatched by radio.

Badoglio and Carboni stood, and snapped to attention with a sharp clicking of heels. "We returned the gesture," Gardiner recalled, "endeavoring to click our heels as loudly as the Italians. There was quite a contest." Badoglio spoke of honor, and of his half century as a soldier. He seemed near tears as the Americans left.

Disheartened and exhausted, Taylor and Gardiner returned to the Palazzo Caprara. They spoke in whispers for fear of eavesdropping microphones as Wednesday's sunrise brought Rome to life. Had the messages reached Algiers? There was no reply, and GIANT II was scheduled to begin in less than ten hours. At 8:20 A.M., Taylor sent another coded warning, stressing Italian rejection of the airborne mission. Pacing back and forth in what they now called "our hideout," the two men considered taking a stroll outside but could not find a civilian jacket big enough for the burly Gardiner.

At 11:35 A.M., Taylor radioed the two-word emergency code that urged cancellation of GIANT II: "Situation innocuous." From overhead came the drone of aircraft, followed by the distant grumble of bombs detonating to the southeast. At last a return message arrived from Algiers: "You will return to Allied headquarters." Grabbing the leather case, they again slipped into a waiting ambulance and sped to an airfield outside Rome, whence an Italian military trimotor spirited them to North Africa.

Eisenhower left Algiers early Wednesday morning to fly to his forward headquarters outside Tunis. The big white house at Amilcar, with its intricate mosaic floor and sun-washed terrace above the bright bay, hardly suggested a field camp; the only audible gunfire came from carbines plinking at

targets tossed in the water beyond the dock. But moving to the forward command post on occasion gave desk-bound AFHQ—and its commander—at least the illusion of being on the march. With the landings at Salerno set to begin before dawn on Thursday, Eisenhower wanted to confer a final time with his top lieutenants in Tunisia. In a brief note to Mamie, he admitted to feeling "rather stretched out at the moment"; he was sleeping poorly, and the Mediterranean campaign had become so consuming, he told her, that he felt like "a creature of war."

So it was that when Badoglio's renunciation of the armistice was finally decoded at AFHQ headquarters at eight A.M.—seven hours after transmission—Eisenhower had gone. Smith forwarded the doleful message and Taylor's initial advisory to Amilcar, then fretted for three hours until also passing them to the Combined Chiefs with a request for advice. Marshall soon recommended publicly revealing the signed Cassibile agreement. "No consideration need be given the embarrassment it might cause the Italian government," he added. Churchill was visiting the White House and still in his wool nightshirt when Smith's cable arrived. "That's what you would expect from those Dagoes," he growled.

In the small schoolhouse outside Bizerte where Alexander kept his Tunisian headquarters, Eisenhower late Wednesday morning had just finished reviewing the AVALANCHE preparations when a staff officer handed him the dispatches from Smith, Badoglio, and Taylor. His face flushed until his cheeks were as pink as the message forms, one witness reported. The broad mouth tightened, the veins in his wide forehead thickened. Seizing a pencil he snapped it in half; seizing another he snapped it, too, and "expressed himself with great violence," a British officer noted. If angry at Smith's presumption in asking for help from Washington and London, he was enraged at the Italians. Badoglio was "an old man and inclined to temporize," especially with "the Germans pressing a revolver against his kidneys." Snapping off each syllable, he dictated a blistering reply to Badoglio: "If you or any part of your armed forces fail to cooperate as previously agreed I will publish to the world a full record of this affair…. I do not accept your message of this morning postponing the armistice." By the time he composed the twelfth and final sentence of his message, Eisenhower's voice had risen to a shout: "Failure now on your part to carry out the full obligations of the signed agreement will have the most serious consequences for your country."

"I always knew you had to give these yellow bastards a jab in the stomach before they would work," he added. To the Charlie-Charlies he dictated another message Wednesday afternoon: "We will not recognize any deviation from our original agreement."

Clearly a deviation was needed in the GIANT II plan. Some 150 C-47 transport planes were to begin lifting off at 5:45 P.M., carrying the first two thousand paratroopers over Rome. As Taylor's repeated warnings finally reached Tunisia, Alexander sent a postponement order to General Ridgway's command post at the Licata South airfield on Sicily. No acknowledgment came back. Eisenhower ordered Alexander's U.S. deputy, Brigadier General Lyman L. Lemnitzer, to personally carry the message to Licata. Still in his pinks-and-greens office uniform, Lemnitzer rushed to El Aouina airfield, commandered a British Beaufighter, and by bracing against the fuselage struts managed to wedge himself behind the nonplussed pilot. After a harrowing takeoff, they reached Sicily in an hour but failed to find Licata until Lemnitzer, after spotting Mount Etna, ordered the pilot to turn around and follow the coastline south and west.

Sixty-two transports were already circling when Licata South appeared below, with more taking off each minute. Unable to land on the clogged runway, Lemnitzer grabbed a flare pistol and began firing from both sides of the cockpit as the Beaufighter skimmed the treetops. The takeoffs stopped, the Beaufighter landed, and Lemnitzer tore hell-for-leather to the small command post off the runway apron. There he found Ridgway, wearing his parachute and ready to climb into a C-47. The 82nd commander had whiled away the afternoon playing cribbage and strolling through the olive trees with

a chaplain, “trying to reconcile myself” to the certain destruction of his command. “Didn’t you get our message?” Lemnitzer asked over the engine roar. Ridgway’s eyes widened. “What message?”

Jeeps raced about, herding paratroopers back to their bivouacs. Recall orders went out to those in the air. Exhausted and relieved, Ridgway stumbled into a tent where one of his officers sat trembling on a cot. Ridgway poured two drinks from a whiskey bottle, and as darkness fell and calm again enveloped Licata South, they sat slumped together, silent but for the sound of their weeping.

At 6:30 P.M. on September 8, Eisenhower’s flat Kansas drawl announced over Radio Algiers: “The Italian government has surrendered its armed forces unconditionally…. All Italians who now act to help eject the German aggressors from Italian soil will have the assistance and support of the united nations.” Ten minutes later, having heard no answering confirmation from Radio Rome, Eisenhower authorized the broadcast of Badoglio’s proclamation, the text of which Castellano had provided at Cassibile: “The Italian forces will…cease all acts of hostility against the Anglo-American forces wherever they may be.”

King Victor Emmanuel, Badoglio, and other Italian officials had assembled for a conference in the Quirinal Palace when a Reuters news bulletin at 6:45 P.M. informed them of Eisenhower’s proclamation. After much anguished discussion, the king concluded that Italy could not change sides yet again. Badoglio hastened to the Radio Rome studio, and at 7:45 P.M. affirmed the capitulation.

For 1,184 days, Italy had fought shoulder-to-shoulder with Germany. Now she had cast her lot with her erstwhile foes, trusting in providence and an Allied shield for protection from Hitler’s wrath. Neither would stay the hot rake. “Italy’s treachery is official,” Rommel wrote his wife. “We sure had them figured out right.”

In the hours following Badoglio’s announcement, jubilation and confusion radiated from Rome to the remotest hamlet of every Italian province. Citizens exulted at the presumed arrival of peace. But no intelligible orders had been issued to the Italian fleet or to the sixty army divisions of 1.7 million troops. Telephone queries from Italian garrisons in Greece, northern Italy, and elsewhere received incoherent replies or no reply at all. The frantic *ring-ring* of unheeded phones soon became the totemic sound of capitulation. The armistice caught fourteen of sixteen government ministers by surprise; one summoned a notary to witness his affidavit of utter ignorance.

No effort was made to stop six battalions of German paratroopers tramping into the capital from the south; their commander even paused to buy grapes at a farmer’s market. Grenadiers closed on the city from the north. Rome’s police chief estimated that six thousand German secret agents infested the capital, and within hours the only open escape route was on the Via Tiburtina to the east. It was on this poplar-lined avenue that the royal family fled by night in a green Fiat: the king—“pathetic, very old and rather gaga,” according to a British diplomat—carrying a single shirt and two changes of underwear in a cheap fiberboard suitcase; the beefy queen, ingesting drops of uncertain provenance; and the middle-aged crown prince, Umberto, head in hands, muttering, “My God, what a figure we’re cutting.” Badoglio and a few courtiers fled with them in a seven-car convoy. Crossing the Apennines to the Adriatic port of Pescara, they scattered 50,000 lire among their carabinieri escorts, then boarded the submarine chaser *Baionetta* for passage to Brindisi, on the heel of the boot. In a suitable epitaph, a Free French newspaper observed, “The House of Savoy never finished a war on the same side it started, unless the war lasted long enough to change sides twice.”

The biggest fish had escaped, but German troops snared thirty generals in Rome, as well as hundreds of Italian officials. A few firefights erupted, around the Caius Cestius pyramid and in Via Cavour and old Trastevere. Italian snipers near the railroad station crouched behind overturned carts

to fire at Germans breezing into the Hotel Continentale. Swiss Guards at the Vatican swapped their pikes and halberds for rifles. Looting broke out near the Circus Maximus, as terrified Romans stockpiled cheese and bundled pasta, and buried their valuables in oilcloth parcels. “The Jews are in a panic and trying to leave the city,” one witness reported. Italian envoys pleaded for a chance to negotiate Rome’s fate.

Field Marshal Kesselring was disinclined to parley. He had narrowly escaped death at noon on September 8 in a decapitation attack on Frascati by 130 American B-17s; it was these planes and the subsequent detonation of four hundred tons of high explosives that Taylor and Gardiner heard from the Palazzo Caprara. The hour-long attack obliterated the bucolic vineyard town, including the charming restaurant with its panoramic view of St. Peter’s where Kesselring had placed his command post. An estimated two thousand civilians and dozens of German staff officers died. Temporarily dispossessed of both his headquarters and his smile, Kesselring crawled from the rubble, convinced that the Italians had set him up. Even as he appealed to residual Fascist brotherhood, the field marshal threatened to blow up Rome’s aqueducts and to raze the city. Among those trying to protect the capital, General Carboni mounted a brief, hapless defense; resistance soon sputtered and died. “It is finished, but there is no need to despair,” Carboni told another officer. “I have saved what there is to be saved.”

Kesselring, now viceroy of the Eternal City, shrewdly allowed Italian troops to leave the capital with marching bands and unfurled flags. There would be ample time to settle scores. Much had become clear to the Italophile who had so steadfastly clung to Rome’s pledges of fidelity. He could see in retrospect that “every event was like a flash of sheet lightning, more foreshadowing than clearing the atmosphere.” Suddenly Italy was just “a card missing from the pack.” As for the Italians, Kesselring added, “I loved these people. Now I can only hate them.”

The Stillest Shoes the World Could Boast

UNMOLESTED and apparently undetected, Kent Hewitt’s armada of 642 ships steamed north in a thousand-square-mile swatch of the Mediterranean, bound for HARPSICHORD, as the Gulf of Salerno was now code-named. If the sea remained calm, the sun was searing. Little ventilation penetrated the packed troop holds, and few were as lucky as those aboard the converted Polish liner *Sobieski,* which had a swimming pool. Food on most vessels during the three-day passage was dreadful. “Whenever I tore a bun open and found a worm, I would cover it with jam and butter and eat ahead,” a mortarman wrote his family in Indiana. “I couldn’t be watching out for those worms, as they had to look out for themselves.” Troops in the three assault divisions—two British and one American—packed and repacked their kit, stuffing a week’s supply of salt tablets and Atabrine pills in knotted condoms before scribbling just-in-case letters to be left with their battalion chaplains.

The usual muddles and nugacities followed the fleet. Four thousand combat soldiers had sailed without weapons, which were in short supply in North Africa (along with binoculars and wristwatches); they would disembark at Salerno as they had boarded: unarmed. Troops of the 36th Division wandered through the sweltering holds with cans of paint, heeding a recent War Department decree that the white-star insignia on all Army vehicles now be enclosed within a white circle. On one British ship, a loftman released his carrier pigeons for a bit of exercise only to see them wing toward Africa, never to return. The cargo manifest on a vessel loaded in Oran simply listed “400 cases military impedimenta.” Hewitt was so incensed by loading infractions—bombs had been dumped into troop holds, for instance, and crates of shoes marked “Signal Equipment”—that he ordered a broad search for contraband. No little befuddlement resulted because the British Army and Royal Navy used

different numbering systems for their LSTs. “Both numbers are painted on the hull of the ship and cause considerable confusion,” the British X Corps noted. So many changes had disfigured the fleet’s sailing formations that a senior Navy operations officer confessed to keeping himself “informed by hearsay” because he was “not sure who was where.”

As always, soldiers found diversions to take their minds off the coming battle. British Commandos gambled away the hours with endless games of housey-housey, akin to bingo. Tommies in the 56th Division, concerned that their desert-bleached khaki would be too conspicuous on a mottled European battlefield, dyed the uniforms in cauldrons of boiling coffee; the treatment left them not only darker but also scented with espresso. Aboard the *Duchess of Bedford,* after listening to an intelligence officer lecture at length on Italian politics, one soldier told his diary, “We know nothing.” Others studied the government-issue “Italian Phrase Book,” which included not only the words for lobster, oysters, and butter, but five pages of handy medical language—*Arrestate il sangue!* “Stop the bleeding!”—as well as the hopeful *Voglio passare la notte,* “I want to spend the night,” and the eternal *Il governo americano vi pagherà,* “The U.S. government will pay you.”

Aboard Hewitt’s flagship, the voyage evoked the dreamy days when *Ancon* had catered to well-heeled travelers on Caribbean runs from Panama to New York. White-jacketed mess stewards served thick steaks with apple pie and ice cream; the leather chairs and perpetual card games in the officers’ lounge reminded one passenger of “the bridge room at the Yale Club.” Clark sat for a few rubbers but again seemed distracted. “General Clark is feeling the strain of this period of waiting,” his aide noted. “There is nothing that he himself can do now.” To pass the hours he napped, did situps, and paced the weather deck to work up “a good sweat.” Summoning reporters to his stateroom, Clark likened AVALANCHE to “spitting right into the lion’s mouth.”

Some 55,000 assault troops would invade Salerno, with a comparable number of reinforcements to follow. On Fifth Army’s left, the British X Corps was to land two infantry divisions and pivot toward Naples; on the right, the U.S. VI Corps would initially land only the 36th Division, with part of the 45th Division afloat in reserve. “It’s the most daring plan of the war,” Clark said as a steward poured coffee into paper cups. “You can’t play with fire without the risk of burning your fingers.”

The 36th, entering combat for the first time, derived from the Texas National Guard. Both the officer cadre and enlisted ranks were dominated by Texans, from Carrizo Springs and Raymondville, Harlingen and Laredo, Houston and San Antonio. In stateside bars, 36th troops had been known to insist that all patrons stand and remove their caps whenever “Deep in the Heart of Texas” was sung. Since leaving Oran hardly an hour had passed on the division flagship, the *Samuel Chase,* without a rollicking chorus of “The Eyes of Texas.” The division commander, Major General Fred L. Walker, was a Regular Army officer from Ohio, but he carried in his kit bag a Lone Star flag given him by Governor Coke Stevenson. When his men sang, Walker sang too.

How much did the Germans know? a reporter asked Clark. Would AVALANCHE catch them unawares? “We can’t expect to achieve strategical surprise,” Clark replied. “But we do hope to achieve a degree of tactical surprise.” The British planned a fifteen-minute naval cannonade to soften defenses before the landings began. The 36th Division, on the contrary, had elected to forgo naval fire. General Walker believed the Germans were too dispersed for shelling to be effective—“I see no point to killing a lot of peaceful Italians and destroying their homes,” he said. He also was wary of short rounds falling on his men, and he still hoped that “our landing may not be discovered until we are ashore.” Hewitt had bitterly disagreed, waving his ten-page list of 275 targets with precise grid locations for machine-gun nests, bridges, and enemy observation posts. The admiral considered it “fantastic to assume that we could surprise them,” but Clark had sided with Walker, in part on the assumption that only Italian troops would defend the beaches. The prodigious power of naval gunnery displayed in North Africa, Sicily, and the Pacific was spurned, foolishly.

At 6:30 P.M. on Wednesday, September 8, barely eight hours before the landings were to commence, Clark joined Hewitt in the admiral's cabin, where they heard Eisenhower's armistice announcement on Radio Algiers and Badoglio's subsequent affirmation. Many ships piped the broadcasts over their public address systems; officers with megaphones quickly spread the word to smaller craft.

Jubilation erupted across the fleet. On *Duchess of Bedford*, Eisenhower's final words were drowned out by the "dancing, kissing, backslapping and roaring of the troops." Aboard H.M.S. *Hilary*, they flung helmets in the air or banged them on the steel deck, yelling, "The Eyeties have jagged it in!" Those on the destroyer U.S.S. *Mayo* brayed, "The war is over!" The commotion "sounded like a ladies' pink tea," one Navy officer complained. "Yap, yap, yap." Chaplains offered prayers of deliverance, Grenadier Guards hoisted toasts to "the downfall of Italy," and a battalion piper was ordered to compose "The Scots Guards March Through Naples." British tars on a warship near Messina watched Italians light fireworks and dance in a floodlit church piazza. "Seldom in history," a Royal Navy officer observed, "can a people have celebrated so hilariously the complete defeat of their country."

Soldiers jettisoned bandoliers and grenades, stuffing their ammo pouches with extra cigarettes. A British officer regretted leaving his dinner jacket in Africa. "I never again expect to witness such scenes of sheer joy," Clark's aide wrote. "We would dock in Naples harbor unopposed, with an olive branch in one hand and an opera ticket in the other." Some lamented the lost opportunity for glory. A 36th Division artilleryman wrote his father, "Our chance to prove ourselves had vanished."

Hewitt noted with alarm that Fifth Army's "keen fighting edge" had been dulled. Officers prowled the decks, trying to talk sense to men now convinced that Salerno's beaches would be undefended. "Stop it, you bloody fools," a British captain bellowed, while on H.M.S. *Princess Astrid* a large sign advised, "Take your ammunition with you. You'll need it." Major General Ernest J. Dawley, commander of the U.S. VI Corps, warned soldiers on the U.S.S. *Funston* that they would "have to fight like horned Comanches if we mean to get ashore and stay there." The troops raised a cheer, then resumed their poker games on the fantail. "Expect a hostile shore," a 36th Division officer told his men. "Go in shooting."

The call to general quarters sixty miles from Salerno restored a modicum of sobriety. "The ship's company will man their stations," naval officers intoned. "Gunners, man your guns." Landlubbers aboard *Ancon* tried to parse the "plan of the day" for September 9: "The ship will be hove to for a while and then anchored, with the anchor at short stay ready to slip at a moment's notice, with a full steaming watch on and full steam at the throttles." Any residual hilarity dissolved at 8:15 P.M., when Luftwaffe planes attacked the fleet with flares, bombs, and torpedoes, though to little effect. As men blackened their hands and faces with burnt cork, a sergeant in the 143rd Infantry observed, "Imagination makes cowards of us all." John Steinbeck studied the pearly mists rising from the Mediterranean. "Each man, in this last night in the moonlight, looks strangely at the others and sees death there," he wrote.

Just before ten P.M., on the approach to HARPSICHORD, lookouts spied blue signal lights from the beacon submarine H.M.S. *Shakespeare* and the destroyer *Cole*. "Do you think we've been spotted by the enemy?" someone asked Hewitt on *Ancon*'s flag bridge. "If they haven't," replied the admiral, "they're blind." Off the port bow, a faint ruby glow radiated from Vesuvius. Capri appeared, as the official U.S. Navy history later reported, "swimming in a silver sea." The loamy scent of land drifted from the Sorrento Peninsula.

Twelve miles offshore, at the hundred-fathom line, captains ordered all engines stopped just before midnight. Water hissed along the hulls as the vessels lost weigh. Chains rattled. Anchors splashed. A bosun's whistle trilled. Each ship swung gently on its moorings. The night was bright and

balmy, with barely a whisper of wind. “In peacetime,” said an officer on *Hilary*, “honeymoon couples would pay hundreds of pounds for this.” An eruption of tracer fire on the distant shore reminded Sergeant Newton H. Fulbright of “a red, beaded curtain rising in a theater.” Someone murmured, “I think they know we’re here.”

Clark stood beside Hewitt, laved in soft red light on the flag bridge. Sailors tied manila lanyards to ten-gallon coffee urns and lowered them to the boat crews. “You’ll be in total command by tonight,” Hewitt said. Clark nodded. “I can’t help thinking that casualties may be high. Pray God they won’t.”

Gold and crimson flares blossomed inshore, followed by the rumble of demolitions in Salerno harbor. Winches creaked: more boats eased into the water. An overburdened 36th Division soldier likened the creeping descent on the cargo nets to “crawling down a ten-story building on a mesh ladder with a file cabinet on your back.” From below came the cough of landing craft. Brightened by moonset, their dim lights danced on the sea as the boat flotillas at last turned eastward and beat for the distant beaches, tugged by destiny.

A reporter scribbling in a notebook wrote of Clark: “tall, smiling, appearing unconcerned.” The army commander composed a short dispatch for Alexander at two A.M.: “Arrived at transport area on schedule. Boats have been lowered and are in position. Sea is calm. Indications are that beaches will be reached on time.”

In his diary he later jotted, “Hewitt and I on bridge. Helpless feeling. All out of my hands.”

* * *

“What’s the weather like at Salerno,” the poet Horace wrote a friend in 20 B.C., “and what sort of people shall I encounter there?” Since then the seaside Roman town had been occupied by Lombards in the ninth and tenth centuries, and Normans in the eleventh, among them one brutish knight known as the Weasel. By the twelfth century, Salerno’s medical school was considered Europe’s finest, lauded by Petrarch and St. Thomas Aquinas alike. Among the bones entombed in the local basilica were supposedly those of Matthew, the Roman tax collector turned apostle, who became the patron saint of bankers and bookies.

The latter-day town had grown to seventy thousand souls, with a handsome corniche fronting the Corso Garibaldi and tunny boats bobbing in the harbor. War had already come to Salerno: Allied bombing raids sent terrorized women rushing through the streets shrieking, “*Basta! Basta!*”—“Enough!” Soon the vegetable market and the gelateria and the tunny boats were wrecked, and messages chalked on charred walls listed both the resident dead and new addresses for the survivors. Many had dragged their bedding into the hills, as their ancestors had a millennium earlier in flight from predatory Saracens and the *mal aria.* South of Salerno, the coastal plain was watered by the Sele and Calore Rivers, which flowed parallel for seven miles before converging four miles from the sea. Tobacco, olives, and teardrop tomatoes grew in the fecund lowlands. But the most singular feature lay on the southern lip of the plain, at Paestum, a sixth-century-B.C. Greek colony famed in antiquity for its roses and violets, and still among the grandest complexes of Doric temples outside Athens. It was precisely here that the U.S. 36th Division planned to come ashore, while the British X Corps, comprising the 46th and 56th Divisions, landed twelve miles north, between the Sele’s mouth and Salerno town. Darby’s Rangers and British Commandos would also fall on the Sorrento Peninsula, seizing the mountain passes from Naples.

What sort of people shall I encounter there? On the morning of September 9, 1943, certainly

many Germans. Neither Kesselring nor his lieutenants believed that Montgomery's landing in Calabria a week earlier presaged an Anglo-American march up the entire length of Italy; in recent days, Salerno had seemed an increasingly likely place for the Allies to force open a back door to Naples and Rome. German reconnaissance on September 6 detected assembling British aircraft carriers, and a German naval analysis warned that "a strike in the direction of the gulf of Salerno is not precluded." Another convoy was spotted north of Palermo a day later. A midafternoon alert on September 8 cited a "large naval force of more than 100 ships" approaching the southwest coast.

Following the capitulation announcement three hours later, Kesselring displayed the agility so characteristic of his generalship. With Hitler's authorization, at eight P.M. he invoked Operation ACHSE, a secret contingency plan drafted in August to disarm Italian forces and take over key fortifications. Confirmation that the Allied armada was closing on Salerno restored Kesselring's smile; at least he would not have to fight an invasion force near Rome while also subduing the capital. The invaders "must be completely annihilated and in addition thrown into the sea," he declared. "The British and Americans must realize that they are hopelessly lost against the concentrated German might."

That German might took the form of Tenth Army, created in mid-August and reinforced with retreating units from Sicily. Army command fell to a veteran of France, Yugoslavia, and Russia: General Heinrich von Vietinghoff, a capable Prussian infantryman with baggy eyes, graying temples, and a little Hitler mustache. Some 135,000 German troops now occupied southern Italy, and Kesselring channeled his resentment at Italy's betrayal—he called it "a spiritual burden for me"—into demands for swift vengeance. "No mercy must be shown the traitors," he cabled Vietinghoff. "Long live the Führer." As Allied soldiers danced on the decks of their ships Wednesday evening, Wehrmacht troops burst through the oak door of the office belonging to General Don Ferrante Gonzaga, commander of the Italian coastal division at Salerno. "Hand me your pistol, General," a German major demanded. Gonzaga stepped back from his desk, fumbling with the Beretta in his holster. "A Gonzaga never surrenders," he shouted. "*Viva Italia!*" A burst of Schmeisser fire to the head and chest cut him down. "He died as a great soldier," the major observed.

With Gonzaga's troops melting away or in German custody, defense of the Gulf of Salerno fell to the 16th Panzer Division. Claiming to be the first German unit on the Volga, the division subsequently crawled away from Stalingrad with only 4,000 survivors. Now rebuilt under General Rudolf Sieckenius, the 16th Panzer was perhaps the best equipped division in Italy, with 17,000 men, 104 functioning tanks, and 700 machine guns.

Sieckenius had split his forces into four battle groups, positioned about six miles apart down the length of the Sele plain. Communications were poor and Highway 18, the coastal road that would bring any German reinforcements, lay within range of Allied naval guns. Still, the defenders had fashioned eight strongpoints, from Salerno in the north to Paestum and Agropoli in the south, each a quarter mile wide and fitted with mines, automatic weapons, mortars, heavy guns, and an abatis of felled trees. As Fifth Army's landing craft swarmed across the bight, the Germans waited, alert and aggrieved, unburdened by delusion that the war might be over.

* * *

On the far right of the Allied line, scout boats spaced half a mile apart flashed red, green, yellow, and blue lights at 3:10 A.M. to signify the four beaches upon which the approaching assault battalions of the 36th Division were to make land at Paestum. As the two-hour run from the transport anchorage

neared an end, a soldier in a plywood Higgins boat finished the pocket novel he had been reading and "stood up to see what this war was all about."

For a moment—a long, queer moment—silence held sway except for the nattering boat engines. Down came the ramps with a clank and a splash, and the first riflemen scuttled nearly dryshod onto the shingle at precisely 3:30 A.M. Then a constellation of silver flares hissed overhead, bathing the beaches in cold brilliance, and the sawmill sound of a German machine gun broke the spell, followed by another and another and another. Mortars crumped, and from the high ground to the east and south came the shriek of 88mm shells, green fireballs that whizzed through the dunes at half a mile per second, trailing golden plumes of dust.

Bullets plumped the sea and slapped the boat ramps. "You can't dig foxholes in a boat," one sergeant observed with evident sorrow. To an artillery officer from Austin, the spattering shell fragments sounded like "spring rain on a taxi window going up Congress Avenue." A second wave landed eight minutes behind the first, and a third wave eight minutes after that; but fire discomposed the four subsequent waves as coxswains swerved left or right or back to sea without unloading. "Shells were *wopping* in all around us," a soldier in the third wave recalled. "We knew that when the ramp fell those red and yellow tracers would eat right into us." A landing craft hit nose-on by a tank shell "seemed to rise completely out of the water," one witness reported; a second shell caught the vessel's stern, spinning it around and flinging bodies over the splintered gunwales. A medic described swimming to another blazing boat forty yards from shore. "Some of the boys were on fire," he later wrote his wife:

> We could hear the bullets hitting the water all around us…. I climbed up in the boat. There were four in there, a major and three enlisted men. The fire was so hot by then my clothes started steaming. Went over to the major. He was burnt, bad. The major was dead…. I drug the three soldiers to the ramp.

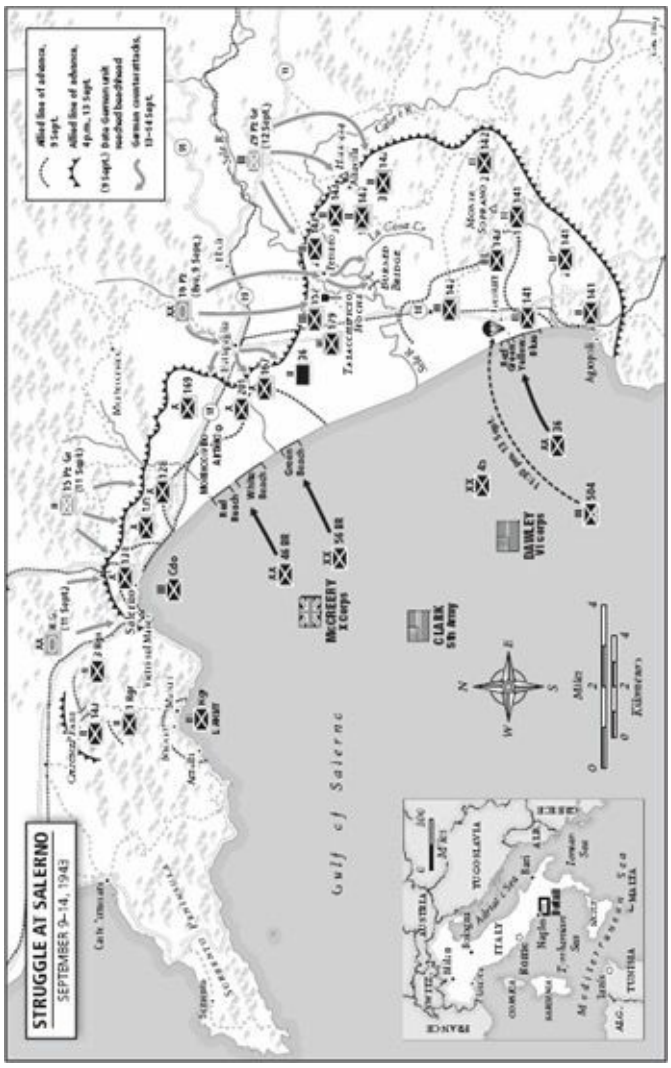
On the beach, soldiers wriggled out of backpacks ignited by grazing tracers. "I'd rather been born a baby girl," one soldier muttered. Teller mines buried ten yards beyond the waterline exploded in geysers of sand and shredded tires from the first jeeps ashore. The dunes were as hellish as the beach, raked with fire from a dense wood line just inland and from a fifty-foot stone turret built centuries earlier as a watchtower against Saracens. German gunners on Paestum's cyclopean walls poured plunging fire on every snapping twig, every rustle in the long grass. Panzers lurked in barns and sheds, firing point-blank on riflemen creeping past. "Great deal of confusion in landing," a surgeon told his diary. "Tough going. I see I am going to lose weight."

The first Luftwaffe planes arrived with the morning light shortly after four A.M., strafing and bombing, as the Navy's official history recorded, "on a scale never before or since equaled in a Mediterranean landing." An LST captain told his gun crews: "Steady now, steady, here they come…. Steady. *Fire away,* and good hunting." After the rejoicing that had met Italy's capitulation, an officer observed, many troops had "the feeling that someone had let them down." As the battle intensified, the reporter Don Whitehead overheard someone suggest, "Maybe it would be better for us to fight without an armistice."

By six A.M., two infantry regiments—the 141st and 142nd—had made land, with the 143rd soon to follow. But the foothold was tenuous. Each assault battalion carried two hundred smoke pots, big buckets of hexachlorethane that were ignited and dropped near the beaches to create a milky haze screening the landing craft. Offshore, destroyers darted through the anchorage and around the

incoming LSTs, “trailing ribbons of white, choking smoke,” as John Steinbeck noted. Ventilation fans sucked smoke into LST tank decks—“the sound of coughing is deafening,” Steinbeck added—and some coxswains were forced to navigate through the miasma by compass heading.

Still, German observers on Monte Soprano and other high perches saw well enough to mass fires. DUKWs hauling artillery and antitank guns to Yellow and Blue Beaches sheered away under the sleeting fire; another sixty lay out of range off Green Beach, and 125 loitered near Red. Six LCTs attempting to land thirty tanks at 6:15 A.M. also hauled off rather than risk sinking. Three shells smashed into an LCT carrying part of the 191st Tank Battalion; the blasts shattered the pilothouse, killed seven men, and set fire to a Sherman tank, which was shoved into the sea only with enormous effort. LST officers scrambled from side to side of the bridge as German shells struck port, then starboard, then port again; *LST 336* alone took eighteen hits. Drumfire fell the length of the beachhead: a Royal Navy cruiser intercepted a dozen vessels headed for Salerno port and warned, “The harbor’s under enemy fire. You’ll be jolly well shot up if you go in there.”



AVALANCHE planners had hoped the assault vanguard would be four thousand yards inland by daylight—to secure the beaches from mortar and machine-gun fire—and far enough by dusk on D-day to exterminate German artillery still capable of ranging the waterline. Instead, by midmorning the beachhead in a few spots hardly extended four hundred yards. A bulldozer crew trying to scrape an exit from the beach was incinerated by an 88mm shell. “They were completely black except for their teeth, which seemed whiter than living ones,” a witness reported. On Blue Beach in the far south, a

battalion was pinned to the dunes and would remain pinned for twenty hours; hundreds of men burrowed into the laurel brakes and ice plant, filching ammunition from the dead. There was more to filch after Mark IV panzers broke through the American line. “It was like fighting tanks barehanded,” a lieutenant colonel in the 141st Infantry reported:

> I saw riflemen swarm over the top of moving German tanks trying to shoot through slits or throw grenades inside. Other tanks would machine gun them off. They ran over wounded men…and spun their treads.

An intelligence officer later found that medics had laid the dead “in a row, side by side, shoulder to shoulder, with extreme precision as if about to present arms.” Their feet protruded from the covering blankets, “the stillest shoes the world could boast,” one staff officer wrote. Other bodies were propped into sitting positions, “so it wouldn’t look so bad to the troops coming in.” A radioed query to the *Ancon*—among the few coherent messages to get through—gave Clark and Hewitt a sense of conditions ashore: “On what beach shall we put our dead?”

Salvation arrived shortly after nine A.M. Minesweepers finished clearing an inshore channel, allowing warships to press toward the beaches. Fire control parties, whose operations had been hampered for hours by balky radios, smoke, enemy aircraft, and utter confusion on the beach, now began sprinkling gunfire around the beachhead rim. By late morning, destroyers steamed within a hundred yards of shore, pumping 5-inch shells into the face of Monte Soprano. The cruiser U.S.S. *Savannah* soon opened on German tank concentrations with scores of 6-inch shells. Her sister *Philadelphia* flushed three dozen panzers detected by a spotter plane in a copse near Red Beach; salvo upon salvo fell on the tanks for nearly an hour, reportedly destroying half a dozen and scattering the rest. Eleven thousand tons of naval shells would be fired at Salerno, almost comparable in heft to the bombardments at Iwo Jima and Okinawa later in the war, but no barrage was more timely than the D-day shoot.

As German troops backed into the sheltering hills, two American regiments pushed east past Paestum’s temples—“This place looks just like the cover of a Latin book,” one soldier remarked—and north toward the Sele River. A third regiment, the 141st, remained trapped near Blue Beach by enfilading fire from high ground to the south. Forty-eight DUKWs finally made shore, each carrying a howitzer, a six-man gun crew, and twenty-one rounds.

Near a tobacco barn at Casa Vannula, three miles inland, guns from the 151st Field Artillery arrived at noon, just as a dozen panzers closed on the 36th Division command post; in what one major called “hip-shooting with howitzers,” gunners demolished a stone wall for a better field of fire, cut their fuzes, then yanked the lanyards at two hundred yards’ range. By 12:30 P.M., greasy smoke boiled from four burning tanks and the others had dispersed.

“It was thrilling,” said Walker, the 36th Division commander, who had watched from the gun line. The shallow American beachhead was secure, for now.

A dozen miles to the north, the British also had won a lodgment on the hostile shore.

German air attacks had harassed the fleet even before the landing boats were lowered, and 88mm airbursts lacerated some of the approaching landing craft. Dive-bombers caught the U.S.S. *Nauset,* an ocean tug assisting the Royal Navy. Fire engulfed the boat deck, then scaled a ladder to the chart room before spiraling upward in fifty-foot orange flares behind the bridge. Powerless, rudderless, and

listing, *Nauset* struck a mine, snapped in half, and sank in sixty-five fathoms, taking her captain and first mate. More than fifty other crewmen were killed or wounded.

But the preliminary naval bombardment eschewed by the Americans helped clear Red, White, and Green Beaches for the British. Hundreds of rockets flew from modified landing craft with a pyrotechnic *swish-swish-swish* that was "quite terrifying even when expected." The 46th Division, on the left, and the 56th Division, on the right, began wading ashore at 3:30 A.M. At the water's edge, a sailor escorting the Coldstream Guards stood waving a huge flag, urging, "This way to Naples, boys!" Among the "essential assault stores" first rolled from the landing craft ramps was a piano, soon followed by crated chickens, geese, and turkeys, all lashed to jeep hoods, as well as a sow for the officers' mess.

By day's end, X Corps would land about a third of its strength—23,000 soldiers, 80 tanks, and 325 guns—despite what one chronicler called "unutterable confusion" on some beaches as subsequent waves intermingled the two divisions. Besides the usual lost coxswains, confused soldiers, and fuming beachmasters, German gunfire soon intensified. *LST 375* caught nine 88mm rounds, with many near misses. *LST 357* suffered two dozen casualties. *LST 365* collided in-shore with *LST 430,* knocking her beam-on to the beach; enemy shells wounded *430*'s skipper in all four limbs, sprayed steel through the tank deck, set fire to an ammunition truck, and terrorized wounded soldiers as they hobbled aboard for evacuation from the shingle.

Beyond the beaches, the invasion unfolded with heady initial promise. Tommies rushed three miles inland to seize Montecorvino airfield, the preeminent D-day objective. Astonished Luftwaffe pilots pelted across the runway to their cockpits only to be shot down by tanks and self-propelled guns that blew apart three dozen parked planes. Yet the field remained within easy range of German guns, a misfortune discovered by an unwitting American air force colonel, John G. Ayling, who landed in a B-25 with a cargo of radio equipment. The aircraft had hardly taxied to a stop when 88mm shells riddled the fuselage, killing Ayling and his pilot, burning the plane to the spars, and, as it transpired, ending Allied hopes of using Montecorvino for the next eleven days.

For every heartening advance, the British front suffered a disheartening setback. The 5th Battalion of the Royal Hampshire Regiment had pushed six hundred yards inland down a narrow lane hemmed in with high stone walls when a German counterattack caught two companies and the battalion headquarters like sheep in a slaughterhouse chute. Three assault guns fired point-blank as the Hampshires clawed at slick stones soon made slicker with blood. Grenadiers in half-tracks rumbled through the lane, crushing the living and the dead alike; a Hampshire radio operator was found with working headphones on his ears and his legs flattened to the thickness of a table leaf. Forty Hampshires died and more than three hundred others were wounded or led away to German cages.

Past Montecorvino, Tommies in khaki drill hurried east toward the town of Battipaglia, soon known as Batty P, a squat, melancholy Fascist showcase straddling the key intersection of Highways 18 and 19, five miles inland. The 9th Battalion of the Royal Fusiliers capered forward by tractor, dray horse, barrow, and bicycle. Crossing dikes and tobacco fields, they entered Batty P shortly after midnight on Friday, September 10, exultant but isolated. German infiltrators in camouflage face paint soon crept through swales and irrigation ditches to flank the British salient. One wary Guardsman detected "a feeling of looseness, of porosity, where all should have been tightly sealed."

As another hot, luminous Mediterranean day dawned on Friday, German counterattacks added panic to that loose feeling. Fusiliers scoured westward past the Lombardy poplars and oleander, warning of Tiger tanks "like bloody great battleships." Some flung away their weapons, yelling, "Back to the beaches! We're overrun!" By Friday afternoon, a Guards officer wrote, "the small roads were full of frightened soldiers, many retiring pell-mell regardless of officers." Short, violent scraps flared across the beachhead, gunfights rather than battles. Outside Battipaglia at a three-acre complex

encircled with an eight-foot spiked fence—labeled “Tabacchificio” on military maps, it was in fact a tomato canning plant—the 2nd Scots Guards made a valiant but bootless attempt to oust German squatters with grenade volleys and bursts of fire down darkened corridors. After reverses on the left flank, some Grenadiers clung to an overloaded truck, shouting in alarm. “They’re coming! They’re through!”

They were not coming, nor were they through. The line stiffened, shoving the Germans back to Batty P, and by early Saturday the British held roughly eight miles of beachfront that extended inland for two to four miles. British Commandos held a smaller, shallower adjacent plot at Salerno town, including the port. Every occupied inch was vulnerable to German guns—the “demented choirs of wailing shells,” as Wilfred Owen had written on a different battlefield—and those without shovels soon dug with their hands. As one artillery major observed, “We’ve got them just where they want us.”

Only on the extreme left of the Allied line could the invaders report unqualified success. Bill Darby’s Rangers had captured the resort villages of Maiori, Minori, and Amalfi without opposition, then climbed a serpentine road through groves of thick-skinned lemons the size of a child’s skull to seize the hogback crest of the Sorrento Peninsula. Five hours after crossing the black-sand beaches, Rangers held Chiunzi Pass, six miles inland and four thousand feet up.

“If ever there was an artilleryman’s dream,” Darby later said, “here it was.” The windswept defile offered a panoramic view of Naples, Vesuvius’s purple shoulders, and all German military traffic crawling south toward Salerno on Highway 18. “This is the place for fighting,” said Robert Capa upon reaching Chiunzi. “It reminds me of Spain.” Rangers nested like cliff swallows in the ridge face, then trimmed the chestnut branches for a better view and called for fire. “We have taken up a position in the enemy’s rear,” Darby radioed Clark on *Ancon*. “We’ll stay here until hell freezes over if necessary.”

Soon a battleship, two cruisers, and a plug-ugly, flat-bottomed British monitor crowded the Amalfi hollow, where Sirens once lured sailors onto rocks “white with the bones of many men.” With their guns cocked like howitzers to clear the mountain crest, the ships unlimbered in a concussive mêlée of smoke rings and shrieking shells that soared above the pass like “a freight train with the caboose wobbling from side to side,” one Ranger recalled. German infantry in long-billed caps furiously counterattacked Chiunzi, firing mortar barrages through holes chopped in farmhouse roofs below the pass and trying to flank the Ranger pinnacles by scaling higher pinnacles. The reporter Richard Tregaskis described “showers of white phosphorus rising like luminous fountains” from the saddles. Wounded Rangers sheltered in a stone roadside tavern at the top of the pass—now renamed Eighty-eight Junction—with mattresses wedged against the window; others filled a Catholic church in Maiori that had been converted to a hospital. OSS agents hired three hundred Italians—$1 a day for men, 75 cents for boys, plus two cans of C rations—to lug mortar shells and water up the switchback road, where poppies danced like candle flames. One officer forever remembered “that long line of men and boys in rags winding up Chiunzi Pass, each with his load.”

Others forever remembered deep-chested Darby, ubiquitious and apparently sleepless, still a lieutenant colonel but leading a force that soon swelled in size to that usually commanded by a major general. Always washed and shaved, his uniform somehow always creased, he radioed orders using the call sign Snow White from a command post in the ramshackle, eight-room San Francisco Hotel. To various Bashfuls, Grumpys, and Dopeys he dictated map coordinates: “I want to give this a hell of a pasting…. I want to blast the crap out of this hill.”

Until hell freezes over, Darby had vowed. Of all the commanders ashore in Fifth Army, only he could truthfully radio Clark, “We are sitting pretty.” For the rest, American and British, in VI Corps and in X Corps, Naples still lay far to the north, and no man doubted that the beachhead had become a

magnet for every *Gefreiter* in southern Italy with a machine pistol. At a cost of a thousand Anglo-American casualties, Fifth Army in two days had won a footing ashore; yet the struggle at Salerno would not be for the beach but for the beachhead.

"Corpses lay on the sand. The living ran for cover," wrote one soldier after slogging ashore near Salerno. "There was," he added, "an uneasy feeling of a hitch somewhere."

"In the land of theory…there is none of war's friction," the official British military history of Salerno observed.

> The troops are, as in fact they were not, perfect Tactical Men, uncannily skillful, impervious to fear, bewilderment, boredom, hunger, thirst, or tiredness. Commanders know what in fact they did not know…. Lorries never collide, there is always a by-pass at the mined road-block, and the bridges are always wider than the flood. Shells fall always where they should fall.

Salerno did not lie in the land of theory. Frictions had accumulated since H-hour. Mistakes were made. Hitches occurred. Three miscalculations in particular would shape the battle, taking the Allied force from the benighted, braying optimism of invasion eve to the brink of obliteration five days later.

The first hitch involved command of the American force. With General Walker leading the 36th Division at Paestum, Clark intended to keep his VI Corps commander, Major General Dawley, out of the battle until September 11, the third day of AVALANCHE, when there would be enough troops ashore to warrant a corps headquarters. A decade older than Clark and also his senior in permanent rank, Mike Dawley was a stocky, cautious artilleryman from Wisconsin who had been described in his West Point yearbook as "a quiet lad that one seldom sees or hears of." A decorated protégé of George Marshall in the Great War, he had a small mouth, a pushbroom mustache, and a worried look. The brow would only become more furrowed. "Don't bite off more than you can chew," he had warned Clark during the Salerno planning, "and chew damn well."

Clark's plan to leave Dawley on the sidelines until D+2 lasted less than seven hours. With little information trickling out to *Ancon* from the beach, the army commander concluded that he needed another major general on the shingle to oversee the landings. Just after ten A.M. on September 9, Clark abruptly directed Dawley to "assume command of all American operations ashore." That order, however, was not decoded aboard the U.S.S. *Funston* until after three P.M., by which time Dawley had left his ship to explore the beachhead. A staff officer sent to find the corps commander returned empty-handed. Clark's message finally caught up with him at Paestum, and at nine P.M. Dawley departed to return to the *Funston* only to spend most of the night wandering the Mediterranean: German air attacks had scattered the anchorage, leaving no ship where it had been that afternoon. "Coxswain got lost, started for Naples, then Sardinia," Dawley told his diary. He finally reboarded *Funston* at four in the morning.

With his dispersed staff in disarray, Dawley returned to Paestum at eleven A.M., September 10, appearing at Walker's command post as an unwanted guest who now required radios, jeeps, and other support. Nominally in command of the battle since the previous morning, Dawley had actually commanded nothing. "Confusion and disorganization" beset VI Corps from the beginning, one staff colonel admitted. Dawley himself was exhausted and off balance. Another officer described him crouched in a ditch at Paestum watching howitzers battle panzers "pretty much as one would sit in the

middle section of the stands at a tennis match and watch opponents bat the ball back and forth."

The second hitch had been foreseen by George Patton, who at Eisenhower's request reviewed the AVALANCHE plan on September 1. Patton noted that the Sele River had been chosen as the boundary between British forces in the north of the Salerno plain and Americans in the south. "Just as sure as God lives," Patton said, jabbing his finger at the map, "the Germans will attack down that river." As X Corps and VI Corps fought their separate fights on D-day, a seven-mile gap, bisected by the Sele, persisted between the two forces; neither could support the other. Clark recognized the rift, but not its vulnerability. "The gap," he had told Hewitt on Thursday night, "is not too serious."

On Friday morning, as Dawley struggled to take command, Clark also went ashore to inspect the beachhead. In the Paestum tobacco barn that served as the 36th Division command post, General Walker described the situation as being "well in hand." The gap between his force and the British persisted, but German troops seemed to be pulling back. The American beachhead had expanded, unloading proceeded apace, and another six-thousand-man regiment—the 179th Infantry, from the 45th Division—had splashed ashore. At one P.M., back aboard *Ancon,* Clark radioed Alexander: "Have just returned from personal reconnaissance of VI Corps sector. Situation there is good." To help unite his two corps, Clark ordered his last reserves, two battalions from the 157th Infantry, to make shore at the Sele. Yet the yawning gap remained, an ominous corridor to the sea between Batty P and the south bank of the river.

The third hitch derived from the failure to secure Montecorvino airfield. Consequences descended, like clattering dominoes. Instead of having more than twenty Allied fighter squadrons ashore in short order, Fifth Army was forced to depend on aircraft from distant Sicily and on little escort carriers like H.M.S. *Battler* and H.M.S. *Stalker,* which had intended to withdraw on September 10. Pilots grew fatigued and the number of accidents soared; more than forty carrier-based Seafires crashed, mostly during deck landings hampered by light winds, callow aviators, and flimsy undercarriages. (The accident rate later improved after mechanics sawed nine inches off each propeller blade, giving more clearance from the flight deck.) When a naval officer told *Ancon*'s crew over the public address system that "the operation in the bay of Salerno is going according to plan," a British pilot rescued at sea after bailing out heaved his shoe at the loudspeaker and barked, "Bloody nonsense."

Using flashlights for illumination and the stars as reference points, aviation engineers worked nights to build four emergency strips at Paestum and elsewhere on the littoral. But even such heroic "cow-pasture engineering"—filling ditches, felling trees, and chopping up rail fences for runway paving—produced only narrow, dusty, accident-plagued fields that were useless in wet weather. And although Allied air forces remained superior in quantity and quality, the Luftwaffe, which would fly 450 sorties against the beachhead on September 10 and 11, now displayed a pugnacity unseen in Sicily. Hewitt reduced his anxiety to four words in a message from *Ancon* on Saturday: "Air situation here critical."

A death struggle had begun, between Allied forces trying to mass enough combat strength to burst free of the Salerno plain and German forces trying to mass enough strength to fling the invaders into the sea. "I feel that AVALANCHE will be a matter of touch and go for the next few days," Eisenhower cabled the Combined Chiefs from Amilcar. "Our greatest asset now is confusion."

That was a thin reed. With Fifth Army's last reserves already committed, Alexander on September 10 urged Eighth Army to make haste from Calabria; Montgomery cheerfully agreed to "push on as soon as admin situation allows," while confiding to his diary that he intended to "act

carefully." Despite modest opposition he issued no get-cracking orders and on September 11 declared a two-day rest for his 5th Division. The plodding march north resembled, in one description, "a holiday picnic."

On the other side of the hill, General Vietinghoff had his own worries in the German Tenth Army. Two-thirds of 16th Panzer Division's tanks had been knocked out in the first day of combat, leaving less than three dozen still in the fight. German scouts, wrapping their boots in rags to silence their footfalls, probed for seams in the Allied lines, but canals, stone walls, and those infernal naval guns hampered mobility. Allied bombers had pulverized most of the German airfields in southern Italy. And Kesselring's September 9 plea to divert two panzer divisions from Mantua, in northern Italy, to Salerno was denied by the Berlin high command, with profound consequences.

Hitches plagued Vietinghoff, too. His Tenth Army, only a few weeks old, had feeble quartermaster and signal units. Fuel worries persisted: a German tanker captain, fearing capture, had dumped his cargo into the sea; supply officers underestimated the extra stocks needed to move in mountainous terrain; and Frascati had provided the wrong locations for fuel depots in Calabria.

Still, reinforcements gathered in the shadowy glens east of Salerno, where confused villagers threw flowers at the passing panzers and shouted, "*Viva* English!" Vietinghoff estimated that by Monday, September 13, he would have five divisions ringing the beachhead, including Sicilian veterans like the Hermann Göring and 29th Panzer Grenadier. Company by company, regiment by regiment, they clanked into position with the precision of a clenching fist.

Within the Anglo-American beachhead, rumors flitted like small birds: that the British were in Naples; that the German garrison on Corsica had mutinied; that the Allies had landed in France; that Italian troops blocked the Brenner Pass; that the Germans were using poison gas. The savvy and the cynical soon credited only what their five senses confirmed. Few would dispute the 45th Division gunner who wrote in his diary, "From what we have seen, the surrender of Italy hasn't hindered the Germans too much."

Fresh dead joined the older dead. Walker reported that in the 36th Division alone 250 men had been killed in action by midday on September 10. Burial details next to Dawley's headquarters quickly hit water, and the shallow grave became a regular feature at Paestum. Soldiers dug a trench four feet deep and a hundred feet long, then straddled the trench line on planks to lower the dead with canvas straps. "The first body didn't have a mark on him, all his bones were broken and it was like lifting a bag of rags," recalled a 36th Division grave digger. Soon dead men lay "like railroad ties" until the trench was filled and another trench was dug. Wooden wedges served as grave markers, with the apex hammered into the ground; officers ordered a canvas screen erected around the Paestum cemetery to hide the forest of triangles growing there. "They've placed the graveyard, the latrines and the kitchen all in the same area for the convenience of the flies," an Army engineer wrote.

Stretcher bearers hurrying to the rear learned to walk off-step, John Steinbeck observed, "so that the burden will not be jounced too much." U.S. Army Medical Forms 52b, 52c, and 52d were tied to wounded soldiers with wire clasps; in the space labeled "place where injured," an overworked medic often just scribbled, as medics in Italy would so often scribble: "Hill." The evacuation hospital near Red Beach was so overcrowded that many patients lay "along the walls of the tents with their heads inside and their bodies outside." Surgeons operated by flashlight at night—much medical equipment had been lost in the landings—and sometimes both doctor and patient were concealed beneath blankets. German shells fell anyway, and a battalion medical history noted that "patients displayed unusual agility in jumping from operating tables into foxholes."

Not all. Richard Tregaskis watched a Catholic chaplain give extreme unction to a young soldier with a bullet in the throat; when the boy's eyes grew fixed and glassy, a doctor turned away, muttering, "Well, that's the way it is." Alan Moorehead wrote of Italian peasants mourning a child

killed in the cross fire: “They cried over it with a nameless uncomprehending anguish, blaming no human agency, attributing everything to the implacable will of God…. This attunement to blind providence communicated itself to the soldiers.” Again, not all. When a German shell killed a lieutenant sleeping in his slit trench at Chiunzi, a comrade concluded, “I don’t think God has anything to do with this war.”

Wishful thinking flocked with rumor. “Our forces have captured Salerno,” the BBC declared, “and are advancing steadily inland.” Just after midnight on Saturday, Fifth Army reported, “Combat efficiency all units excellent.” At two A.M. Clark radioed Alexander, “Am satisfied in both corps sectors.” Fifth Army was ready to march north toward Naples. As often occurred on even the fiercest battlefields, an odd lull briefly becalmed Salerno. “The worst is over,” the 142nd Infantry commander told his Texans. “We are more than a match for all that can meet us.”

The Moan of Lost Souls

As a gloriously warm and clear Saturday morning spread across the Gulf of Salerno on September 11, Kent Hewitt harbored no illusions that the worst was over. Four German bombs had landed off *Ancon*’s starboard bow the previous day, and four more had detonated a hundred yards astern just before five A.M. The ship’s size and antennae made her conspicuous—“like a sore thumb,” Hewitt complained—and radio intercepts revealed that German pilots were specifically hunting the flagship. Trenchant scuttlebutt could be heard about whether General Clark ever intended to “get off and get into the action” by moving his headquarters permanently ashore, allowing *Ancon* to return to Algiers.

Thirty “red alerts” had sounded in thirty-six hours, and frequent hailstorms of spent antiaircraft splinters forced sailors topside to flatten against the bulkheads. Even *Ancon*’s mess orderlies had joined the human chains passing ammunition to the gun turrets. Belowdecks, with safety hatches closed and ventilation fans turned off to avoid sucking in acrid smoke, the crew sweltered. At night, helmsmen tried to minimize the ship’s silhouette by steering straight toward or away from the moon at twelve knots—slow enough to shrink her wake but fast enough to complicate any U-boat captain’s torpedo trigonometry.

Three days into AVALANCHE, Hewitt’s cares had doubled and redoubled. The beaches were now so congested that fuel, food, and ammo lay heaped in the shallows, drawing enemy fire and impeding further unloading. Army and Navy officers argued bitterly over who outranked whom and which service bore responsibility for clearing the shingle. Drivers could not find their vehicles, surgeons their scalpels, mortarmen their mortars. Sailors playing “cowboys and Indians” aboard one of *Ancon*’s barges had peppered floating crates, first with pistol fire, then with 20mm slugs. The scouring action of LST and other landing craft propellers had created formidable new sandbars and runnels 150 yards offshore.

Worst of all, Luftwaffe attacks had intensified almost hourly. Hewitt this morning had sent Admiral Cunningham an urgent plea for more air cover. Repeated alerts and shooting throughout the night rattled skippers and swabs alike. “All are jumpy and nervous and washed out now,” one LCT commander told his diary. The cruiser *Philadelphia* reported that her crew was drinking a daily average of a gallon of coffee per man, and the ship’s surgeon had begun distributing “nerve pills.”

The demand for pills must have spiked at 9:35 A.M., when an enormous explosion fifteen feet to starboard caused a “very marked hogging, sagging, and whipping motion” from *Philadelphia*’s bow to her fantail. Nine minutes later, as Clark and Hewitt stood on *Ancon*’s flag bridge sorting through frantic reports of the mysterious blast, a slender, eleven-foot cylinder dropped from a Luftwaffe Do-217 bomber at eighteen thousand feet. Plummeting in a tight spiral and trailing smoke, the object

resembled a stricken aircraft.

In fact, as Hewitt soon surmised, it was a secret German weapon: a guided bomb with four stubby wings, an armor-piercing delayed fuze, and a six-hundred-pound warhead. A radio receiver and movable fins permitted a German bomber pilot to steer with a joystick from his cockpit, tracking the falling bomb by the burning flare mounted on its tail. Four years in development, the FX-1400—soon known as the Fritz-X or Smoky Joe—had first appeared in combat in late August, sinking a British sloop in the Bay of Biscay; on September 9, two Fritz-Xs had sunk the Italian battleship *Roma* near Corsica as she sortied to join the British fleet at Malta. Allied intelligence would dispatch agents from Norway to Greece in an effort to capture one of the missiles, which an intelligence officer called "the holy grail." For now, as Hewitt knew, the only defense against the Fritz-X was to hope it missed, as the *Philadelphia* had been missed.

Closing at six hundred miles per hour with a "terrific screeching noise," the bomb appeared to Clark to be aimed straight for *Ancon*. Instead, it swooped over the flagship toward a cruiser five hundred yards to starboard. The U.S.S. *Savannah* had been lying to while awaiting the morning's shore-bombardment assignment, but a red alert from *Ancon* caused her to ring for twenty knots and a hard left rudder. She had just leaned into her turn when calamity struck.

"It didn't fall like bombs do," an observer on *Ancon* later said. "It came down like a shell." At a 20-degree angle from true vertical, the Fritz-X hit just forward of *Savannah*'s bridge, punching a twenty-two-inch hole in the armored roof of turret number 3 and slicing through three more steel decks before detonating in the lower handling room, thirty-six feet down. No American vessel had ever before been struck by a guided missile, and no U.S. Navy warship in World War II would be struck by a larger bomb than the Fritz-X that caught *Savannah* at 9:44 A.M. Another witness concluded, "That hit wasn't natural."

A spurt of flame "flared like a sulphur match" from the turret. Quentin Reynolds on *Ancon* wrote, "The flame must have shot eighty feet into the air and then, as it receded, men who had been blown skyward fell with it, mingling with the flame and the orange smoke." Hewitt watched aghast as the explosion vented along the cruiser's port waterline: *Savannah* had been his flagship during North Atlantic convoy duty in 1941.

The blast vaporized bulkheads, buckled decks, and shattered watertight doors, killing every sailor in turret number 3, and ripping a thirty-foot hole in the ship's bottom. Flame licked through ventilation ducts, incinerating more men with flash burns; poisonous gases rolled up powder hoists and piping. Eight magazines were wrecked, and a design flaw caused ducts from the magazines to vent on the third deck rather than overboard, killing men in compartments that suffered little structural damage. Twenty-one sailors died in a gun room when visibility instantly dropped to six inches and toxic fumes overwhelmed them before they could escape through a rear hatch.

Not least, gunpowder lay scattered five inches deep. At Pearl Harbor twenty-one months earlier, a conventional bomb under similar circumstances had ignited a forward powder magazine and eviscerated the U.S.S. *Arizona* with a devastating explosion; *Roma* had died in like fashion on Thursday afternoon, broken in half with a loss of thirteen hundred lives. Only massive flooding preserved *Savannah* from the same fate: her powder had begun to burn but an abrupt tide of seawater through the side plates and lower hull quenched the fire just seconds before the magazines would have ignited.

Her rugged hull saved her, along with luck and heroic firefighting. Flooded for 152 feet of her length and listing 8 degrees to port, *Savannah* settled 12 feet in the bow until her forecastle was nearly awash. Frozen in a left turn, she crossed *Ancon*'s bow before gliding by the flagship's port side as if passing in review. Detonating 6-inch shells and burning balsa rafts on the weather deck complicated the rescue efforts of men playing hoses down gun muzzles and through the violated roof of turret

number 3. The lucky died quickly, including one human torch who appeared on deck and leaped overboard—his body was never recovered—and a turret officer, naked and charred and entangled in phone wire, who passed within minutes. Others lingered for days. Among the unluckiest was Bosun's Mate John M. Wilhelm, who had been transferred from his minesweeper to *Savannah* the previous day for treatment of a broken ankle; he died with eight others in the sick bay, and would be buried at sea.

A deft shifting of fuel from bunker to bunker brought the cruiser to an even keel, and on Saturday evening *Savannah* retired with a destroyer escort for Malta. Across the Salerno anchorage, sailors braced the rails, saluting. At Valletta she would moor in Dockyard Creek, where rescuers hoisted bodies from the wrecked compartments below; wrapped in sheets or olive-drab blankets they covered the deck like toppled chess pieces. Four men trapped in a radio room emerged alive after sixty hours, but 206 others had perished.

Savannah's fight was finished, at least for a year, but at Salerno the war continued. Hewitt desperately sought remedies against the glide bombs, pleading for more smoke generators from North Africa and toying with electronic countermeasures by having sailors flip on their electric razors and other appliances during an attack. The experiment was said "to improve morale without affecting the accuracy of the missiles." Fritz-X attacks in coming days would also cripple the battleship H.M.S. *Warspite* and the cruiser H.M.S. *Uganda,* among eighty-five Allied vessels hit by German bombs at Salerno. In a few months, effective jamming transmitters would emerge from Navy research laboratories, but for the moment every man afloat felt a dread vulnerability.

To the relief of *Ancon*'s crew, on Sunday morning, September 12, Mark Clark moved his Fifth Army headquarters from ship to beachhead. Clerks, drivers, and staff officers rode a Royal Navy landing vessel to shore, where a witness described "hundreds of soldiers streaming like ants to bring typewriters and filing cabinets up from the beach." Near Highway 18, in a pine grove southwest of the Sele-Calore confluence, a conspicuous pink-stucco palazzo with a lush garden was chosen for Clark's command post despite sporadic enemy artillery fire. The late-summer landscape blended the pastoral and the war-torn. Blue grasshoppers whirred among rioting zinnias, and water buffalo grazed in the plashy fens near the carcasses of goats killed in the cross fire. Naval shells had splintered gum trees and cratered the meadows, but a cat dozed on the windowsill of an empty peasant house where sweet peas and tomatoes and geraniums stretched toward the sun.

Clark immediately drove south to General Dawley's tobacco barn headquarters, his long legs folded awkwardly into the jeep. Across his nose he knotted a bandana against the dust that soon powdered his uniform and whitened his eyebrows. At the Paestum cemetery, corpses lay in windrows awaiting interment—"lots of dead piling up outside the wall and beginning to get ripe," Dawley's aide had noted in his diary on Saturday. Inside the VI Corps command post, the rich fragrance of drying tobacco leaves in overhead flues masked the stink. Dawley tromped about in his cavalry boots, flicking a riding crop at the large map board covered with cabalistic red and blue symbols.

Twenty-eight thousand Americans were now ashore, with roughly twice that many British troops to the north. The Fifth Army beachhead stretched for forty miles, at an average depth of six miles. Nowhere was it deeper than eleven miles, and near Battipaglia the line had hardly advanced since the invasion began four days earlier. Montgomery's army still dawdled far to the south, and Clark could expect no significant reinforcements by sea until another infantry division and an armored division finished arriving in the fourth week of September.

The American right flank seemed secure, but the center worried Clark. This morning, German grenadiers had infiltrated a battalion of the 142nd Infantry in the hilltop village of Altavilla, then cut

the unit to ribbons. Driven from Altavilla and the terraced heights to the east, the battalion was reduced by two-thirds, to 260 men. As described by a 36th Division soldier, Altavilla embodied another of those topographical truisms all too common in Italy: "a height of some sort with the enemy looking down at us." The battalion commander was captured, and among the other casualties was his intelligence officer, a former Southern Methodist University football star named John F. Sprague, who had played in the 1937 Rose Bowl. Bleeding from grenade fragments in his eyes and torso, Sprague told a comrade, "I'm a little hungry. Let's put on the pan and have some ham and eggs." Then: "I have a little headache. I wish I had an aspirin." With a flail of his arms and a final heave of his barrel chest, he died.

Of still greater concern to Clark was the American left flank. The Sele corridor, code-named BRYAN, was even more vulnerable after the loss of Altavilla. As one officer noted, the Sele had become not just a river but "a tribulation." In the V-shaped bottoms where the Calore flowed into the Sele from the northeast, the 179th Infantry for the past day had fought desperately against panzers spilling from the dells below Eboli. One artillery battalion was reduced to five rounds, to be "fired point blank in the final emergency," and as riflemen fixed bayonets and formed a 360-degree perimeter, gunners made contingency plans to spike their tubes and flee through the brush. On a commanding rise just north of the Sele, a tank battalion had been ambushed by 16th Panzer Division troops this morning at the Tabacchificio Fioche, a stronghold of five brick buildings with massive walls, red tile roofs, and small windows resembling gun ports; the tobacco factory would change hands several times through the afternoon, as tank rounds gnawed at the brick and machine-gun bullets scythed the Sele rushes. After seesaw fighting, American troops occupied the *tabacchificio,* digging in along the river and the dusty road to Eboli.

If German forces followed the Sele to the sea, Clark realized, they could turn the inner flanks of both X Corps in the north and VI Corps in the south. Was Dawley alive to the peril on his left? Clark wondered. The 45th and 36th Divisions were arrayed in a brittle cordon defense, and the 45th had just five infantry battalions in Italy. The enemy noose grew tighter by the hour, yet the corps had no reserves. Unmentioned was Clark's original decision to divide his army by landing on both sides of the Sele, rather than putting all forces north of the river and using it to shield his right flank. He ended the conference, folded himself back into the jeep, and drove to Red Beach, where he flagged down a patrol boat and roared off to the British sector in search of the X Corps commander, Lieutenant General Richard L. McCreery.

Here things were even worse. "Very heavy fighting today involving very great expenditure of ammunition," McCreery had informed Clark the previous night. On Saturday alone, the Germans had captured fifteen hundred Allied soldiers, mostly British; X Corps casualties at Salerno approached three thousand. A pious, blunt Anglo-Irish cavalryman—"tall, lean, and vague," as one Yank described him—McCreery limped from a Great War wound and tended when alarmed to lower his voice to a near whisper. He was whispering now. Hounded by panzers, the exhausted 56th Division was pulling back to a new line two miles west of Battipaglia, a town badly pulverized and reeking of seared flesh. Grenadier and Coldstream Guardsmen were only five thousand yards from the beaches; some battalion officers had burned their secret documents and maps as a precaution against capture. "Shells whined swiftly over us like lost souls. Moan, moan, moan, they wept," wrote a young Coldstream officer named Michael Howard. The Scots Guards official history later acknowledged "a general feeling in the air of another Dunkirk."

Shaken by the sight of the British dead stacked in the dunes, Clark at dusk raced the failing light back to Paestum. His first order was to abandon the pink palazzo, now within earshot of panzer fire; the army headquarters moved into a green calamity tent hastily erected in a thicket just a stone's throw north of the VI Corps barn. Under prodding, Dawley—who complained about "my paucity of

reserves”—issued VI Corps Field Order No. 2 to shift his forces to the left. The 45th Division would sidestep north of the Sele, with two battalions on the far left of the American line stretching toward Batty P in an effort to seal the gap with the British; Walker’s 36th Division now held everything south of the river on an exceptionally elongated thirty-five-mile front. In his pencil-written diary, Dawley scribbled: “Situation bad.”

Grimy and dust-caked, Clark crawled into Al Gruenther’s small trailer for a few hours’ sleep. Flares limned the horizon to the east, bleaching out the rising moon. Muzzle flashes twinkled along the ridgelines, and the nag of artillery rolled down the hills, echoing and reechoing across the Sele tribulation. “Situation unfavorable in 10th Corps,” Clark warned Alexander before dropping off to sleep. “It now appears I must await further buildup before resuming offensive.” Two hours after receiving Clark’s message, Alexander scratched a note to Eisenhower on a blank sheet of white typing paper: “The situation is not favorable, and everything must be done to help him.”

September 13—“Black Monday,” to those who outlived it—dawned “so quiet that the crowing of a cock cut the ears.” Mist drifted in the flats, wet and eerie. Eight-foot tobacco fronds nodded on the morning airs. Somewhere a cow lowed, longing to be milked.

All tranquillity vanished at six A.M. Two battalions from the 36th Division struck Altavilla through the peach and apple trees in a futile lunge for the high ground behind the town, especially a cactus-infested knob known as Hill 424. Ferocious German counterattacks with twenty tanks eventually drove the Americans down the terraced slopes, firing over their shoulders. Off to a bad start, the morning only worsened when the 142nd Infantry’s 1st Battalion, already reduced to 260 men, pushed through a ravine south of the village in a column of companies; artillery shells—some alleged they came from American guns—ripped the formation from front to back. By day’s end, just sixty men were reported fit for duty. The 3rd Battalion of the 143rd Infantry, encircled and besieged by five counterattacks, would slip away only after nightfall, although Company K remained trapped in Altavilla for another twenty-four hours; fighting with desperate gallantry, three soldiers in the battalion earned Congressional Medals of Honor. Yet three battalions had been repulsed with heavy losses, and an uncharitable soldier in another division wondered “if the Texans were having any trouble getting the Germans to stand up and take off their hats when ‘Deep in the Heart of Texas’ was played.”

Slapped around in the uplands at Altavilla, the Americans now faced mortal danger in the Sele flats. For only on Monday morning did General Vietinghoff confirm that a rift ran through the center of Fifth Army; German intelligence surmised that the two enemy corps had “independent and almost unconnected leadership.” Vietinghoff, who had amassed six hundred tanks and self-propelled guns, now insisted that the Allies had “split themselves into two sections” to expedite evacuation of the beachhead. The arrival of more ships in the anchorage, as well as an intercepted radio message, seemed to confirm the enemy’s intention of abandoning Salerno. A quick thrust down the Sele to the sea could thwart any escape; there would be no second Dunkirk.

Grenadiers sang “Lili Marlene” as they rolled into their assembly areas at midday. “The engines were started up again,” a 16th Panzer Division history recorded. “Once more the dust rose in clouds above the hot, narrow roads.”

Even in peacetime the five stout warehouses of the Tabacchificio Fioche offered scant shelter from the hard life of the Sele peasantry. Reclamation projects in the nineteenth century had converted

malarial swampland—"altogether insalubrious," a visiting priest complained—into tenant farms growing tobacco for a state monopoly that by 1940 was producing nearly twenty billion cigarettes annually. Hundreds of women in homespun smocks labored under the *tabacchificio*'s brick archways from dawn to dusk, typically for less than twenty lire a day, spearing leaves onto drying-rack spindles, or sorting them by grade into large wicker baskets. "*Andare al tabacco*"—"going to tobacco"—had become a euphemism for a hard life, often choked with tragedy.

Here the full fury of the German attack fell at 3:30 P.M. A spearhead of fifteen panzers clanked southwest down the Eboli road, followed by a shrieking battalion of grenadiers shooting colored flares and smoke grenades to simulate a bigger force. ("Fireworks created an appearance of large numbers," an American officer later observed.) Like a battering ram, the assault stove in first one flank and then the other of the 157th Infantry's 1st Battalion, part of Middleton's 45th Division. From the far bank, tank fire screamed through the Yank command post. The battalion soon broke, pelting west down the river for nearly two miles toward Highway 18 with a loss of more than five hundred men. A mortar company left unprotected near the *tabacchificio* continued to fire until German machine gunners closed to within two hundred yards, forcing the mortarmen to flee as well, their abandoned tubes unspiked.

The wolf was in the fold. "Tracers were going through my pack," a soldier later wrote his father. "My nose was all scratched trying to hug the ground." Across the river, a single battalion from the 36th Division—the 2nd of the 143rd Infantry—had been plopped after midnight between the Sele and the Calore, just beyond the hamlet of Persano. Germans from the *tabacchificio* looped behind the unit's left flank, while other panzers struck from the right and head-on, machine-gunning GIs in slit trenches along a dirt track. "For a description of the next five hours," one corporal later wrote in his diary, "I will reserve a space in my memory." A sergeant was reading the Twenty-third Psalm when grenadiers yanked him from his hole; he was surprised to see "*Gott mit Uns*" belt buckles, having been told that all Germans were atheists. Rifle companies, one witness said, "were swept aside like furrows from a plow." Of 842 men, 334 survived to fight another day; half the battalion was captured, including the commander. Some men dropped their weapons on the pretext that the barrels had become too hot to handle. Poor coordination between the 45th and 36th Divisions resulted in gunners from one firing into the backs of soldiers from the other. All afternoon panzers hunted GIs like game birds in the dense undergrowth. A major who escaped across the Calore summarized his report in five words: "It was hell up there."

And soon, back here. "Situation worse. Enemy closing. Heavy tank and artillery action," a 179th Infantry war diary recorded. "Aid station set up in haystack." The 191st Tank Battalion backed its Shermans into a semi-circle to fire on three fronts; quartermasters dumped ammunition in a hedgerow, and tank crews took turns scuttling back one by one to rearm. Dead men lay on a gravel bar in the Calore as if sunning themselves. A young major in the 179th Infantry told his men, "Tonight you're not fighting for your country, you're fighting for your ass. Because they're behind us."

"Enemy on the run," the German vanguard reported. Only a charred, demolished bridge across the Calore, five miles from the beach, momentarily stalled Vietinghoff's drive to Paestum and the sea. Deep drainage ditches kept German tanks and armored carriers from veering off the narrow dirt road. Panzer commanders milled at the Burned Bridge, studying their maps.

Then, on the southwest bank of the Calore, hard by the junction with the Sele, two field artillery battalions from the 45th Division—the 158th and the 189th—shouldered two dozen guns into the brambles, and at 6:30 P.M. let fly volley after stabbing volley, point blank across the muddy stream. Drivers, bandsmen, and cooks crawled along the bank, and the crackle of rifle fire soon punctuated the roar of 105mm howitzers and the *pumpf* of white-phosphorus mortar shells springing from their tubes. Smoke billowed in the bottoms, swallowing the molten glare of flares floating on their tiny

parachutes, and howitzer shells splintered trees on the far bank, clear-cutting the wood with steel and flame. Some guns fired nineteen rounds a minute, triple the howitzer's supposed maximum rate of fire, in a blur of yanked lanyards and ejected brass. Stripped to the waist and black with grit, soldiers staggered from dump to gun with a high-explosive shell on each shoulder, and sheets of flame bridged the Calore, hour after hour after hour.

Three miles down Highway 18, grim dispatches fluttered into the VI Corps tobacco barn: an enemy column a mile long was moving south from Eboli toward Persano to exploit the gash in the American line; several battalions had been ravaged if not obliterated; German shells had destroyed forty thousand gallons of fuel and thwarted efforts to reopen the Salerno port. The rude airstrips around Paestum were so dusty that pilots often took off and landed by instrument even in daylight. Runway construction work had been impaired this afternoon by the desertion of terrified Italian laborers. Also, a P-38 fighter had crashed into a water truck that was laying the dust, killing two engineers; a wrecking crew raced onto the field, cinched cables around the dead men's ankles, and dragged them off along with the other debris. "The work went on as if nothing much had happened," one officer noted. "A pretty hard-boiled business."

"Things not too hot for the home team today," General Dawley's aide wrote in his diary. Haggard and gray from lack of sleep, Dawley in his own diary entry assessed the afternoon with a single noun: "Disaster—." A Fifth Army messenger found him "resting on a cot, looking very bad." When the corps commander phoned Clark to warn of the enemy breakthrough at Persano, Clark asked, "What are you going to do about it? What can you do?" Dawley replied, "Nothing. I have no reserves. All I've got is a prayer."

Clark had spent the day in Gruenther's trailer hearing the same bleak reports. The beachhead, he concluded, had deteriorated from precarious to "extremely critical." Not until this morning had Alexander issued an unambiguous hurry-up order to Eighth Army, but Montgomery remained more than sixty miles away—despite annoying BBC broadcasts that portrayed him as heroically galloping to the rescue. Only the lightly armed 82nd Airborne Division in Sicily could provide quick reinforcement, and Clark this morning sent Ridgway a note so hastily scribbled that he omitted the final consonant from the 82nd commander's first name: "Dear Mat…It is absolutely essential that one of your infantry regimental combat teams drop today within our defended beachhead."

At 7:30 P.M., as evening again enfolded the beachhead, Clark convened a conference with Dawley, Walker, and Middleton in the hot, dim VI Corps command post. To avoid drawing enemy fire, cigarettes were forbidden in the capacious barn, and only a hooded flashlight illuminated the map board. Staff officers drifted through the spectral gloom, and radios crackled in the corner. Clark recalled a staff college exercise at Fort Leavenworth a decade earlier in which students prepared demolition orders to prevent ammunition and other stocks from falling into enemy hands. "How the hell would you do it?" Clark wondered. Set the stuff ablaze? "You just don't go up with a match." Demolition preparations alone would shatter morale. Staff college also had stressed the importance in amphibious invasions of drafting an evacuation plan. Yet the 1941 Army field manual "Landing Operations on Hostile Shores" warned that reembarkations of forces under fire "are exceedingly difficult and hazardous operations," which could require "the deliberate sacrifice of part of the forces ashore in order to extricate the bulk." Which forces should be sacrificed at Salerno?

Clark would subsequently deny seriously considering evacuation. "That was never in our thoughts," he wrote his mother a month later. In fact, he now revealed contingency plans still being cobbled together by the Fifth Army staff. Under Operation SEALION, landing craft would shift British X Corps troops to the VI Corps sector at Paestum; under Operation SEATRAIN, the reverse would occur, with American troops ferried to join the British near Salerno town. Under BRASS RAIL, Clark and his staff would leave the beachhead for a "headquarters afloat" on H.M.S. *Hilary*. Gruenther was ordered

to "take up with the Navy" the necessary arrangements. The plans were strictly precautionary; George Meade had prepared a just-in-case retreat order for his Union army at Gettysburg.

Roused from his torpor, Dawley protested and announced his intention to remain at Paestum, SEATRAIN or SEALION be damned. As the meeting adjourned, others grumbled in discontent, or privately questioned Clark's fortitude. "I don't want to tell you how to run your job, but give me support," Middleton told the army commander. Spitting in annoyance, he added, "I want to stay here and fight." The time had come, Middleton advised his subordinates, "to do some hard fighting."

At nine P.M., 2,500 yards south of the Calore, a whistle blew in the Fifth Army bivouac, summoning officers into the bright moonlight. In what the reporter Lionel Shapiro described as a "level, lifeless voice," a colonel announced, "German tanks have broken through our lines. They are coming down the Sele toward this camp. All officers will take a roll call of their men." Three quick pistol shots would signal the panzers' arrival.

Cooks, clerks, and orderlies loaded their rifles and fanned into a firing line. Slapping at mosquitoes, they hoarsely whispered the night's challenge—"Canadian"—and strained to hear the parole: "wheat." An officer arrived to find the Fifth Army headquarters "in the weeds no higher than your waist and crawling around on their hands and knees." Some men sidled down to the sea, determined, as one soldier explained, to wade "up to our necks and wait there until some ship comes along and picks us up." Clark ordered his staff to prepare for evacuation on ten minutes' notice: five landing craft bobbed offshore, waiting for a summons to Green Beach.

The waxing moon cast grotesque, unnerving shadows, and in a privet hedge outside the camp a soldier sang softly to himself:

I'm a Yankee Doodle dandy,
A Yankee Doodle, do or die…

General Vietinghoff had placed his headquarters in a tenth-century castle in Sant'Angelo dei Lombardi, an ancient mill town in the eastern hills, known for bell foundries and macaroni. From here the signs of Allied flight seemed unmistakable. "After a defensive battle lasting four days, enemy resistance is collapsing," the Tenth Army commander cabled Kesselring and the Berlin high command. "Tenth Army pursuing enemy on a wide front." Told by a subordinate that Allied resistance seemed to be stiffening, Vietinghoff insisted, "The fact that he is collapsing cannot be doubted if he voluntarily splits his force into two halves." As Black Monday drew to a close, the Tenth Army war diary recorded, "The battle of Salerno appears to be over."

A Portal Won

FROM the rail of U.S.S. *Biscayne,* where Kent Hewitt had planted his flag after sending *Ancon* back to Africa, the distant beach on Tuesday, September 14, still radiated an illusory Mediterranean warmth. The dappled sea stretched to the shore in patches of turquoise and indigo. Beyond the golden ribbon of sand, the Sele plain spread in a silver-green haze. But there the arcadian vision abruptly ended in banks of gray and black smoke, and a pale penumbra of fire hinted at violent struggle and death ashore.

Hewitt bitterly opposed Clark's evacuation scheme, even as he made ready to carry it out. He spent Tuesday morning in *Biscayne*'s topside war room issuing orders and dictating messages. All

unloading was halted on the southern beaches, and cargo ships prepared on half an hour's notice to steam beyond range of shore artillery. An awkward message to Cunningham in his Malta bastion reflected Hewitt's own exhaustion: "Depth of beachhead narrowing and ground forces now taking defensive. Fatigue existing…. Are heavier naval forces available?" Cunningham promptly dispatched the battleships *Valiant* and *Warspite,* both fire-breathing veterans of Jutland in 1916, and he sent three cruisers at flank speed to Tripoli, where they were to embark as many British combat troops as could cram the decks. "I will try to help you all I can," Cunningham signaled.

Hastily summoning his top lieutenants for an afternoon conference, Hewitt unveiled SEALION, SEATRAIN, and BRASS RAIL in the crowded war room. To a man they were horrified.

"If we withdraw we will lose our whole landing force," warned Rear Admiral Richard L. Conolly, who had landed Darby and his Rangers at Maiori. Amphibious crews lacked "the capability and training and experience to evacuate a force. We have never done this." The additional tonnage added to landing craft in the shallows would cause them to settle lower in the water and thus exceed the backing power of the vessels' engines. Fleet planners estimated that at most they could evacuate only half the load that had been landed at Salerno.

The senior British naval officer, Commodore G. N. Oliver, who arrived by barge from *Hilary* to find "intense gloom" suffusing the *Biscayne,* was equally adamant. To reembark "heavily engaged troops from a shallow beachhead" was impracticable and would "probably prove suicidal.

"It just cannot be done. Ships get deeper when being loaded, and it would be impossible to get them off the beaches," Oliver said. "If you shorten the beachhead, the Germans will be within kissing distance and able to shell us from both flanks." Enemy artillery would "rake the beaches," destroying mountains of matériel. An evacuation, the commodore added, was "simply not on." As for BRASS RAIL, he would happily take Clark and his staff aboard *Hilary.* But Fifth Army headquarters had grown to two thousand soldiers and five hundred vehicles, far beyond the flagship's capacity. The only recourse was "to stay and fight it out." Oliver all but spat the words. Heads nodded around the room.

Hewitt nodded, too. The logic was unimpeachable. But Clark was in command at Salerno; preparations for evacuation must proceed, as he requested. "Never mind, Commodore," Hewitt told Oliver. "You go and do it."

Yet the pack of fighting sea dogs had failed to sense a turning tide. Just as Fifth Army's plight had deteriorated from precarious to critical on Black Monday, now it ebbed back to simply precarious. The plucky stand at the Burned Bridge had checked German momentum. Then, just before midnight, a fleet of C-47s had appeared overhead and an enormous letter "T"—with legs half a mile long, fashioned from pails of gasoline-soaked sand—abruptly burst into flame to mark the beachfront drop zone. Like "a cloud of monster snowflakes," as one witness reported, the 82nd Airborne's 504th Infantry sifted into the beachhead, on time, on target, and without a single instance of the friendly fire that had decimated the regiment in Sicily two months earlier. Thirteen hundred lightly armed paratroopers would hardly reverse Fifth Army's fortunes, but the boost to morale was incalculable: from their slit trenches and fluvial thickets, soldiers cheered themselves hoarse as they watched the snowflakes descend. "Men, it's open season on krautheads!" the 504th commander roared as his soldiers headed for the corrugated uplands. "You know what to do."

Perhaps to compensate for any fainthearted behavior on Monday evening, Clark on Tuesday was conspicuously daring, demonstrating the physical courage that in fact would characterize his generalship. Exposing himself to fire below the Calore, he helped position his battered battalions to suture the seam between VI Corps and X Corps. A German lunge south of the Tabacchificio Fioche at

eight A.M. was met with a hot volley of flanking fire that left seven panzers burning in the mist. Early in the afternoon, 45th Division troops threw back two more attacks, and by late in the day two dozen German tanks had been destroyed. “In one case,” an intelligence officer told his diary, “the trapped crew had been broiled in such a way that a puddle of fat had spread from under the tank.”

South of the Sele the 36th Division shortened its line along La Cosa Creek, scattering mines and unspooling barbed wire from the Calore to Monte Soprano, and halting the German drive through Altavilla. To the north, the British still fought furiously from Vietri to Battipaglia, but McCreery showed studied nonchalance in his signal to Clark at five P.M. on Tuesday: “Nothing of interest to report during daylight.”

Vietinghoff was loath to accept that he had not driven the Allies back to their ships. Yet frictions had accumulated in Tenth Army: a corps commander had been injured in a plane crash; many German troops suffered from heat exhaustion; and Allied artillery was profligate—U.S. gunners alone fired ten thousand shells on Tuesday, and howitzers sniped at individual German soldiers. Berlin’s refusal to release the two tank divisions from Mantua had also hurt the cause in Salerno. Those reinforcements that did arrive often came in penny packets—a company here, a battalion there—and were committed to battle the same way, without providing a critical mass anywhere. Attacking downhill brought certain pleasures, but also exposed the attackers to blistering fire that unhinged German formations.

No fire blistered more than naval shelling, for which there was no antidote except to flee the littoral. “The heavy naval artillery barrages were especially unpleasant,” a Hermann Göring Division commander confessed. Hewitt ordered every boat with a gun barrel into the fight, led by the big warships dubbed “the murderous queens.” Steaming off the Sele’s mouth, *Philadelphia* from nine P.M. Monday until four A.M. Tuesday fired nearly a thousand 6-inch shells at roads, intersections, and German troop concentrations, then yielded to the equally murderous U.S.S. *Boise.* Guns grew so hot that hydraulic rammers slowed, barrel paint blistered, and the canvas boots that kept seawater off the gun mounts charred. To clear their decks, sailors took fire axes to empty shell cases and heaved the splinters over the side. Soldiers ashore greeted new salvos with a baying war cry: “Adolf, count your children now!”

What naval shells missed, air force bombs hit. Several hundred bombers struck the Sele plain during daylight on Tuesday. That night, in an unusual tactical role, sixty B-17s battered road and rail targets around Eboli and Battipaglia; by late Wednesday, more than a thousand “heavy” sorties had been flown at Salerno. Over the next four days, the heavies would drop 760 tons of high explosives per square mile, annihilating intersections, rail yards, and villages. Smaller fighter-bombers grew pugnacious enough to strafe lone German motorcyclists, while flocks of Spitfires flew from Sicily every fifteen minutes and pilots in the tiny Piper L-4 Grasshopper spotter planes known as Maytag Messerschmitts took occasional potshots with their .45-caliber pistols.

By dusk on Tuesday, German commanders reported that movement during the day had become “almost impossible” without attracting Allied artillery, naval shells, bombs, mortar rounds, or tank fire—and sometimes all five. Having seen such firepower in Tunisia and again in Sicily, Kesselring now doubted that Tenth Army could mass enough combat strength to obliterate the beachhead. Still, the stakes made it worth one more try. Smiling Albert on Tuesday gave Vietinghoff his marching orders: make a final effort to throw Fifth Army into the sea, but be prepared to march north, perhaps as far as Rome.

The somber if sketchy reports from Salerno had so incensed Winston Churchill that he threatened to set things right by flying to the beachhead personally. Instead he sent his favorite *beau sabreur*, a

man who had reputedly built sand castles under fire on Dunkirk beach and whose very name calmed tempests and stiffened spines. Harold Alexander—"General Alex" to buck privates and brigadiers alike—arrived in the roadstead aboard the destroyer *Offa* before dawn on Wednesday, September 15, and clambered aboard the *Biscayne* to learn from Hewitt what all the fuss was about.

"Quelle race!" murmured a visiting French officer who watched Alexander at Salerno. What breeding, indeed. He was immaculate, as always, with his bloused britches, sleek mustache, and steep-peaked, red-banded cap, worn with an upward tilt of the head "that might be called supercilious if it were not so serene," John Gunther wrote. As always, he carried in his kit an Irish flag, which he intended to raise over Berlin. A talented draftsman who had been known to sketch a battlefield amid bursting shells, he evinced "a calm, gentle, friendly presence whose influence, like an oil slick, spread outward," according to a fellow Guardsman, the future military historian Michael Howard. He assumed that "nothing ever went right in battle," and thus was rarely surprised by confusion or calamity; in Alexander's cosmology, chaos at Salerno reflected the natural order. "Good chaps get killed and wounded, and it is a terrible thing," he once said of combat, though without great conviction. To him, war was simply "homicide on a scale which transformed it into a crusade and an art, dignified by its difficulties and risks." Churchill adored Alexander, according to the prime minister's physician, because he "redeemed what was brutal in war, touching the grim business lightly with his glove. In his hands it was still a game for people of quality."

No sooner had Hewitt laid out Clark's evacuation contingency than General Alex in a rare flash of temper cracked his bloused britches with a swagger stick and stepped to the front of *Biscayne*'s crowded war room. "Oh, no! We *can't* have anything like that," he said, bristling. "Never do, never do." All planning for SEATRAIN, SEALION, and BRASS RAIL would "cease immediately," lest panic infect the ranks. Alexander looked about as if seeking sand to build a castle. "There will be no evacuation," he said. "Now we'll proceed from there."

He and Hewitt found Clark awaiting them on the Paestum beach. Around a camp table in the Fifth Army headquarters thicket, an orderly served breakfast while *Philadelphia,* back on the Sele station, unlimbered at targets near Persano, rattling coffee cups and shivering the tent canvas with concussion ghosts. Alexander and Clark vanished for a private conversation in the army commander's little trailer; when they emerged, all evacuation schemes had been scrapped.

Clark accepted the bucking-up graciously, and managed to conceal his seething anger at Montgomery, who seemed impervious both to Alexander's exhortations and to the predicament of Fifth Army. This very day, the Eighth Army commander had sent a message, both tactically and syntactically suspect, and with a misspelled salutation:

> My dear Clarke…It looks as if you may be having not too good a time, and I do hope that all will go well with you…. We are on the way to lend a hand.

In fact, Montgomery's 64,000 troops were still fifty miles from Paestum, patching demolished bridges and holding medals ceremonies. In nearly two weeks only eighty-five German prisoners had been captured; the rearguard 26th Panzer Division was suffering just ten combat casualties a day; and Montgomery's army on Monday reported a total of sixty-two British dead since arriving in Italy. Several squads of British reporters, chafing at the glacial pace, set off by road for Salerno with their public relations escorts, flinging wild hand gestures and demanding of cheerful Calabrian peasants, "*Dove tedeschi*? *Où* are the *Allemands?* Where the hell are the Germans?" This morning the first jeepload of hacks met American scouts south of Agropoli, having encountered nary an enemy soldier

in two days. Not for another thirty-six hours would a British patrol make contact with the bridgehead, thirty-five miles south of Paestum, and no significant link-up would occur until September 19. Clark, whose casualty list had swelled to nearly seven thousand, swallowed his fury and replied to Montgomery, “It will be a pleasure to see you again at an early date. Here situation well in hand.”

Of more immediate concern to Clark was General Dawley. “I would like you to go now and visit VI Corps headquarters and look over Dawley,” Clark told Alexander. “I’m worried about him.” Shortly before nine A.M., Alexander strolled into the big corps barn where Dawley stood before his map board like a condemned man on the scaffold. After little rest in nearly a week and no sleep at all for the past forty-eight hours, his voice cracked as he described, incoherently, both corps dispositions and his future plans. Asked to pinpoint Walker’s 36th Division, he gestured vaguely with a trembling hand to a much larger sector around the Gulf of Salerno than even the doughty Texans could occupy.

“I do not want to interfere with your business,” Alexander told Clark an hour later. “But I have some ten years’ experience in this game of sizing up commanders. I can tell you definitely that you have a broken reed on your hands, and I suggest you replace him immediately.”

“I know it, Alex,” Clark replied. “I am up there every day.” He asked Alexander upon returning to North Africa to tell Eisenhower what he had seen. With a hearty cheerio, Alexander sped off by patrol boat to the British sector, where McCreery had spread a checkered tablecloth on the beach, with picnic platters of sandwiches and crackers.

“Although I am not entirely happy about the situation,” Alexander cabled Churchill after leaving Salerno, “I am happier than I was twenty-four hours ago.”

As for Clark, perhaps inspirited despite himself, he wrote Renie, “No doubt you people are worried to death—far more so than I am…. I am not downhearted a bit.” To Fifth Army he proclaimed on Wednesday night, “Our beachhead is secure…. We are here to stay.”

He did not tell the Germans, however, and on Thursday morning, September 16, they struck again.

Hardly had the shrieking hordes begun to lunge seaward, however, than Allied cannonades smacked them down. An attempt by the 26th Panzer Division to thunder down Highway 18 from Battipaglia and join forces with the Hermann Görings in Salerno was “under bad auspices from the start,” a German commander reported: fuel shortages in Calabria had delayed the division’s arrival at Eboli by two days; Allied air attacks and naval gunfire raked the lumbering columns; scouts got lost in the dark; artillery observers failed to find the grenadier spearhead; and traffic bottlenecks near Batty P disrupted timetables. When two regiments finally attacked at midmorning, they covered less than two hundred yards before British tanks flayed them, with severe casualties. A regiment of German paratrooper reinforcements never penetrated the curtain of naval shells, and two Hermann Göring battalions reported being “put out of action in close-quarters fighting.” The Allied weight of metal was now insuperable. Vietinghoff had shot his bolt.

This welcome news greeted Eisenhower when he arrived Friday afternoon in the Salerno anchorage aboard H.M.S. *Charybdis*. With Hewitt at his elbow, he clambered into a DUKW and headed to shore for his first look at the battlefield that had so vexed him for the past week. On Black Monday, with his usual impulse to take responsibility, Eisenhower had cabled Marshall that if the beachhead collapsed he intended to “announce that one of our landings had been repulsed due to my error in misjudging the strength of the enemy at that place.” To Harry Butcher he added, “If things go wrong there is no one to blame except myself.”

As recently as yesterday, Eisenhower had mused aloud during breakfast at Amilcar that if

Salerno ended badly he "would probably be out" as commander-in-chief. Clark's now defunct BRASS RAIL plan caused particular anguish—a leader must "stay with his men to give them confidence," Eisenhower fumed—and he wondered whether he had erred in giving command of Fifth Army to Clark rather than to Patton, who at least "would prefer to die fighting." Alexander's report that he was "most favorably unimpressed by Dawley," and a message from Clark that Dawley "appears to go to pieces in the emergencies," made Eisenhower flush with anger at the Fifth Army commander. "Well, goddam," he snapped, "why in the hell doesn't he relieve Dawley?"

If Salerno plagued him, other things also gnawed, including the usual barrage of "most immediate" cables from Washington and London. "It is now 15 months since I saw you," he wrote Mamie. "My life is a mixture of politics and war. The latter is bad enough…. The former is straight and unadulterated venom." He had been thinking of their dead son, who would have turned twenty-six this month, but also of their living son, John, to whom he wrote at West Point as if lecturing himself: "Learn to live simply…. Do not be too free with advice…. Don't be afraid to do the dirty work yourself." Even his appearance on the cover of *Time* this week (the article included a backhanded compliment from a female admirer who called him "the handsomest bald man" she had ever met) caused him more chagrin than pleasure. "When this war is over," he wrote a friend, "I am going to find the deepest hole there is in the United States, crawl in and pull it in after me."

There was dirty work to be done at Salerno, but Eisenhower would leave it to others. Though fretful, he kept his temper during a conference in the VI Corps tobacco barn. But after traveling by jeep to a farmhouse command post occupied by the 36th Division, he listened distractedly for a few minutes, then whirled on Dawley. "For God's sake, Mike," he said. "How did you manage to get your troops so fucked up?" Dawley sputtered in reply. "I'll back you up, anything you do," Eisenhower privately told Clark. "I really think you better take him out of the picture." Later in the day, after Eisenhower had visited a gun battery and a field hospital, Dawley and Clark quarreled during a jeep ride back to Paestum, with Dawley deriding his younger superiors as "boy scouts" and "boys in short pants." Clark expelled him from the jeep, then drove off in anger.

The course was set. "I want you to go down and tell General Dawley that there will be an airplane in here for him at dawn," Clark subsequently told a staff officer. "Tell him to take it and go back to Algiers and they'll give him transport back to the States." The messenger found Dawley napping on a cot under mosquito netting. "I know what you're going to say," the corps commander said. "When do I leave?" He later added, with a shrug, "You can't fight city hall." In his diary, Dawley described the day in a single misspelled word: "Releived." After shaking hands with his staff he left Italy forever, playing gin rummy on the long trip home, for which he was authorized a fifty-five-pound baggage allowance and a $7 per diem. "It was just as well," he later said. "I couldn't work with Clark. He made decisions off the top of his head." Busted to his permanent rank of colonel, he would regain one star before the end of the war and eventually retire with both stars restored. "He is being promoted," Marshall ostensibly told a U.S. senator, "as a reward for keeping his mouth shut."

Even those who doubted Dawley's generalship fretted at the peremptory dismissal of senior commanders that had become commonplace in the U.S. Army. Of four American corps commanders to face the Germans thus far, two had been cashiered. "It makes a commander supercautious," James Gavin told his diary. "Lee would have been relieved in '61 if our present system were in effect." Major General Ernest N. Harmon, who was about to bring his 1st Armored Division to Italy, alluded to the oak leaf insignia of his own permanent rank when he wrote Clark in late September that Dawley's relief "has had a rather dampening effect on us general officers…. I will bring my lieutenant colonel's leaves along in my pocket, to have them ready."

As Eisenhower left, so did the Germans. Vietinghoff late on Thursday concluded that "complete success at Salerno could no longer be hoped for." Acknowledging Tenth Army's "grievous losses,"

Kesselring authorized a retreat, with the proviso that Vietinghoff hold the Volturno River, twenty miles north of Naples, until at least October 15. After a final mauling of two isolated American paratrooper battalions at Altavilla, the Germans stole away from the beachhead on Friday night, leaving a rear guard of 2,500 to discourage pursuit.

On Saturday morning, September 18, the long German convoy snaked up Highway 91 from Eboli. Ribbons of dust rose from the road, the spoor of an enemy retiring to fight another day. Northward they trudged with their plunder piled on trucks and dray carts: olive oil and salami, linen and silver. Under Tenth Army Order No. 3, roads were to "be destroyed most thoroughly," factories would be dynamited, and "all supplies and equipment that cannot be taken along must be destroyed." An "evacuation list" of items to be pillaged included rolling stock, machine tools, typewriters, cars, buses, the Alfa Romeo plant in Naples, ball bearings, lathes, saw blades, and measuring tools—"but not slide rules."

The scorching and salting of the earth had begun. Horses and mules were stolen or shot, and even surplus saddles and horseshoe nails were put to the torch. An estimated 92 percent of all sheep and cattle in southern Italy, and 86 percent of all poultry, were taken or slaughtered. "Rail rooters"—huge iron hooks pulled behind locomotives—snapped railroad ties like matchsticks. The echo of demolitions rolled from the mountains, and oily smoke smudged the northern skyline.

An unfinished letter found in the tunic of a dead German paratrooper foreshadowed the world ahead. "The Tommies will have to chew their way through us, inch by inch," the soldier had written, "and we will surely make hard chewing for them."

So ended the first great battle to liberate the continent of Europe.

Even in retreat, the Germans deemed the ten-day struggle at Salerno a victory. Kesselring told Berlin that he had captured three thousand Allied prisoners, inflicted at least ten thousand additional casualties, and left the invaders "incapable of attacking for a long time…. Above all, the value to us is the time won, which assists us in the building up of strength." General Sieckenius, the 16th Panzer Division commander, considered both the British and Americans to be inferior combat soldiers—devoid of "the offensive spirit," excessively dependent on artillery, and reluctant to close with the enemy. Hitler agreed. "No more invasions for them!" he said. "They are much too cowardly for that. They only managed the one at Salerno because the Italians gave their blessing."

Once again the Führer and his minions had misjudged their adversaries. Certainly Salerno was inelegant and brutal, a fitting overture for the Italian campaign that followed. Allied casualties totaled about 9,000—5,500 for the British and 3,500 for the Americans—of whom more than 1,200 were killed in action. Total German losses numbered roughly 3,500, of whom an estimated 630 had been killed, a modest butcher's bill for an army that in September alone would suffer 126,000 casualties in Russia.

Yet Salerno for the Allies was a blood chit, to be redeemed in the future. Much had been learned—some of it, sadly, for the second or third time—about combat loading, over-the-beach resupply, naval gunnery, and ground combat. No officer planning for Normandy nine months hence would ever forget that while land warfare offers "a road upon which you may retire, there is no road of retirement in amphibious operations," as one Navy commander put it. Eisenhower emerged from AVALANCHE convinced of the need "to turn the scales by turning every ship and every aircraft on the vital battle area"; he would also demand, when his hour at Normandy came round, absolute authority over air forces as well as those of the sea and land. But he had again neglected to make demands of Alexander, to insist on cohesion between V Corps and X Corps, and between Fifth Army and Eighth Army.

Alexander's handling of Montgomery was said by his biographer Nigel Nicolson to resemble that of "an understanding husband in a difficult marriage." Eisenhower recognized what he called General Alex's "unsureness in dealing with certain of his subordinates," yet failed to intervene.

George Marshall had decreed that the "vital qualifications" for senior U.S. Army officers included "leadership, force, and vigor." Too often such traits were most conspicuous in their absence. Dawley's deficiencies made him an easy scapegoat, but he was hardly the only senior officer still struggling to meet the chief's high standard. Mark Clark was also in over his head at Salerno, as he showed in matters ranging from the confusion over H-hour to his approval of a plan that left a gaping hole between his corps. Salerno annealed Clark: he emerged stronger and wiser, if still so autocratic and aloof that soldiers now called him Marcus Aurelius Clarkus. "He is not so good as Bradley in winning, almost without effort, the complete confidence of everybody around him," Eisenhower wrote Marshall on September 20. "He is not the equal of Patton in refusing to see anything but victory in any situation that arises. But he is still carrying his full weight."

Others wondered. "Mark Clark really didn't have a true feel for what soldiers could and could not do, and how much power it took to accomplish a particular mission," James Gavin later wrote to Matthew Ridgway. Whether Clark had the mettle of a great field commander was yet to be discovered, a central subplot in the unfolding drama that was the war in Italy.

Still, the Allies were on the continent, never to be expelled again. An alert and skilled enemy, fighting on favorable terrain with the advantage of terrestrial rather than maritime lines of communication, had been cudgeled aside. A portal had been won, and through it poured men and matériel; from two divisions on September 3, the Allied host in Italy grew to thirteen by the end of the month, with captured airfields that would contribute to pummeling the Reich.

Precisely where they were going and what they would do when they arrived there remained in doubt. The avowed strategic purpose of the Italian campaign—to knock Italy from the war and to engage as many German divisions as possible—had been at least partly fulfilled. How to completely satisfy those war aims was as unclear in Salerno as it was in Washington, London, and Algiers. The strategic drift persisted.

That was neither the province nor the fault of those who had fought their way ashore. Perhaps only a battlefield before the battle is quieter than the same field after the shooting stops; the former is silent with anticipation, the latter with a pure absence of noise. Calm now settled over Salerno as the troops stood down, resting for the long march ahead.

Cooks bolstered their Army rations with Italian tomatoes, beans, and onions, while soldiers "made our acquaintance with vino, Alberti gin, 40-octane cognac, and grappa." Staff officers moved into the Fascist party headquarters in Salerno, slapping black paint across the gilt lettering of "*Credere, Obbedire, Combattere*" and other fatuous slogans. Civilians emerged from their hiding places to resume the interrupted harvest. Peasant women glided through vineyards with great baskets of blue and white grapes on their heads, or searched tomato vines for fruit overlooked by pillagers. An Italian farmer appeared at a command post with a note, in English, given him by retreating Germans: "The Americans will pay for the two pigs we took." George Biddle's artistic eye detected signs of life in the rubble: a man toting his framed legal diploma; a woman carrying an iron bedspring; an old man clutching a rabbit by the ears; another woman with a sack of potatoes and, on her head, a straw hamper holding a baby.

The living searched for the dead "by smelling them out," wrote one soldier assigned to a burial detail. "I covered my mouth and nose with a piece of parachute silk…. When I returned to the company no one would have anything to do with me because my clothes retained the smell of the dead and my own puke." Michael Howard described "the hunched, urgent diggers, the sprawling corpses with their dead eyes in a cold dawn light that drained all colour from the scene."

So many civilian bodies littered the mountain town of Avellino that they were doused with gasoline and burned in a pyre. Altavilla was even more horrible. The bloated corpses of civilians slaughtered in the cross fire, including many children, burst from their clothing. “The stinch was terrible,” a military policeman reported. Entire platoons of 36th Division soldiers killed early in the battle lay in shallow revetments, their faces “black and hard like an eggplant.”

Bulldozers now dug the trenches at Paestum, and proper grave markers replaced the crude wooden triangles. A visiting general complained that a Star of David among a row of Latin crosses “spoils the symmetry of the cemetery. Move it.” A 36th Division chaplain refused. His boys held title to that ground.

5. Corpse of the Siren

"I Give You Naples"

TOWARD Naples they pounded, long columns of jeeps and trucks and armored cars with German coal-scuttle helmets wired to the radiators as hood ornaments. British military policemen in red caps and white canvas gloves waved them north beneath the rocky loom of Vesuvius, through Nocera and Angri and Torre del Greco. Jubilant crowds strewed flowers beneath their wheels, and priests in threadbare cassocks crooked their fingers in benediction. Refugees trudged along the road shoulders, including boys "so dirty they didn't look human" and hatless, truant Italian soldiers, who carried their shoes to spare the leather and bathed their feet in hillside streams. Villagers who had been to the States shouted denunciations of Fascism in broken English spiced with recollected American profanities, or recited the brands of toothpaste and laxatives they had encountered in the land of opportunity. The reporter John Lardner found the Campanian countryside redolent "of bandits and light opera," while another American insisted that southern Italy "just stinks of the classics." After searching the ruins at Pompeii, a lieutenant from Indiana nodded toward the Roman amphitheater and observed, "They certainly make 'em to last."

A squadron from the King's Dragoon Guards was the first Allied unit to enter Naples, at 9:30 A.M. on Friday, October 1, 1943. Mark Clark followed a few hours later. Much discussion had been devoted to arranging a triumphal entrance, but in the event the procession had an air of hasty improvisation and slapdash stagecraft. On Highway 18 in the southern suburb of San Giovanni, Clark climbed into the open cockpit of an armored car with Ridgway, who clutched his Springfield rifle and squinted at the rooftops for snipers. Gavin led the convoy in a jeep, a city map spread across his lap, and a paratrooper battalion trailed behind in trucks. Laundry flapped from iron balconies and geraniums spilled from their windowsill pots, but every door and window remained shuttered in what Clark called "a city of ghosts." A team of OSS infiltrators warned that retreating Germans had mined at least fifty buildings, and Italian bodies lay in the streets of a city "heavily scented with the sweet heliotrope odor of unburied dead," an OSS officer wrote. Now and then a gunshot echoed down the Corso Umberto, sharp as a single handclap: partisans were hunting Fascist collaborators. Clark surveyed the deserted Piazza Garibaldi, across from the central train station, and confessed to being "in a less happy mood than I had expected to be in."

He was in the wrong place. Thousands of joyful Neapolitans awaited their liberators barely a mile away, in the Piazza del Plebiscito, where conquering heroes traditionally appeared. As soldiers eventually tramped past the stately Palazzo Reale and into the semicircular plaza a great shout went up. *"Viva, viva!"* the throng screamed. *"Grazie! Viva!"* Weeping and genuflecting, they plucked at the uniforms of the passing troops or flung themselves down to kiss their boots. The pandemonium soon spread through the city. "Walls of shouting faces leaned out at us, and arms pelted us with grapes and chrysanthemums," wrote the reporter Richard Tregaskis, who likened the crowds to "ants swarming toward and over us."

"Naples has been taken by our troops," Clark radioed Alexander. "City quiet. No indications of disease or disorder." The delirious welcome buoyed Clark's spirits, and to Renie he wrote, "I give you Naples for your birthday. I love you. Wayne."

It proved an odd gift, neither quiet nor lacking in disease and disorder. Insurrection had flared in Naples on September 26, two weeks after Kesselring's troops occupied the city and began conscripting young men into labor battalions. A reign of German terror that featured public executions for minor infractions led first to gunplay by Italian snipers reportedly as young as nine, and then to pitched battles in the railroad station and Piazza Carlo III. Rebels manhandled streetcars to build barricades, and fought with shotguns, swords, ancient muskets, and roofing tiles. An estimated three hundred locals died in the brawling, and the OSS believed that Neapolitan fury had forced German troops to quit the city two days sooner than planned.

"There were still Germans fighting in spots," Gavin later told his diary, "but worse the Italians were fighting each other, accusing friends and foes alike of being Fascists or *tedeschi*." Teenagers in tin helmets roamed the streets, armed with kitchen knives, tire irons, and German Lugers; red Italian grenades dangled from their belts. Robert Capa photographed a schoolhouse converted into a morgue with twenty boys arrayed in twenty crude coffins shouldered by men in black fedoras; keening women blotted their eyes and held up photographs of their dead children. George Biddle took his sketchbook into the Ospedale degli Incurabili, where he found 150 dead civilians on stretchers and window shutters, slips of paper with their names and addresses tucked into their folded hands. There were no trucks to haul them to graveyards, nor was there water to wash their blood from the hospital floor. Families carrying clean shirts and white undergarments to dress the dead "wandered about the corridor in the semi-darkness, holding mufflers or handkerchefs over their faces," and peering at each body in dread of finding a familiar face.

Naples itself—"the most beautiful city in the universe," in Stendahl's judgment—had been mutilated. German vengeance at Italy's betrayal foreshadowed the spasmodic violence that European towns large and small could expect as the price of liberation. Half of the city's one million residents had remained through the German occupation, but none now had running water: Wehrmacht sappers had blown up the main aqueduct in seven places and drained municipal reservoirs. Dynamite dropped down manholes wrecked at least forty sewer lines. Explosives also demolished the long-distance telephone exchange, three-quarters of the city's bridges, and electrical generators and substations. Among the gutted industrial plants—about fifty in all—were a steelworks, an oil refinery, breweries, tanneries, and canneries; others were wired for demolition though they had been not fired. Saboteurs wrecked city trams, repair barns, and even street cleaners. A railroad tunnel into Naples was blocked by crashing two trains head-on. Coal stockpiles were ignited, and for weeks served as beacons for Luftwaffe bombers. The Germans had extorted ransom from Italian fishermen for their boats—a small skiff was worth one gold watch—and then burned the fleet anyway. Even the stairwells in barracks and apartment buildings were dynamited to make the upper floors inaccessible.

The opportunities for cultural atrocity were boundless in a city so rich in culture. A German battalion burst into the library of the Italian Royal Society, soaked the shelves with kerosene, and fired the place with grenades, shooting guards who resisted and keeping firemen at bay. The city archives and fifty thousand volumes at the University of Naples, where Thomas Aquinas once taught, got the same treatment, leaving the place "stinking of burned old leather and petrol." Another eighty thousand precious books and manuscripts stored in Nola were reduced to ashes, along with paintings, ceramics, and ivories.

Worse yet was the sabotage around the great port, which compounded grievous damage inflicted by months of Allied bombing. Half a mile inland, the city's commercial districts remained mostly intact, although looters had rifled the Singer Sewing Machine showroom and the Kodak shop on Via Roma. But along the esplanade—where the corpse of the beautiful Siren Parthenope was said to have washed ashore after Odysseus spurned her "high, thrilling song"—all was shambles. Bombs had battered the Castel Nuovo, the National Library, and the Palazzo Reale, where every window was

broken, the roof punctured, and the chapel demolished by a detonation beneath the ceiling beams. Grand hotels—the Excelsior, the Vesuvio, the Continental—had been gutted by bombs or by German vandals who torched the rooms and ignited the bedding in courtyard bonfires. An American port battalion stevedore, Paul W. Brown, described waterside buildings that had been

> sliced in half, leaving the remaining halves showing exposed rooms with furniture intact or half hanging out, pictures on a wall, a brass bed slanting down toward the street, bed linen still in place. From the open side of a third-story room the legs of a corpse dangled.

Not a single vessel remained afloat in the port, a drowned forest of charred booms, masts, and funnels. Thirty major wrecks could be seen, and ten times that number lay submerged. All tugs and harbor craft had been sunk; all grain elevators and warehouses demolished; all three hundred cranes sabotaged or toppled into the water. Vessels had been scuttled at fifty-eight of sixty-one berths, often one atop another. An Axis ship with seven thousand tons of ammunition had blown up at Pier F, wrecking four adjacent city blocks, and fires still smoldered on October 2. At Mole H, slips were blocked by a dozen rail cars and a pair of ninety-ton cranes shoved off the pier. Quayside buildings were dynamited so that their rubble tumbled like scree across the docks. To complicate salvage, German demolitionists had seeded the harbor with ammunition, oxygen tanks, and mines.

Only rats still inhabited the waterfront, and hungry urchins with knife-edge shoulder blades who reminded Paul Brown of “small, aged animals.” Although U.S. Army engineers reported that the sabotage had been conducted “by a man who knew his business,” a closer inspection revealed that the Germans “planned their demolitions for revenge, to wreck the economy of Naples, rather than to prevent Allied use of the port.” As the Allies learned from each campaign, so did the Germans, and they would be less sentimental and more comprehensive when the time came to undo Marseilles and Cherbourg.

Still, the damage was monstrous. To sustain an army of half a million men—and Fifth Army would be half that size within weeks—required the monthly cargo equivalent of sixty-eight Liberty ships. Only Naples—sad, scuttled, big-shouldered Naples—could handle such commerce. There was nothing for it but to get to work, and to bring the Siren back from the dead.

* * *

The capture of Naples gave Clark time to take stock of a campaign that grew bigger and dirtier by the day. Rommel’s genteel *Krieg ohne Hass*—“war without hate”—was but a hazy memory from North Africa. The brutality of total war had long been felt on the Eastern Front, but as the Second World War entered its fifth year the stain spread throughout western Europe.

Contrary to Clark’s hopes, the Italian army contributed little to the Allied cause after Rome’s capitulation. Twenty-nine Italian divisions in the Balkans and five more in France mostly surrendered to the Germans, sometimes duped by forged orders and sometimes reduced by force. “Every bomb is chipping a little piece off my heart,” the Italian garrison commander on Rhodes radioed during a Luftwaffe attack. Those defending Italia proper proved just as impotent.

Brave souls—and there were some—faced barbaric reprisals. On the rocky Greek island of Cephalonia, in the Ionian Sea, the 12,000-man Italian army garrison fought for five days at a cost of 1,250 combat deaths before surrendering on September 22. On orders from Berlin, more than 6,000

prisoners were promptly shot, including orderlies with Red Cross brassards, wounded men dragged to the wall from their hospital beds, and officers, executed in batches of eight and twelve. An Italian commander ripped off the Iron Cross given him by Hitler personally and flung it at his firing squad. The dead were ballasted on rafts and sunk at sea or burned in huge pyres that blackened the Ionian sky for a week; decades later, when the air grew heavy and clouds darkened before a storm, islanders would say, "The Italians are burning."

"The only Italian army that will not be treacherous is one that does not exist," said Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel, the German chief of staff. Soon 600,000 Italian soldiers were en route to Germany in cattle cars, not as prisoners of war but as "military internees" to be used for slave labor in factories and mines. Ten thousand German railway workers poured into Italy to ensure that the trains still ran on time.

Three improbable escapes marked the early campaign in Italy. The first had occurred as Clark's forces came ashore at Salerno before dawn on September 9, when much of the Italian battle fleet fled La Spezia, in northern Italy, for Malta. A German radio intercept detected clandestine sailing preparations, but too late to prevent a sudden sortie for the open sea. The unfortunate battleship *Roma* would be sunk by the new radio-controlled glide bomb, and captains who, unable to flee La Spezia, scuttled their ships were summarily executed. But by September 21 five other battleships, eight cruisers, thirty-three destroyers, one hundred merchant ships, and many lesser tubs had found refuge in Allied waters, some flying surrender flags said to be "the size of a tennis court." German forces managed to impound hundreds of smaller naval and merchant vessels, part of a vast catalogue of booty seized in Italy: 1.3 million rifles, 38,000 machine guns, 10,000 artillery tubes, 67,000 horses and mules, 9,000 tons of tobacco, 13,000 tons of quinine, 551,000 overcoats, 2.5 million blankets, 3.3 million pairs of shoes, and, in Rome alone, 60,000 motor vehicles.

The second escape evoked unhappy memories of the Axis getaway from Messina a month earlier. Hitler on September 12 had ordered the evacuation of German forces on Corsica, including thousands who had crossed to the island from nearby Sardinia. As French troops stormed ashore at one end of Corsica, German soldiers decamped from the other end, crossing sixty miles of deep water to northern Italy in transport planes and a cockleshell fleet of ferries. Mostly unmolested by Allied naval or air forces, which pleaded a preoccupation with Salerno, more then thirty thousand enemy troops with their arms and vehicles reached safety by early October. Given the absence of Axis shore batteries or other defenses, the evacuation was "even more astonishing" than Messina had been, as the official U.S. Navy history later conceded. Surely it was every bit as disheartening.

The third escape was the most flamboyant. Since his arrest in late July, Benito Mussolini had been shuttled from cell to whitewashed cell in the islands off Italy's west coast, spending his days—including his sixtieth birthday—reading Ricciotti's *Life of Jesus* and underscoring the passages on betrayal and martyrdom. Hitler's search for his erstwhile ally included consultation with various occultists and astrologers, among them a certain "Master of the Sidereal Pendulum," as well as more conventional intelligence clairvoyants. In late August, the Duce was moved to the Hotel Albergo-Rifugio, a vacated ski resort atop the Gran Sasso peaks in the Apennines, accessible only by funicular and guarded by 250 carabinieri. To his daily regimen the prisoner added card games, strolls across the bleak heath, and endless carping about his ulcer. Gray stubble sprouted from his unshaved pate. When Mussolini vowed never to be taken alive, jailers removed all sharp objects, including his razor. "To redeem oneself," he told his diary, "one must suffer."

Soon enough his whereabouts leaked. Hitler entrusted the Duce's rescue to Captain Otto Skorzeny, a six-foot, three-inch Viennese commando whose badly scarred visage attested to the fourteen duels he had supposedly fought as a student. At one P.M. on September 12—just as conditions at Salerno turned grievous—Skorzeny packed 108 men into gliders and took off for the Gran Sasso,

carving a hole in the canvas floor of his craft through which to watch for navigational landmarks. Mussolini was sitting at his open bedroom window, arms folded in his iconic pose, when gliders began skittering across the cobbled ground directly outside. Skorzeny bolted up a staircase three steps at a time, flung open the door to room 201, and announced, “Duce, the Führer has sent me to set you free.” Off they went, wedged into a tiny Storch airplane and saluted by the carabinieri guards. After a giddy reunion with Hitler, Mussolini was installed in an Alpine town as the puppet head of a puppet regime called the Italian Social Republic. Even the Germans, rarely celebrated for ironic sensibilities, recognized the pathos. “The Führer now realizes that Italy never was a power, is no power today, and won’t be a power in the future,” Joseph Goebbels told his diary.

Whatever Mussolini’s shortcomings as a world-historical figure, he had kept the Nazi reaper at bay by refusing to allow the deportation of Jews. That moratorium had now ended. On September 16 the first consignment of two dozen Jews was shipped from a town in northern Italy to Auschwitz. Among them was a six-year-old child, who was gassed upon arrival.

The liberation of Naples grew sanguinary again at 2:10 P.M. on Thursday, October 7, when the first German time bomb exploded in the southwest corner of the main post office on Via Monteoliveto. “The first two floors were blown completely away,” a witness reported. “Chunks of steel and marble were thrown as far as 100 yards.” The blast ripped apart an Army work detail and Neapolitans begging for food along a mess line. A soldier, Robert H. Welker, described the carnage in a letter home:

> From the huge smoke pall still hanging in the street staggered a sergeant in fatigues, bloody about the face, barely conscious…. The sergeant’s head was rolling from side to side, and all he could mutter was, “What was it? What was it?”

The blast killed and wounded seventy people, half of them soldiers. Rescuers shimmied into the post office basement to dig for survivors, while medical details shoveled up heads and limbs. Welker’s first sergeant called the unit roll that night, reading out names by flashlight. “I shout a word, and live,” Welker wrote. “Another cannot give the word, and is accounted dead…. Here, now, was mortal danger for us all.”

Three days later, on Sunday morning, Clark, Ridgway, and several thousand troops were attending a mass of thanksgiving in the Duomo beneath the vivid frescoes of Paradise when another muffled roar sent them hurrying to a nearby barracks. That blast, in the Corso Orientale, killed twenty-three combat engineers who had fought with Darby’s Rangers at Chiunzi Pass. The two generals helped extricate broken bodies—“sacks of burlap,” in one paratrooper’s description—as well as survivors. “Nice work, boys, thanks,” said a soldier who was pulled from the rubble and hoisted to his feet before falling over, dead. “It makes us all the more determined to crush them completely,” Clark wrote Renie that evening. A bomb squad “delousing” a different wing in the Prince of Piedmont Barracks later found nearly a ton of explosives in stacked boxes with a ticking German fuse set to detonate at seven A.M. on Tuesday, October 19.

Bombs would continue to explode for three weeks. Norman Lewis, a British intelligence officer in Fifth Army, described one demolished apartment building along Via Nazario Sauro in which survivors stood “as motionless as statues, and all coated in thick white dust…. A woman stood like Lot’s wife turned to salt.” Others, in fetal curls, reminded Lewis of “bodies overcome by the ash at

Pompeii." Frantic sappers ultimately searched hundreds of buildings, disarming explosives in seventeen of them. An official "list of suspicious noises" grew to 150 entries. Maledictions on the German fiend grew proportionately fervent, although rarely was it mentioned that Allied planes were dropping thousands of bombs with delay fuses.

Fears that more hidden bombs would be triggered when electricity again surged through the repaired power grid led to a mass evacuation of western Naples in late October. Lewis watched "men carrying their old parents on their backs" and wounded soldiers being wheeled from hospitals. Any loud noise sent women and children stampeding in panic, "leaving trails of urine." Another British officer, Malcolm Muggeridge, described the evacuees as "a vast concourse gathered on the hills around the city, like a vision of the Last Day, when all the dead arise." The lights winked on without incident, and the citizenry shambled home.

Neapolitan life after liberation remained brutish for weeks. "There are 57 varieties of grief, but only about 7 of that number that some flour would not cure," an American officer told his superiors. "These people are hungry." All the tropical fish in the municipal aquarium were devoured, and the city's cat population was said to have thinned dramatically. Brackish watering holes and even broken sewer mains drew thousands of parched residents "with buckets, bottles, barrels, cauldrons, [and] coffee pots," George Biddle noted. Army engineers soon set up two dozen faucets but soldiers with bayonets were needed to quell the rioting.

Twenty-six thousand tons of wheat would be sent from North Africa and the Middle East, but even famine relief had to compete with war matériel for scarce shipping space. The port's ruin complicated the task, and a third of the food in the initial shipments was stolen. Prices spiraled, sometimes quadrupling overnight. A spectacular black market flourished. Frank Gervasi catalogued the apparently limitless cupboard of luxury goods available even as Neapolitans grew gaunt and the first cases of typhus appeared in October: "silver fox capes in furriers' windows…ladies' hats, shoes, gloves…Venetian lace…perfume by weight." Citizens joked bitterly that "when the Germans were here we ate once a day. Now the Americans have come we eat once a week."

Reconstruction had begun on Neapolitan roads and railways on October 2, and an engineer team entered the harbor from the sea at noon on the same day to take soundings. Bulldozers, minesweepers, and salvage ships soon resembled "an army of ants eating their way into the wreckage," in one admiral's description. Divers pumped compressed air into sunken wrecks to create buoyancy and tugs then dragged the hulks from the harbor with huge slings. Dynamite periodically scared off the Italian workforce, and only three berths were opened in the first weeks; but within three months Naples would claim more tonnage handled than New York harbor. Potable water began flowing on October 13; Italian submarines provided power for pumping stations, hospitals, and flour mills, and the sewers would be fixed by mid-December.

As thousands of Allied soldiers poured into Naples, street life rekindled in one of the world's most flamboyant cities. Garbagemen sang Rossini and hunchbacks sold lottery tickets, permitting each buyer a stroke of the hump for luck. A few restaurants reopened, though the veal Milanese often proved to be horsemeat and, as Norman Lewis observed, Italian patrons sat bundled in coats "made from our stolen blankets." Thievery, beggary, and harlotry flourished in a city that was desperately hungry. "It wasn't safe to go to town without a gun," a paratrooper recalled, and GIs joked that if you dropped even your voice an Italian pauper would pick it up. Thousands of Italian women turned to prostitution to avoid starvation. Little boys pimped for streetwalkers around the Piazza Garibaldi; troops who paid with Monopoly money, claiming it was occupation scrip, found the joke repaid with a strain of Neapolitan gonorrhea that proved resistant to sulfa. An airman told his diary on October 6: "'Fik' can be had for chocolate."

Some soldiers behaved badly. Troops quartered in the zoological laboratories at the University of

Naples smashed specimen cases, rifled the mineral collection, and used rare seashells as candle holders. GIs drove about in jeeps adorned with "stuffed toucans, parrots, eagles, and even ostriches" from the collections; the custodian of the Palazzo Reale complained that Allied troops were "carrying away anything that pleases them." Reuben Tucker, the commander of the 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, ordered a bottle of champagne in a restaurant—for seventy-three cents—and toasted the capture of Naples. "He drained his glass and smashed it on the table," a paratrooper reported. "The rest of us did likewise." To the proprietor, Tucker said, "That's the price you pay for collaborating with the Germans."

They were in fine fettle. High spirits infected all ranks after the grim struggle at Salerno. They now owned a major port and three hundred miles of Italian boot. On the same day that Naples fell, Montgomery's Eighth Army had captured the airdromes at Foggia, near the Adriatic, which would provide bases for the bombing of Austria, southern Germany, and the Danube basin.

Everywhere Allied forces were on the march. In the southwest Pacific, parallel thrusts in New Guinea and the Solomon Islands continued to pare away pieces of the Japanese empire; the first B-29 bombers were coming off U.S. assembly lines, doubling the range of existing planes and putting Japan's home islands at risk. British and American bomber fleets from England were already pummeling German cities, though at a frightful cost in aircrews. Hamburg had been incinerated in July with an estimated forty thousand German deaths, eight hundred died in Berlin in late August, and massive raids would batter Mannheim, Frankfurt, Hanover, and other targets across the Fatherland. On the Eastern Front, the Red Army in late September took Smolensk and crossed the Dnieper River, recapturing nearly half the territory seized by Germany since the summer of 1941. In the east, Hitler had already lost a half million dead and and two million wounded. Goebbels told his diary, "We are still retreating and retreating."

They were retreating in Italy, too. With Naples secure and the Allied vanguard approaching the Volturno River, Clark was keen to press the fight. "He always wants speed," Major General John Lucas, who had replaced Dawley as the VI Corps commander, observed in his diary. Clark, he added, "has ants in his pants."

Canadian soldiers proposed the slogan "Rome by Christmas," but they were pessimists. "Alexander and I both believe we will have Rome by [the end of] October," Eisenhower cabled Marshall on October 4. Alexander thought Florence might fall by December, and some zealous troops began studying German to prepare for occupation duty. Churchill posited that the enemy lacked "the strength to make a front"—Kesselring always looked weaker from Whitehall than from within artillery range—and the prime minister planned to visit the Eternal City before the month was out.

Even cautious Franklin Roosevelt, who had begun pushing for Allied forces to reach Berlin "as soon as the Russians," was swept along on the optimistic tide. To Stalin he wrote, "It looks as if American and British armies should be in Rome in another few weeks."

"Watch Where You Step and Have No Curiosity at All"

ALL blithe predictions of a promenade to Rome would be challenged soon enough, but first the Allied legions faced a formidable obstacle twenty miles north of Naples. Here, at the wide Volturno, Fifth Army would make its inaugural crossing in Europe of a contested river, with six divisions abreast opposed by four from Vietinghoff's Tenth Army.

Lucian Truscott had kept most of his 3rd Division guns quiet for nearly a week to conceal his strength, but at one A.M. on Wednesday, October 13, gunners flipped back their camouflage nets and let fly a barrage that stamped and howled across the dells. Artillery rippled like chain lightning down

the Volturno Valley, shaming the full moon that silvered the river. Flames soon guttered from the German-held hills and farmhouses north of the river. More guns barked downstream from the three British divisions joining the assault, and upstream where two other American divisions on Truscott's right—the 34th and 45th—anchored a forty-mile front.

From the third-floor window of an abandoned hilltop monastery, Truscott's gray eyes searched the river below. German sentries had shouted taunts in English from the far bank—"Sleep, swine. We kill you all before breakfast"—but now the roar of gunfire swallowed all insults. Blue and white machine-gun tracers swept like heated needles from enemy bunkers hidden in the orchards and stone quarries, and mortar bursts blossomed across the muddy fields on the south bank. American gunners flailed back with braids of crimson tracers, and riflemen popped away at the winking muzzles to the north. Here the Volturno was two hundred feet wide, swift but fordable, and Truscott's sector stretched laterally for seven miles in the center of the Allied line.

Drawing on a cigarette with his hands cupped to hide the ember, he watched two regiments in a line of trees below the monastery make ready by moonlight. Soldiers cinched life vests scavenged in an Italian torpedo factory and coiled cotton guide ropes over their shoulders. Others stacked rafts borrowed from the Navy and crude, canvas-bottom boats hammered together from scrap lumber and truck tarpaulins.

Garish signal flares—gold, green, red—drifted above the German lines. "Unfortunately I'm beginning to realize the truth that Ike spake when he described his loneliness to me," Truscott had written in a "beloved wife" letter to Sarah as the division approached the Volturno. "We are lonely." Never more than now, while watching men whom he had perhaps ordered to their deaths. He also told her:

> I would love in the quiet of the evening to sit with you and tell you the thousand and one details of my life over here…. If and when I get back from this business I want to settle down somewhere…and spend a few years in peace and quiet.

At 1:55 A.M. the gun batteries began to mix white-phosphorus shells with the high explosives, training their tubes on the far bank. Silvery smoke soon boiled in a cloud three miles wide and five hundred feet high. With a shout and a clatter, the troops below hoisted their rafts and their homely boats. Surging across the fallow fields, they slid down the ten-foot embankment and splashed into the muddy Volturno.

It went well enough in the American sector, less well in the British. On the far left of the Allied line, three LCTs ferried a squadron of seventeen British tanks across the river's mouth to the north shore. But mines and boggy ground kept them immobile. British infantrymen struggled with a wider, unfordable stretch of river, as well as with German defenders—the 15th Panzer Grenadier and Hermann Göring Divisions, old adversaries from Sicily and Salerno—who found good cover in vineyards and behind the levees. Tommies lashed lumber to empty fuel cans and paddled across, or fashioned life belts from buoyant flax sheaves. Two brigades from the 46th Division secured a bridgehead near the coast, though by Thursday morning it was still only six hundred yards deep. On the 3rd Division's immediate left, ten assault boats from the British 56th Division were sunk midstream near Capua and not a single company made the far shore in what Truscott considered a botched, halfhearted effort. "Drowning wounded men were washed away by the current into the sea,"

Alan Moorehead wrote. “Everywhere machine-gunning and sniping was going on through the reeds.”

With his left flank exposed and no American armor yet across, Truscott scrambled down to the flats at dawn. Milky smoke swirled like mist. GIs waded chest-deep through the water, holding their rifles overhead with one hand and clinging to a guide rope with the other. Worry etched Truscott’s weathered face. Five battalions occupied the far shore, and American spearheads had reached Monte Caruso, four miles beyond the Volturno. But without armor they were vulnerable to counterattacking panzers. “Hurry!” he urged. “Hurry!”

Hissing fragments from a German shellburst pocked the river. “Get those damn tank destroyers and tanks across,” Truscott ordered. A tank commander, puzzled by a sharp rapping on his hull, peered from the turret to see a two-star general wielding a shillelagh. “Goddamit, get up ahead and fire at some targets of opportunity,” Truscott demanded. “Fire at anything shooting our men, but goddamit, do some good for yourselves.” To an officer who complained of bridging difficulties, he responded with a growl. “What do you mean it can’t be done? Have you tried it? Go out and do it.”

They did. Below an oxbow loop, engineers hacked at the steep bank with picks and shovels. At eleven A.M. the first Sherman forded the river, muddy water streaming from the fenders as it clanked toward Highway 87. Fourteen more crossed close behind. A light bridge opened to traffic at 3:30 P.M. —eighty jeeps sped across in eight minutes—and heavier treadway bridges followed. Massed artillery discouraged German counterattackers; like a melting shadow, the enemy drew back. Clark shifted boundary lines to give one large bridge to the Tommies—the British in Fifth Army had only 3,500 engineers, compared with 15,000 for the Yanks—and soon the entire valley was in Allied hands. On the right flank, where the meandering river doubled back on itself and required some units to make three crossings, 34th Division soldiers asked whether every stream in Italy was named “Volturno,” or whether it was simply the longest body of water in Europe.

“Like the earthworm, I seem to bore into what’s in front and leave debris in the rear and am barely sensible of the passage of days and nights,” Truscott wrote Sarah as the bridgehead expanded on October 14. “Days of the week? I hardly know there is a distinction between them.” He added, “This business of killing Boche is an absorbing and all-consuming proposition.”

Inelegant and exhausting though it was, the Volturno crossing would serve. By moving more quickly than expected on a broad front, and by leaving the main roads to infiltrate around enemy strongpoints, the Anglo-Americans had advanced thirty-five miles past Naples. Hills loomed ahead, as every corporal could see, and beyond those hills loomed higher hills. “This is not the place for masterminding,” Eisenhower said with a shake of the head upon viewing the terrain. But beyond the higher hills, barely 130 road miles from the Volturno, lay Rome.

Italy would break their backs, their bones, and nearly their spirits. But first it would break their hearts, and that heartbreak began north of the Volturno, where the terrain steepened, the weather worsened, and the enemy stiffened. Allied casualties in Italy totaled eighteen thousand between September 3 and October 20—fifteen thousand in Fifth Army and three thousand in Eighth Army. Yet that was only a down payment on the campaign to come.

German demolitions had begun five miles from Salerno—“no bridge or culvert seems too small to escape their eye,” an Army observer reported—and it soon became evident that Italy would be a battle of engineers: the speed of advance would be determined by bulldozers, if not by a nervous soldier on his hands and knees, prodding for mines with a bayonet. An AFHQ study estimated that one thousand bridges would be needed to reach the Po River in the north, a disheartening number given that for weeks the U.S. Army had only five prefabricated Bailey bridges in Italy. In the event, the

Allies would erect three thousand spans in twenty months, with a combined length of fifty-five miles. Some were built and rebuilt, as autumn rains put the Italian rivers in spate. The fickle Volturno soon rose eighteen feet in ten hours, sweeping away every hard-won bridge but one. “The floods bring down quantities of debris, ranging from whole trees to bulls, the horns of which had a disastrous effect on the plywood sides of a pontoon,” Fifth Army engineers reported.

Ingenuity became the order of the day, every day. When German sappers blew up stone houses to block narrow village streets, American sappers bulldozed “new tracks across the rubble heaps, often at the level of the second stories,” Truscott noted. Engineers reportedly filled road craters with “broken bathtubs and statues and sinks and hairbrushes and fancy fedora hats.” Bridge builders fashioned a pile driver from the barrel of an Italian 240mm gun, and the Allies built rolling mills, cement works, foundries, nail works, and enough sawmills to cut nine thousand tons of Volturno lumber a month. They used the timber to corduroy muddy roads, as armies had for centuries.

Yet no engineer could corduroy the weather. “It got darker, colder, wetter,” a 45th Division soldier recalled. Autumn rains began on September 26, and soldiers soon realized why their Italian phrase books included *Piove in rovesci*, “It’s raining torrents.” Censorship rules forbade writing home about the weather—“One may write of mist,” a wag proposed, “but not of rain”—though nothing precluded bivouac grousing. “No conversation, genteel or otherwise, can be carried on without mentioning the weather,” a diarist in the 56th Evacuation Hospital noted in November. Campfires were banned after five P.M., so troops ate at four, bolting their supper before rain pooled in their mess kits, then went to bed at 7:30. Craps games lasted “until darkness obscures spots on the dice.” Rain soon grayed the soldiers, making them one with the mud in which they slept and fought until they seemed no more than clay with eyes.

As Allied planners had misjudged the harsh North African winter, so they underestimated—perhaps less pardonably—the even harsher Italian climate: Rome shares a latitude with Chicago. “The desert war had made men forget the mud of Flanders,” wrote the British general W.G.F. Jackson, but no veteran of Italy would ever forget Italian mud, which Bill Mauldin insisted lacked “an honest color like ordinary mud.” A private from Michigan complained, “The trouble with this mud is that it’s too thick to drink and too thin to plow.” Even in summer, the roads of southern Italy were barely adequate; now the British and Americans would be canalized on the only northbound hard-surface roads—Highways 6, 7, 16, and 17—that could carry the prodigious traffic of armies. Foul weather constrained maneuver, obviated the advantages of motorization, and undermined air superiority by halving the number of Allied bombing sorties. Churchill cursed the “savage versatility” of Italy’s climate, but GIs simply called it “German weather.”

Mines made it much worse. “All roads lead to Rome,” Alexander quipped, “but all the roads are mined.” So were footpaths, lovers’ lanes, alleys, goat trails, streambeds, shortcuts, and tracks, beaten and unbeaten. “I never had a moment that I didn’t worry about mines and booby traps,” a 7th Infantry officer said. Forty percent of Fifth Army battle casualties in early November came from mines. “Watch where you step,” Clark’s headquarters advised, “and have no curiosity at all.”

North of the Volturno, “you could follow our battalions by the bloodstained leggings, the scattered equipment, and the bits of bodies where men had been blown up,” the 168th Infantry reported. Big Teller mines could destroy a truck or cripple a tank, but German antipersonnel mines became particularly diabolical. “Castrators” or “nutcrackers” fired a bullet upward when an unwitting soldier stepped on the pressure plate. “Shoe” mines, built mostly of wood, proved nearly impossible to detect. Enemy sappers mined or booby-trapped doorknobs and desk drawers, grapevines and haystacks, apples on the tree and bodies on the ground, whether Italian or German, Tommy or Yank. At least two chaplains lost legs trying to bury the dead above the Volturno.

“A man’s foot is usually blown loose at the ankle, leaving the mangled foot dangling on shredded

tendons," an Army physician noted in his diary. "Additional puncture wounds of both legs and groin make the agony worse." A combat medic later wrote, "Even though you'd give them a shot or two of morphine, they would still scream." In a minefield, Bill Mauldin observed, "an old man thinks of his eyes and a young man grabs for his balls." The Army bought 100,000 of the SCR-625 mine detector—dubbed a "manhole cover on a stick"—but they proved useless in the rain and befuddled by the iron ore and shell fragments common in Italian soil. The device also required its operator to stand upright, often under fire, while listening for the telltale hum that signified danger. A secret program to train canine detectors—"M dogs"—failed when half the mines in field tests remained unsniffed.

* * *

None of it—not the demolitions, nor the rain, nor the nasty Ms—would have thwarted the Allies' upcountry march even temporarily had the Germans adhered to their original plan of an expedient fighting withdrawal to fortifications in the northern Apennines. Then perhaps the prime minister could have enjoyed autumn Chianti in Rome, and Alexander might indeed have captured Florence by year's end.

Instead, as the Allies splashed across the Volturno, an intense debate raged in the German high command over whether to change strategies. Rommel, who still commanded nine divisions in northern Italy, had spent much of September recuperating from an appendectomy. "Domineering, obstinate, and defeatist," as one admirer described him, he was increasingly disaffected with his military superiors in Berlin and adamant that German forces must retreat to a line below the Po River valley, or risk being outflanked and encircled. He chalked that line in blue on his headquarters map.

Kesselring, commanding eight divisions in the south, argued otherwise. Italy remained a comparatively minor theater: 3 million Germans fought in 163 divisions on the Eastern Front, and 34 divisions occupied France and the Low Countries. But Italy was the one active battleground where the inexorable German retreat might be arrested. Abandoning Rome would be a psychological blow, Kesselring insisted. More important, in Allied possession the airfields around the capital would complement those already captured at Foggia, making Austrian aircraft factories, Romanian oil fields, and the Danube basin even more vulnerable to enemy bombers.

Smiling Albert had his own map, and his own chalked lines. The Italian Peninsula was narrowest south of Rome, just eighty-five miles from sea to sea. Across this neck of country so wild it was home to wolves and bears, the Germans could build three progressively stout fortified lines, to be named Barbara, Bernhardt, and Gustav. "The object is to create an impregnable system of positions in depth, and so to save German blood," Kesselring said. "Leaders of all ranks must never forget this high moral responsibility." The Gustav Line, anchored on the vertical massif at Monte Cassino, could become the most formidable defensive position in Europe, strong enough that "the British and Americans would break their teeth on it."

Even as Hitler vacillated he began shifting forces south, from northern Italy and elsewhere, in part to forestall an Allied leap into the Balkans. It was said that he was dictating the order appointing Rommel supreme commander in Italy when he changed his mind in favor of Kesselring. "Military leadership without optimism is not possible," the Führer later explained, adding, "Rommel is an extraordinarily brave and able commander. I don't regard him as a stayer."

Rommel shrugged. "I'll take it as it comes," he wrote his wife, Lucie, on October 26. Hitler in early November signed a formal order demanding "the end of withdrawals," thereby condemning a million men to the agonies of Cassino, Ortona, the Rapido River, and Anzio. Rommel would be sent

west to oversee the Atlantic Wall coastal defenses, including those in Normandy, where he had won military glory in 1940. “The war is as good as lost,” he told one comrade, “and hard times lie ahead.”

Thanks to Ultra, the stiffening of German strategy had become all too evident to the Allied high command. Decrypted radio intercepts revealed both Hitler’s growing reluctance to yield ground and the construction south of Rome of three fortified lines, which collectively would be known as the Winter Line. The Germans appeared ready to wage a protracted war of attrition, with a view to exhausting the Allies.

The optimism of early October vanished, supplanted by extravagant despair. After reviewing the latest intelligence, Alexander cabled London on October 21: “We are committed to a long and costly advance to Rome, a ‘slogging match.’” The return of seven Allied divisions to Britain for OVERLORD left, for the moment, only eleven facing a German force that had swelled to twenty-three divisions and could grow “to the order of sixty.” The Allied buildup had dwindled, too: where thirteen hundred vehicles had been arriving in Italy each day, now only two thousand came per week. The terrain was abominable, the weather filthy. (Twenty inches of rain would fall in the final three months of 1943.) Fifth Army was advancing less than a mile a day and had yet to hit the main German line. On the Adriatic, Eighth Army crept forward on a thirty-five-mile front into what Alexander called a “cul-de-sac of rather unimportant country.”

In supposing that Hitler would abandon southern Italy after losing Naples, the Allies had once again underestimated German resolve—or capriciousness—in the Mediterranean. Eisenhower saw no alternative to bulling ahead. “It is essential for us to retain the initiative,” he cabled the Combined Chiefs on October 25. Referring to the enemy, he added: “If we can keep him on his heels until early spring, then the more divisions he uses in a counteroffensive against us, the better it will be for OVERLORD.”

Nor did the high command in Washington and London see a need to revise the rather vague strategic objectives in Italy: to engage as many German troops as possible and, although this goal remained more tacit than explicit, to liberate Rome. Churchill tried to sugar the pill by assuring Roosevelt on October 26, “The fact that the enemy have diverted such powerful forces to this theater vindicates our strategy.”

The prospect of waging a bitter mountain campaign rather than wintering in lovely Rome pleased no one, although the official British history later doubted “whether anyone in high places fully understood what a winter campaign in Italy implied.” Alexander translated the strategic objectives into a line on the map, roughly fifty miles above Rome and stretching northeast across the peninsula to the Adriatic, which he urged Clark and Montgomery to reach as soon as possible.

Alexander’s despondency was aggravated by a bout of jaundice, and his ecru complexion compromised efforts to put on a determined public face. “We’ll just have to punch, punch, punch, and keep Jerry on the run until we reach Rome,” he told reporters. Privately, he saw “no reason why we should ever get to Rome.”

Montgomery at least sensed what the Anglo-American legions were in for. He believed that Allied strategists needed to rediscover what W.G.F. Jackson called “ancient truths” about seasonal fighting in Europe. “I do not think we can conduct a winter campaign in this country,” Montgomery wrote on October 31. “If I remember, Caesar used to go into winter quarters—a very sound thing to do!”

The Mountainous Hinterland

LIEUTENANT Colonel Jack Toffey surely would have found sense in Montgomery’s prescription had it

reached his ear. “The road to Rome is a long one,” Toffey wrote, “and in many respects like the road to hell—inclusive of the good intentions.” Yet there would be no winter quarters, no sheltered wait for the roads to dry and the skies to clear, no Caesarian pause for a better day. Toffey commanded only one of a hundred Allied infantry battalions scattered from the Tyrrhenian Sea to the Adriatic, but he and his men were of a piece with the larger army group. What they endured, many endured. What they suffered, many suffered. As Toffey was emblematic of the young commanders who carried forward the battle experience of Morocco, Tunisia, and now Sicily, so his unit—the 2nd Battalion of the 15th Infantry Regiment, in Truscott’s 3rd Division—typified others trying to chivvy the Germans out of the interlocking fortifications of the Winter Line.

Under a different star, Toffey would have been aboard a troopship bound for Britain with the rest of the 9th Division, with which he had served in Africa and Sicily. Instead, he was among two thousand veterans transferred to the 3rd Division for immediate duty in Italy. Though he still dreamed of the day when he would “never get disheveled again,” he was pleased at the chance to serve once more under Truscott, whom he knew from Morocco, and proud to join both the 3rd Division—“the best in the West,” he called it—and the 15th Infantry, whose antebellum alumni included George Marshall and Dwight Eisenhower.

“Life is good,” he wrote his wife, Helen, in Columbus. Having reached Italy during the final hours at Salerno, he felt that he was “really soldiering again.” During the Volturno crossing “he was inexhaustible,” reported George Biddle, who joined Toffey’s men for a month of sketching and watercoloring. “He seemed to carry the whole battalion on his shoulders.” Biddle admired Toffey’s “keen, sharp mind and tough, salty American humor.” The young colonel, who possessed “the bones and conformation of a steeple-chaser rather than a racehorse,” was ubiquitous: urging his men forward, directing artillery fire, interrogating prisoners, evacuating the wounded and the dead.

For the last two weeks of October, they pushed north by northwest in Alexander’s “slogging match,” following a rugged corridor between the upper Volturno and Highway 6, known ever more sardonically as Victory Road. American maps often labeled the terrain here simply “mountainous hinterland.” Through stone pines and flame-shaped cypresses they trudged, past farm cottages with chimneys poking like snorkels above the red tile roofs. Peasants keened over their dead, or rummaged through their ruined crofts to salvage a copper pot or a rag doll. “Nothing I can do for him,” a medic told Toffey, pointing to a prostrate old man. “He is as dead as he will ever be.” German corpses, most from the 3rd Panzer Grenadier Division, flattened the weeds; some had been carbonized by artillery fire, others were simply carrion. GIs pocketed their *Gott mit Uns* buckles and moved on.

Across the cobblestones of Liberi and Roccaromana and Pietravairano they plodded, past the townfolk dressed in mourning and the *bambini* diapered in newspapers. Mines detonated, gunfights erupted, and all too often Toffey stood over a dying boy, whispering, “The stretchers are coming up, kid. Hang on.” Turning to a squad leader during one brawl he said, “I think we have the machine gun nest surrounded up there among the rocks…. Go get ’em—and don’t bring ’em back.”

At night they put the battalion command post in a fire-blackened cave or a farmhouse loft, sleeping on cold ground or corn shucks. Biddle sketched the tableau: battle maps spread across a camp table; flickering candle stubs flinging monstrous shadows on the whitewashed walls; empty cans of Spam or C ration peas tossed in a corner; a demijohn of rough red wine passed from hand to filthy hand. Cooks whipped up powdered eggs with powdered milk and powdered coffee; soldiers insisted that the Army would next issue powdered water. Sometimes the radio picked up Axis Sally, who closed her broadcasts by purring, “Easy, boys, there’s danger ahead.” Toffey slept with a field phone near his head, alert to calls for Paul Blue Six, his sign.

For a few weeks, Biddle—a Harvard-educated, World War I veteran whose brother was Roosevelt’s attorney general—gave Toffey someone to talk to, a rare prize for a commander. Toffey

told of being wounded in Tunisia, and of how so many recuperating officers had sought rear-echelon duties to avoid a return to combat. “If I had to do it again,” he mused, “I wonder if I wouldn’t look for a swivel chair?” He wondered aloud how to develop “the killing instincts…. Our boys aren’t professionals, and you have to condition them to enjoy killing.” He talked to Helen, too, in his letters, about how his knee grew “stiff and tired in the wet weather and rough country,” and about how he “would like a rest, a bath, a home and my family.” He fantasized about a stateside assignment. “At this point, Bragg would look good, and Dix or Lewis positively luxurious,” he told her, ticking off Army posts.

He did not mention the close calls, as when a German shell detonated in a chestnut tree on October 21, wounding two staff officers ten yards from where he was reading an August issue of *Time.* Nor did he tell her of the shells that a day later chased him from a grassy ledge on Monte della Costa, where he had been puffing his pipe and writing her a letter. Nor of the deaths of two other battalion commanders in the 15th Infantry, including one crushed in his foxhole by the engine of a downed German fighter.

Then another wet, gray dawn arrived and they edged forward, and upward. One account likened the soldier’s day in Italy to “climbing a ladder with an opponent stamping on his hands at every rung.” They learned to shun skylines and to dull the glint of helmet rims and mess kits with mud. They listened for the mewing of cats, a favorite German signal. Barbasol shave cream was a good balm for sore feet, but nothing could compensate for the lack of overcoats, wool underwear, and shelter halves, which remained in barracks bags stranded in Palermo. Every man’s shoulders instinctively hunched at the rush of artillery, but still they debated with theological intensity whether it was true that a man never heard the shell that hit him.

Easy, boys, there’s danger ahead. On occasion Paul Blue Six lost his temper, as in late October when he berated staff officers for incaution. “I’m goddam sick and tired of seeing these picnic gatherings in the open,” he barked. “I’m sick of telling you guys to wear your helmets and carry your arms.” On October 28 he asked Biddle to sketch a sergeant who had been shot dead on Monte Caievola. Pulling back a blanket, Toffey nodded at the dead man’s sunken face and said, “The people at home ought to see things like that.” When artillery raked the battalion again, he rang the regimental headquarters. “This is Toffey. Get the meat wagon down here,” he said. “There are two more killed and one wounded.”

More often he was a sturdy, abiding presence, a steeplechaser. “Be alert and live,” he told his soldiers, echoing the motto printed in *Stars and Stripes.* He urged new replacement officers to “get to know your own men, every man in your platoon,” by name as well as by their strengths and weaknesses. “We need you, terribly,” he continued. “You’ll have less good personnel than you had at home. You’ll find that your company has lost its top sergeant and that the best platoon sergeant is dead. But we need you and we’ve got a job to do.” No officer was to sleep without checking perimeter security. Not a bandolier or canteen should be abandoned. “I wish you all luck,” he told them. “We’re glad to have you with us. Remember that if I can help you I’ll do it.”

Toffey’s battalion punched through the Barbara Line, which was hardly more than a chain of outposts, but the Bernhardt Line proved obdurate. Two companies failed to oust the enemy from Monte Cesima, looming nearly four thousand feet above Highway 6. Under Truscott’s orders, the entire battalion on November 4 looped through Presenzano to flank the mountain in a night climb through spectral chestnut groves. “We circle the meadows, keeping the shadow,” Biddle wrote. Up and up they climbed, “the lips parted in that rictus which you see on the faces of distance runners.” After ten hours they reached the stony crest to find the German observation post deserted. Toffey pointed among the ferns to a dead soldier with a bullet through his left temple. Here, he told Biddle, was another lost soul “to add to your collection.”

From the summit Toffey squinted at the northern glacis of mountains that would bedevil the Allies for the next six months: Lungo and Trocchio, Sammucro and Cassino. “Hell,” he said. “You can see all the way into Germany.” More than half the battalion had become casualties since arriving in Italy. After watching the men of his division emerge from the high country on November 5, Lucian Truscott simply piled up adjectives: “Haggard, dirty, bedraggled, long-haired, unshaven, clothing in tatters, worn out boots.”

“Just so many dead,” Biddle wrote. Below Monte Cesima, in the valley town of Mignano, he watched in the rain as gloved soldiers heaved the pallid corpses of American and German soldiers into a truck trailer, the living “wrestling with the dead” until a full measure filled the bed. He added:

> I wish the people at home, instead of thinking of their boys in terms of football stars, would think of them in terms of miners trapped underground or suffocating to death in a tenth-story fire. I wish they would think of them as cold, wet, hungry, homesick and frightened. I wish, when they think of them, they would be a little sick to their stomachs.

Toffey finally finished a letter to Helen he had started a fortnight earlier. “It at least assures you,” he told her, “of my continued existence.”

The panorama from Monte Cesima revealed the formidable tactical challenge confronting Fifth Army. The only viable overland passage to Rome followed Highway 6 through the narrow Mignano Gap, six miles long and dominated by mountains on either flank. Several hills also sat in the gap proper, like stoppers in a bottleneck, soaring a thousand feet or so above the valley floor. North of these impedimenta, the gap emptied onto the broad plain of the Rapido River Valley, across which a final mountain barrier—dominated by Monte Cassino—guarded the entrance to the Liri Valley, boulevard to Rome.

Mark Clark’s plan called for his infantry divisions to force the Mignano Gap and then converge on the Liri Valley, where tanks could spearhead a run for the capital. On Fifth Army’s far right, the 34th and 45th Divisions crept through the Apennine crags, using herds of goats to clear highland minefields. Vietinghoff accurately observed of his American adversary here: “Every step forward into the mountainous terrain merely increased his difficulties.”

On the left flank, the British 56th Division tried to loop around the western lip of the Mignano Gap on November 5 by attacking Monte Camino, a “steep solid rock leading God knows where,” as one rifleman put it. Expecting only German pickets, the 201st Guards Brigade instead found the Bernhardt Line: mines, machine guns, and mortar pits blasted from an exposed face dubbed Bare Arse Ridge. Heath fires lighted the scarps and cols, as Guardsmen clawed up a succession of summits only to find that they were false crests overshadowed by still higher ground.

Three panzer grenadier counterattacks on November 8 nearly flicked the British from the mountain. Tommies built stone breastworks against singing mortar fragments and a frigid east wind, stripping rations and ammo from the dead, and brewing tea with muddy water scooped from shell holes. Without blankets or winter battle dress, the wounded died from exposure; three forward Guards companies dwindled to a hundred men, combined. “A small earthquake added to the unpleasantness,” a Scots Guard account noted. In the end, four British battalions could not overcome five entrenched German battalions; after a horrid week Clark approved a withdrawal from what was now called Murder Mountain. Dead men remained propped at their posts with helmets on and rifles ready, a rear

guard faithful to the end and beyond. “Altogether,” the Coldstream Guards history explained, “the difficulties were too great.”

Too great as well for Truscott’s 3rd Division in the Fifth Army center. A ten-day effort to seize Monte la Difensa, a geological appendage to Murder Mountain, proved just as futile. On the evening of November 5, corps commander Lucas phoned Truscott with orders from Clark to help the British by also attacking Monte Lungo, one of those isolated hill masses inside the gap. Protesting the lack of reconnaissance, air support, and artillery, Truscott asked to speak to Clark.

“Damn it,” Lucas replied. “You know the position I’m in with him. That would only make it worse, and put me in a helluva hole. You have just got to do it.”

“I still think it’s wrong,” Truscott said, then ordered his 30th Infantry forward. One battalion captured conical Monte Rotondo and another secured a modest foothold on Lungo: that far and no farther.

As the grim season wore on, the suffering grew epic. Audie Murphy noted that the “faces of the dead seem green and unearthly. This is bad for the morale, as it makes a man reflect upon what his own life may come to.” Since arriving in Italy less than two months earlier, the 3rd Division had tallied 8,600 casualties. Losses included almost 400 officers—half of the division’s second lieutenants among them—and nearly 4,000 privates. The three infantry regiments had lost 70 percent of their strength, an indicator of “how fragile an infantry division really is,” Truscott told Beetle Smith.

To wife Sarah on November 10 he wrote, “You are in my thoughts a thousand times a day.” He later added, “One day merges into another while time is measured only by the capture of the next ridge, the crossing of the next stream. I’m a bit grayer than when you saw me last, but otherwise unchanged in appearance.” Even amid carnage Truscott tried to honor the beauty of this world by placing autumn flowers on his field desk every day. He also dispatched an aide to Naples to replenish the command post’s liquor supply; the lieutenant returned with thirty-five bottles of cognac. “I only pray,” Truscott told Sarah, “that I can live and measure up to what my lads seem to expect of me.”

Ernie Pyle returned to the front in November after two months at home. Rested if not reinvigorated, he quickly sized up the Italian campaign. “The land and the weather were both against us,” he wrote. “The country was shockingly beautiful, and just as shockingly hard to capture from the enemy.” He listened to “shells chase each other through the sky across the mountains ahead, making a sound like cold wind blowing on a winter night.” Pyle found “almost inconceivable misery,” as well as a bemused fortitude. When gunners calculated that it cost $25,000 in artillery shells for each enemy soldier killed, one GI asked, “Why wouldn’t it be better to just offer the Germans $25,000 to surrender?”

A diarist in the 56th Evacuation Hospital noted that even away from the front lines life was spare: “No shelves, no dresser, no hooks or nails on a wall. No bed table, no reading table, no cabinets. No floor except a muddy, wet one.” Pyle described a soldier playing poker by candlelight who abruptly murmured, “War, my friends, is a silly business. War is the craziest thing I ever heard of.”

Irony and dark humor—“the greatest of protections against crackup,” in one soldier’s estimation—grew ever sharper in the ranks. During a showing of *Casablanca* in a British camp, when Humphrey Bogart’s gunshot victim crumpled to the ground, Tommies cried as one, “Stretcher bearer!” Spike Milligan, serving in the Royal Artillery, wrote his family, “The whole of this land we have arrived in is now top secret, in fact no one is allowed to know where it is…. However, the bloody Germans know where it is.” On November 9, Milligan wrote, “Nothing much to report except World War 2. Is it still going on where you are?”

Burial details sent out at night to retrieve the dead were known as the Ghouls. When a mobile shower unit arrived at one artillery battery, a quartet of naked gunners stood singing in barbershop formation for an hour. “It’s the loss of dirt,” one explained. “It leaves you dizzy.” A 36th Division soldier wrote his father that he now lived in “a remodeled pig shed. I say remodeled because there is no pig in it.” Others occupied a heatless hovel they named Villa des Chilblains, and soldiers hooted at a mistyped headquarters order: “Latrines: all troops will ensure that faces are covered with soil after each person has deprecated.” A platoon leader who learned that his battalion commander’s radio call sign was “Big Six,” speculated that to ring the division commander he should ask for “Big, Big, Big Six,” and to reach Eisenhower he must request “Six to the Maximum Power.”

Each man coped with calamity in his own fashion. Richard Tregaskis described a combat engineer sitting on a curb in Pietramelara in late October, nibbling the “cheese unit” from his C ration as a woman’s shrieks carried from a ruined building nearby. “She’s been yelling like that all day,” the soldier said. “Sometimes I feel kinda sorry for these poor people.” One night in mid-November, upon finding four dead 3rd Division soldiers in slit trenches, a sergeant said, “You can pray forever but those poor fellows are gone.” Pretending to play his rifle like a bull fiddle, the sergeant sang “Heart of My Heart,” while a comrade tipped his helmet forward like a vaudeville hoofer’s bowler and danced a jig to cheer the dead.

“You can’t believe men will do to each other the things they do,” a forward observer wrote his sister. “I suppose I’m soft, but I’ve got to say, God forgive us all.” A week later he was killed when a shell severed his jugular vein.

At 9:30 A.M. on Thursday, November 11, Clark drove through the hills below Naples to Avellino, where a new American cemetery was to be dedicated on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the armistice ending World War I. Sunlight glinted from hundreds of white crosses and stars of David, perfectly arrayed in a former potato field.

“Here we are, a quarter century later, with the same Allies as before, fighting the same mad dogs that were loose in 1918,” Clark said, speaking without notes at the flagpole. “They gave their lives that the people at home could pursue the life which we have always wanted—a happy life—and that their children could go to the schools and churches they want, and follow the line of work they want. And we are fighting, first, to save our own land from devastation like this in Italy.”

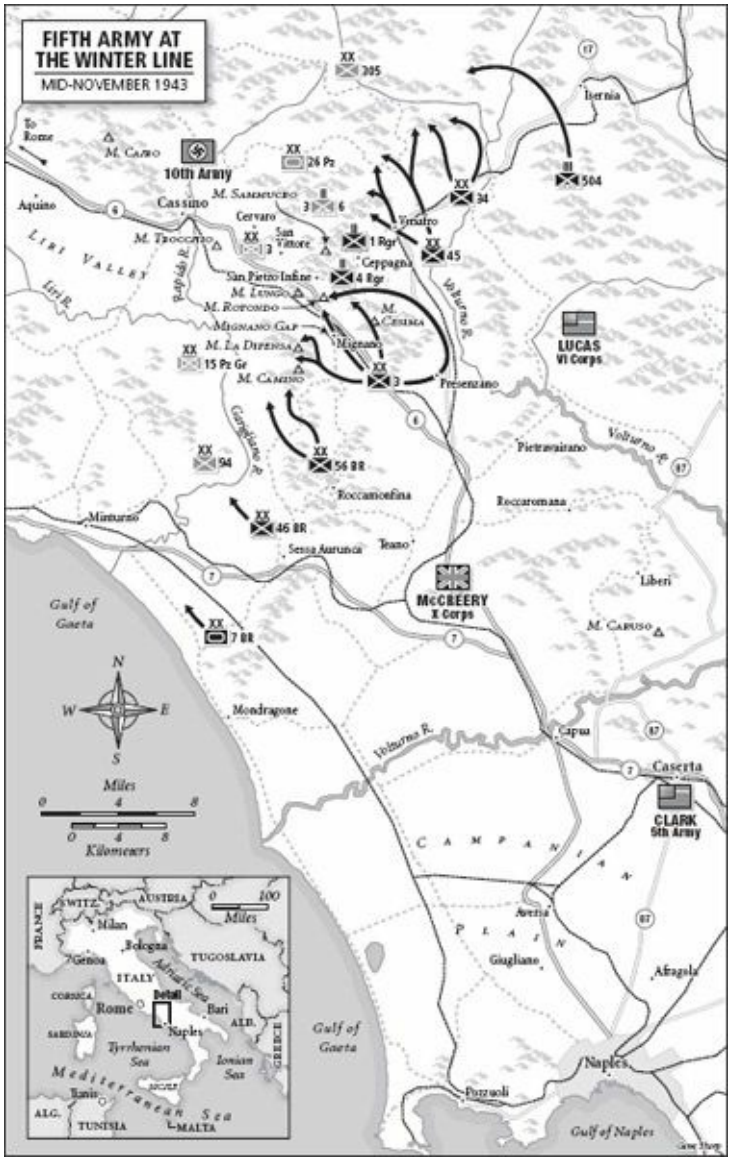
He drew himself to his full height, a ramrod in a peaked cap. “We must not think about going home. None of us is going home until it’s over…. We’ve caught the torch that these men have flung us, and we’ll carry it to Berlin and to the great victory—a complete victory—which the united nations deserve.”

An honor guard fired thrice. Wadding from the blank cartridges fluttered across the graves. A bugler blew Taps, echoed by another, unseen bugler in a nearby arbor. “That was a good ceremony,” Clark said. His jaw set, he climbed back into the jeep to return to the battlefield.

Imperfect as a commander and at times insufferable as a person, Clark knew what he was fighting for. Few men would love him, some would detest him, but most recognized in him a forceful field general who was willful enough, indomitable enough to wage the hard war that the Italian campaign had become. He believed, as he had told Alexander’s chief of staff a week earlier, that “the war could be won in this theater”; he also believed that Fifth Army could seize Rome, “and intended to do so.” In part this was vainglory: resentful of Montgomery, Clark wanted Eighth Army to steer clear of the Italian capital and the hosannahs its capture would merit. Yet it also reflected his single-minded grit, and a determination to keep faith. *He* had caught the torch tossed by his dead soldiers,

and he would carry it as far as necessary.

Clark knew that the current battle had stalled. Since crossing the Volturno, Lucas's VI Corps had covered forty-five miles on Fifth Army's right flank and twenty-five miles in the center, at Mignano. McCreery's X Corps on the left had covered seventeen miles. That yardage had cost the army ten thousand casualties since mid-October, and the equivalent of two divisions since landing at Salerno, including more than three thousand dead. Although the Liri Valley was barely a dozen miles ahead, it might just as well have been on the moon. MPs posted warning signs across the front, including "Nothing But Jerry Beyond This Point" and "If You Go Any Further Take a Cross With You."



The British had disappointed Clark at the Volturno and in the attack on Monte Camino. "Why in the hell don't you get going?" he had asked McCreery. Privately, and unfairly, Clark believed that American units were "the only ones I really could depend upon to slug it out." In truth, although Fifth Army now numbered 244,000 men, Clark lacked enough reserves of any nationality to exploit a breakthrough even if he reached the Liri Valley.

Getting that far seemed doubtful in itself. Few of the troops now butting at the Bernhardt Line had mountain training. Most lacked "the born hillman's eye for the best way up, down, or across a mountain," as the official British history would conclude. Instead, "the major tactics of the Allies became, willy-nilly, a head-on battering" that also required enormous quantities of ammunition and

the conversion of combat troops to porters and stretcher bearers. Will Lang of *Life* scribbled in his notebook: "Need one man carrying for every two men fighting."

Worse yet, the battered docks in Naples limited resupply efforts. Wool clothing scheduled to arrive in mid-October was delayed until mid-November after ammunition took shipping priority. Shortages of tires, batteries, and spare parts immobilized three of every ten trucks, further hampering quartermasters trying to move matériel from port to battlefront. As the frozen corpses on Camino could attest, the Allies were utterly unprepared for winter. Much of the cold-weather gear under development in the States would not reach Italy for another year. Heavy combat boots would not arrive until February. British units doubled the blanket allowance from two to four, requisitioned sheepskin coats from Syria, and increased the daily sugar ration by four ounces for those fighting at altititudes above two thousand feet.

Too little, too late. "Cold ground trauma" injuries soared in November, including the first thousand cases of trench foot among American troops. Clark was aghast to learn that the British had begun breaking up a division every two months to field replacements. "I wish so many things were not done on a shoestring," Lucas wrote. "This campaign was poorly planned in many respects. We should have at least twice as many troops."

True, the Germans were also in a bad way, and there was always comfort in the misery of one's adversary. Kesselring had stabilized the front by throwing two more divisions into the fight, but the first ten days of November cost him more than two thousand casualties. "Under heavy artillery fire," a German NCO wrote in his diary. "My morale is gone." A captured letter from a soldier on the Adriatic front lamented, "The lice are at me now and I haven't washed or shaved for a fortnight…. All I am doing is waiting for the war to end." Another letter, written by a German soldier in Poland to a comrade captured in Italy by the 3rd Division, included a grim confession: "We have already liquidated our 1,200 Jewish slaves. We sent them to another ghetto, beyond the borders of life."

Clark concluded that the time had come to pause. On Saturday, November 13, he met his senior commanders at the VI Corps command post and ticked off the battlefield realities: five of Fifth Army's seven divisions had been in the line almost constantly since Salerno; the British were stalled at Monte Camino; casualties and supply troubles kept mounting. The army would "hold to its present positions" for at least two weeks. Commanders would ensure "that the troops get all the rest possible." Planners would take the rest of the month to concoct a new scheme before the offensive resumed.

"We musn't kid ourselves," Truscott said, gesturing vaguely toward German lines to the north. "There's still a lot of fight left in the old son of a bitch."

But Lucas provided the apposite epitaph for the first Allied assault on the Winter Line. "The weather is cold as hell and the wind is blowing," he wrote in his diary. "Wars should be fought in better country than this."

"The Entire World Was Burning"

AT 8:30 A.M. on Saturday, November 20, Six to the Maximum Power—otherwise known as Dwight D. Eisenhower—stood smoking a cigarette on the docks at Mers el-Kébir, the great French naval base six miles west of Oran. Snow crowned the majestic Atlas Mountains to the south and a chill breeze swept the dockyard, where sailors in peacoats and dungarees bustled about the piers and warehouses. A brilliant winter sun gleamed from the African heavens, and the Mediterranean sparkled like buffed lapis. In the sheltered anchorage, the newly arrived battleship U.S.S. *Iowa* swung on her chains after a transatlantic passage, and Eisenhower watched through field glasses as a whaleboat descended from her port davits. He had come to welcome the dreadnought's distinguished passengers, including a

particular eminence code-named CARGO; in a few minutes, even Six to the Maximum Power would be substantially outranked.

He welcomed the diversion. Autumn at AFHQ had been an anxious season. Sanguine predictions of a promenade to Rome proved fanciful, and the Winter Line battle now teetered toward debacle. "We are very much disturbed…about the campaign in Italy," the British chiefs had cabled on November 4, even suggesting that a stalemate there might require postponement of OVERLORD. Tart messages from Marshall, faulting Eisenhower for not "cracking the whip" and for misusing Allied airpower, made him "burn the air" in frustration, Harry Butcher reported. His explications to Washington and London now had an occasional odor of martyrdom. By drawing the wrath of Kesselring's armies onto his own, he advised the Combined Chiefs, "it then makes little difference what happens to us if OVERLORD is a success." Fifth and Eighth Armies, segregated by the Apennines, continued to fight disjointed wars, but Eisenhower seemed powerless to contrive a better scheme. "I have sought in every possible way to avoid a mere slugging match along a wide front," he told Alexander on November 9. Since the TORCH invasions a year earlier, Allied casualties in the Mediterranean had eclipsed 100,000. In exhortations to his troops, who would have disagreed that "it makes little difference what happens to us," Eisenhower had been reduced to invoking prepositional deities: "The God of Justice fights on our side."

Politics and folderol beset him still: whether Capri should be an exclusive preserve of the Air Force ("contrary to my policies"); whether he disliked the photographer Margaret Bourke-White ("absolutely untrue"); why a professed man of faith would sometimes cuss ("Damn it, I *am* a religious man"); whether he would run for president ("I ain't and won't"). Some requests left him scratching his head, including an offer of £10,000 from a South African impresario "if you arrange for Mussolini's personal appearance on the stages of our Cape Town theaters. Three weeks' engagement." Beetle Smith proposed creating a special AFHQ staff "whose job would be solely to keep the home front frightened," since the Pentagon and Whitehall seemed more responsive when catastrophe threatened.

It all wore him down, although at age fifty-three he still radiated vigor. "He usually blew his top if anyone so much as intimated that he looked tired," Kay Summersby recalled. Most nettlesome in recent weeks was the rampant speculation over who would command OVERLORD, and suggestions that he and Marshall were rivals for the post. The topic made him "acutely uncomfortable," John Eisenhower later wrote. Eisenhower denounced the rumors as "false and malicious gossip," the quintessence of folderol.

The whaleboat drew close to the dock. Eisenhower picked out Marshall, King, Harry Hopkins, and General H. H. "Hap" Arnold, the Army Air Forces chief, standing at the rail. A grinning, sea-tanned figure in a gray fedora gestured with his cigarette holder at the bright sunshine and yelled from his wheelchair, "Roosevelt weather!"

Handshakes and a blur of salutes greeted the president and his chiefs—"all the heavy maleness of the war," in Summersby's phrase. En route from Washington to strategy conferences in Cairo and Teheran, they planned to fly to Tunisia and spend the night before pressing on to Egypt. Secret Service agents lifted Roosevelt into an armored limousine, where he was joined by Eisenhower and two of the president's sons, Elliott and Frank, Jr., who were serving in the Mediterranean.

During the fifty-mile drive to La Sénia airfield, south of Oran, Roosevelt described with evident delight the near sinking of the *Iowa:* on Sunday afternoon, November 14, in fair weather and following seas off Bermuda, he had been on deck watching antiaircraft gunners take target practice at drifting weather balloons when the ship's bridge announced, "Torpedo! Torpedo on the starboard beam." A sailor bellowed, "This ain't no drill." Much excitement ensued: whistles; alarms; hoisted signal flags; a stampede to general quarters. Secret Service agents rushed about with drawn pistols. *Iowa* surged to flank speed and heeled sharply to port in evasion. "Take me over to the starboard rail," Roosevelt told

his valet. “I want to watch the torpedo.”

Streaking at forty-six knots, the torpedo hit *Iowa*’s turbulent wake several hundred feet astern and detonated with such violence that many aboard the battleship thought she had been struck. A mile away the culprit signaled apologies: the destroyer U.S.S. *William D. Porter*, part of *Iowa*’s escort, had accidentally fired tube number 3 during a simulated torpedo attack drill. Admiral King ordered the destroyer back to port with her entire company under arrest. “Tell me, Ernest,” Hap Arnold had asked, “does this happen often in your Navy?” Hopkins speculated that the *Porter*’s skipper was “some damned Republican.”

Roosevelt threw back his head in glee. The motorcade pulled onto the tarmac at La Sénia, where four C-54s waited to fly them to Tunis. There was much to discuss, including the imminent conferences with Churchill and Joseph Stalin, the looming campaign in western Europe, and the shape of the world after the Axis defeat. “The war, and the peace,” Roosevelt said. “Can you wait, Ike?”

Eisenhower nodded. “Just about, sir.”

The president had planned to fly to Cairo from Tunis at dawn on Sunday, but after a lively Saturday dinner overlooking the sea at La Marsa, he announced, over Secret Service objections, that he would linger an extra day to explore the Tunisian battlefields. On the Sabbath noon, Summersby pulled the Cadillac in front of Guest Villa Number 1. Roosevelt settled into the backseat with Eisenhower. A Secret Service agent carrying a machine gun in a large case climbed up front with Telek, the general’s yapping terrier. Three truckloads of MPs, a radio car, and eight motorcycle outriders completed the convoy.

Past the bey’s palace and the Roman aqueduct they drove, then turned southwest to follow the lush Medjerda River valley. Eisenhower narrated with fluency and passion: how British and American troops exactly a year earlier had pushed across the Tunisian outback and down this valley to Djedeïda, where they could even see the minarets of Tunis; how Kesselring’s troops stiffened—*right here*, at Point 186—and drove the Allies back up the valley in pitched, heartbreaking winter battles at Tébourba and Medjez-el-Bab and Longstop Hill; how Rommel attacked in the south, lunging through Kasserine Pass and nearly reaching the vast supply depot at Tébessa; how the Allies gathered themselves in the spring to eventually encircle the Axis bridgehead at Tunis and Bizerte, where callow American troops redeemed themselves at Mateur and Hill 609, *right over there*.

They stopped for lunch in a eucalyptus brake on the north bank of the Medjerda. MPs formed a wide cordon, elbow to elbow, with their backs to the picnickers. Was it possible, Roosevelt wondered, that U.S. and German tanks had fought across the now lost battlefield at Zama, where Scipio Africanus smashed Hannibal to close the Second Punic War in 202 B.C.? Eisenhower could not say with certainty, but near the picnic grove once stood ancient Utica; here in 46 B.C., according to Plutarch, Cato the Younger revolted against Julius Caesar in defense of republican ideals, reading Plato’s “On the Soul” as Caesar’s troops closed in, then falling on his own sword to remain “the only free and undefeated man” in greater Rome. As the president finished his sandwich, Eisenhower wandered off to inspect a burnt-out tank. “Ike,” Roosevelt said when he returned, “if, one year ago, you had offered to bet that on this day the president of the United States would be having his lunch on a Tunisian roadside, what odds could you have demanded?”

Late that night the presidential party lifted off for Cairo from El Aouina airfield in Tunis. Scant mention had been made of Italy. “Eisenhower showed no signs of worry about the success of the Italian operation…for which many of us did not think he had sufficient force,” wrote Admiral William D. Leahy, chairman of the Joint Chiefs. Even less was said about the OVERLORD command, although, after several glasses of sherry, King asserted that Marshall would get the job and that Eisenhower would return to Washington as Army chief of staff. Roosevelt seemed to regard Eisenhower as a more formidable figure than the tentative young commander he had last met in Casablanca ten months

earlier. But the president as usual remained cheerful and opaque, offering only the cryptic observation that “it is dangerous to monkey with a winning team.”

A few days later, Eisenhower wrote Mamie, “The eternal pound, pound, pound seems a burden, but when it once ceases it is possible that many of us will be nigh unto nervous wrecks, and wholly unfit for normal life.” As if adding a postscript to himself, he observed, “I know I’m a changed person. No one could be through what I’ve seen and not be different from what he was at the beginning.”

Evidently no discussion at La Marsa had been devoted to a curious development in the Italian campaign, in which both Roosevelt and Eisenhower had a hand and which now played out in the Adriatic seaport of Bari.

Few cities in Italy had escaped war’s havoc with greater panache than flat-roofed, white-walled Bari. Once an embarkation point for Crusaders headed east, it had been destroyed by William the Bad, restored by William the Good, and enhanced by the arrival of the bones of St. Nicholas—Father Christmas—which were stolen in Asia Minor by Bari seamen in the eleventh century. It was said that St. Francis’s devotion to chastity had been tested in Bari by a comely temptress whose advances were repelled when the holy man heaved a brazier of hot coals at her. Horace called the town “fish-famous,” and stalls of clams, sea urchins, cuttlefish, and oysters still lined the breakwater, where fisherman smacked dead octopuses on the rocks to tenderize them. Peddlers wheeled their barrows through Bari’s serpentine alleys, selling amulets against the evil eye, while toothless pilgrims at the basilica sought Nicholas’s intercession. *Netturbini* with handcarts swept the gutters of garbage heaved overnight from upper windows. Unlike that of Naples, Bari’s “agile and ingenious criminal class consisted chiefly of small boys,” wrote a British officer and novelist named Evelyn Waugh. Bari’s newest landmark was the Bambino Sports Stadium, built by Mussolini as a reward for producing more male babies than any comparable city in Italy.

Liberating Tommies had been greeted with flowers and speeches, although a British major reported that by the time Montgomery arrived in an open jeep few of the city’s quarter million souls “came to see him for by then the novelty had worn off.” Shops still offered silk stockings for four shillings, and Allied soldiers, when not gawking at the sculpted fauns and nymphs at the opera house, prowled through a PX stocked with Palmolive soap and Hershey bars. The large port, enclosed by a mole of cyclopean blocks weighing 350 tons each, had been captured in good condition, and a thousand stevedores now labored around the clock.

They had much to unload. With Naples reviving slowly, Bari provided the main supply port for Eighth Army as well as for the Allied air forces now building four dozen fields at Foggia and elsewhere. To bring heavy bombers to Foggia required shipping comparable to that needed to move two Army divisions; keeping those planes flying would take a supply effort equal to the entire Eighth Army’s. To floor a single all-weather airstrip against mud, for example, took five thousand tons of perforated steel planking. On December 1, the newly created Fifteenth Air Force opened its headquarters in Bari. The commander, a former professional bantamweight boxer who also held both a doctorate in aeronautical engineering and the Medal of Honor, Major General James H. Doolittle, moved into a plush first-floor office on the waterfront, in the former headquarters of the Italian air force.

Doolittle’s job was to augment the bombing of strategic targets, such as German aircraft plants and oil facilities, now under way by British and American squadrons based in Britain. Doolittle had claimed that flying weather in Italy would be almost twice as good as that in the United Kingdom, a

proposition sorely tested by the cancellation due to inclemency of roughly half his bombing missions in November. Still, Allied pilots now owned the Italian skies. German long-range bombers had flown only eight times in Italy since mid-October, including four attacks on Naples in November. Nearly three-quarters of all Luftwaffe fighters had retreated to Germany, and the Allied pummeling of enemy airfields had become so intense that the raids were known as Reich Party Days.

So cocky were Allied air commanders that on the afternoon of Thursday, December 2, Air Vice Marshal Arthur Coningham assured reporters, "I would regard it as a personal affront and insult if the Luftwaffe should attempt any significant action in this area."

As Coningham issued this challenge to the Fates, berth number 29 on the outer mole of Bari harbor was occupied by an ordinary Liberty ship, S.S. *John Harvey.* She had arrived four days earlier in a convoy of nine merchantmen, after an odyssey that began in Baltimore and included stops at Norfolk, Oran, and Augusta. Only her secret cargo was unusual: 1,350 tons of bombs filled with a toxin known to chemists as dichlorethyl sulfide and to Army chemical warfare specialists as HS, but more commonly called mustard gas. Several military port officials knew of *John Harvey*'s lading, but other ships with medical supplies and conventional munitions took precedence, and she remained unloaded, nearly hull to hull with fourteen other vessels moored at the Molo Nuovo. German torpedo boats infested the Adriatic, and investigators later concluded that "the ship was at the time in as safe a place as could be found."

No Axis chemical stockpiles had been discovered in North Africa, and AFHQ believed that gas warfare by Germany "appears unlikely" except "at a critical moment of the war, when such a course might be expected to be decisive." But Eisenhower wondered whether that moment was approaching. Relying on Italian intelligence, he had warned Marshall in late August that Berlin had "threatened that if Italy turned against Germany gas would be used against the country and the most terrible vengeance would be exacted" as a lesson to other wobbly allies. Churchill also sounded the alarm in a note to Roosevelt. Fifth Army prisoner interrogations suggested intensified German preparations for chemical combat, and rumors circulated of a new, egregiously potent gas. "Many soldiers in the German army say, 'Adolf will turn to gas when there is no other way out,'" a Fifth Army memo noted in mid-October. Nineteen plants in Germany were suspected of making poisonous gases, with others scattered across occupied Europe.

Twenty-eight different gases had caused more than a million casualties in World War I, beginning with a German chlorine attack at Ypres in April 1915. Hitler himself had been temporarily blinded by British mustard; a liquid that emitted vapor at room temperature, mustard blistered exposed skin and attacked eyes and airways. No commander in 1943 could be cavalier about a manifest threat by Germany to use gas. Spurred by resurgent concerns in the Mediterranean, Roosevelt in August publicly warned Berlin of "full and swift retaliation in kind." Allied policy had long authorized large chemical depots near Oran and elsewhere; when mustard stocks were moved by convoy in Africa, MPs sat in the truck beds "in order to report any poison gas leaks, thus avoiding danger to the native population."

Now, to ensure a capacity for "swift retaliation," AFHQ and the War Department had secretly agreed to finish stockpiling a forty-five-day chemical reserve in the Mediterranean, including more than 200,000 gas bombs. (How the Germans would be deterred if the deterrent remained secret was never adequately explained.) With White House concurrence, a substantial cache would be stored in forward dumps at Foggia, beginning with the consignment that sat in *John Harvey*'s hold as the sun set on Thursday evening.

Several thousand Allied servicemen and Italian spectators sat in the oval Bambino Stadium near Bari's train station as a baseball scrimmage between two quartermaster squads entered the late innings under the lights. Moviegoers filled several theaters around town; the Porto Vecchio was showing *Sergeant York*, with Gary Cooper. In the British mess on the Molo San Nicola, a female vocalist crooned to homesick officers sipping gin. Italian women drew water from corner fountains in the old city, or laid fresh pasta on wire tables to dry. Lights also burned atop port cranes and along the jetties: another convoy had arrived at 5:30 P.M., bringing to forty the number of ships in the harbor, and stevedores manned their winches and bale hooks. Merchant mariners finished supper or lay in their bunks, writing letters and reading. Sailors aboard the S.S. *Louis Hennepin* broke out a cribbage board. In his spacious waterfront office, Jimmy Doolittle leafed through reports from a recent bombing mission to Solingen; hearing airplanes overhead, he assumed they were more C-47s bringing additional men and matériel to Bari. It was 7:20 P.M.

The first two Luftwaffe raiders dumped cardboard boxes full of tiny foil strips. Known as Window to the Allies and Duppel to the Germans, the foil was intended to deflect and dissipate radar signals. The tactic confused Allied searchlight radars but was otherwise wasted: the main early-warning radar dish, on a theater roof in Via Victor Emmanuel, had been broken for days. British fighters, sent up on routine patrol at dusk, had already landed without incident. Ultra intercepts had revealed German reconnaissance interest in Bari, but no one guessed that Kesselring and his Luftwaffe subordinates had orchestrated a large raid on the harbor to slow both Eighth Army and the buildup at Foggia. "Risks such as were accepted in the port of Bari on this occasion must result in damage proportional to the risk taken," Eisenhower's air chief would tell him three weeks later. To avoid fratricide, a senior British officer had insisted that naval gunners not fire until fired upon.

That moment soon arrived. Guided by the harbor lights and their own hissing flares, twenty Ju-88 bombers roared in at barely 150 feet. A few tracer streams climbed toward the flares above the harbor, but gunners blinded by the glare were reduced to firing by earshot at the marauding planes. The first bombs fell near the Via Abate Gimma in central Bari. Explosions around the Hotel Corona killed civilians and Allied soldiers alike. A woman screamed, *"Non voglio morire!"*—I don't want to die—but many died. Near the Piazza Mercantile a house collapsed on a mother and her six sons. Baseball fans stampeded for the stadium exits. The door to Doolittle's office blew in and the windows disintegrated. Dusting himself off as bombs began to detonate in the flare-silvered harbor, Doolittle told another officer, "We're taking a pasting."

Much worse was to come. Bombs severed an oil pipeline on the petroleum quay. Burning fuel spewed across the harbor and down the moles, chasing stevedores into the sea. The *Joseph Wheeler* took a direct hit that blew open her starboard side and killed all forty-one crewmen. An explosion carried away half the *John Bascom*'s bridge, blowing shoes from sailors' feet and watches from their wrists. *Bascom*'s cargo of hospital equipment and gasoline ignited, burning away her stern lines so that she drifted into the *John L. Motley*, carrying five thousand tons of ammunition and already holed by a bomb through the number 5 hatch. Engulfed in flame, *Motley* smacked against a seawall and exploded, killing sixty-four of her sailors and catapaulting shards of flaming metal over the docks. The blast caved in the burning *Bascom*'s port side—"The ship did not have a chance to survive," a crewman noted—and generated a wave that swept over the breakwater, tossing seamen who had climbed from the sea into the water again.

A bomb detonated belowdecks on the British freighter *Fort Athabaska*, killing all but ten of fifty-six crewmen. The Liberty ship *Samuel J. Tilden* caught a bomb in the engine room before being strafed by both a German plane and by errant antiaircraft fire from shore; a British torpedo boat soon sank the drifting freighter to prevent her from setting other vessels ablaze. Two bombs hit the Polish freighter *Lwów*, sweeping her decks with fire. Half an hour after the raid began, the last German raider

emptied his bomb rack and headed north. “The whole harbor was aflame,” the seaman Warren Bradenstein reported, “with burning on the surface of the water, and ships were on fire and exploding.”

Among those burning vessels was the *John Harvey,* at berth number 29 with her secret cargo. Shortly after *Motley* blew up, *Harvey* detonated with even greater violence, killing her master and seventy-seven crewmen. A fountain of flame spurted a thousand feet into the night sky, showering the harbor with burning debris, including hatch covers, ruptured bomb casings, and a derrick, which punctured another ship’s deck like a javelin. The blast ripped apart the freighter *Testbank,* killing seventy crewmen, and blew hatches from their frames aboard U.S.S. *Aroostook,* carrying nineteen thousand barrels of 100-octane aviation fuel. Windows shattered seven miles away, including those in Alexander’s headquarters, and tiles tumbled from Bari roofs. A searing wind tore across the port—“I felt as if I were bursting and burning inside,” recalled George Southern, a young officer standing on H.M.S. *Zetland*’s forecastle—followed by another tidal wave that rolled the length of the harbor, sweeping flotsam along the jetties and soaking men with seawater now contaminated by dichlorethyl sulfide. A sailor on H.M.S. *Vulcan* described “hundreds of chaps desperately swimming and floundering, screaming and shouting for help.” To another sailor, “It seemed as if the entire world was burning.”

Horrors filled the town. Civilians were crushed in a stampede to an air raid shelter; others drowned when ruptured pipes flooded another shelter after shattered masonry blocked the exits. A young girl pinned in the rubble next to her dead parents was freed only after a surgeon amputated her arm. Soldiers had been attending evening services in a Protestant church when bombs blew the chapel’s front wall into the street, toppling the pulpit and splintering pews; gathering their wits, the men belted out, “If this be it, dear Lord, we will come to you singing.” Dead merchant mariners and Italian port workers lay along the seawall or floated facedown in the scummy water. Screams carried across the harbor, mingled with pleas for help and the odd snatch of a hymn. Fire trapped sixty men on the east jetty until a plucky Norwegian lifeboat crew ferried them to safety at eleven P.M. Burning hulks glowed weirdly through the steam and smoke that cloaked the harbor. Explosions shook the Molo Nuovo through the night. Watching from the soot-stained waterfront, Will Lang of *Life* scribbled in his notebook, “Many little tongues of flame like forest fires…There goes Monty’s ammunition.”

Seventeen ships had been sunk, with eight others badly damaged. Not since Pearl Harbor had a sneak attack inflicted such damage on an Allied port. Medics darted along the quays, passing out morphine syrettes and cigarettes. Lang jotted down another observation: “There are a lot of men dying out there.”

More deaths would follow, odd and inexplicable deaths. Perhaps the first clue came from a sailor who asked, “Since when would American ships carry garlic to Italy?” Others also noticed the odor, so characteristic of mustard gas. H.M.S. *Brindisi* took aboard dozens of oil-coated refugees and by early Friday morning inflamed eyes and vomiting were epidemic in the sickbay and on the quarterdeck. *Bistra* picked up thirty survivors and headed to Taranto; within hours the entire crew was nearly blind and only with great difficulty managed to moor the ship after she made port.

Casualties flooded military hospitals around Bari, including sailors still wearing their lifebelts but with both legs missing. “Ambulances screamed into hospital all night long,” a nurse told her diary. Many with superficial injuries were wrapped in blankets and diverted to the Auxiliary Seaman’s Home in their oily clothes. One chief surgeon admitted to being “considerably puzzled by the

extremely shocked condition of the patients with negligible surgical injuries."

By dawn, the wards were full of men unable to open their eyes, "all in pain and requiring urgent treatment." Surgeons were mystified to also find themselves operating with streaming eyes. Many patients presented thready pulses, low blood pressure, and lethargy, yet plasma did little to revive them. "No treatment that we had to offer amounted to a darn," a doctor wrote. The first skin blisters appeared Friday morning, "as big as balloons and heavy with fluid," in one nurse's description. Hundreds of patients were classified with "dermatitis N.Y.D."—not yet diagnosed.

A Royal Navy surgeon at the port on Thursday night reported rumors of poison gas, but in the chaos his account failed to reach hospital authorities. With *John Harvey* at the bottom of Bari harbor and the ship's company dead, few knew of her cargo. Those who did met at 2:15 P.M. on Friday in a conference of six British and American officers; they agreed that "in order to maintain secrecy, no general warning was to be given now." A ton of bleach would be dumped to disinfect the breakwater at berth number 29 and signs would be posted: "Danger—Fumes."

The first mustard death occurred eighteen hours after the attack, and others soon followed, each "as dramatic as it was unpredictable," according to an Army doctor dispatched from Algiers. "Individuals that appeared in rather good condition…within a matter of minutes would become moribund and die." The cellar of the 98th General Hospital became a morgue; hopeless cases were moved to the so-called Death Ward, including a doomed mariner who kept shouting, "Did you hear that bloody bang?" The passing of Seaman Phillip H. Stone was typical: admitted to the 98th General without visible injuries but drenched by oily seawater, he developed blisters a few hours later and by nine o'clock Saturday morning was unconscious, with "respirations gasping." At 3:30 P.M. he regained consciousness, asked for water, and "abruptly died." An autopsy revealed "dusky skin" and "epidermis easily dislodged," a badly swollen penis, black lips, and lungs with "a peculiar rubberlike consistency." Seaman Stone was eighteen.

By noon on Friday, physicians were reasonably certain that "dermatitis N.Y.D.," with symptoms ranging from bronzed skin to massive blisters, in fact resulted from exposure to mustard gas. Men who believed they were permanently blind eventually had their lids pried open until the "patient convinced himself that he could in fact see." But the damage was done. Simple measures that would have saved lives—stripping the exposed patients and bathing them—were not adopted until hundreds had spent hours inhaling toxic fumes from their own contaminated clothes.

More than 1,000 Allied servicemen were killed or went missing at Bari. Military hospitals documented at least 617 confirmed mustard casualties, including 83 Allied deaths, but investigators acknowledged "many others for whom no records can be traced." Comparable numbers of Italian civilians died; the precise figure remained uncertain, in part because Italian doctors never knew what they were facing. "With no treatment," one account later concluded, "the Italians suffered alone and died alone." Bodies bobbed to the surface of Bari harbor for days, many gnawed by crabs. Covered with a Union Jack and hauled away by truck, they were laid head to toe in trench graves.

News of the raid was heavily censored. "For purposes of secrecy all these cases have been diagnosed N.Y.D. dermatitis," an AFHQ memo noted on December 8. In Algiers, public acknowledgment of an enemy air attack at Bari manifested haiku-like brevity: "Damage was done. There were a number of casualties." *The Washington Post* in mid-December disclosed the "costliest sneak attack since Pearl Harbor," but no mention of gas was published. When reporters asked Henry L. Stimson, the secretary of war, whether Allied defenses at Bari had been lax, he snapped, "No! I will not comment on this thing." A British general on Eisenhower's staff wrote a colleague in London, "There is no one person who can be hanged in the affair."

Rumors spread that the Germans had used gas, but a chemical warfare expert sent to Bari from Algiers concluded in late December that the mustard aboard *John Harvey* was to blame, a finding

affirmed in March 1944 by a secret investigative board appointed by Eisenhower. The commander-in-chief preferred prevarication: in his postwar memoir, he acknowledged shipping mustard to Bari but asserted that “the wind was offshore and the escaping gas caused no casualties.” Churchill directed that British records be purged of mustard references, and all burns suffered on December 2 were to be attributed “to enemy action.”

The extent of the catastrophe stayed hidden for years. Declassified in 1959, the episode remained obscure until 1967, when the U.S. Naval Institute published a scholarly article in its *Proceedings*, followed by a book on the subject in 1971 by Glenn B. Infield. British officers long denied knowledge of *Harvey*’s cargo, but *The Times* of London reported in 1986 that six hundred British seamen contaminated at Bari would receive backdated war pensions following an official admission that they had been gassed. Curiously, autopsies at Bari provided a vital breakthrough in modern chemotherapy when researchers recognized that mustard gas had attacked white blood cells and lymph tissue. Two pharmacists recruited by the U.S. government demonstrated shortly after the war, first in mice and then with human tumors, that a variant of the gas could treat cancers of the lymph glands, such as Hodgkin’s disease.

In Bari, in December 1943, there was only misery. Thousands of refugees trudged from the city with bundles on their heads, tethered goats trotting behind. The port would remain closed for weeks, and not until February 1944 did full operations resume. The half-hour attack destroyed 38,000 tons of cargo, including vast medical stocks and 10,000 tons of steel planking needed for airfields.

Allied secrecy may have duped the public, but the enemy was not fooled. “I see you boys are getting gassed by your own poison gas,” Axis Sally cooed. The Hermann Göring Division and other units intensified their chemical training. A memo from the high command warned: “The Allies could begin the gas war tomorrow.”

6. WINTER

The Archangel Michael, Here and Everywhere

SINCE its founding in the eleventh century, San Pietro Infine had grown accustomed to calamity. Earthquakes, invaders, brigands, and the great migration to America in the 1880s had annealed the village; its fourteen hundred souls were hardy, fatalistic, and devout. Nestled amid wild figs and cactus on the southern flank of Monte Sammucro, overlooking the bucolic landscape soon to be known as Purple Heart Valley, San Pietro for centuries had eked out an existence from olives and *stramma,* a local hemp twisted into baskets and mats. In recent years obligatory Fascist slogans had been slathered on the walls along the steep cobblestoned paths—"Straight Ahead with Mussolini"—but life under the Duce was much as life had always been: Friday market in the Piazza San Nicola; women filling their water jugs from the sycamore-shaded *fontana;* prayers in the village church, where men and women came to God through separate doors beneath the carved inscription, "St. Michael Archangel always remember us, here and everywhere."

Then war came. One evening shortly after Italy's capitulation, a German patrol arrived to requisition all vehicles and firearms. Only four families in San Pietro possessed an automobile, but when one owner protested he was told, "Do you prefer we take your car or your son?" Soldiers dug trenches and strung barbed wire. Palazzo Brunetti, the most stylish house in town, became a command post. The smell of boiled pork and potatoes wafted from the windows, and men in coal-scuttle helmets stood with binoculars at the upper casements, watching Highway 6 where it snaked through the Mignano Gap between Monte Rotondo and Monte Lungo, barely a mile away.

On October 1, the day Naples fell, the Germans had requisitioned all donkeys and mules, and ordered every San Pietran male between fifteen and forty-five to muster in the little piazza above the *fontana.* Two hundred were press-ganged and forced to haul munitions or dig fortifications along the Bernhardt Line, which now angled past San Pietro and up Monte Sammucro. Several hundred others fled into the mountains to shelter in caves or highland hamlets. One night in late October the village priest, Don Aristide Masia, a middle-aged man with wire-rimmed glasses and a downturned mouth, vanished from his sickbed. It was said that the Gestapo had taken him away, but the only trace ever found was Don Aristide's black cloak, snagged like a shadow in a tree branch below the town.

San Pietro's fate was sealed in mid-November. As Fifth Army butted at Monte Camino and Monte la Difensa a few miles away, Kesselring agreed to fall back from San Pietro to a better blocking position two miles up the valley. Hitler, ever more immersed in minute tactical decisions concerning battlefields a thousand miles away, agreed, then changed his mind several hours later. Tenth Army was "to hold and develop the line at San Pietro," an order Kesselring deemed "most unpleasant."

While Mark Clark paused to marshal his strength, Kesselring shifted units from the Adriatic until seven panzer grenadier battalions stiffened the Bernhardt Line across the Mignano Gap. The defense of San Pietro itself was given to a battalion from the 29th Panzer Grenadier Division, commanded by Captain Helmut Meitzel, at age twenty-three a veteran of Poland, France, Russia, and Salerno. Meitzel had been wounded five times, including severe injuries at Stalingrad that led to his evacuation on one of the last Luftwaffe planes to leave the besieged city. Antitank barrels and machine guns soon bristled from San Pietro and the terraced orchards to the east. Supply trucks barreling down Highway

6 ran a gauntlet of American artillery; a single motorcycle messenger was said to draw one hundred rounds as he raced through Dead Man's Curve on the approach track to San Pietro. Rain fell incessantly. Meitzel's grenadiers complained that their uniforms had become "sodden clumps of clay and filth."

For the San Pietrans, life grew more hideous by the day. Many had fled, but five hundred, mostly the old and the very young, took refuge in a warren of caves below the western lip of the village. With picks and even dinner forks they hacked at the soft tufa until the caves were connected. Each family had its own cramped cell, with a few crude shelves cut from the walls. German patrols sometimes swept through, searching for able-bodied men who slipped down from the mountains to visit their families, and who quickly hid in shallow trenches scooped from the cave floor and covered with planks. Stone baffles built in the cave openings shielded villagers from stray shell fire, but nothing repelled the lice, the cold, or the hunger. Stocks of flour and figs ran short. German sentries barred villagers from using the *fontana*—two girls who disobeyed were shot dead—and rainwater cisterns once used for livestock provided the only drinking water, even after soldiers heaved dead sheep into the wells. Villagers who died—and their numbers swelled as December arrived—were lugged outside the caves and laid in a dark glen soon known as the Valley of Death.

St. Michael, always remember us. On their knees they prayed, for strength and for deliverance. They prayed for the archangel to draw his flaming sword and lead the American host now gathering on the far side of the hill.

The temporal leader of Fifth Army, Mark W. Clark, had his own flaming sword and he was keen to thrust it through the Mignano Gap. The galling November repulses at Camino and La Difensa had sent Clark back to the map board for a new plan. His first impulse was to attack simultaneously across the front with three corps. Noting that none of the three would have adequate artillery or air support, Truscott argued that "a worse plan would be difficult to conceive."

Clark's revision, Operation RAINCOAT, had more nuance, although military imagination tended to impale itself on Italian pinnacles. Since first studying San Pietro through field glasses from a rocky den above Mignano on November 6, Clark had considered the village key to his northward advance. Five days later, he told subordinates that the "critical terrain in the operation [is] the hill mass running north of San Pietro": Monte Sammucro, nearly four thousand feet high, with rocky spurs radiating for several miles north and east. RAINCOAT called for an attack on the left by the British X Corps and the U.S. II Corps, which had just arrived in Italy under Major General Geoffrey Keyes, Patton's former deputy and now the successor to Omar Bradley. They would seize, respectively, Camino and La Difensa, the two windswept peaks that formed a single massif, six miles by four, on the west flank of the Mignano Gap. A subsequent lunge by VI Corps, including Walker's Texans in the 36th Division, which had relieved Truscott's 3rd Division, would grab San Pietro and Monte Sammucro on the gap's eastern flank.

The Allied force in Italy soon would reach fourteen divisions. Clark's intelligence estimated that 185,000 German troops in eleven divisions now defended southern Italy, with another twelve divisions in the north. The Allied strategy of tying up German forces appeared to be succeeding, albeit through a war of mutual attrition. Every hour's delay here gave enemy sappers another hour to strengthen their main defensive fortifications around Cassino, seven miles north. Yet Alexander worried at Clark's insouciance over the growing casualty lists in the Winter Line. Even the U.S. 34th Division, attacking as a diversion on Fifth Army's far right, was gaining barely three hundred yards a day at a cost of one casualty for every two yards.

“Oh, don’t worry about the losses,” Clark told Alexander. A stiff defense at San Pietro was unlikely, he added, and Sammucro even appeared to be clear of German troops. “I’ll get through the Winter Line all right, and push the Germans out.”

The attack began with the heaviest artillery barrage in Italy to date. More than nine hundred guns opened in the gathering gloom at 4:30 P.M. on Thursday, December 2. Flame reddened the clouds above Camino and La Difensa. Explosions blossomed across the upper slopes until the entire mountain appeared to be burning. Two hundred thousand shells would fall in the next two days, with some targets battered by eleven tons of steel a minute.

As the British once again trudged up Camino in what one soldier called “the blackness that only an Italian winter seems to have,” several hundred infantrymen in ponchos began climbing the steep northeast face of La Difensa. Rain streamed from their helmets. In places nearly vertical they pulled themselves up hand over hand with manila climbing ropes. Recruited among American lumberjacks, Canadian prospectors, and assorted ruffians of both nationalities, the 1st Special Service Force had trained in Montana with emphasis on mountaineering, skiing, and kicks to the groin. The Forceman’s credo, borrowed from the British *Handbook of Irregular Warfare*, held that “every soldier must be a potential gangster.” In his backpack for the unit’s first combat mission, the Force surgeon now carried five hundred codeine sulfate tablets, a hacksaw with a ten-inch blade, and a canvas bucket for amputated limbs.

Leading the gangsters up the precipice was a wiry, thirty-six-year-old American colonel named Robert T. Frederick, who had likened this ascent to the 1759 climb up the cliffs of French Quebec by the British general James Wolfe. The son of a San Francisco doctor, Frederick had joined the California National Guard at thirteen, sailed to Australia as a deckhand on a tramp steamer at fourteen, and graduated from West Point at twenty-one. “He was unusually fit,” a classmate recalled. “Kind of like a cat.” It was said that Frederick had made his first parachute jump after ten minutes’ instruction, wearing bedroom slippers. In combat, he carried only his rifle, Nescafé, cigarettes, and a letter in Latin from the bishop of Helena, commending him as “altogether worthy of trust.” Though sometimes dogmatic—he had purged the Force of most French Canadians on the supposition that “they lacked guts”—by war’s end he would earn eight Purple Hearts and a reputation as one of the U.S. Army’s greatest soldiers. “His casual indifference to enemy fire was hard to explain,” a junior officer observed.

Their barked fingers blue from cold, the Forcemen had nearly reached the summit when the clatter of dislodged scree alerted the enemy just before dawn on December 3. Flares popped overhead, followed by the roar of machine guns and volleys of grenades and even thrown rocks. Through this fusillade the attackers heaved themselves over the final shaly lip, faces peppered with rock splinters from ricochets. By seven A.M. they had seized the crest of La Difensa, a shallow saucer the size of a football field, 3,100 feet above sea level.

A maddening wait for more ammunition delayed their westward push to link up with the British. German artillery raked reinforcements scaling La Difensa with such fury that they suffered 40 percent casualties without firing a shot. On the summit, Frederick and his men huddled under lacerating mortar fire. “A German was with me in my foxhole,” recalled one lieutenant. “He didn’t bum any cigarettes or anything, because he was dead.” A direct hit killed a battalion commander—a former professor of history from New Brunswick—and a sergeant. “I looked back just in time to see them disappear,” recalled one soldier. “It was just a red mist.” A wounded private worked his way down the mountain praying aloud, “The Lord is my shepherd. He shepherds me hither, thither, and yon.” Frederick passed word to supply officers below to send up whiskey, for fortitude, and condoms, to keep rain out of the rifle barrels.

Panzer grenadiers counterattacked in rain and hail, pushing the Forcemen back into their rocky

saucer with machine-gun fire so ferocious it resembled “a huge shotgun blast.” German snipers took a toll—a fatally wounded major plummeted over the cliff to the woods below—and officers soon smeared mud over their rank insignia to make themselves less conspicuous. Word spread that a captain had been shot in the face after an enemy white-flag ruse. “The Krauts fought like they didn’t have any intention of losing the war,” recalled one lieutenant. “We didn’t take any prisoners. Fighting like that, you don’t look for any.” A soldier told to escort a captured German officer down the mountain soon reappeared. “The son of a bitch died of pneumonia,” he said. After two days on La Difensa, Frederick’s senior subordinate “couldn’t quite speak properly” and displayed “extreme nervousness and indecision,” according to several Forcemen. Emptying two clips from his .45-caliber pistol at a sniper no one else could see, he scrambled down the hill and earned the nickname Foxhole Willie.

By late Monday, December 6, Frederick’s men had pushed west through a barren saddle to capture Hill 907, vital terrain below Monte Camino. In heavy pencil on a sequence of message blanks, Frederick scribbled dispatches to his command post far below, his cursive tidy and his punctuation proper even as he misdated the messages “November 6”:

> We have passed the crest of 907. We are receiving much machine gun and mortar fire from several directions…. Men are getting in bad shape…. I have stopped burying the dead…. German snipers are giving us hell and it is extremely difficult to catch them.

“I am OK,” he added, “just uncomfortable and tired.”

Early on Tuesday morning, a British patrol emerged from the fog to report that X Corps now controlled Camino after a five-day ordeal of attack and counterattack in which a hilltop monastery changed hands repeatedly. Parched Tommies had licked the mossy rocks for moisture; riflemen hauled up supplies on backs bent double by the incline and then hauled down casualties on stretchers whose eight bearers “slithered rather than walked,” in Alan Moorehead’s description. By noon on Wednesday, the last German defenders had slipped away through a valley to the west, firing a few defiant shots over their shoulders. The entire massif was at last in Allied hands, although “no one felt particularly triumphant,” a Force historian wrote. Frederick scratched out a final message: “I expect to leave no wounded behind.”

Survivors hobbled into the rear encampment to be greeted by a brass band playing jaunty airs. The Force had sustained 511 casualties, one-third of its combat strength, including 73 killed in action and more than 100 fatigue cases. The hospital admissions list ran to forty pages and the diagnoses summarized life on the Winter Line: gunshots, mortar fragment wounds, cerebral concussions, fractures and sprains, grenade lacerations, “amputation, right thumb, traumatic,” contusions, “nervous exhaustion,” jaundice, “severe diarrhea,” powder burns, “hemorrhoids, extremely severe.”

Of the last eighteen men treated, all but five had trench foot, including one soldier who studied the swollen, translucent appendages below his ankles and wrote, “They were almost like the feet of a dead man.”

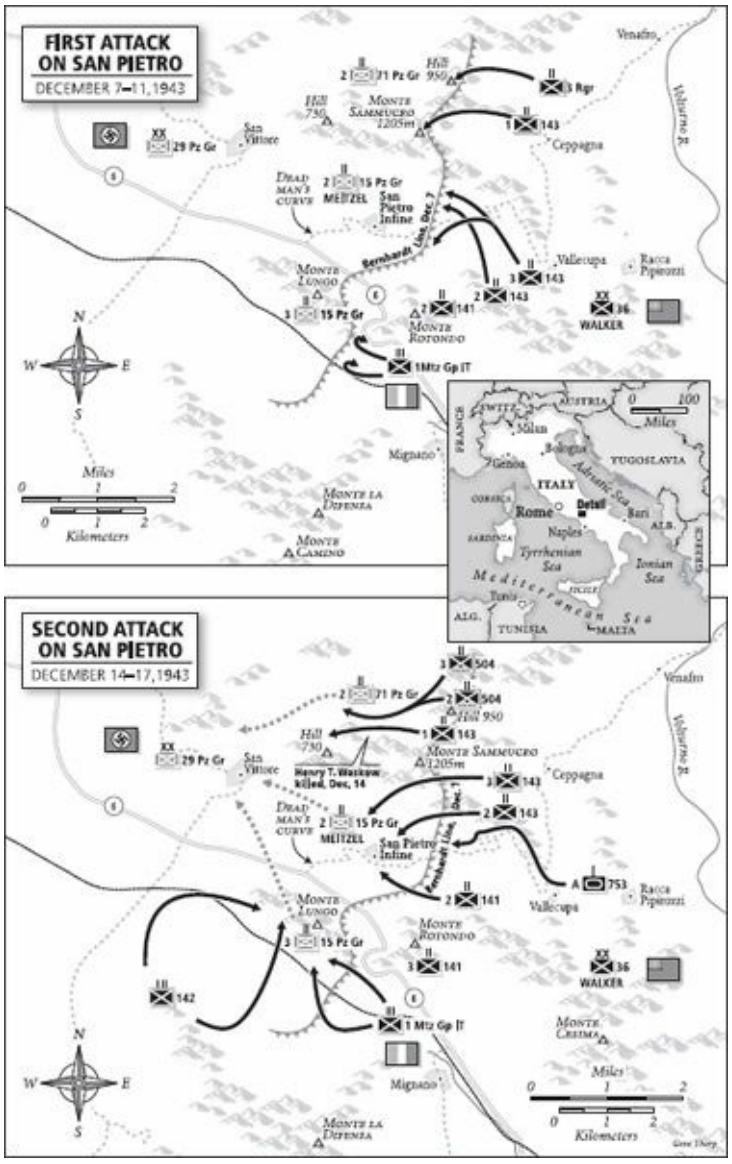
With his left flank secured, Clark could now throw a roundhouse right to capture Monte Sammucro and San Pietro. Darby’s Rangers had skirmished with grenadiers on the flanks of the mountain since mid-November, usually in claustrophobic gunfights fought at close range across the talus. The 3rd Ranger Battalion had crept to the eastern fringe of San Pietro just before dawn on

November 30; heavy fire pinned them down all day until they crawled away at nightfall with more than two dozen casualties. But two Ranger patrols in early December edged close to the village without drawing fire, fueling hopes that San Pietro and Sammucro had been abandoned. “I don’t think there are any Krauts up there,” declared Captain Rufus J. Cleghorn of the 143rd Infantry.

He soon learned otherwise. Cleghorn, a former Baylor University football player from Waco, Texas, impiously known as “Rufus the Loudmouth,” led his Company A up Sammucro’s east face on the evening of December 7. For five hours they climbed through swirling fog, the minesweeping detachment commanded by a lieutenant lugging a movie camera, a copy of Clausewitz’s *On War*, and a fruitcake from home. As they neared the pinnacle, labeled Hill 1205 on Cleghorn’s map, a sudden shout carried from above: *“Die kommen nach oben!”* Too late. The Americans swarmed over the crest in a brawl of muzzle flashes and pinging ricochets. By first light, 250 Yanks held the high ground. Flinging insults and grenades, Cleghorn and his band rolled boulders down the pitch at the field-gray shadows below. Grenadiers counterattacked, then counterattacked again, each time driven back until bodies lay like bloody stones across the slope. Private duels were fought in the fog, grenadier and rifleman darting among the rocks “like a couple of lizards.” Surveying a squad of dead Germans he had just mowed down with his Browning Automatic Rifle, a soldier murmured, “This is fun. This is like what I dreamed about.”

Two miles west and two thousand feet below, the attack on San Pietro proved less merry. Four battalions of long-range artillery shattered the village at five A.M. Wednesday, smashing the tailor shop and the post office and the Galilee porch of St. Michael’s church with its separate doors for women and men. At 6:20 A.M., the 2nd Battalion of the 143rd Infantry crossed a shallow streambed from the southwest, “in magnificent skirmish lines just like the training manual ordered,” reported one witness. With rebel yells and Texas whoops, the men clattered four hundred yards to the edge of the olive terraces. There the whine of Meitzel’s machine guns stopped them as abruptly as a slammed door. Tracers lashed the ranks as the men dove for cover among the ancient olives, detonating mines and drawing mortar fire that boiled in orange clusters across the battlefield.

A sister battalion, the 3rd of the 143rd Infantry, surged into the fight, shaking out on either flank only to find the orchard terraces seeded with shoe mines and enemy pillboxes emplaced every twenty-five yards. “Ammo, damn it, we need ammo,” someone yelled above the roar. Men with fingers shot off were hastily bandaged and shoved back into the fight. Enemy artillery opened from Monte Lungo, across Highway 6 to the west, where German observers had an unobstructed view of the American ranks. Still a quarter mile from San Pietro, the attack faltered and slid back in an olive-drab ebb tide. Levitating bodies lay snagged across the German barbed wire. By nightfall the attackers had retreated almost to where they had started. They tried again Thursday morning—the rebel yells a bit subdued this time—and again Meitzel’s grenadiers threw them back. In thirty-six hours losses in the two battalions exceeded 60 percent.



No assault on San Pietro was likely to succeed until German gunners were knocked from Monte Lungo. U.S. troops held the southern knob, but to seize the rest of the mile-long hogback the 1st Italian Motorized Group was chosen by General Keyes for Italy's first battle on the side of the Allied angels. With ROMA O MORTE chalked on their rail cars, sixteen hundred soldiers in Alpine uniforms and feathered caps arrived in Mignano. Uphill they marched in heavy mist, two chattering battalions abreast, shouting threats and vowing to punish their erstwhile Axis allies for deserting them in Africa and Russia. For a few glorious minutes the attack went well. Then machine-gun cross fire hit the Italians—"like corn cut by a scythe," in one account—and enraged grenadiers fell on the confused ranks with fists and clubs. Those who escaped downhill were said to be the fastest runners. Only massed U.S. artillery fire checked the German counterattack and prevented the Italians from being driven back to the Volturno. Losses at first were feared to exceed nine hundred, but stragglers reappeared and the final tally was pared to less than three hundred. "My troops," the Italian commander wrote Keyes, "are not in a condition to be able to accomplish the missions which you have assigned them."

Monte Lungo remained in German hands, and so too San Pietro. Only on Sammucro's icy parapets had the attack succeeded, and there Captain Cleghorn, with reinforcements from the 1st Battalion, held firm despite frenzied enemy efforts to dislodge him. Sardinian mule skinners plodded

up the mountain from Ceppagna each night, following trails marked with white tape or toilet paper. They brought rations and phone wire, grenades and dry socks, sulfa and Sterno and a daily water ration of five gallons per squad. *"Brrrr,"* the skinners told their little mules—the Italian equivalent of "Giddy-up"—urging the animals down the trail before daybreak, which was not difficult since the December nights were endless. Cooks and clerks wearing packboards also hauled up supplies, along with mail and a few improbable early Christmas gifts from home: one soldier shivering in a burrow was chagrined to receive a necktie. Seeing a small cairn of dead soldiers lying trailside near the crest, an officer wrote, "Splendid, husky young men. They seemed just barely dead."

A hundred yards or so down the back slope, grenadiers shivered in their own burrows, close enough that a GI could "feel the presence of the enemy through the pores of [his] skin," wrote Margaret Bourke-White. Once known as Huns or Jerries, now they were called Krauts or Teds—from the Italian *tedeschi*—or Blonds or Heinies or Graybacks. By any name, dead ones lay scattered about, green and grotesque, and every few hours another counterattack added more to the landscape. Sometimes the Germans' grenade volleys grew so intense, a U.S. soldier reported, that "we were holding our rifles so we could bat them off the way you bunt a baseball." American artillery swept the slopes with white phosphorus, silhouetting the attackers and spattering Krauts, Teds, and Blonds with incandescent flakes. A speck the size of a pinhead would burn clean through a man's leg unless plucked out with forceps or smothered with a mud poultice. Day and night, artillery reverberated against the low clouds, and the rumble echoed across the crags like querulous nagging. Men slept behind stone sangars with tracers whispering six inches overhead. "The fellow who stays out of sight the most is the one who lives the longest," an officer advised. Few needed to be told twice. "I may be prejudiced," a soldier told his buddy, "but I don't like this place."

Cleghorn's Company A had been reinforced by Company B, commanded by another Texan, a twenty-five-year-old captain named Henry T. Waskow. Raised in the cotton country south of Temple, one of eight children in a family of German Baptists strapped enough to sew their clothes from flour sacking, Waskow was fair, blue-eyed, short, and sober—"a sweet little oddball," in the estimate of a school chum. "He was never young," another classmate recalled, "not in a crazy high school–kid way." A teenage lay minister, Waskow took second prize in a statewide oratory contest, won the class presidency at Belton High School, and graduated with the highest grade-point average in twenty years. At Trinity College he joined the Texas Guard, in part for the dollar earned at each drill session, rising through the ranks on merit and zeal. At Salerno, Company B had fought with Darby at Chiunzi Pass.

"I guess I have always appeared as pretty much a queer cuss to all of you," Waskow had written in a "just-in-case" letter to his family as he shipped overseas. "If I seemed strange at times, it was because I had weighty responsibilities that preyed on my mind and wouldn't let me slack up to be human like I so wanted to be."

Now, after almost a week on Sammucro, the entire 1st Battalion was hardly bigger than a company, and Waskow's company no bigger than a platoon. Ammo stocks had dwindled again; the men threw grenade-sized rocks to keep the Germans dancing. At nightfall on Tuesday, December 14, the battalion crept forward beneath a bright moon and angled northwest along the massif toward Hill 730, a scabrous knoll almost directly behind San Pietro. The trail skirted a ravine with shadows so dense they seemed to swallow the moonbeams. "Wouldn't this be an awful spot to get killed and freeze on the mountain?" Waskow asked his company runner, Private Riley Tidwell. The captain had a sudden craving for toast. "When we get back to the States," Waskow added, "I'm going to get me one of those smart-aleck toasters where you put the bread in and it pops up."

Those were among his last mortal thoughts. German sentries had spotted the column moving across the scree slope. Machine guns cackled, mortars crumped, and Henry Waskow pitched over without a sound, mortally wounded by a shell fragment that tore open his chest. He had never been

young, and he would never be old.

Wearing his trademark knit cap and tatty field jacket, Ernie Pyle had arrived in Ceppagna, at the base of the Sammucro trail, earlier on Tuesday. Pyle's columns now appeared in two hundred daily newspapers, making him a national celebrity; Al Jolson joked that to soldiers he had become "Mr. God." But in this disfigured village, only two miles from San Pietro, Pyle could find near anonymity as just another unwashed Yank a long way from home. In a dilapidated cowshed near the olive orchard that served as a mule livery, he set his typewriter on a packing case and then poked about the battalion base camp. Engineers were corduroying the muddy paths to the gun batteries, filling ruts with logs, stones, and brush. Occasionally, a serenade—a barrage of every gun in the corps, fired at the same time at the same target—screamed over the hills toward San Pietro.

Late at night the pack mules returned from Sammucro with bodies trussed facedown across their wooden saddles, each corpse slithering "on the mule's back as if it were full of some inert liquid," as one corporal wrote. Sardinian muleteers feared the dead and trailed behind the trains.

Pyle stood outside the cowshed and watched as the first body was unlashed. "They slid him down from the mule, and stood him on his feet for a moment. In the half light he might have been merely a sick man standing there leaning on the others. Then they laid him on the ground in the shadow of the low stone wall beside the road."

Four other mules arrived. "This one is Captain Waskow," a man said. Pyle watched and said nothing. "You feel small in the presence of dead men, and you don't ask silly questions," he subsequently explained. A few days later, after returning to Fifth Army headquarters in Caserta, where he played gin rummy and drank to excess, Pyle would recall how the bodies lay uncovered in the shadows and how several of Waskow's men edged over to the dead captain to voice regret—"I sure am sorry, sir"—or to curse—"God damn it to hell anyway!" Riley Tidwell appeared and the company runner held his commander's hand, studying Waskow's waxy face.

> Finally he put the hand down. He reached over and gently straightened the points of the captain's shirt collar, and then he sort of rearranged the tattered edges of the uniform around the wound, and then he got up and walked away down the road in the moonlight, all alone. The rest of us went back into the cowshed, leaving the five dead men lying in a line, end to end, in the shadow of the low stone wall.

Pyle had written his most famous dispatch, perhaps the finest expository passage of World War II. But still he felt small in the presence of dead men. "I've lost the touch," he told a friend. "This stuff stinks."

Mark Clark had proposed using tanks to capture San Pietro as early as December 9. He had pressed Eisenhower and Alexander in the fall to send the 1st Armored Division—Old Ironsides—to Italy, and he felt chagrined that the mountainous terrain afforded so few chances to unleash it. Fred Walker, the 36th Division commander, doubted that the gullies and six-foot olive terraces ringing San Pietro would accommodate tanks, a skepticism reinforced in an early foray when the lead Sherman threw a track and blocked the trail.

Walker planned to try again at midday, Wednesday, December 15. This time the attack would be

filmed by a pair of Signal Corps cameramen perched on Monte Rotondo, part of a movie crew working for Captain John Huston. Assigned by the War Department to document "the triumphal entry of the American forces into Rome," Huston, who two years earlier had directed Humphrey Bogart in *The Maltese Falcon,* instead found himself trying to concoct a celluloid epic from the Army's frustrated assault on an anonymous village in southern Italy. At least his cinematography would be unimpeded by trees: after weeks of shelling, Rotondo reportedly "looked as if a large mower had been used on the side of the hill."

At eleven A.M. the mist lifted, the cameras rolled, and two platoons from the 753rd Tank Battalion clanked to a hairpin bend in the high road from Ceppagna. For fifteen minutes, Shermans and tank destroyers hammered San Pietro with 75mm shells. Then loaders with asbestos gloves shoveled the fuming brass from their turret floors, and at noon the attack by sixteen tanks trundled forward. It was doomed, of course. Only the lead Sherman made headway, churning through a terrace wall to shoot up several German machine-gun nests. The second tank struck a mine. The next three closed to within half a mile of the village only to burst into flames from German antitank fire. Three more hit mines. By midafternoon four surviving tanks were limping back toward Ceppagna with crews from the less fortunate Shermans clinging to the hulls like barnacles. Seven tanks had been destroyed, five others immobilized.

Walker's foot soldiers had no better luck. The 141st Infantry's 2nd Battalion launched another frontal assault across open ground at one A.M. on Thursday morning. "Dead and wounded marked the route of advance," a regimental account noted. A few intrepid souls grenaded and bayoneted their way into the lower village, scrambling through breaches in the wall by standing on one another's shoulders. Most were captured or killed by plunging fire; the 2nd Battalion fell back, now shorn to 130 men by "the stupidest assignment the battalion ever received," according to Major Milton Landry, the unit commander. A lieutenant disemboweled by grenade fragments repeated the name "Erika" through the small hours, then died at dawn. A second attack at six A.M. also failed, as did lunges on the right flank by two battalions of the 143rd Infantry. When a pinned-down soldier began waving his undershirt in surrender, a sergeant put his rifle muzzle to the man's temple and warned, "Put that damn rag away or I'll blow your head off."

Wisps of steam rose from shallow revetments in the rear where exhausted riflemen lay beneath their sodden blankets. Clark arrived at noon on Thursday, listening to the cacophony of mortars and machine pistols just ahead. Through field glasses he studied the charred tank hulks on the Ceppagna road. "What troops are in front of you?" he asked a lieutenant. "Sir," the officer replied, "Germans." Clark uttered a few words of encouragement, and drove off.

"The losses before the town have been heavy," Walker told his diary. "Many wounded had to be abandonded within enemy lines…. This is bad."

And then it ended. Monte Lungo had always held the key to San Pietro, and by dusk on Thursday two battalions from the 142nd Infantry had overrun the hogback from the west, threatening to encircle the village. Captain Meitzel's grenadiers launched a brief counterattack from San Pietro to cover the battalion's withdrawal. At midnight on Friday, December 17, a fountain of colored flares above the north slope of Sammucro signaled retreat. German troops fell back two miles to yet another hillside village, San Vittore, which they would hold for the next three weeks.

American riflemen creeping through the blue battle haze found San Pietro in ruins, "one large mound of desolation," in a gunner's description. The detritus of total war littered the rubble: cartridge belts, stained bandages, dead pigs, "a gray hand hanging limply from a sleeve." St. Michael's was reduced to a single upright wall, with a headless Christ hanging on His cross. The choir loft dangled above an altar now buried in masonry. The correspondent Homer Bigart also discovered a December 6 copy of the *Völkischer Beobachter* and, inexplicably, a baseball glove.

A few dozen wretched San Pietrans emerged from the ruins to huzzah their liberators. The dim, fetid caves below the village were "the nearest thing to a journey in Dante's *Inferno* that I was to know in the war," wrote J. Glenn Gray, an Army intelligence analyst. "Children were screaming, old men and women coughing or moaning, while others tried to prepare gruel over smoking coals." Some 140 San Pietrans were dead, one villager in ten. A baby's corpse lying in the mud was repeatedly run over by military vehicles before someone finally noticed and a medic buried the remains. Graves registration men arrived with their leather gloves to police the battlefield, folding the hands of dead GIs across their chests before lifting them into white burial sacks. As the soldier-poet Keith Douglas wrote, "About them clung that impenetrable silence…by which I think the dead compel our reverence."

Those who had fought for the past ten days supposedly "slept where their bedding fell from the truck." San Pietro had cost Fred Walker's 36th Division twelve hundred battle casualties, and two thousand nonbattle losses; the 143rd Infantry Regiment alone lost 80 percent of its strength. Engineers, tankers, Rangers, paratroopers, and the Italians who also fought for the village had hundreds more killed, missing, sick, and injured.

At an evacuation hospital near Mignano, patients lay listening to the shriek of artillery, calling out the guns by millimeter. A chaplain played "Ah! Sweet Mystery of Life" on his Victrola. Margaret Bourke-White spied "a small grim pile of amputated legs" covered with canvas outside a surgical tent. When one dying Texas boy asked for watermelon, a surgeon replied, "They're not in season, son." To Bourke-White he added, "They often ask for their favorite food when they're near death."

As the front lurched forward another mile or two, John Lucas advised his diary on December 18, "We find the country thick with dead as we advance…. I think the swine have taken a lacing." But, the VI Corps commander added, "Rome seems a long way off." A 36th Division soldier offered his own summary: "This is a heartbreaking business."

For John Huston, the battle for San Pietro went on. The director's footage of the star-crossed tank attack was dramatic but incomplete. Although he later claimed to have done most of his filming "during the actual battle," Huston in fact spent two months staging elaborate reenactments in olive orchards and on Monte Sammucro, using 36th Division troops. Casualty scenes were staged in a hospital, a dead German in a foxhole was actually a GI actor in a grenadier uniform, and sequences inside the ruined village were filmed at another town accidentally bombed by American planes. After draconian editing by George Marshall, who ordered the film cut from fifty minutes to half an hour, Huston added a brief introductory speech by Mark Clark and a soundtrack that included the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. *San Pietro* would be released nationwide in the spring of 1945 to rhapsodic reviews. *Time* called it "as good a war film as any that has been made."

The telegram announcing Henry Waskow's death would arrive at his Texas home on December 29, delayed by the War Department along with similar notifications until after Christmas. Henry's mother had been troubled with premonitions, and when the family appeared to break the news she blurted out, "I was right, wasn't I? Henry's gone." Pyle's column would appear on January 10, 1944, covering the entire front page of the *Washington Daily News*. Hollywood seized on the story and a year later released *The Story of G.I. Joe,* with Burgess Meredith as Pyle and Robert Mitchum as a "Captain Bill Walker," who dies on a mountainside in Italy.

But Waskow had the final word, a "last will and testament" mailed to his sister for safekeeping and made public more than fifteen years after his passing. "I would have liked to have lived," he told his parents in a ten-paragraph meditation. "But, since God has willed otherwise, do not grieve too

much, dear ones, for life in the other world must be beautiful, and I have lived a life with that in mind all along. I was not afraid to die, you can be assured of that."

> I will have done my share to make this world a better place in which to live. Maybe when the lights go on again all over the world, free people can be happy and gay again…. If I failed as a leader, and I pray God I didn't, it was not because I did not try.

"I loved you," he added, "with all my heart."

"A Tank Too Big for the Village Square"

LIFE in exile had its compensations for George Patton. As the viceroy of Sicily, he slept in a king's bedroom on three mattresses and dined on royal china. Every day he rode an Italian cavalry horse in the Palermo palace riding hall, serenaded by a mounted band and attended by 120 plumed, saber-wielding carabinieri. With a snub-nosed Colt revolver in his pants pocket ("for social purposes only," he said), Patton also took daily walks of precisely two miles, which a trailing driver measured on the jeep odometer. "I can now chin myself five and a half times and do it three times a day," he told his diary, impressive enough for a man who had turned fifty-eight on November 11.

On mild afternoons Patton sailed the Gulf of Palermo or swam at his beachhouse, where a young female attendant insisted on helping visitors disrobe. There was quail hunting with Sicilian guides at a beautiful lodge in the mountains. To brush up his French—just in case—he listened to language lessons on phonograph records. On cold winter nights he stirred the embers of a blazing fire while sipping wine and reading a biography of Wellington, later regaling his staff officers with stories of the Iron Duke. He flitted conspicuously about the Mediterranean; Marshall and Eisenhower hoped the enemy would assume he was preparing another invasion force. Sardinia intrigued him, but Cairo was "really a disgusting place. It looks, and the people act, exactly as they did in New York in 1928." He wrote verse, including a poem titled "God of Battles"—"Make strong our souls to conquer"—for which *Women's Home Companion* paid him $50. Visitors came and visitors went, including John Steinbeck and Marlene Dietrich, who thought Patton looked "like a tank too big for the village square." He even found time to reopen Palermo's opera house with a sold-out performance of *La Bohème*. Crowds packed the balconies and thronged the streets outside to listen by loudspeaker. As the house lights dimmed, a beam on the royal box revealed Patton holding an American flag, arm in arm with Palermo's mayor, who held an Italian tricolor. The audience cheered wildly, then wept from the overture through the final arias. For days, snatches of Puccini could be heard around the city from would-be Mimìs and Rodolfos.

Yet even a heartsick bohemian swain could not have been more miserable than Patton. A few months earlier he had commanded a quarter million men; now Seventh Army was reduced to a shell of five thousand, and in late November even his signal battalion was plucked away for service in Italy. "It almost looks like an attempt to strip the body before the spirit has flown," Patton wrote. John Lucas during a visit found him "very depressed," and a British general thought he looked "old and dessicated," chin-ups notwithstanding. His chief engineer strolled into Patton's office one day to find him "literally cutting out paper dolls" with a pair of scissors. On November 7 he had written Bea that in the 365 days since the TORCH landings, "I have been in battle seventy-two days." She replied with an eight-syllable telegram: "Atta boy. Love. Confidence. Pride."

Still, he had not heard a shot fired in anger since mid-August, except during occasional air raids. (German prisoners-of-war were issued wicker baskets and ordered to collect body parts from the rubble.) Gesturing vaguely toward the front, Patton told an old friend, "I want to go out up there where it is hot, with an enemy bullet in the middle of my forehead." When Jimmy Doolittle flew in for a chat, Patton threw his arms around the airman with tears streaming down his cheeks. "I didn't think anyone would ever call on a mean old son of a bitch like me," he said. As the 1st Division sailed from Syracuse for Britain, Patton waved farewell from a harbor barge, blowing kisses and yelling God-bless-yous. Still resentful at the treatment of Terry Allen and Ted Roosevelt, soldiers stood three deep at every rail and peered from every porthole, utterly silent. "It was awful," Clift Andrus reported.

"You need have no fear of being left in the backwater of the war," Eisenhower had told Patton, but that was before Patton slapped the two soldiers. For more than three months that secret had held, with at least sixty reporters in Algiers and Italy sitting on the story. But Sicily now felt like the ultimate backwater. Patton tramped around Gela and other Sicilian battlefields, reliving past glories while disparaging the commanders struggling on the Winter Line. "I wish something would happen to Clark," he told his diary. Montgomery was simply "the little fart." To Bea he wrote with his idiosyncratic spelling and grammar: "Send me some more pink medecin. This worry and inactivity has raised hell with my insides."

He took little interest in governing Sicily, which desperately needed a caring hand. Allied planners, drawing on irrelevant experiences from the U.S. Civil War and the occupation of the Rhineland after World War I, had assumed the Italian economy would "maintain itself at a minimum subsistence level," particularly in agrarian Sicily. That proved dead wrong. By early winter, to forestall famine and bread riots, Allied commissaries were forced to provide flour for three-quarters of the Sicilian population. At feeding centers, starving women feigned pregnancy with pillows stuffed beneath their skirts to claim an extra ration. Black marketeering drove up the price of salt a hundredfold, to 350 lire per kilo.

Shortages plagued the island, from coal and fertilizer to nails and lightbulbs. Typhoid appeared. Officers also reported "some recrudescence of Mafia activities," including occasional murders with the *lupara,* a sawed-off shotgun that was the traditional weapon of choice for revenge killings. Power outages were chronic, and courts handed down criminal sentences by matchlight. Occupation authorities jailed sixteen hundred "politically dangerous" Sicilians for months and scissored Fascist cant from school textbooks, but the locals still greeted Allied soldiers with absentminded Black Shirt salutes. The liberators soon grew weary of the liberated. "The Sicilian has been found by experience to be utterly untrustworthy," U.S. Army logisticians complained. "They adopt every possible ruse to cheat and generally outwit us." OSS agents agreed. "Lying, stealing, and general dishonesty…can be considered a prevalent folk characteristic."

Whatever mild curiosity Patton evinced in these local affairs vanished after the slapping story broke at home in late November. The Quaker muckraker Drew Pearson, apparently tipped off by an OSS source, broadcast a garbled but uncensored version of the incidents during his weekly radio show. Beetle Smith in Algiers made matters worse by disingenuously insisting that Patton had not been reprimanded, distinguishing between an official censure and Eisenhower's personal castigation in August.

Politicians and the press were in full throat overnight. "Army regulations specifically forbid this sort of thing," complained a former artilleryman from Missouri, Senator Harry S. Truman. Editorial opinion ranged from the condemnatory (the *Raleigh News and Observer:* "A man who cannot

command himself lacks the supreme virtue") to the indulgent (the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* held that "allowances must be made for the feelings of a high-spirited man under the stress of battle"). By mid-December, the White House and War Department had received fifteen hundred letters, pro and con, though a Gallup poll indicated that by a four-to-one margin Americans opposed sacking Patton.

"I am not so sure that my luck has held," Patton told Bea on December 4, adding, "The only thing to do is do nothing and make no excuses." In a conversation with Clark he contemplated retirement, then privately complained that the Fifth Army commander "treated me as an undertaker treats the family of the deceased." As usual his contrition was inconstant, a blend of contumacy, repentance, and irony. Of Drew Pearson he wrote, "I will live to see him die." He told Kay Summersby, "I always get in trouble with my goddam mouth. But if this sort of thing ever comes up, I'll do it again." When Lieutenant General Lesley J. McNair wrote that "in all frankness your temper has long threatened to undo you," Patton replied that in striking the soldiers "I was putting on an act." Perhaps his most reflective moment came in a note to a friend in December: "Very few of us fail to make mistakes. This does not excuse mistakes, but it at least puts us in good company."

Eisenhower had kept faith with his old friend, even as he recognized that personal foibles limited his utility in high command. While privately recommending Patton for another army command, he told Marshall, "I doubt that I would ever consider Patton for an army group or any higher position." In December, in the semiannual evaluations of his chief subordinates, Eisenhower rated Patton "superior" and ranked him fifth among the two dozen lieutenant generals he knew. Patton was "impulsive and flamboyant," Eisenhower added, and "should always serve under a strong but understanding commander."

Deliverance came from Franklin Roosevelt, a strong but understanding commander-in-chief. On Wednesday, December 8, en route to Washington after the conferences in Cairo and Teheran, the president landed at Malta for a quick inspection of the dockyard and then flew on to Sicily. Escorted by a dozen P-38 fighters, the aircraft touched down at two P.M. at Castelvetrano, fifty miles southwest of Palermo. Patton and Clark, who had flown in from the Winter Line, braced at attention at the foot of the ramp.

With the brim of his hat tipped up to catch a few final minutes of Mediterranean sun, Roosevelt took a jeep tour of the airfield before presenting the Distinguished Service Cross to Clark and several others for their heroics at Salerno. A receiving line formed, and as Patton shuffled past, a beaming Roosevelt grabbed his hand and held it for a long moment. According to Clark's later recollection, the president murmured, "General Patton, you will have an army command in the great Normandy operation."

He had been reprieved. In a secluded corner away from the president's entourage, Patton glanced about to be certain that he was alone and then burst into sobs. For a full minute he wept, tears of relief, of regret, of gratitude, and surely of defiance coursing down his cheeks. Wiping his eyes, he gathered himself and strutted back to the jeep to join the president for cocktails at the officers' club.

Official redemption would arrive several weeks later, in a message ordering him to the United Kingdom to take command of the new U.S. Third Army. His country needed him, and the forces of righteousness also required him. Had Patton known that he had but two years to live, he hardly would have cared. He had already heard the summons of the trumpet.

"My destiny is sure," he would tell his diary on Christmas Day, "and I am a fool and a coward ever to have doubted it."

A Gangster's Battle

THE forces of righteousness also required Bernard Montgomery, but for the moment they required him in Italy, on the Adriatic front.

While Clark's Fifth Army struggled up the west coast, Eighth Army since invading Calabria had traced the ancient Crusaders' Coast for four hundred miles. Five divisions—Brits, Kiwis, Indians, and Canadians—armed with nearly seven hundred guns and two hundred tanks had pushed back four German divisions on a forty-mile front. With Fifth Army threatening Rome from the south, Montgomery intended to seize the seaside resort of Pescara, halfway up the boot, before swinging west on Highway 5 across the mountains through Avezzano to approach the capital from the east. Alexander hoped that if attacked on a broad front, from sea to sea, "the enemy would be sufficiently stretched to prevent him massing for the defense of Cassino."

That strategy still seemed plausible on November 20, when Eighth Army attacked the Sangro River, establishing a bridgehead on the far shore and nearly obliterating the German 65th Division, whose commander forfeited his right arm during an air attack. By early December, with thousands of Allied planes providing support and British tanks deftly maneuvering through snowdrifts, the Sangro defenses had been unhinged. New Zealand troops pushed into the crossroads town of Orsogna before panzers pushed them out again. "The Germans are, in fact, in the very condition in which we want them," Montgomery declared. "We will now hit them a colossal crack." He publicly announced, "The road to Rome is open."

Alas, no. The Bernhardt Line defenses extended nine miles deep north of the Sangro, in what Alexander came to call "ridge and furrow country." Montgomery discovered, as Clark had, that superior Allied air, artillery, and armor could be checked by poor weather, hellish terrain, and a stubborn *Feldwebel* with an antitank gun. A British analysis warned that for Sherman tank crews, "the average range of vision was about 50 yards, and the average range at which tanks were knocked out about 80 yards…. To hesitate spells death." In one especially trying stretch, German axes felled a half mile avenue of poplars, which had to be cleared from the road with bulldozers and chains at a rate of an hour per tree.

Drenching winter rains abruptly widened the Sangro from one hundred feet to four hundred and more, sweeping away so many bridges that an official history damned "this malignant river, rising to flood and fury." A half dozen ambulances returning to an aid station were halted so long by a washed-out bridge that the medics ran out of morphine. "I could hear the wounded men inside moaning dreadfully and shrieking," a Canadian officer wrote. Battle casualties, as well as sickness and injury, gnawed at Eighth Army; losses in the 78th Division would total ten thousand in the second half of 1943.

The Adriatic, in fact, was "an unprofitable sector" with "no real strategic objective," as an astute New Zealand brigadier, Howard K. Kippenberger, recognized. Montgomery lacked the combat power and reserves to reach Pescara, much less Avezzano or Rome. A giddy AFHQ intelligence summary on December 4 declared, "The enemy has lost the initiative…. The Winter Line has been breached and overrun in the Adriatic sector." Perhaps it seemed so in Algiers, but on the actual battlefield a strategy of maneuver had quickly devolved into a strategy of attrition and mutual bloodletting. An Eighth Army pause in early December let Kesselring's troops regroup; two more attacks on Orsona failed, leaving the New Zealanders stymied.

For those whose blood was let, the Winter Line in the east rivaled that in the west for vexation. In early December, a Canadian soldier described "a landscape that seemed almost lunar in its desolation," where "men lived and died in many unremembered ways." Each ridge seemed to conceal a constellation of enemy bunkers; every snow-dusted furrow might hold a mine, or a sniper all but invisible in a white snowsuit. In preparing for a patrol in the no-man's-land along the Winter Line, one soldier recounted how he "lay rigid, biting my hand and totally convinced beyond all doubt that

waiting Germans were watching us…. I hated it; I hated the cold and the dark; above all I hated the loneliness."

"To preserve sanity," another Tommy told his diary, "the limits of imagination must stop at one's own miseries." Gun crews traded the heavy barrages known as "murder." As the season deepened and darkened, a Royal Fusilier observed that troops had revived a survival concept from the Great War known as "the better hole": the search for a burrow of relative security and comfort. His staccato summary of infantry life along the Sangro had universal merit: "Move forward. Stop. Dig in. Wait. What is happening? Who knows? Not us. Move on."

Montgomery kept his swank, at first. With his menagerie of canaries, lovebirds, hens, dogs, and the odd lamb or piglet, he waged war as he had with Eighth Army for sixteen months: from "Main 35," a compact and nomadic tactical camp of rickety trucks and caravans, well hidden by brush and camouflage netting, and calibrated to the commander's early-to-bed battle rhythm. To commemorate the first anniversary of El Alamein, Montgomery threw a party near Lucera, with staff officers assigned to provide wine, fresh meat, and a grand piano, which was somehow coaxed into an olive grove. Italian musicians, billed as the Lucera Swingers and featuring a pianist who claimed to have played New York, banged out "Lili Marlene" and "La Vie en Rose." For a few sweet hours, the greatest British victory since Waterloo seemed nearer than the muddy misery of central Italy.

Montgomery remained peremptory as ever, with subordinate and superior alike. A staff officer sent to fetch a brigadier told him, "The army commander wants to see you in exactly four minutes and thirty-five seconds. Thirty-four. Thirty-three…" When Alexander stood in a conference to explain his thoughts on shifting Eighth Army divisions to support Fifth Army, Montgomery impatiently snapped, "Sit down. I'll show you how to do it." He lamented what he saw as the lack of "a firm plan for waging the campaign. At present it is haphazard and go-as-you-please…. We each do what we like, when we like." A parody of Montgomery in conversation with God made the rounds, with the general advising the Almighty in a final heroic couplet:

And after the war when I've nothing to do,
I'll come up to heaven and run things for You.

Each night he prayed for fair skies, and each morning was peeved when his appeal went unheeded. "I *must* have fine weather," he insisted in November. "If it rains continuously, I am done." Rain fell continuously. When the Sangro spate washed out his bridges, he summoned a senior engineer, served a convivial cup of tea, then rounded on the poor fellow. "You are useless, quite useless," Montgomery charged. "I have a little geography book about Italy. It says it isn't unusual at this season for the rivers in Italy to rise even twenty feet in one night. Get out. You are fired." More to his liking was an Australian pilot, who was shot down, rescued, and brought to Montgomery's mess on the Sangro for lunch. When the army commander asked his opinion on "the greatest principle of war," the Aussie replied, "I should say it's: 'Stop frigging about.'"

But frigging about had become the order of the day in Italy. Whether any mortal commander could have flanked Rome across the Apennines in midwinter is problematic, but Montgomery's particular skills seemed ill matched to the task. He "had the unusual gift of persuasively combining very bold speech and very cautious action," as C.J.C. Molony would observe in the official British history of the Italian campaign. A methodical orthodoxy now defined his generalship, much as the

beret and eccentric encampment expressed his persona. Again and again he chose limited objectives, which were attacked only after a painstaking accretion of men and matériel in such quantities that he could "scarcely fail, given time, to take that objective," as Molony wrote. Then the cycle began again, with the selection of another limited objective, and another slow buildup.

"He was in fact a very good First World War general, and he did not regard his troops as capable of any higher performance," concluded Michael Howard.

Years of calamity—in France, Norway, Crete, Singapore, and the Western Desert—had demonstrated the limits of this huge conscript army, including the capacity of staff officers and junior commanders to handle the immensely complex requirements of modern war. For Montgomery, simplicity was paramount, initiative to be discouraged. His battlefield was linear and sequential, meticulous and unimaginably violent.

This vision, which had made him Britain's most successful and celebrated field general, was unlikely to carry the day above the Sangro, and Montgomery knew it. In late November, even before Eighth Army stalled along the Bernhardt Line, his frustration boiled over in a private five-page screed, "Reflections on the Campaigns in Italy, 1943." He tattooed the cousins, of course: "The Americans do not understand how to fight the Germans…. They do not understand the great principles of surprise and concentration." But most of his fire fell on Alexander. "He has very little idea as to how to operate armies in the field. When he has a conference of commanders, which is very seldom, it is a lamentable spectacle…. No one gets any orders, and we all do what we like." He worried that "we may be led into further troubles in 1944 and will not finish off the war cleanly."

In short, Montgomery concluded, the war in Italy had become a detestable thing, "untidy and ad hoc."

Montgomery's last best hope to avoid a stalemate fell on the Canadian 1st Division, which in early December was ordered to force the narrow coastal plain in a final effort to at least reach Pescara and Highway 5, the lateral road to Rome.

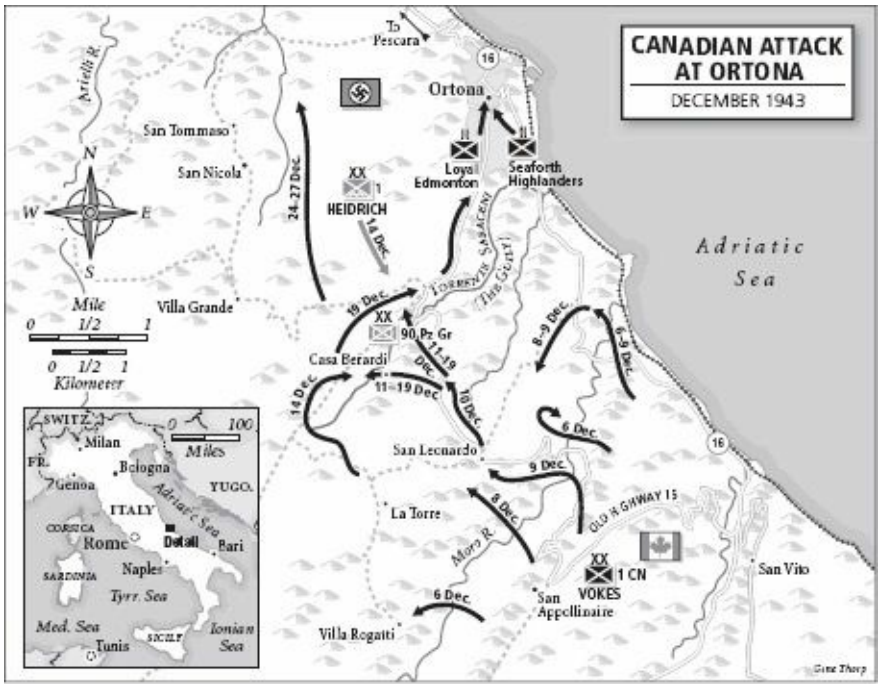
Canada's hour had finally come. The country had entered the war in 1939 with fewer than five thousand professional soldiers and a callow militia of under fifty thousand. Within three years, the force grew to half a million, but Canadian troops had seen little action except for nine murderous hours in the French coastal town of Dieppe, where in August 1942 a raid gone awry left more than nine hundred Canadians dead and nearly two thousand captured. Canadian troops had fought with distinction in Sicily, but some feared that the war would end without a chance to avenge Dieppe or to prove the national mettle.

That chance would come fifteen miles south of Pescara, at Ortona, a port town built on its Adriatic promontory by Trojans fleeing their burning, high-walled city in the second millennium before Christ—or so it was said. Centuries of prosperity had ended in 1447, when Venetians fired Ortona's fleet and arsenal. Now a decrepit sandstone castle beetled over the harbor and a few scraggly palm trees ringed the Piazza Municipale. But the more beguiling local landmarks included a domed twelfth-century cathedral that held the bones of St. Thomas the Apostle, and an even older church founded by Mary Magdalene—or so it was said. Most of Ortona's ten thousand souls had fled to the mountains or toiled in German labor battalions; Wehrmacht sappers also blew holes in the harbor mole and sank two hundred boats to block the anchorage. The coastal road from the south, Highway 16, was easily severed by dropping a bridge below the town, leaving but a single approach road, which hugged a narrow ridge from the southwest. Still, the Germans were likely to fall back to more easily defended ridge-and-furrow country to the north—or so it was said.

The Canadian division commander, Major General Christopher Vokes, was a burly engineer who had been born in Ireland to a British officer and his wife but educated in Ontario, Quebec, and England. “A tough old bird, great boxer, tall, wide, and built like a bulldog, which also summed up his personality perfectly,” said one aquaintance. Given to roaring through his red pushbroom mustache, Vokes at age thirty-nine was described as “a roughneck” by a Canadian reporter, who added, “I never knew a more profane man.” Others considered him “a pompous bully” who imitated Montgomery by carrying a fly whisk and affecting a British accent. He preached a bracing stoicism, claiming that “a man’s fate is written the day he is born and no amount of dodging can avoid it.” The tactical corollary of this eschatology appeared to be the frontal assault, which Vokes ordered in sufficient numbers at Ortona to be known thereafter as the Butcher.

As commanded, the Canadians attacked across the Moro, a mustard-hued creek that emptied into the sea two miles south of Ortona. A lunge on the left flank gained sufficient surprise to find food abandoned on German mess tables. Other thrusts met stout resistance; when a Canadian gunner yelled that he was out of ammunition, his company commander yelled back, “Why, you stupid bastard, make military noises.” So intense grew the shell fire that one corporal declared, “It was like a raving madhouse.” Sweating artillerymen stripped to their bare chests, as blood trickled from their concussion-ruptured eardrums and gun barrels glowed a “translucent red.” “The situation was undoubtedly confusing to the enemy as well as to ourselves,” a staff officer wrote. But on December 9 the Moro line was breached, with 170 Germans killed in a single day. Montgomery sent Vokes “hearty congratulations.”

The plaudit was premature. Beyond the Moro lay a ravine running northeast to southwest, and labeled Torrente Saraceni on Italian maps. Just south of the ridge road that offered the only access to Ortona, this gulch was more than three miles long, two hundred yards wide, and two hundred feet deep. Italian farmers had planted the bottoms with grain and olives; German sappers replanted with mines and booby traps. Troops from the 90th Panzer Grenadier Division, many of whom had escaped from Sardinia and Corsica in September, dug into the slopes and barricaded the stone farmhouses along the north lip. Vokes failed to sense how formidable was the barrier posed by the Gully—as Canadian troops called it—and beginning on Saturday, December 11, he flung a sequence of piecemeal attacks into the breach. Of eight assaults on the Torrente Saraceni, five were made by single battalions, and only the last involved as many as three. When Montgomery dispatched a messenger to ask why the Canadians had stalled, Vokes snarled, “You tell Monty if he would get to hell up here and see the bloody mud he has stuck us in, he’d know damn well why we can’t move faster.”



For nine days the Gully held the Canadians in what infantry officer Farley Mowat called a “filthy limbo.” A corporal with a notebook sketched the configuration of slit trenches around him, then listened to the shriek of an approaching shell and placed a pencil tick on the trench where he guessed it would land; he called the game “Dots and Spots.” Horribly burned by white phosphorus, a sergeant cried to those rushing to help him, “Don’t come near me, boys, don’t let this stuff get on you.” In agony he died, alone.

The limbo grew filthier on December 14, with the discovery of a German corpse wearing a round helmet and a Luftwaffe uniform—evidence that panzer grenadiers had been replaced by the 1st Parachute Division. Commanded by a corpulent, gray-eyed major general named Richard Heidrich, whose uncanny resemblance to Churchill extended to a fondness for enormous cigars, the paratroopers were “the best German troops in Italy,” in Alexander’s estimation. Their presence suggested to Allied intelligence that Kesselring intended to hold Ortona and not simply delay the Canadian advance.

On and on went the primordial struggle across this boggy rent in the earth. Heavy losses and exhaustion beset both sides of the Gully, now also known as Dead Man’s Gulch for the bodies bricking the scorched heath. “You feel nothing,” a Canadian soldier reported. “Only a weariness so great you couldn’t sleep if they let you.” Inexact maps led to errant Canadian shelling, including a barrage that straddled the Gully to hit friendly regiments on either side. So many shells puckered the landscape that one tanker was reminded of “a large porridge pot bubbling.” An intrepid captain managed to capture Casa Berardi, a farm at the west end of the Gully, but Vokes lacked reserves to exploit the flank and instead launched another bootless frontal assault. “He frittered away everything, and everything was committed and he had no reserves, which is a terrible thing,” the Canadians’ chief engineer lamented.

A flanking attack from the west, code-named MORNING GLORY, finally unhinged the German line and by dusk on December 19 the Gully belonged to Canada. To plant the Maple Leaf flag had cost a thousand casualties. Two Canadian battalions were reduced to the size of companies, and one company was commanded by a corporal. The reporter Christopher Buckley entered a battered cottage to find “an old woman, her eyes closed, her face the colour of old parchment, moaning and keening to herself…. Stretched out on the floor lay the corpses of four young children.”

A mile to the north, Ortona town still belonged to Germany. Any illusions that the enemy planned to quietly decamp should have been dispelled by a captured German paratrooper. Blinded by

his wounds, he told his captors, “I wish I could see you. I’d kill every one of you.”

A man’s fate is written the day he is born and no amount of dodging can avoid it. Perhaps that also held true for towns, and if so Ortona had been doomed from the moment those fabled Trojans shipped their oars off the beckoning promontory. As the burning towers of Troy presaged Ortona’s ashes, so did Ortona’s fate offer auguries for a hundred towns to come. For here was fought the first large, pitched urban battle in the Mediterranean—not a skirmish against Italians as in Gela, or a village brawl as in San Pietro, but a room-to-room, house-to-house, block-to-block struggle that foretold iconic street fights with heavy weapons from Caen to Aachen, and from Nuremberg to Berlin.

Ortona had been spared razing because of a wan hope in Montgomery’s headquarters that it would fall quickly to become an Allied port and winter hostel for weary troops. That fantasy vanished in a great roar at dawn on Tuesday, December 21, when German demolitionists blew up a watchtower adjacent to the cathedral, leaving St. Thomas’s dome “split in half like a butchered deer,” in one witness’s description. At the same hour, Canadian infantry and Sherman tanks rushed the town from the southwest, sirens wailing and every gun blazing. Machine-gun bullets chipped the cobblestones in a spray of orange sparks as riflemen crouched in the doorways and fired at every window. Just after noon Kesselring’s chief of staff rang Tenth Army headquarters to report that Berlin assumed the town was lost. “The high command called me on the phone. Everybody was very sad about Ortona,” he said. “Why?” a Tenth Army staff officer replied. “Ortona is still in our hands.”

So it would remain for another week. Side streets proved too narrow for tanks, and German sappers blew up stone buildings to block the intersections and canalize Canadian attackers down the Corso Vittorio Emanuele. Antitank guns hidden in alleys shot the Shermans in the flank as they passed; others, tucked in the rubble, shot the tanks in the belly when they crawled over street barricades. Booby-trap trip wires seemed to stretch across every stairway and from every doorknob. Two Canadian regiments—the Loyal Edmontons on the left and the Seaforth Highlanders from British Columbia on the right—inched forward on a five-hundred-yard front in fighting described as “a gangster’s battle” that raged “from cellar to loft, from one rubble pile to the next.” Progress was “measured in a house or two gained every hour,” wrote the historian Mark Zuehlke. No-man’s-land was measured in the width of an alley, and sometimes the width of a bedroom wall. “For some unknown reason,” a *New York Times* reporter noted, “the Germans are staging a miniature Stalingrad in hapless Ortona.” Soldiers told one another, “Only three more shooting days till Christmas.”

Rather than clear buildings conventionally, from the ground floor up, Canadian engineers perfected the art of “mouseholing” from one adjoining building to the next without setting foot in the street: a beehive explosive charge was placed on a chair next to a top-floor wall; after the blast blew a hole into the abutting building, infantrymen stormed through the dust, spraying all cupboards and bedsteads with “speculative fire” from tommy guns, then fought their way downstairs, floor by floor, grenading “any room which gave reason for suspicion.” Sheets draped from designated windows indicated a cleared house, which then required a small garrison to prevent Heidrich’s paratroopers from reinfesting it at night. Farley Mowat observed that his men soon developed an architectural “capacity to estimate the relative strength of a building at a single glance…the wall thickness, the firmness of the mortar, the number of rooms.”

“The stench here is dreadful,” one soldier wrote. “I can’t understand why the Germans decay differently.” Christopher Buckley spied a dead paratrooper with postcards spilling from his tunic, each featuring a photo of Hitler. An enemy sergeant, shot in the head and dying in a side street, told a Canadian in English, “We could beat you.”

Not for want of effort did they fail. Two dozen Edmontons were buried alive when a booby-trapped building near St. Thomas's collapsed. Germans showered would-be rescuers with stick grenades; only four men were saved that day—a fifth, a corporal from Alberta, was pulled from the rubble three days later—and Canadian engineers retaliated by demolishing two buildings in which German voices were heard.

"We do not want to defend Ortona decisively," Kesselring complained to General Joachim Lemelsen, who had taken temporary command of Tenth Army after Vietinghoff fell ill. "But the English have made it appear as important as Rome."

"It costs so much in blood it cannot be justified," Lemelsen replied.

"No," Kesselring said, "but then you can do nothing when things develop in this manner."

And then, as such things do, the battle ended. Squeezed into the old quarter around the shell-torn castle, Heidrich's men waited until nightfall before slipping up the coastal road toward Pescara, leaving dead comrades spread-eagled on staircases and the grass-grown ramparts. "There is no town left," a German officer told his diary. "Only the ruins."

A new sign posted at the city limits disagreed: "This is Ortona, a West Canadian town." Tacking up that sign had cost General Vokes another 650 casualties; Canadian battle losses for the month of December would exceed 2,300, including 500 dead. "Everything before Ortona was a fairy tale," Vokes said. In one typical battalion, of forty-one officers who had landed on Sicily in July, only nine remained, and six of them had been wounded, according to the historian Daniel G. Dancocks. A Canadian psychiatrist who made his rounds from camp to camp on a motorcycle reported an alarming number of "gross hysterias with mutism [and] paralysis."

Alexander's plan had miscarried. In five weeks, Eighth Army had moved just fourteen miles, averaging less than thirty yards an hour. Pescara still lay ten miles to the north; Rome lay beyond the snowy Apennines, on the other side of the world. Montgomery recommended that the Adriatic campaign come to a halt, and Alexander agreed.

In Ortona, above the purple sea, a Seaforth piper played the threnodic "Skye Boat Song" in memory of those fallen. A Canadian combat artist who prowled the rubble with his sketch pad later summarized his aesthetic assessment: "The familiar world had disappeared."

Too Many Gone West

A few minutes past sunrise on Saturday, December 11, a four-engine British York skidded to a stop on a bleak, deserted landing strip forty miles from Tunis. As crewmen tethered the propellers and chocked the wheels, a short, thick figure stumped down the metal stairway and sat heavily on a packing crate next to the runway. Removing his hat, Winston Churchill daubed the perspiration from his scowling gray face. A chill breeze teased his wispy hair, and sand swirled around the luggage now being unloaded from the aircraft belly, including the crated gifts he had recently received for his sixty-ninth birthday: a porcelain bowl from President Roosevelt; a silver drachma coin, minted in 300 B.C., from his daughter Sarah; a silver Isfahan cigar box; and, from the traveling press, a Persian astrakhan hat, which the prime minister had taken to wearing with his air commodore's uniform.

Nearly an hour passed. Churchill's physician, Lord Moran, entreated him to escape the wind and reboard the aircraft; the scowl simply deepened. The prime minister had planned to spend a single night with Eisenhower at Carthage before pressing on to inspect the battlefield in Italy with General Brooke, yet this diversion—Where was Eisenhower? Why had they landed *here*?—taxed both his patience and his strength. "I want to sleep for billions of years," he had recently told Moran. Churchill had logged more than 100,000 miles since the beginning of the war, but the last thousand, since

leaving the strategy conferences in Teheran and Cairo, seemed especially cruel. In Egypt he had felt too exhausted to dry himself after a bath, and simply flopped sopping on the bed. “We are only specks of dust that have settled in the night on the map of the world,” he told Moran.

At length the mystery was solved: through misunderstanding, the specks had settled on the wrong Tunisian strip. Baggage and shivering passengers were bundled back into the square-windowed York, and fifteen minutes later Churchill felt the grip of Eisenhower’s hand at El Aouina field, where the worried general had been pacing for two hours. As he settled into the rear seat of Eisenhower’s sedan, Churchill confessed, “I am afraid I shall have to stay with you longer than I had planned. I am completely at the end of my tether.”

Ringed by sentries and antiaircraft guns, the La Marsa seaside cottage in December was a study in melancholy. Churchill collapsed in a chair, and was ordered to bed after Moran found that he had a fever of 101 degrees and a “shabby” pulse. “I feel much disturbed,” the physician wrote. That evening, the lethargic prime minister complained of a sore throat. “It’s pretty bad,” he said. “Do you think it’s anything?” At four o’clock on Sunday morning, Brooke awakened to a dolorous voice in his room, crying, “Hullo, hullo, hullo.” Bolting upright—“Who the hell is that?” he demanded—Brooke switched on a flashlight to find the prime minister in pajamas with his head bound in a brown bandage, wandering the room in search of Moran and complaining of a headache.

“My master is unwell,” one of the prime minister’s servants wrote home, “and future movements remain uncertain.” Harold Macmillan found a portable X-ray machine in a Tunis hospital, and a pathologist arrived from Cairo, followed by a cardiologist and two nurses from Algiers. Chest film on Monday showed “a considerable opaque area at the base of the left lung,” the telltale sign of pneumonia, and Moran prescribed sulfonamide antibiotics. The patient’s pulse grew irregular and spurty, and the edge of his liver could be felt beneath his ribs. Churchill complained that his heart “feels to be bumping all over the place.” The heart specialist administered digitalis.

More specialists were summoned, as well as the Churchill family and a Coldstream Guards battalion to protect the house. “He’s very glad I’ve come,” Clementine Churchill told Moran, “but in five minutes he’ll forget I’m here.” Randolph Churchill insisted on discussing French politics with his father. To daughter Sarah, the prime minister murmured, “If I die, don’t worry—the war is won.” Confessing to being “tired out—body, soul, and spirit,” he flung out his arms and cried, “In what better place could I die than here, in the ruins of Carthage?” More heart fibrillations followed, and more digitalis. Moran, who found the patient “very breathless and anxious looking,” feared that Winston Churchill had indeed come to the end of his mortal tether.

The preceding fortnight could have killed anyone, particularly a proud, aging Tory whose overarching war aim—to preserve the imperial construct of His Majesty’s realm—now seemed jeopardized less by Britain’s enemies than by her friends. The Allies had met in three distinct sessions: first in Cairo, where Churchill and Roosevelt were joined by the Chinese leader, Chiang Kai-shek; then in Teheran, where the Anglo-Americans met for four days with Stalin; then in Cairo again, in a conference exclusive to Yanks and Brits. The epicurean excess had taxed even Churchill’s iron constitution. There were bottomless glasses of vodka and cognac with the Russians, of course, but the Cairo conferees also consumed 22,000 pounds of meat, 78,000 eggs, 4,600 pounds of sugar, and 1,500 cigars, as well as curried prawns, Turkish delight, and ice cream with chocolate sauce. Quartermasters reported an average daily consumption of 80 bottles of whisky, 34 of gin, 12 of brandy, 528 of beer, and 20,000 cigarettes.

If Egyptian and Persian excesses contributed to Churchill’s physical malady, surely the

diplomatic developments indisposed his soul and spirit. That Britain's senior role in the Grand Alliance was irrecoverable had never been more obvious than in the presence of the emerging superpowers personified by Roosevelt and Stalin. Even Churchill could see the tracings of a bipolar world that had no room for nineteenth-century empires. He and his small nation were overshadowed; no wonder he was sick at heart.

Much had been achieved in two weeks, but as usual all progress first required the spilling of fraternal blood. "Brooke got nasty and King got good and sore," one witness in Cairo, Lieutenant General Joseph W. Stilwell, wrote in his journal. "King almost climbed over the table at Brooke. God, he was mad. I wished he had socked him." When Churchill urged a British and American invasion of Rhodes—"muskets must flame," he thundered, grasping his lapels in both hands—Marshall replied, "Not one American soldier is going to die on that goddamned beach." Roosevelt archly presented U.S. and British manpower statistics showing the inexorable American preponderance: large as the American military overseas had grown, an even larger force still awaited deployment at home. "Our manpower is now fully mobilized for the war effort," Churchill told his advisers. "We cannot add to the total. On the contrary, it is already dwindling."

Perennial American suspicions that Churchill intended to sidetrack OVERLORD by subordinating the cross-Channel invasion to "peripheral and indecisive ventures in the Mediterranean" were again inflamed by British suggestions that a stalemate in Italy might require a postponement in France. The time had come, in Marshall's phrase, for the British to "fish or cut bait." Churchill had privately urged Brooke "to swing the strategy back to the Mediterranean at the expense of the Channel." An alert Henry Stimson, who as war secretary prayed every night for a cross-Channel attack, warned Roosevelt that the prime minister was prepared "to stick a knife in the back of OVERLORD." An ill-advised autumn campaign by the British in the Aegean—the debacle cost more than five thousand casualties and twenty-six ships—added to the distrust. The British had long justified the Mediterranean campaign as a vital antecedent to the death blow to be struck in northwest Europe; but, as Michael Howard observed, London now regarded "the Mediterranean theater not as subsidiary, but as an end in itself, the succcess of whose operations was its own justification." Major General John Kennedy, a British planner, later conceded, "Had we had our way, I think there can be little doubt that the invasion of France would not have been done in 1944."

They did not have their way. Stalin gruffly threw his support behind Roosevelt, insisting on both OVERLORD and a concomitant invasion of southern France. (It was said that Vyacheslav Molotov, the Soviet foreign minister, spoke only four words of English: "Yes," "No," and "Second front.") Moscow also agreed to join the war against Japan after Germany's defeat. Roosevelt left Teheran convinced that Stalin was "getatable"—susceptible to the president's charms. "The Russians are perfectly friendly," Roosevelt insisted. "They aren't trying to gobble up all the rest of Europe or the world."

Outnumbered and outmaneuvered, Churchill had little choice but to agree that OVERLORD, now scheduled for May 1944, would "have first claim on the resources…of the Allies, worldwide." The strategic drift had ended. As the historian Mark A. Stoler later wrote, "After two full years of controversy and more than ninety days of meetings, the Allies had adopted a unified, coordinated strategy for the defeat of the Axis." Roosevelt capped the decision by selecting Eisenhower to command the western invasion, telling Marshall, "I could not sleep at night with you out of the country." Eisenhower, the president concluded, "is the best politician among the military men. He is a natural leader who can convince other men to follow him."

As for Italy, London and Washington agreed on the capture of Rome and a subsequent advance limited to the Pisa–Rimini latitude, two hundred miles above the capital. Churchill had at least won that concession.

Despite the frictions, the fortnight had also seen renewed brotherhood and mutual affection.

“Large families are usually more closely united than small ones,” Roosevelt proclaimed in a dinner toast. The president had roared with laughter when an Army band struck up a tune and Churchill danced with Pa Watson, the burly White House aide. Yet even before the second Cairo meeting adjourned, “things were changing,” a British staff officer, Brigadier Ian Jacob, later recalled.

It was all too clear that “by the end of the war there would only be two great powers,” Jacob said. “From that moment on, I would say, we were nothing so close as we had been.” Though Roosevelt remained “extremely friendly,” he seemed “to keep Churchill somewhat at arm’s length.”

The prime minister did not die amid the ruins of Carthage, of course. It would take more than curried prawns, Turkish delight, and Yankee estrangement to kill Winston Churchill. After six days the fever broke, although his pulse still raced to 130 on December 19; perhaps the acceleration came from the large cigar and the whiskey with soda he had consumed a couple of days earlier. Churchill became fixated on his own white blood-cell count, envisioning the battle against the pneumococci as a titanic clash of forces not unlike the world war itself. One visitor to La Marsa reported that “a lot of the fire had gone out of his eyes,” but they seemed to rekindle at the discovery of some thirty-five-year-old brandy. Churchill spurned the efforts of Eisenhower’s culinary staff to prepare meals suitable for an invalid; a Royal Navy cook was summoned to gratify his palate. When Sarah read aloud to her father from *Pride and Prejudice*, he interjected, “What calm lives they had, those people!”

“The Bible says you must do just what Moran orders,” Roosevelt cabled from Washington, “but at this moment I cannot put my finger on the verse and chapter.” Couriers came and went from the La Marsa cottage at all hours with war news, including landing craft tallies from the Indian Ocean and drydock status reports in the Mediterranean: Churchill had taken a keen interest in launching another amphibious landing to outflank the Winter Line. “The stagnation of the whole campaign on the Italian front is becoming scandalous,” he cabled the British chiefs. When Beetle Smith and a gaggle of staff officers came to Churchill’s bedroom, he peppered them with questions about available landing craft before snapping, “You don’t seem to know much. You’re no use.”

Not until late Friday afternoon, December 24, did he rise from his sickbed. Wrapped in a padded-silk Chinese dressing gown with blue and gold embroidered dragons, he scuffed to the dining room in slippers stitched with his initials in gold thread across each foot. “Looking in his strange costume rather like a figure in a Russian ballet,” as Macmillan put it, he joined Alexander and other senior British officers at the table for a discussion that lasted until midnight. When they broke, Christmas had come, and with it a consensus that an amphibious assault in Italy “must be carried out on a sufficient scale to ensure success.” The most promising beaches lay southwest of Rome on the Tyrrhenian Sea, near a resort town called Anzio.

Churchill telegraphed the news to the British chiefs in London, then scribbled a note to Roosevelt in hope of the president’s concurrence. “This,” he wrote, “should decide the battle of Rome.”

Christmas *had* come, and across the Mediterranean a million soldiers far from home opened gifts that, however impractical or improbable, made them long for home all the more: black silk socks, cologne, Life Savers, canned Spam, slivers of prewar soap, a volume of Lytton Strachey, polka-dot neckties, Cherry Blossom boot polish, straw house slippers, Brasso, louse powder, a carefully wrapped bottle of Coca-Cola, and crumbling loaves of “war cake,” baked without benefit of sugar or shortening but larded with love.

Had he been home in Ohio, “I would be fussing with tree lights or a tree stand or doing my last

second shopping or coming home from an office party," Lieutenant Colonel Jack Toffey wrote Helen on Christmas Eve. "As far as I am concerned it is time for me to see you all again." Sutlers shipped 170 tons of turkey to the troops, along with 90 tons of apples and 112 tons of Sicilian oranges. Combat units also received "morale crates" that implied a certain rear-echelon misapprehension of life on the Winter Line. Box no. 11, for example, included eighty phonograph records and a pair of tennis rackets, while box no. 21 contained 258 Ping-Pong balls and box no. 171 held wrestling mats, tennis nets, boxing gloves, makeup kits, and masquerade costumes.

In Naples, shoppers and boulevardiers swarmed along the Via Roma. Harbor restaurants offered decent black market meals for 140 lire, or $1.40. Soldiers polished their shoes for a dance at the enlisted club and wished one another "Merry Typhus!"—the disease had become epidemic. MPs prowled the streets, fining officers caught with their hands in their pockets; sergeants who had removed their chevrons at the front to confound snipers now risked $10 per stripe for not sewing them back on. The city evinced the "spurious brightness which you find whenever there is a rapid turnover of money," Christopher Buckley wrote. "There was a general atmosphere of jolliness."

Jolliness faded farther north. Mark Clark on Christmas Eve gave a carton of cigarettes to each man in his Fifth Army headquarters, which now occupied the enormous royal palace at Caserta. He then served eggnog to his staff officers during a round of caroling. After attending a concert by the Royal Artillery band, he mingled with revelers at the Red Cross club and went to midnight mass in the packed royal chapel. To his daughter, Ann, Clark wrote, "I am anxious to get this thing over and get back to see you and have a good old laughing contest."

In a Bari hospital, where mustard gas victims continued to die, a major walked the wards in a cotton beard and a St. Nick costume fashioned from two red hospital robes. Up the Adriatic coast, in Ortona, soldiers built plank tables in the candlelit church of Santa Maria di Constantinopoli, then laid the settings with white linen and silver scavenged from the ruins. Companies rotated through for Christmas dinner served by their officers in the British tradition, with soup, roast pork, pudding, and a bottle of beer apiece. A lieutenant with the wonderfully seasonal name of Wilf Gildersleeve played the pump organ while a battalion padre led the caroling. "Most of the men found it hard to take in," an officer said. Radio calls to units on the perimeter began with a few bars of "Silent Night," played by an adjutant strumming a mandolin near the microphone. General Vokes dined alone, and wept.

"The stars have crept low tonight / To comfort half-buried dreamers," wrote a mortarman-poet, Hans Juergensen. Sprigs of holly and mistletoe decorated various encampments, and C-ration foil festooned little pine trees. In Venafro, near the Mignano Gap, pealing bells competed with booming guns, and five priests tendered communion to filthy, bearded soldiers on their knees at the altar rail. "I prayed that there would be no more wars after this one," a private from Denver wrote his family.

Bells rang in Orsogna, too, but Kiwi troops heard them only at a distance since Germans still held the town. "I had not seen men so exhausted since Flanders. Their faces were grey," Brigadier Kippenberger wrote. An Italian woman living furtively in Orsogna wrote to her missing son about the "poor sad Christmas" in the battered town, then added plaintively, "And where are you?" On the other side of the hill, where German soldiers agonized over reports of carpet-bombed cities in the Fatherland, the 71st Panzer Grenadier Regiment order of the day declared: "Hatred and revenge overcome our hearts as we ponder the magnitude of our misfortune and the anguish which these attacks have brought to our German families."

"Usual targets of opportunity were engaged all through the day," an American field artillery battalion reported, "climaxed by a salvo of colored smoke for Xmas greeting." In one field hospital, surgeons operated by flashlight and fell flat whenever they heard the rush of approaching shells. When blood for transfusions ran short, nurses circulated among the gun crews and motorpool drivers, soliciting donations. A clerk in the 36th Division sorted Christmas packages and scribbled "KIA" on

mail to be returned to the sender; at length, utterly spent, he sat at a typewriter and pecked out, “Now is the time for all good men to come to the aid of their country.”

And in the 34th Division, Captain Leslie W. Bailey assembled his company and read aloud from the second chapter of the Gospel According to Saint Luke. “Glory to God in the highest,” Bailey concluded, “and on earth peace and good will toward all men.”

The bottom of the year brought the Allied camp more hope than despair, even if it delivered neither peace nor universal goodwill. “The war is won,” Churchill had told his daughter, and War Department analysts now forecast Germany’s defeat in October 1944. If too optimistic by eight months, optimism seemed warranted. *Life* magazine noted in a year-end editorial that American factories already planned to resume production of consumer goods on a modest scale in 1944, including bobby pins, baby buggies, hot water heaters, and two million irons. On all battlefronts, with the notable exceptions of Italy and Burma, Allied forces were advancing. In the Pacific, the outer perimeter of Japan’s empire had been pierced in the Gilbert and Marshall Islands, and the inner ring of the Carolines and Marianas would soon loom in American crosshairs. General Douglas MacArthur continued to angle toward the Philippines, which would provide a springboard to Formosa and the Chinese mainland. Allied domination of the seas, among the signal achievements of 1943, was further demonstrated on December 26 when the Royal Navy trapped and sank the German battleship *Scharnhorst* off northwest Norway. Nearly two thousand German sailors were lost. On the Eastern Front, 175 German divisions continued their epic retreat.

Italy was a different matter. “The campaign is heartbreakingly slow,” John Lucas told his diary on December 26. “We haven’t enough troops to go very fast and I am afraid we will get weaker instead of stronger as time goes on because I figure this is becoming a secondary theater.” Fifth Army’s strength of 200,000 had hardly grown since October, and in December alone the army tallied 23,000 hospital admissions. Battle casualties had whittled away more than 10 percent of U.S. combat power since Salerno; for the British, the figure was 18 percent. The German high command on December 31 noted with satisfaction that the Allied advance on Rome had been “equal to about six miles per month.” Moreover, the Anglo-Americans were stuck not only in the Italian mud but also in the Mediterranean: more than twenty-five Allied divisions and five thousand combat planes remained in the theater “with no shipping available to move them elsewhere,” the Army concluded. Except for the seven divisions already sent from Sicily, overburdened British ports could not handle additional transfers from the Mediterranean on top of the floodtide of Yanks now arriving from the States. Italy, as Martin Blumenson wrote in the official U.S. Army history, had become “a war of position, static warfare at its worst.”

Dark thoughts intruded. “One rather wondered what we achieved,” admitted Major General Freddie de Guingand, the Eighth Army chief of staff. “We began to think about Passchendaele.” Farley Mowat told his family in Canada, “Things have changed so much since Sicily. Too many pals gone West. Too many things that go *wump* in the night.”

Doubts about the battlefield leadership also intruded, among both high and low. Alan Moorehead decried “a plan that was distinctly conservative and lacking in imagination”; the Allied armies, he added, “had come into Europe with very muddled ideas of what we were going to find.” Now when Alexander strolled into his war room to study the map in quiet reflection, some might wonder not what he was thinking but whether he was thinking at all. The manipulation of an army group “required weeks and months of forethought, not hours or days” as with smaller tactical units, his chief of staff later noted, and it was uncertain that Alexander possessed the capacity for such forethought. “He had

the average brain of an average English gentleman. He lacked that little extra cubic centimeter which produces genius," said Lord Louis Mountbatten, commander of forces in Southeast Asia and hardly a towering intellect himself. The disjointed attacks by Fifth and Eighth Armies allowed German forces to shift back and forth across the peninsula to parry the blows in turn. Thanks to Ultra, Alexander was better informed about his adversaries than any general in modern history: "the Allies often knew almost as much about the enemy's formations as he did himself," a British intelligence history concluded. Yet the Allied brain trust seemed unable to overcome "the old methodical way" of war, as Kesselring put it.

Discontent clattered down the chain. Eisenhower privately wished that Patton rather than Clark commanded Fifth Army, although, given Patton's inattention to logistics and medical issues in Sicily, his mastery of the infinitely harder welfare issues in an Italian winter was hardly assured. Clark in turn groused about Lucas and threatened to sack Doc Ryder, commander of the 34th Division, while Lucas groused about Middleton of the 45th Division and Middleton groused about his own subordinates. "The battalion commander problem is serious. It is our weakest link," Middleton wrote in December. "My battalion executives are no good."

Fortunately for the Allied cause, the enemy had problems, too. Twenty-three German divisions were mired in Italy, with nearly 300,000 troops. Joseph Goebbels lamented that if the Wehrmacht had another fifteen or twenty division to throw into the Eastern Front "we would undoubtedly be in a position to repulse the Russians. Unfortunately we must put these fifteen or twenty divisions into combat in the Italian theater." Even Smiling Albert turned querulous. "For two months now," Kesselring complained, "I have not been able to exercise proper command because everything evaporates between my fingers."

War was never linear, and in the Mediterranean its road seemed especially meandering and desultory. "What will 1944 do to us?" Lucas asked his diary. Yet sometimes a soldier in a slit trench saw more clearly than the generals on their high perches. "You got the feeling that you were part of a vast war machine which could not be defeated and would never retreat," wrote P. Royle, a Royal Artillery lieutenant in the British 78th Division. "It had all been so different a year ago in Tunisia when we were very much on the defensive and at times hanging on for dear life."

For the Allies, things would continue to go *wump* in the night, and many more pals would go West. But the winter solstice had passed; each night grew shorter. Light would seep back into their lives, bringing renewed optimism as well as firm ground and fair skies.

* * *

"A terrible year has ended," the monks in the Benedictine abbey atop Monte Cassino wrote in their log on December 31. "God forgive us our errors."

The old year slipped away, lamented by no one. A ferocious storm with gale winds howled through Italy, destroying forty spotter planes and uprooting acres of tentage. Undaunted, troops in the 36th Division commemorated New Year's Eve with a concoction of ethyl alcohol and grapefruit juice; the bitter weather made many nostalgic for a Texas blue norther. Soldiers across the front listened to German Radio Belgrade, which played "Lili Marlene" endlessly. "We'd pinched the enemy's song, pinched his girl in a way," said a British rifleman. Thousands wrote year-end letters to reassure their families. "We sleep plenty, eat plenty, and keep busy, so that's enough to keep a guy living," John S. Stradling, the seventh of eight children, told his mother. "And when the mail starts coming through, what else could a guy want besides a discharge?" In three weeks Stradling would be dead, killed by a

mine.

Truscott's 3rd Division headquarters roasted a piglet, then threw an Auld Lang Syne party in an abandoned church. Officers danced with thirty nurses and Red Cross workers until midnight, when fireworks—machine-gun tracers, mortar shells, and Very lights—welcomed the new year. The festivities continued until dawn, ending with a champagne breakfast. "Thought I might as well let them get it out of their systems because it will be a long time before they have another fling," Truscott wrote Sarah. He added, "The road to Rome is one on which one does not make speed, at this season at any rate. After all, Hannibal spent 14 years on the road."

Out with the old year went two familiar faces from the Mediterranean theater. Escorted by Spitfires, Montgomery flew from Italy on December 31, having been ordered back to London to command an army group in OVERLORD. He would be replaced in Italy by a protégé, General Oliver Leese, commander of the British XXX Corps. Before departing, Montgomery mounted the stage in the Vasto opera house to bid farewell to his assembled Eighth Army officers. He closed his half-hour address by telling them, "I do not know if you will miss me, but I will miss you more than I can say." Alan Moorehead reported, "There was a silence among the officers as he turned abruptly and began to walk off. Then a perfunctory, well-bred, parade ground cheer broke out."

"So there we are," Montgomery wrote in his journal, trying to assay the Italian campaign. "After a brilliant start, we rather fell off. And it could have been otherwise…. I have enjoyed the party myself and am full of beans." In northwest Europe he would start anew, if not quite afresh; for good and ill, he left the Mediterranean encumbered by a reputation. "No one who has not been in the Eighth Army can appreciate just what he meant to us," a British sapper wrote home. "He was a real human person."

Eisenhower also left on the thirty-first. At 11:30 A.M., he strode for the last time from the Hôtel St. Georges, where he had kept his headquarters through fourteen months of reversal and triumph. An hour later he lifted off from Maison Blanche airfield, bound for Washington via Morocco, the Azores, and Bermuda. Roosevelt a week earlier had announced Eisenhower's appointment as supreme commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force, and Marshall insisted that he come home for a brief rest before traveling to London. "Allow someone else to run the war for twenty minutes," Marshall urged. The new Mediterranean theater commander, Field Marshal Henry Maitland Wilson, known as Jumbo for his elephantine bearing, had hoped for three days' overlap with Eisenhower in Algiers; Wilson instead arrived from Cairo to find him long gone. Most of Eisenhower's inner circle would follow him to England, including Beetle Smith, Harry Butcher, and Kay Summersby.

Some believed his departure overdue. "He has lately been rather going to seed here," Harold Macmillan confided to his diary. After conferring with Eisenhower during his final visit to Italy, Lucas wrote, "Ike looked well but much older. The boyish look is gone and he has the guise of a man. I think he is. A job like his will either make or break anyone."

He left believing he had accomplished what had been asked of him. North Africa, Sicily, Sardinia, Corsica, and a large patch of mainland Italy had been liberated. "Fascism had been given its death blow," he wrote in his final assessment of the Italian campaign. "Elimination of Italy from the war had been accomplished." Some two dozen German divisions were tied down in Italy alone, and many more in the Balkans and Greece. The Mediterranean had become an Allied pond: more than a thousand ships crossed the sea in December, three times as many as in June. Even Stalin had conceded that fighting in Italy seemed to be easing some pressure on the Eastern Front.

Vigor, authenticity, and integrity remained Eisenhower's trademarks; he possessed a big brain and a big heart. He despised the enemy—hate had finally lodged in his bones—and cherished his polyglot alliance as the surest instrument of victory. From Algiers, he would take the template for an Allied headquarters and use it to build SHAEF—the Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary

Force—and eventually NATO. He also would take with him sixty hard weeks of battle experience, in logistics, diplomacy, military governance, leadership, character, and mass slaughter.

He left with a nagging sense of loose ends, as well. “I am very disappointed to leave here before we could attempt one ambitious shot at Rome,” he told Marshall. Though he was uneasy at Churchill’s advocacy of an amphibious landing near Rome, his prescience was imperfect. “Jerry is going to write off this southern front,” he told reporters, “and I don’t think he is going to defend it long.” He vowed, wrongly, that there would be no frontal attacks against entrenched defenders. But he did not shy from the hardest of the hard truths he had absorbed: “Sometimes it just gets down to the dirty job of killing until one side or the other cracks.”

Eisenhower’s arrival in Washington would remain secret, allowing him a cocoon of privacy for perhaps the last time in his life. At 1:30 A.M. on January 2, after plucking the general’s stars from his cap, he climbed the servants’ stairs at the Wardman Park Hotel on Connecticut Avenue for his first reunion with Mamie in eighteen months. The White House sent a cooler of thick steaks and fifty Chesapeake oysters. Later he would visit John at West Point, and his mother in Kansas. “Why, it’s Dwight!” Ida Eisenhower exclaimed. “Nothing seems real any more.” To his family he appeared “heavier and definitely more authoritative,” in John’s words; when Mamie complained of his abrupt manner, he growled, “Hell, I’m going back to my theater where I can do what I want.” Twice he absentmindedly called his wife Kay, and when the moment came to leave she told him, “Don’t come back again till it’s over, Ike. I can’t stand losing you again.”

He would go on to greater things, becoming perhaps the largest figure on the war’s largest stage. But part of him would forever linger in the Mediterranean, where he had exchanged that boyish mien for the guise of a man. In a final message, dated January 1 and read to soldiers from Tunis to Ortona and from Palermo to San Pietro, he reduced his valedictory to fifteen words: “Until we meet again in the heart of the enemy’s continental stronghold, I send Godspeed.”

Part Three

7. A River and a Rock

Colonel Warden Makes a Plan

MARRAKESH in midwinter remained a world apart, a world uninjured, a world where war was but a rumor. Snake charmers and professional storytellers thronged the teeming medina, along with tumblers, jugglers, henna *artistes*, monkey handlers, quacks, juice-squeezers, proselytizers, and dye merchants. An Army Air Forces officer described visiting a local sharif who "sat on his leather hassock fingering his white whiskers while his veiled wives brought in gorgeous five-hundred-year-old velvet robes, fists full of jade, emeralds, crystal and ambergris, and chests of gold and silver trinkets, all at very low prices." In addition to elegant minarets and rose-tinted ramparts, Marrakesh had 28,000 registered prostitutes, and U.S. authorities attempting to curb the harlotry complained that French law required either catching a strumpet in flagrante delicto or securing from her clients a signed "statement of intercourse." The skin trade flourished.

The Red City had been Winston Churchill's Shangri-La since 1936, and it was here that he chose to recuperate from the pneumonia that had laid him low at Carthage. It was also here that he intended to refine his brainstorm: the plan to toss two divisions onto the beach at Anzio and "decide the battle of Rome," as he had promised Roosevelt. Before leaving Tunisia, the prime minister donned his uniform in the La Marsa cottage—Clementine buckled the belt for him—and slowly shuffled past the drawn-up Coldstream Guard. Driving to El Aouina airfield, he led a spirited chorus of "When the Midnight Choo-Choo Leaves for Alabam'" before winging across Africa to Morocco on December 27 under the nom de guerre of Colonel Warden.

In Marrakesh he occupied La Saadia, a lush former olive plantation where he and Roosevelt had stayed for a night precisely a year earlier, after the Casablanca conference. Built in 1923, the stucco villa opened onto an orangery, with the distant, snow-crowned Atlas peaks framed by swaying palms. Bougainvillea vines climbed through the courtyard where lizards basked in the winter sun; the interior rooms featured shoulder-high Moorish wall mosaics and carved-wood ceilings. A huge staff flew in from London, among them half a dozen cipher clerks and enough naval officers for around-the-clock vigilance in the map room abutting Churchill's suite. Still weak, the prime minister loitered in bed until noon, then wallowed in a sunken bath filled with great gouts of hot water. For hours he listened to gramophone records of *The Pirates of Penzance* or played poker in a style described as "wildly rash but successful." At sunset, aides improvised a sedan chair and lugged him up the winding staircase of La Saadia's six-story observation tower—"it was certainly heavy going," one bearer reported. Here amid the fluttering moths he sipped his tea and listened to the muezzins' cry, as he had with Roosevelt. The mountains caught the dying carmine light, then stood as sentinels for the coming night. "This war," Churchill mused, "will be known in history as the Unnecessary War."

As his strength returned, he organized daily picnics in the Atlas foothills. The borrowed Cadillac roared through native villages, trailed by a retinue of servants, boon companions, and American MPs in open jeeps. Wearing a huge sombrero, Churchill flashed his V-for-victory at gaping Moroccan peasants, who soon began flashing it back. "We tear after him over the red plain in clouds of red dust," Moran reported. "Deck chairs and hampers are piled on top of the cars…. Arab children gather round like sparrows waiting for crumbs." Scrambling down a steep path to lunch beside a mountain brook, the prime minister found the return climb too arduous. "We took the white tablecloth, folded it like a

rope and put it round his middle," Moran added. Two soldiers "tugged him up while two of us pushed from behind, and a third carried his cigar."

By early January, Churchill was again master of all he surveyed. "Can't I ever get any commanders who will fight?" he complained to one senior officer. "You don't care if we lose the war. You just want to draw your pay and eat your rations." Patting his staff officers on the shoulder, he had told them, "Be good boys and write me a nice plan." But when logisticians carefully documented the shortfall of landing craft needed to carry out his various amphibious schemes around the globe, he replied, "Magnificent, but negative as usual." In his air commodore's uniform, he mounted a reviewing stand to take the salutes of parading French colonial troops bound for Italy—"black as pitch, in reddish uniforms with red fezzes and bayonets on their rifles," one witness reported, "hopelessly out of step but obviously tough soldiers." The jubilant crowd huzzahed him with shouts of "*Vive,* Churchill!"

Finding that he could easily phone Algiers, he pestered AFHQ with calls despite warnings that the French had likely tapped the lines. "Undue discretion was never one of the P.M.'s faults," Macmillan wrote. In London, a peevish Brooke told his diary:

> Winston sitting in Marrakesh is now full of beans and trying to win the war from there. As a result a three-cornered flow of telegrams in all directions is gradually resulting in utter confusion. I wish to God he would come home and get under control.

Not likely. As Moran noted, "The P.M. has a bright idea. He is organizing an operation all on his own…. Twice the picnics have had to be sacrificed to stern duty." When Moran observed that Hitler seemed engrossed not only in grand strategy but also in the minute details of German war operations, the prime minister nodded. "Yes," he said with a smile. "That's just what I do."

Churchill's "bright idea" had been bandied about since shortly after the capture of Naples, when Fifth Army planners began studying the beaches southwest of Rome. Alexander in a dreamy reverie had envisioned five fresh divisions falling on the German flank. But when neither the troops nor the means to move them materialized, Clark proposed landing a single division, reinforced to 24,000 troops who would cling to the shingle for a week until relieved by their Fifth Army brethren arriving overland through the Gustav Line. The scheme in fact was code-named SHINGLE. Truscott's 3rd Division was to be given the honor of landing alone one hundred miles behind enemy lines. "You are going to destroy the best damned division in the United States Army," Truscott warned Clark. "For there will be no survivors." When stalemate froze the Winter Line, a chastened Clark recommended canceling the plan. On December 22, Alexander complied.

Churchill refused to capitulate. "It would be folly to allow the campaign in Italy to drag on," he said while still in his La Marsa sickbed. He wheedled and pleaded, bullied and petitioned. If Rome were not captured, the world would "regard our campaign as a failure," he insisted, because "whoever holds Rome holds the title deeds of Italy." Without Rome, the campaign would "peter out ingloriously," he wrote Clark. A jab in the flank could well compel Kesselring to withdraw his forces from central Italy, freeing Fifth and Eight Armies from their hyperborean fetters. Galvanized by the prime minister's elan, Clark replied, "I have felt for a long time that it was the decisive way to approach Rome."

The revival of Operation SHINGLE had gathered momentum on Christmas Day, when Churchill

extracted from Alexander and other senior commanders pledges of support for a larger, two-division landing. With Eisenhower's departure, leadership in the Mediterranean devolved to the British; the malleable Field Marshal Wilson simply observed that it was "a good idea to go around them rather than be bogged down in the mountains." Eisenhower had tendered a few departing words of caution, noting that the enemy "hasn't been predictable so far, and there's no guarantee he's going to act the way you want him to now." If disquieted by SHINGLE, the departing commander-in-chief chose not to assert himself; the British formally recorded that he and his top lieutenants "signified their agreement with the prime minister's proposal." As Eisenhower left the theater, he concluded that Churchill had "practically taken tactical command in the Mediterranean."

"I have arrived in Italy, O Best of Emperors!" the Byzantine general Belisarius wrote to Justinian in A.D. 544 at the start of his campaign against the Ostrogoths. "In great want of men, of horses, of arms, and of money." For latter-day invaders, the want was mainly of ships. The Anglo-Americans from 1940 to 1945 would build 45,000 landing vessels of all types, but there would never be enough: every major American and British campaign in World War II began with an amphibious operation, and the global demand for shipping far outweighed the supply.

"Shipping [is] at the root of everything," Admiral King observed, and that prosaic truism obtained for Italy as it had for North Africa and would for Normandy. To land and sustain two divisions required 88 LSTs and 160 lesser landing craft; of the 105 LSTs currently in the Mediterranean, two-thirds were scheduled to return to England by January 15 for refitting in time for OVERLORD. First at La Marsa and then in Marrakesh, Churchill "produced set after set of calendar dates" to prove that delaying the departure of several dozen LSTs for a few weeks would not upset the sacrosanct Normandy timetable. To the prime minister's elated surprise, Roosevelt endorsed his efforts in a cable from Washington. "I thank God for this fine decision," Churchill replied. "Full steam ahead."

Operation SHINGLE now carried an inexorable momentum. "Clark and I are confident that we have a great chance of pulling off something big if given the means with which to do it," Alexander wrote Churchill on January 4. In truth, Clark felt ambivalent. Even two divisions landed behind German lines would be exposed "on a very long limb," he had confided to his diary on January 2; yet he felt that "a pistol was being held at [my] head" by the prime minister. He pressed without success for a three-division landing, and for restricting all assault troops to a single nationality to simplify logistics. "We are supposed to go up there, dump two divisions ashore…and wait for the rest of the Army to join up," Clark told his diary. Perhaps to buck himself up, he added, "I am convinced that we are going to do it, and that it is going to be a success."

To clinch the deal, Churchill proposed a conference in Marrakesh on Friday, January 7. Too busy to leave Italy, Clark sent several staff officers who arrived at the exquisite La Mamounia Hotel to find confusion beneath the Art Deco sconces and Moorish arabesques. Regardless of Fifth Army's request for enough shipping to provide fifteen hundred tons of supplies per day indefinitely, the Royal Navy planned to put the assault force ashore like castaways, with a week's provisions and no resupply. Alexander had consented to an American commander for SHINGLE, Major General John Lucas, while insisting on a multinational invasion because "heavy casualties might be expected" and should be shared, "lest undesirable reactions occur at home." Yet Alexander harbored several misapprehensions about Lucas, who had replaced Dawley as the U.S. VI Corps commander after Salerno. "Lucas, who is the best American corps commander, planned and carried out the Salerno landing, and consequently has experience of amphibious operations," Alexander had written Churchill and Brooke. None of that was true.

The conference convened at La Saadia at 6:30 P.M. on Friday evening. The throb of drums carried from the medina, and the perfume of honeysuckle drifted through the villa where Churchill sat in his

living room amid nineteen officers. The prime minister quickly reviewed the history of SHINGLE: how the single-division plan had expired only to be resuscitated with a bigger, better plan that eventually would fling more than 100,000 Yanks and Tommies into the enemy rear; how at least eighty-four LSTs would remain in the Mediterranean until February 5, landing not only the U.S. 3rd and British 1st Divisions, but reinforcements from the U.S. 45th and 1st Armored Divisions; how Kesselring would be forced to thin his defenses near Cassino to confront this threat to his supply lines on Highways 6 and 7, allowing Fifth Army to sunder the German line; how the quick capture of Rome would give the Allies those "title deeds" to Italy.

Questions? There were a few. The AFHQ intelligence chief, Brigadier Kenneth Strong, wondered whether the landing force could "achieve a decisive success" in the face of certain German opposition. Strong also argued that the strength of the Gustav Line at Cassino was "seriously underestimated." Churchill had already heard Strong's qualms at La Saadia, and he was no more ready now than then to acknowledge what he called "the seamy side of the question." When the dour new Royal Navy commander in the Mediterranean, Admiral Sir John H. D. Cunningham, agreed that the landing "involves great risks," the prime minister snapped, "Of course there is risk. But without risk there is no honour, no glory, no adventure." Cunningham fell silent. A Fifth Army colonel proposed postponing the landing by three days, until January 25, to permit a rehearsal he considered "absolutely necessary." Churchill scoffed. All troops were trained and needed no rehearsal, the prime minister said. A "single experienced officer or non-commissioned officer in each platoon" would give the force a sufficiently honed battle edge.

The conclave broke for supper, then reconvened for more discussion at the Mamounia without Churchill. Few cared to provoke the prime minister's caustic contempt with overt opposition to SHINGLE. "You take the most gallant sailor, the most intrepid airman, and the most audacious soldier, put them at a table together—what do you get? The sum total of their fears!" Churchill had recently complained. Hour by hour the officers edged closer to consensus. Minefields and shallow shore gradients had narrowed the landing site options to several beaches bracketing the resort towns of Anzio and Nettuno. Those beaches also had the virtue of *not* being overlooked by high ground, like those at Salerno; the Alban Hills—the southern portal to Rome—lay twenty miles inland. Initial photo reconnaissance showed Anzio to be heavily fortified, but analysts soon realized that the area had once been an Italian military training ground; most defenses now lay abandoned.

Could the Germans quickly reinforce the beachhead with troops from the north? This seemed unlikely, particularly given Allied air superiority. Would the beachhead force and Fifth Army be too far apart—at least sixty miles at the outset—to support each other? This was deemed "an unavoidable risk." Alexander's intelligence staff posited that German Tenth Army forces would "make an attempt to seal off the beachhead, and [would] thereby be maneuvered out of their strong defensive position at Cassino."

Field Marshal Wilson found the conversation so soporific that he went to bed. Beetle Smith, who remained the AFHQ chief of staff pending his departure for London, apologized for the commander-in-chief's early departure. "After all," Smith quipped, "he is getting old." Not until Saturday morning would Wilson learn that by 1:30 A.M. his minions had talked themselves into an invasion at Anzio. Skeptics remained, including Brigadier Strong and several logisticians, but a majority supported Churchill's daring gambit. Alexander voiced enthusiasm, but seemed to hedge his bets in a note to himself on Saturday: "Take no chances. Keep a reserve."

Bleary-eyed, they reassembled in the La Saadia villa at 9:30 A.M. Saturday. Churchill had prevailed through intimidation, endurance, and imaginative panache, wearing them down like water on stone. "It will astonish the world," the prime minister said of SHINGLE, "and it will certainly frighten Kesselring." He remained contemptuous of logistical anxieties, telling Alexander, "I do hope, General,

that when you have landed this great quantity of lorries and cannon you will find room for a few foot soldiers, if only to guard the lorries." As Harold Macmillan had recently noted, "Winston is getting more and more dogmatic…and rather repetitive." SHINGLE was not a bad plan, and it embodied the military virtues of audacity and surprise. Yet enough pieces of it were bad to risk rotting the whole. The belief that Kesselring would ignore this spear in the ribs and withdraw to the north was simply wishful. "It was a bluff, to scare the Germans into pulling back," Alexander later admitted. No flinty-eyed assessment analyzed the likely strategic reaction of an enemy that did not scare easily. Once again, the Allies lacked the true measure of their adversaries.

Moreover, the SHINGLE force was sized not by the number of troops required to succeed, but by the number of divisions and ships available. "You need more men," General Middleton told AFHQ after examining the plan. "You can get ashore, but you can't get off the beachhead." A weak corps was being dispatched for a job that required an army. Respected voices that might have given the planners pause were unheard: Admiral Kent Hewitt had opposed SHINGLE in December, but was subsequently summoned back to Washington; Hewitt would not return to the Mediterranean until late January.

True, Allied air-and seapower caused perturbations in the German high command. "Where can the enemy land? Everywhere," Kesselring's chief of staff, General Siegfried Westphal, lamented in December. "When will he land? The enemy is not tied to any season." Yet if command of the seas gave Allied commanders the mobility to attack where they pleased—and the British had built an empire on that principle—Churchill continued to underestimate the ability of a motorized defender, using roads and rails on interior lines, to concentrate forces overland faster than they could be consolidated over a beach.

Another die had been cast, another lot of fates consigned. Churchill "had imposed his will on the generals and admirals against their better judgment," Samuel Eliot Morison concluded in the official U.S. Navy history of the Mediterranean. Alexander accepted SHINGLE "out of loyalty to his patrons," a British officer wrote. "It was an error of judgment to have done so." He also had failed to clarify precisely what his lieutenants were to do upon reaching shore; ambiguity rarely meliorated a flawed plan.

For now a buzz and bustle took hold, a sense of possibility and purpose. "Operation SHINGLE is on!" Clark told his diary on January 8 upon hearing the news. A chance to break the winter stalemate was at hand. Whatever ambivalence Clark harbored, surely the prime minister was correct: without risk there could be no honor, no glory, no adventure.

As for Churchill, he was the lion redux. Morocco had restored his health, his verve, his roar. Soon he would fly back to England, ending a two-month absence and keener than ever to obliterate Nazi despotism from the face of the earth. On January 8 he cabled Roosevelt:

> A unanimous agreement for action as proposed was reached by the responsible officers of both countries…. Everyone is in good heart and the resources seem sufficient. Every aspect was thrashed out in full detail.

The wariness of his lieutenants worried him not at all. Perhaps influenced by the lush ambiance of Marrakesh, Churchill turned to a horticultural metaphor. "They may say I lead them up the garden path," he said, "but at every stage of the garden they have found delectable fruit and wholesome vegetables."

AT last, at long last, they had reached the end of Purple Heart Valley. On the chilly Sabbath morning of January 16, a footsore regiment from the U.S. 34th Division crept up the limestone flank of Monte Trocchio, four miles northeast of San Pietro Infine. Olive trees bearded the lower slopes and a few splintered cedars ringed the crest. So many American artillery shells had crashed across Trocchio before dawn—shells chalked in vengeance with the names of American soldiers killed or wounded in the recent fighting—that red-hot fragments "fell in gusts like a thunderstorm," wrote Margaret Bourke-White. Now the riflemen plodded upward, scrutinizing every lichen-covered rock for booby traps and straining for the telltale clap of exploding shoe mines. An occasional *pop!* carried across the slope, followed by an anguished shriek, but German troops had decamped. At noon the lead scouts wriggled onto the rocky summit to behold a panoramic view of the perdition behind and the perdition still ahead.

To the rear lay the Mignano Gap and a seven-mile stretch of sanguinary eminences: Camino and La Difensa, Rotondo and Lungo, Sammucro and the slag heap once known as San Pietro. To cross that seven-mile stretch and pierce the Bernhardt Line had taken the Fifth Army six weeks, at a cost of sixteen thousand casualties.

Ahead lay a pastoral river plain, three miles wide. Highway 6 bisected these alluvial flats from Monte Trocchio to Cassino—now the most fortified town in Italy—then swerved up the Liri Valley toward Rome, eighty miles distant, before vanishing in the midday haze. Behind Cassino loomed its beetling namesake, Monte Cassino, crowned with the gleaming white Benedictine abbey that for fifteen centuries had been among Christianity's most venerated shrines. A serpentine river threaded the alluvial flats from right to left past Cassino. The complex watercourse bore several names, but to American engineers—who had built intricate plaster relief models of this terrain, based on seventy thousand aerial photos—it was known as the Rapido. Several miles downstream, the Rapido swam into the Liri to become the Garigliano, which then flowed southwest for fifteen miles to the sea.

The Rapido-Garigliano floodplain and the steep uplands beyond it formed the western segment of the Gustav Line, the most ominous of Kesselring's fortified barriers below Rome. The line stretched for one hundred miles across the Apennines to the Adriatic north of Ortona, but nowhere was it stouter than around Cassino, gateway to the beckoning Liri Valley. Already in spate from January rains, the Rapido and other streams were enhanced by a German "flooding program" under which dikes were demolished and canals diverted to create shallow polders across the flats.

The highland glens above Cassino concealed more than four hundred German guns and rocket launchers. Field wire linked each battery to observers in field gray who nested in the high rocks like birds in a rookery, watching with supernal omniscience the movements of the living creatures below. For more than two months German engineers and press-ganged Italian laborers had blasted gun pits from the rock face, reinforcing the bunkers with telephone poles sawed into eight-foot lengths and roofing the structures with oak beams, more poles, and several feet of dirt. The defenses extended up to three thousand yards in depth. In Cassino town, fields of fire were cleared around the fortified rail station and Hotel Continental. Hitler provided even more defensive matériel than Kesselring demanded: more concrete, mines, and barbed wire; more antitank guns, engineers, and slave laborers; more three-ton armored turrets with charcoal burners to keep the gunners warm.

It was here that Kesselring hoped the Anglo-Americans would "break their teeth," and it was here that they intended to attack.

The impending landing at Anzio on January 22 lent urgency to Fifth Army's assault on the Gustav Line. On this southern front, Clark now counted seven divisions in his army, parceled into three corps across a thirty-five-mile front. Although the winter fighting had already left many units disorganized and bereft of reserves, Clark intended to press the attack immediately to divert German attention from the beachhead. "The momentum of our advance must be maintained at all costs,"

Alexander urged four days after leaving Marrakesh.

In Operations Instructions No. 34, confidently titled "The Battle for Rome," Alexander ordered Clark to force the enemy's retreat beyond Rome and to press on to Florence and Pisa. Intelligence analysts at 15th Army Group predicted that Kesselring would withdraw when confronted by the pincers of Fifth Army from the southeast and the SHINGLE force from the northwest. To speed the enemy's departure, all three corps would attack the Gustav Line. The two-division French Expeditionary Corps, or FEC, new to the theater and keen to redeem French honor, had surged forward on the far right of Clark's front on January 12 and was making a mile per day, mostly uphill, with grenades and bayonets. On the left, the British X Corps would attack across the Garigliano River beginning on January 17, with two divisions near the sea and another one eight miles upstream.

The heart of the assault would fall in the center. On January 20, the U.S. II Corps was to cross the Rapido River, just a mile from Monte Trocchio and three miles downstream from Cassino. With a bridgehead secured by the 36th Division—the same Texans who had fought at Salerno and San Pietro—tanks from Old Ironsides, the 1st Armored Division, would storm across two new-laid bridges, veer up the Liri Valley to Frosinone, and merge with the Anzio force for a grand entry into Rome.

Clark later denied paternity of this plan, fingering Alexander instead. Yet it bore a striking resemblance to a scheme concocted by the Fifth Army commander as early as mid-December. Like SHINGLE, it embodied audacity and tactical plausibility. The Rapido even at flood stage was hardly fifty feet wide, though steep-banked and deep. Here lay the most direct route into the Liri Valley, and thence to the beachhead and Rome.

But also like SHINGLE, the Rapido plan had defects. Possession of the heights at the mouth of the Liri Valley, particularly Monte Cassino, gave the Germans an unobstructed view of the river and the ability to mass fires on all approaches. Truscott, whose 3rd Division had briefly been considered for a Rapido assault before being consigned to SHINGLE, told Clark in December that the attack would fail unless those heights were captured or attacked with enough fury to divert German attention.

"As long as this condition existed, bridges over the river could not long exist and any of our troops that succeeded in crossing would be cut to pieces," Truscott's chief of staff, Colonel Don E. Carleton, later observed. But Clark seemed "convinced that by some act of divine providence the well-entrenched defenders at Cassino would fade away and his tanks would go storming up the Liri Valley."

* * *

The prospect of being cut to pieces displeased Major General Fred Walker, and it preyed on him body and soul. Since shortly after Salerno and through the scalding fight at San Pietro, the 36th Division commander had eyed the Rapido on the big map in his command post, sensing that destiny was tugging him toward this obscure creek below Cassino. By early January he had persuaded himself that the Rapido resembled the Marne, where in July 1918, as a thirty-one-year-old battalion commander, he had earned the Distinguished Service Cross for repelling an attack across the river by ten thousand Germans. He had never forgotten the sodden enemy corpses lining the muddy banks and drifting on the current. "I do not see how we, or any other division, can possibly succeed in crossing the Rapido River," he confided to his diary on January 8. A week later he added, "This is going to be a tough job and I don't like it. There is nothing in our favor."

Square-jawed, with a heavy brow and a large nose that made him seem bigger than his actual five feet, ten inches and 173 pounds, Fred Walker once was described as an "amiable mastiff." Born in

Ohio, he earned a degree in mine engineering from Ohio State and enlisted as a private in 1911. After fighting in the Punitive Expedition against Mexico in 1916, he won fame—and survived mustard burns—in France. Walker was curious, alert, and ironic, a chess player although not a good one, and an excellent dancer. He was the sort of man who jotted down unfamiliar words to memorize —"factitious," "chary," "pretentious," "abjure"—as well as quotes from Emerson and inspirational passages from Carl Van Doren's *Benjamin Franklin.* As an instructor at the Army War College in the 1930s, Walker had taught a young rising star named Mark Clark. Despite their nine-year age difference, the two became "very good friends," in Walker's estimation, and shortly before Pearl Harbor the ascendant Clark had persuaded Lieutenant General Lesley J. McNair, the Army Ground Forces chief, to give Walker command of the 36th Division.

The very good friends had since drifted apart. Perhaps envious of his former protégé, Walker had also begun doubting Clark's tactical acuity while the division was still training in North Africa. After Salerno and San Pietro, his disaffection blossomed. In a black, cloth-covered diary with red corners, he recorded his disdain in the neat cursive he had once used to scribble vocabulary words. "Our wasteful policy or method of taking one mountain mass after another gains no tactical advantage, locally," he wrote shortly before Christmas. "There is always another mountain mass beyond with the Germans dug in on it." The reserved Clark kept his distance, disinclined to heed advice from his old mentor yet admiring Walker's performance at Salerno. Clark suspected that Walker resented not receiving command of VI Corps after Dawley's relief at Salerno. Privately, he disapproved when Walker chose one son as his operations officer and another son as his aide; soldiers grumbled that the division commander was keeping his kin out of harm's way.

At fifty-six, Fred Walker was now the oldest division commander in the field. Age and stress had taken a toll, which he carefully concealed. Since the summer of 1942, he had suffered from severe headaches and tachycardia. He wore heavy wool underwear to combat severe arthritis in the shoulder, hips, and knees. Easily fatigued, he had recurrent spells of "partial blindness and [an] inability to articulate properly." Several times a week he felt heart pain, or faint. A physician had diagnosed arteriosclerosis, and Walker privately complained of "impaired memory, lack of endurance, emotion tensions, [and] restlessness." As the third week of January unspooled, he caught a bad cold.

Walker also concealed his trepidation about the Rapido. In discussions with Clark and other senior officers, he told his diary on January 13, "I have mentioned the difficulties involved. They do not want to talk about them." He proposed attacking upriver, where the Rapido was fordable, but chose not to press his case forcefully. "They do not understand my problems and do not know what I am talking about," Walker wrote. Staff officers fed his anxiety. "General, it's going to be awfully hard for me to keep from sounding so pessimistic about this," his intelligence chief warned. The division engineer foresaw an attack that would "end in failure and result in the loss of a great many lives." On Monday, January 17, Walker wrote five anxious pages in his diary, including, "We have to cross the Rapido. But how?…We are undertaking the impossible, but I shall keep it to myself."

On Tuesday morning, Walker strode from his command post on the eastern face of Monte Rotondo and drove south through Mignano on Highway 6. The January sun sat low in the southern sky, "sickly, whitish and weak," as one lieutenant said, and even wool underwear hardly warmed Walker's bones. The usual odors of damp canvas and scorched coffee filled the II Corps headquarters tent, where staff officers drew on acetate maps with colored grease pencils. Walker was greeted by Major General Keyes, the corps commander, who was trim and impeccable in polished boots.

Walker reviewed his attack plan as crisply as if delivering a War College lecture. At eight P.M. on Thursday, the 141st Infantry Regiment would cross the Rapido in small boats at a single ferry site one mile upstream from the town of Sant'Angelo in Theodice; simultaneously, the 143rd Infantry intended to cross at two points downstream. In this sector, the Rapido meandered north to south, so the attack

would flow east to west before securing Sant'Angelo and swinging north into the Liri Valley. In keeping with Keyes's orders, "large, strong fighting patrols" had slipped across the river for the past two nights to "keep contact with the enemy" and assess German defenses.

Those were formidable, Walker said with a knowing look. German troops from the 15th Panzer Grenadier Division—escapees from Sicily who had also fought at Salerno and Monte Camino—were "very well organized, wired in, and in depth, supported by automatic weapons, small arms fire, [and] prepared defensive fires of artillery, mortars." Of seven boats launched the previous night by the 141st Infantry, five had been lost on a current clocked at four miles per hour. Scouts reported a double apron of barbed wire beyond the far bank and a broad mine belt nearly a mile long. As expected, German demolitionists had blown the bridge at Sant'Angelo three days earlier; the river had been dredged two years before, and spoil lined both banks to form steep gravel dikes. Mud remained "shoe mouth deep" despite recent dry weather. Six-man mine removal teams crawled about on their hands and knees each night, but German sappers sneaked over the river to reseed cleared approaches. Yesterday, a division surgeon reported "an epidemic…of traumatic amputations of one or both legs." As he finished sketching his plan, Walker again cocked an eyebrow.

Keyes listened intently. He was careful not to betray his own doubts, about the attack and about Walker. A frontal assault across the river was "unsound," Keyes had warned Clark; given German command of the high ground, the crossings would be made "in a fishbowl." Even back in Sicily, Keyes had drafted alternative plans for precisely this tactical conundrum. His favorite, dubbed Big Cassino, envisioned an assault across the Garigliano by both II Corps and the British X Corps, which then would scale the massif southwest of Cassino to outflank the fortified mouth of the Liri Valley. The scheme intrigued Clark. But Alexander and McCreery, the X Corps commander, considered it "a tactical monstrosity"; British troops had neither training nor equipment for mountain warfare. Clark sided with the British—he was increasingly beguiled by the image of American tanks roaring toward Rome—and Big Cassino slid into a drawer.

Keyes persisted. In late December, he proposed crossing the Rapido "a day or two" *after* the Anzio landings. "If the enemy withdraws forces now on our front to oppose VI Corps [at Anzio], there is a chance that this corps can make a real advance," he wrote. Clark demurred, insisting that the Rapido attack precede SHINGLE. On January 13, Keyes warned that the British 46th Division, which was to protect Walker's left flank, planned to cross the Garigliano with a modest, two-battalion assault. "The effort of the 46th Division should be made by the entire division," Keyes wrote, otherwise it risked a "gradualism" that could leave the Americans exposed. Clark again declined to intervene.

Geoff Keyes knew his business. He possessed, in the estimation of George Patton, "the best tactical mind of any officer I know." Son of a cavalry officer, Keyes grew up on horseback along the Mexican border. Two years ahead of Eisenhower at West Point, Keyes in one football game scored two touchdowns, kicked both conversions, and booted a forty-three-yard field goal to account for seventeen points; the academy's legendary Master of the Sword, Marty Maher, proclaimed him "the only man who could stop Jim Thorpe" on the gridiron. "If there is a man in the Corps who is more universally liked than he," the academy yearbook stated, "we have yet to find him."

Also a cavalryman, Keyes had attended the École Supérieure de Guerre in Paris and served as Patton's deputy during the invasions of Morocco and Sicily. "The impetuous, vitriolic, histronic Patton is considerably leavened by the calm, deliberate, circumspect Keyes," a War Department observer had reported to Washington from Palermo. Slender, pleasant, and tactful, Keyes was a devout Roman Catholic who attended mass each morning and eschewed profanity—"not even hell or damn," one comrade said. Eisenhower unfairly described him as "a man who has everything but a sense of humor"; in fact, he possessed a puckish streak. Behind Patton's endorsement, Keyes in September

took command of II Corps after Omar Bradley's departure for England. "Don't be afraid to show pleasant reactions in your contact with your subordinates," Eisenhower told him. "Every commander is made, in the long run, by his subordinates. We are all intensely human, and war is a drama, not a game of chess."

Like so many American generals, Keyes distrusted the British, and his spare, bemused diary entries revealed an intense Anglophobia as the Rapido attack drew near. "God forbid we ever have to serve with or near the British again," he wrote on January 16. A day later he added, "Clark insists we are not being sold down the river but I am not convinced. Every move is a repetition of the slick maneuver of the British in planning HUSKY and the Sicilian campaign." On the day of Walker's visit, he wrote, "The British are going to contribute nothing as usual."

As the conference in the II Corps command post drew to a close, much remained unsaid, and in that silence sprouted mistrust and discord. Walker privately considered Keyes "too cavalry," with a "Boy Scout attitude" toward the grim infantry combat ahead. The notion of Sherman tanks storming up the Liri Valley was "visionary," Walker believed; the term was not a compliment. Sensing Walker's hostility, Keyes felt a reciprocal antipathy. He wondered whether the division commander was overmatched.

More important, both men remained mute about their shared disquiet. Can-do zeal required obedience and a bluff optimism. Walker finished his brief, then scooped up his maps and papers. He would prefer to attack elsewhere, he said. But in a final burst of bravado, and perhaps sensing that his rendezvous with the Rapido was ineluctable, he advised Keyes that he was "confident of success." The 36th Division, he added, would "be in Sant'Angelo on the morning of the 21st."

Only in his diary did Walker speak from the heart: "We have done everything that we can, but I do not now see how we can succeed."

Sant'Angelo was a drab farm village on a forty-foot bluff above the turquoise Rapido. The local *cantine* served Peroni beer and a *vino* renowned for potency. Pastel houses with iron balconies and red tile roofs crowded the narrow main street. Flying buttresses shored up the church of San Giovanni Battista, with its handsome campanile. Black-bordered death notices were pasted on a billboard beneath the narthex.

The notices had multiplied after the first bombs hit Sant'Angelo on September 10, killing a three-year-old girl and her parents. The Germans soon arrived from nearby Cassino, carrying large hooks with which to drag the haystacks in search both of contraband and of young men for their labor battalions. Electricity and running water became sporadic and then nonexistent. Mail delivery ended. Phones went dead. Farmers toiled at night, hitching oxen to their plows and listening for what the locals called the "she-wolf," the six-barreled Nebelwerfer mortar, which fired rounds that wailed in flight. As the Allied army drew closer, German sappers mined the local mill and demolished houses to fortify the town center, sparing the rectory, which had a deep cellar and became a command post.

Three hundred impressed Italians dug trenches and cleared brush on the Rapido flats for better fields of fire. German commanders now considered Sant'Angelo the "strongest point of the defensive line." The river's west bank was defended by two battalions from the 15th Panzer Grenadier Division, described by Allied intelligence as "the strongest single German division in the Italian theater," with a full roster and ample heavy weapons. Aggressive American patrolling kept them alert and edgy. "Extensive enemy movements observed opposite left wing of 15th Panzer Grenadier Division," the Tenth Army war diary recorded on January 17. "The enemy has crept up to the riverbank."

The Germans grew even edgier after the British attack began on the lower Garigliano at nine P.M.

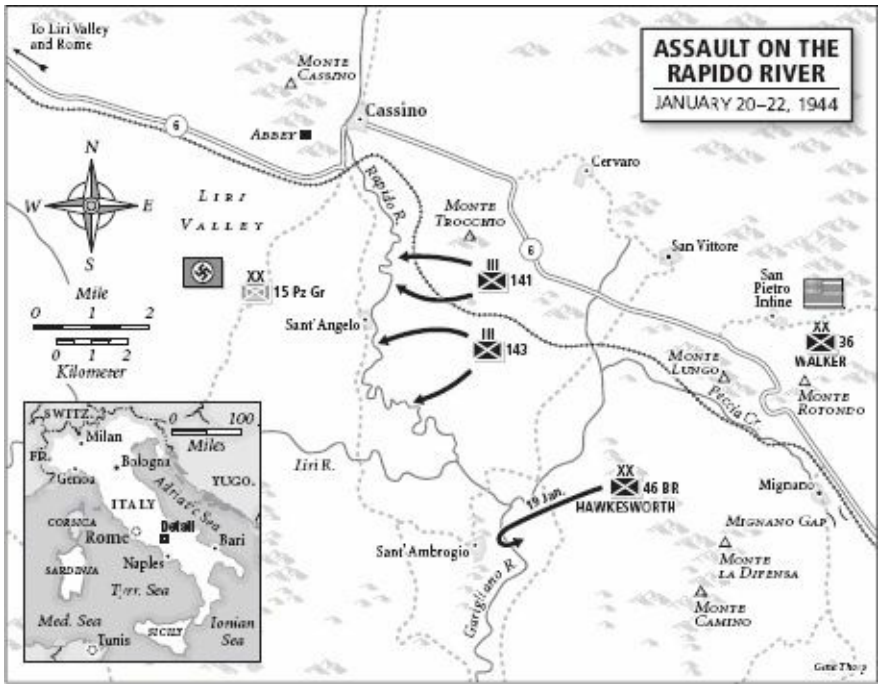
that night. The 5th and 56th Divisions surged across the river, a dozen miles downstream from Sant'Angelo. "The waiting is the worst part," the Royal Artillery signaler Spike Milligan had written as the assault began. "I oil my tommy gun. I don't know why, it's already oiled." To the surprise of Jerry and Tommy alike, by dawn on January 18 ten battalions occupied the far bank; German commanders had doubted the Allies would attack on a moonless night. "Moving off in trucks with our hearts in our mouths," a Scots Guards lieutenant told his diary. "Passing very ominous blood wagons coming back the other way…. I wonder if we look heroic filing away in the darkness."

They gained the far bank but not much more: the X Corps bridgehead barely extended three miles, and a ferocious German counterattack almost shoved the lead companies back into the river. The crossing sites would remain under German artillery fire for three months, and British soldiers complained that the alluvial plain resembled a "mine marsh." Still, they had made a promising start. "I am convinced that we are now facing the greatest crisis yet encountered," Kesselring advised Vietinghoff, his Tenth Army commander, shortly before ten A.M. on January 18. The Americans, he added, would now likely attack below Cassino in an attempt to storm the Liri Valley.

Not yet. On Wednesday night, January 19, British 46th Division soldiers, drawn from Yorkshire and the North Midlands, crept through the Garigliano mists four miles downstream from Sant'Angelo. This was "a bleak, disturbing place," a landscape of grays and blacks beneath scudding clouds. Assault troops cinched their Mae Wests, slung their rifles, and shoved the first boats into the dark water.

"Then nothing went right," the Royal Hampshires reported. Far upstream, German engineers had opened a set of sluice gates, raising the water level several feet and turning the Garigliano into a millrace. Boats bucked and spun on the current, then vanished in the fog as exhausted oarsmen slapped their way back to shore, a mile or more downstream. Again they tried, and then again. By early morning, despite only sporadic German opposition, a single company hugged the far bank. Gunfire riddled their vessels, and soon the isolated vanguard was besieged. A few survivors splashed back to safety beneath a smoke screen. At dawn on Thursday, enemy artillery sliced up the crossing site, and McCreery ordered the 46th Division to abandon further attempts.

A few hours later, the burly British division commander, Major General John Hawkesworth, known as Ginger to his friends, appeared at Fred Walker's command post in the lee of Monte Rotondo. Three old wounds from the Great War hobbled Hawkesworth, and he leaned on an ashplant stick. The attack had failed, he told Walker. The river had run higher than expected: a contumacious beast, really. No further attempt was possible. Walker's left flank would be exposed during the Rapido attack this evening. Hawkesworth was sorry, but there it was. Walker nodded and returned to his preparations. "The British are the world's greatest diplomats," he told his diary, "but you can't count on them for anything more than words."



Keyes and Clark were both alarmed. “Always the same story,” Keyes wrote in his diary. “Too few, too little practical preparations. This is serious for us tonight.” Clark attributed the aborted British crossing “to lack of strong aggressive leadership at the division level.” Fifth Army engineers reported that Hawkesworth had failed to properly reconnoiter the river or the crossing site. In a memorandum dictated on Thursday, Clark added, “The failure of the attack of the 46th Division to reach its objective…was quite a blow. I was fearful that General Hawkesworth had a mental reservation.” The army commander dispatched Gruenther to see McCreery, who warned that the Rapido attack “has little chance of success” and should be canceled. Unmentioned was McCreery’s growing concern at Clark’s apparent willingness to accept high casualties for dubious gains; the British commander now thought of Clark as “the Man of Destiny I somehow imagined he always wanted to be.”

That surely was unfair, although not untrue. With Eisenhower gone from the theater, Clark now stood in the footlights at center stage as the most prominent American commander in the Mediterranean. Yet the Man of Destiny was hardly a free agent. Clark had been ordered by Alexander to attack quickly, and to eject the enemy from Rome; for all practical purposes, he also had been ordered by Churchill to plop two vulnerable divisions behind German lines the day after tomorrow. Were he to curtail the Rapido offensive, nearly fifty thousand men now embarking for SHINGLE would face the full fury of a German counterstrike in isolation.

Destiny held Clark in thrall, but not Clark alone. A great rolling tide of tragedy and fate and human folly swept them all along, like those fog-swaddled boats beating against the Garigliano current.

“It is essential that I make the attack, fully expecting heavy losses, in order to hold all the [German] troops on my front and draw more to it, thereby clearing the way for SHINGLE,” Clark wrote on Thursday. “The attack is on.”

Since the Salerno landings, nineteen weeks earlier, war had gutted the 36th Division. Rifle company losses in the 141st Infantry exceeded 60 percent. In one typical 143rd Infantry battalion, three-quarters of the officers had joined the unit in Italy. Texas drawls no longer dominated the

division. “We were no longer a team,” a captain complained. “Gone was the feeling that you knew you could rely on your people.” Together the two assault regiments mustered about four thousand men; many units were understrength, often by a third, and undertrained. New bazooka teams arrived at the front having never fired a bazooka. Training for a river assault was limited to paddling on the placid Volturno. A platoon leader in the 141st considered his soldiers “unprepared physically, mentally, and morally.”

Several hundred replacements showed up on the eve of the Rapido attack to find that all troops had removed their unit insiginia to confound the enemy; sergeants spent hours trying to determine who belonged to whom. Many replacements never found their proper companies, and some would die without meeting their squad leaders or knowing a single comrade in their new platoons. “Can’t expect these replacements to be good soldiers,” an officer told the reporter Will Lang. “They ain’t mad.”

Walker continued to fret in private. “The mission should never have been assigned to any troops and, especially, when both flanks will be exposed when we get across,” he scribbled on January 20. Clark phoned on Thursday afternoon to wish him luck. “He is worried over the fact that he made an unwise tactical decision,” Walker concluded, then added:

> If we get some breaks we may succeed. But they will have to be in the nature of miracles…. I will have little influence on the battle because everything is committed; I have no reserves.

And then it began. The last smudges of violet light faded in the west. Hundreds of soldiers rose from their burrows on Monte Trocchio and from behind the marsh hummocks on the Rapido flats. Fixing bayonets with an ominous metallic click, they looped extra bandoliers over their twill field jackets. Fog coiled from the riverbed and crept across the fields, swallowing the stars and a rising crescent moon. A company commander handed a cigar to each of his sergeants, as a talisman.

At 7:30 P.M., sixteen artillery battalions opened fire in gusts of white flame. Soldiers flinched as more than a thousand shells per minute shrieked overhead in a cannonade that ignited the mist and gouged the far bank with rounds calibrated to explode every six and a half yards. Crewmen flipped back the camouflage nets on fifty Sherman tanks, hidden four hundred yards from the river, and yellow tongues of flame soon licked from the muzzles to join the bombardment. Sixty fighter-bombers swooped down the river, and their tumbling silver pellets blossomed in fire and black smoke across Sant’Angelo, adding ruin to ruination. Four hundred white-phosphorus mortar shells traced the river line with topographic precision; the night was windless, and instead of billowing to form a low screen, the smoke spiraled vertically for 150 feet, framing the shore in fluted alabaster columns.

The attack was to fall across a three-mile front, centered on Sant’Angelo. On the right, the 141st Infantry tramped down a farm road toward an oxbow in the river, led by the 1st Battalion in a column of four companies. Wet fog grew as thick as cotton batting. Barely able to see their feet, soldiers bunched up to keep sight of the bobbing helmet ahead. Stragglers and shirkers melted away. When the column stalled, men dozed off and awoke to find that those in front had vanished. Units became jumbled, and sotto voce queries carried in the night, calling for 3rd Platoon or B Company.

Along the rail tracks south of Trocchio, boats had been readied in a hidden dump: rubber dinghies that carried two dozen men, of whom half would paddle, and M-2 plywood scows, weighing nearly a quarter ton each and capable of ferrying a dozen men with a two-man crew. German artillery that afternoon had already holed twenty rubber boats, and ugly gashes marred several M-2s. Wooden catwalks also lay scattered about the dump: laid across rubber rafts lashed together as pontoons, they

would make footbridges. Two sturdy Bailey bridges, dubbed Harvard and Yale, would subsequently be erected for the two hundred tanks waiting behind Trocchio to storm the Liri Valley.

Hoisting the heavy boats, their rifles banging against the gunwales, the men staggered toward the river on a narrow, muddy road. Enemy artillery now answered the American barrage, and the shriek of westbound volleys was exceeded by the rush of eastbound German shells and that she-wolf howling of Nebelwerfer rounds, also known as screaming meemies, moaning minnies, and howling heinies. "It could damn near make your blood turn solid," one soldier confessed. Brown smoke foamed from mortar rounds tromping across the flats, and the maniacal cackle of machine guns carried from Sant'Angelo, including the dread MG-42, known in the Wehrmacht as "Hitler's bandsaw." Riflemen tossed away their cumbersome bandoliers, which soon lined the road like a trail of brass necklaces. A thousand smoke pots, ignited as a deception far south of Trocchio, drew more than five hundred German shells in two hours. U.S. artillery battalions received a frantic order to "check all shells for mustard gas as such shells had been issued by mistake" from an ammunition depot; no mustard was found or fired.

Little else went right. An engineer guiding Company B to the oxbow missed the path to the river by several hundred yards; as the troops and boats turned around for a reverse march, their clatter attracted a German volley that cut down thirty men, including the captain who had distributed his cigars. Paddles, rifles, and human limbs rained across the road. Survivors scattered for cover, but the cleared corridors through the minefields were no longer visible: minesweeping teams initially had marked the paths with white tape, but switched to a brown cord that was less conspicuous to German observers. Confused GIs pelted through the fog, triggering shoe mines and drawing more mortar fire as sergeants tried to hush the wounded. "It's pretty hard when you're dying to keep quiet," a platoon leader observed. Another befuddled guide also led Company A into a minefield. "We walked as men do in a cow pasture," said one man, "placing each foot carefully on a pre-selected spot."

Corpses and abandoned M-2s blocked the swept lanes to the river. Screaming Nebelwerfer rounds reminded an officer of "a streetcar coming down sideways with its brakes on." Exhausted men dragged the cumbersome rubber boats the last few hundred yards, tripping more mines. German flares silvered the water, and tracers sliced scarlet vectors through the fog, or bounced like flaming marbles off the Rapido. Those who managed to shoulder their vessels down the steep bank found that many had been holed and sank immediately; others capsized, dumping men and equipment into the icy river, or were swept away on the current.

Soldiers fell without ever firing a shot. "It was like fighting an octopus in a crooked sack," recalled Lieutenant William E. Everett, a platoon leader in Company C. Everett rebuked several men for shirking in a ditch, then realized they were dead. "I could hear paddles slapping and hitting together, and then the men yelling when their boat turned over," another lieutenant wrote. "It curdled your blood to hear those men drown." Sodden twill trousers and field jackets dragged the men under. "I had to let go of the young man and he drowned," a private later said of one comrade. "Eight of us drowned and four swam to the German side."

By nine P.M., an hour into the attack, fewer than one hundred men had reached the west bank. Many burrowed into the marsh, using their helmets to scrape a few inches of defilade and piling the spoil in parapets around their shallow trenches. Thirty-one thousand artillery rounds had not discouraged the fuming German guns at Sant'Angelo. Glowing shell fragments blew in orange swarms across the bottoms. "Close explosions leave one vibrating like a tuning fork," reported one soldier. At least four MG-42s stitched the oxbow crossing site with machine-gun fire. Of four footbridges to be laid across the Rapido, two were destroyed by artillery fire, and mines claimed a third. For hours engineers muscled the last span into the water, and by four A.M. on Friday the river had at last been bridged.

Dozing men on the east bank were awakened to scramble across the rickety catwalk, squad by squad, platoon by platoon. “The Germans opened fire with every automatic weapon they had,” an officer said. “The slapping noise of the planks against the water would draw fire.” Another officer confessed to feeling “like a Judas goat, leading the sheep to slaughter.” By 6:30, as dawn leaked into the bottoms, about half of the 1st Battalion had reached the west bank. Shell fire damaged the bridge, dropping segments of the catwalk below the river surface. All radios had been ruined in the crossing; most artillery observers had been wounded or killed; and all phone lines back to the east bank were soon severed. So many litter carriers had fallen that few wounded could be evacuated across the river. “I don’t know how many dead and wounded there were,” a medic in Company A later recalled, “but there were plenty.”

The 141st Infantry commander, Lieutenant Colonel Aaron A. Wyatt, Jr., had intended to send his 3rd Battalion on the heels of the 1st, but with the bridgehead barely two hundred yards deep he canceled the order. After a night of confusion, the new day simply brought more derangement, including contradictory orders that first instructed men on the west bank to hold fast, then advised them to pull back. A few scuttled across the submerged bridge or swam to safety, grabbing at tree roots to haul themselves onto the east bank. Most dug in to await reinforcements, or raised their arms in surrender. Engineers stretched a net across the Rapido, seining for bodies adrift on the current.

Downstream, on the division left, the attack proved no less gallant and no more successful. “When I saw my regimental commander standing with tears in his eyes as we moved up to start the crossing, I knew something was wrong,” said the commander of Company L in the 143rd Infantry.

Two crossing sites had been selected for the 143rd, and at eight P.M. on Thursday night the point platoon at the upper site paddled across without drawing fire. Then German gunners leaped to life, riddling the boats and wrecking a footbridge in progress. Engineers scorched back to the boat dump, where the regimental commander, Colonel William H. Martin, found them cowering in foxholes. Rallied with threats and supplications, the men lugged more M-2s to the river, and by six A.M. Friday most of the 1st Battalion—the late Captain Henry Waskow’s former unit—had reached the west bank.

Their stay was brief. Machine guns and panzers flailed the bridgehead with grazing fire, lashing the buttocks, backs, and legs of soldiers unable to hug the ground any tighter. Facing annihilation, Major David M. Frazior shortly after seven A.M. asked permission for his battalion to return to the east bank. Walker refused, but by the time his stand-fast order arrived, Frazior had abandoned the bridgehead with the remnants of his command.

Five hundred yards downstream, at the 3rd Battalion crossing site, no retreat was necessary since not a single soldier had reached the far shore. Plagued with bumbling engineers and skittish riflemen, companies had wandered in and out of minefields for hours. “The flashes seemed to turn the fog rising from the river into a reddish glow,” one officer wrote. “The men were unable to identify even the path at their feet.” At midnight the battalion commander reported that he had five boats remaining and still was unsure where to find the river; at five A.M. he was relieved of command, and his successor soon canceled the attack.

This bad news was scribbled on a message slip for General Keyes and entrusted to a carrier pigeon by a II Corps liaison officer near the Rapido. At 7:25 A.M., with a great flutter of wings, the bird was released and flew straight to a nearby tree, perhaps dispirited by the fog and gunplay. “I had to throw dirt at it to get it out,” the officer reported. “When it flew to another tree, I just left it there.”

Neither Keyes nor Walker needed a pigeon to tell him that the evening had not gone well. After sitting by the field phones in his command post all night, Walker advised his diary on January 21,

“The attack last night was a failure.” But now what? Crossing the river in daylight would be foolish, he believed. Time was needed to draft new orders, to position new boats, and to replace leaders who had been wounded or killed. At 8:30 A.M., Walker told the 141st and 143rd to resume the attack in just over twelve hours, at nine P.M.

Keyes had other ideas. At ten A.M. he strode into Walker’s Monte Rotondo command post. A few minutes earlier, Clark had urged Keyes by phone to “bend every effort to get tanks and tank destroyers across promptly.” Keyes concurred. Weren’t there at least some troops from the 141st Infantry still on the west bank? he asked Walker. No effort should be spared to reinforce them, preferably before noon: the rising sun would blind German defenders. A II Corps staff officer with a clipboard sketched a crude map of the Rapido, with arrows pointing from east to west. Walker argued briefly, then agreed to set H-hour for two P.M.

“Anybody can draw lines on a map,” he wrote after the corps commander drove away. “I felt like saying that battles are not won by wishing while ignoring the facts, but this was no place to court insubordination.” Instead, Walker channeled his frustration into his diary: “The stupidity of some higher commanders seems to be profound.”

Neither Keyes nor Walker was privy to the secret, but Fifth Army’s attack had already fulfilled part of Clark’s ambition. An Ultra intercept two nights earlier disclosed that Field Marshal Kesselring had ordered the 29th Panzer Grenadier Division near Rome—half of his reserve force—to reinforce Tenth Army on the Garigliano; another decrypt soon revealed that the other half, the 90th Panzer Grenadier Division, had also been ordered south, leaving the Anzio beaches virtually undefended. However ineffectual, the British X Corps attack had spooked the Germans. Kesselring believed that Tenth Army was hanging “by a slender thread.”

This intelligence, available to Clark and Alexander but not to their subordinates, had little impact on the Rapido battle. Pressing the attack would further distract the enemy from SHINGLE, Clark believed. And if Walker could punch through at Sant’Angelo, unleashing his armored horde up the Liri Valley, so much the better.

Off they went, trudging like men sent to the scaffold. A soldier stumping down a sunken road toward the Rapido observed, “There was a dead man every ten yards, just like they were in formation.” Close to the river, the formation thickened. Another soldier, carrying a rubber boat, later wrote, “It didn’t seem what we were walking on was dirt and rocks. We soon found out it was dead GIs.”

On the division left, the 143rd Infantry crossed more adroitly on Friday afternoon than it had on Thursday evening. Confusion delayed the attack for two hours, but at four P.M., beneath a vast, choking smoke bank, the 3rd Battalion began to paddle west. By 6:30 all rifle companies had found the far shore, and Colonel Martin ordered his 2nd Battalion to follow in train late that night. A quarter mile upstream, the 1st Battalion also crossed at dusk, although the laconic battalion commander, Major Frazior, radioed, “I had a couple of fingers shot off.” Three battalions crowded a bridgehead only five hundred yards deep and six hundred yards wide. “When twilight turned to darkness,” one soldier later wrote, “I was thinking this is my last old day on earth.”

On the division right, delay begat delay in the 141st Infantry. Not least, engineers neglected to bring an air compressor to inflate fifty rubber boats, and Colonel Wyatt, the regimental commander, postponed the attack until nine P.M. without telling Walker. By two A.M. on Saturday, a pair of footbridges had been laid, and six rifle companies from two battalions soon crossed. They found no survivors from the previous night’s combat. Engineers wondered whether the Germans had left the catwalks intact “to draw more of our troops over.” Some soldiers balked at crossing the river, or

deliberately tumbled into the water. Others displayed uncommon valor. Company E of the 2nd Battalion—the unit roster boasted mostly Spanish surnames, Trevino and Gonzalez, Rivera and Hernandez—advanced with bayonets fixed through sleeting fire from three sides. “Fire wholeheartedly, men, fire wholeheartedly!” cried their commander, Captain John L. Chapin, before a bullet killed him. Corraled by minefields and barbed wire, the 141st held twenty-five acres of bottomland that grew bloodier by the hour. “Well, I guess this is it,” a major told a fellow officer. “May I shake hands?” Moments later a shard from a panzer shell tore open his chest. He dragged himself to safety across a submerged bridge, and medics saved him. “It was the only time,” one witness said, “I ever saw a man’s heart flopping around in his chest.”

Artillery and Nebelwerfer drumfire methodically searched both bridgeheads, while machine guns opened on every sound, human and inhuman. GIs inched forward, feeling for trip wires and listening to German gun crews reload. “Get out of your holes, you yellow bellies!” an angry voice cried above the din, but to stand or even to kneel was to die. A sergeant in the 143rd Infantry described “one kid being hit by a machine gun—the bullets hitting him pushed his body along like a tin can.” Another sergeant wounded in the same battalion later wrote, “I could hear my bones cracking every time I moved. My right leg was so mangled I couldn’t get my boot off, on account of it was pointed to the rear.” German surgeons would remove the boot for him, along with both legs.

A private sobbed as wounded comrades were dragged on shelter halves up the mud-slick east bank. Ambulances hauled them to a dressing station in a dank ravine behind Trocchio. Crowded tents “smelled like a slaughterhouse,” wrote the reporter Frank Gervasi. Outside a small cave in the hillside, a crudely printed sign read: PIECES. Inside, stacked burlap bags held the limbs of dismembered boys. On average, soldiers wounded on the Rapido received “definitive treatment” nine hours and forty-one minutes after they were hit, a medical study later found: nearly six hours to reach an aid station, followed by another three hours to a clearing station, and another hour to an evacuation hospital. The dead were easier: they were buried fully clothed without further examination.

Certainly the doctors were busy enough with the living. Only five physicians manned the clearing station of the 111th Medical Battalion. They treated more than three hundred battle casualties on Friday, often struggling to mend the unmendable, and they would handle nearly as many on Saturday. A wounded sergeant undergoing surgery with only local anesthesia later reported, “The doctor stopped in the middle of the operation to smoke a cigarette and he gave me one too.” Another sergeant from the same company told a medic, “Patch up these holes and give me a gun. I’m going to kill every son of a bitch in Germany.”

Three hundred German artillery rounds danced across Monte Rotondo before dawn on Saturday, causing casualties and disorder in the 36th Division command post. Dire reports from the river made the morning worse: heavy losses, no troops yet on the bluff at Sant’Angelo, ammo shortages, bridges wrecked. “Nearly six battalions across but no bridges,” Keyes wrote in his diary. “Something wrong.” The corps commander had ordered two Bailey bridges built despite the Americans’ shallow purchase on the west bank, but the effort—a six-hour task even under perfect conditions—had been undone by confusion among engineering units, rutted roads that kept trucks from reaching the Rapido, and incessant shooting. “Talking or coughing drew fire,” an engineer with the 143rd Infantry reported. On Saturday morning a visiting general found the bridge builders “dug in and no work being done.”

Smoke hardly helped. To screen the crossings, hundreds of smoke pots and mortar rounds had been laid along the Rapido. Some zealous mortarmen pumped out twenty-one shells per minute, a rate of fire so intense that many tubes burned out. By Saturday morning, visibility was only fifty yards,

blinding the observation posts on Trocchio and concealing German snipers who lurked near the river. American artillerymen were forced to orient their fire by sound, a method rarely effective on a cacophonous battlefield. Chemical officers in both the 36th Division and II Corps complained about German smoke without realizing that the dirty banks were their own.

As the morning wore on, "a pathetic inertia seemed to take hold of American commanders," wrote Martin Blumenson, author of the official Army history of the Rapido operation. Exhaustion, guilt, regret, despondency—all gnawed at them. A II Corps major who had fought in Algeria and Tunisia reported, "The situation as I saw it needed no further explanation to me because I had seen the same indications at St. Cloud and at Kasserine Pass." Keyes remained pugnacious, if not prudent, and at ten A.M. on Saturday he ordered Walker to prepare his reserve regiment, the 142nd Infantry, to reinforce those six battalions on the west bank. Surely the Germans were "groggy" and could be overpowered by fresh troops, he told Walker.

But Clark in a phone call cautioned against throwing good money after bad. To Keyes's vexation, the 142nd also reported that it needed almost fifteen hours to get ready and could not attack until early Sunday. When further dispatches from the river suggested that the 141st Infantry had been "practically wiped out," Keyes rescinded his order. "You are not going to do it anyway," he told Walker. "You might as well call it off. It can't succeed as long as you feel that way about it." In his diary Keyes wrote, "Our failure due to 1) lack of means 2) poor division."

The finger-pointing began. Clark "seemed inclined to find fault with our decision to force the Rapido," Keyes wrote. The record, the corps commander added, would show that for months he had "pointed out [the] fallacy in going up the valley unless heights on either side were attacked! And each time I was overruled by [Fifth] Army." For his part, Walker was furious at Keyes's suggestion that he was disloyal and disobedient. "I have done everything possible to comply with his orders," he wrote. During a brief visit to the 760th Tank Battalion, parked a quarter mile from the river, Walker told a tank crewman: "I knew from the beginning that this would never work. Too many damned Germans over there."

Clark seemed to recognize that recriminations would be unseemly if not toxic. Joining Keyes and Walker at Monte Rotondo for lunch, he was affable and solicitous. "Tell me what happened up here," he said. Keyes replied that the attack had appeared worthwhile—risky but warranted. Clark interrupted. "It was as much my fault as yours," he said. But were the regimental commanders up to the task? How had the division staff performed?

As soon as Clark and Keyes drove off, Walker asked his assistant commander, Brigadier General William H. Wilbur, to write an affidavit documenting the conversation, including Clark's admission of culpability. "I fully expected Clark and Keyes to can me to cover their own stupidity…but they were not in a bad mood," Walker wrote. He taped Wilbur's memorandum into his diary, just in case.

While the generals dined and discoursed, the remnants of two regiments struggled to extract themselves from the Rapido kill sack. By midday on Sunday, every commander in the 141st Infantry except for a single captain was dead or wounded, along with all battalion staff officers. The 143rd Infantry was hardly in better shape. Orders to fall back filtered across the river. Major Milton J. Landry, commander of the 2nd Battalion, who was spending his thirtieth birthday at the Rapido oxbow, had survived three wounds, including a hip dislocation produced by a shell fragment the size of a dinner plate and a steel shard in the chest that was partly deflected by the Parker pen in his blouse pocket. Hobbling about with a pair of paddles for crutches, Landry went down again when machine-gun fire hit him in the legs, nicking an artery and severing a sciatic nerve. "Major," a medic told him, "I don't believe there are enough bandages this side of the Rapido to cover all the holes in you." Evacuated to the east bank, Landry heard another medic say, "You've got a boot on the end of something out here. I guess it's your leg."

Landry survived. So did a soldier who swam the river with one foot blown off. As dusk fell, a few dozen more struggled back, clinging to flotsam as bullets frothed the water. By early evening on Sunday, the division log estimated losses at 100 officers and 1,900 enlisted men. Gunfire dwindled to a mutter. From the darkness came an occasional plea for water or faint cries for a medic, but both sides had grown inured to supplication. Then, silence. "It was reported," the log noted at 8:30 P.M., "that American firing had ceased west of the river."

A rifleman from the 143rd Infantry who regained the east bank later reflected, "I had turned into an old man overnight. I know I was never the same person again."

The preliminary tally in the division log proved close to the mark. Official medical records listed 2,019 casualties, of whom 934 were wounded. Some counts were a bit lower, others higher; preposterously, Clark would accuse Walker of inflating his losses in a bid for sympathy. The Germans found 430 American bodies on the west bank, and took 770 prisoners; 15th Panzer Grenadier Division losses included 64 dead and 179 wounded. To the victors went a cocky insolence. A captured II Corps carrier pigeon returned on the fly with a banded message: *"Freuen wir uns auf Euren nächsten Besuch."* We look forward to your next visit.

By any reckoning, two U.S. infantry regiments had been gutted in one of the worst drubbings of the war; the losses were comparable to those suffered six months later at Omaha Beach, except that that storied assault succeeded. "I had 184 men," a company commander in the 143rd Infantry said. "Forty-eight hours later I had 17. If that's not mass murder, I don't know what is." Two scarecrow battalions of the 141st when merged under the command of a captain could barely muster two hundred riflemen. Engineers reported scavenging eight M-2 boats, 323 paddles, and 4,100 feet of half-inch manila rope "in a bad tangled mess." After pinning a Silver Star on a double amputee, Walker told his diary, "When I think of the foolish orders of the higher command which caused those broken bodies and deaths unnecessarily, it makes me feel like crying *halt*."

Clark soon summoned Walker for a conference at Mignano. The two men shook hands and then strolled down the road in the morning sun, the tall, bony army commander towering above his stocky former instructor. Clark worried about the division's morale. What could be done? Walker acknowledged a dejection after the "recent reverses and heavy losses of leaders." Yes, Clark agreed, but those reverses had reflected a dearth of capable officers in key positions. He intended to make wholesale changes by removing Brigadier General Wilbur, both of the regimental commanders who had fought at the Rapido, the division chief of staff, and Walker's two sons.

Stunned, Walker asked whether he also was to be sacked. "No, you are doing all right," Clark replied. "But you have surrounded yourself with officers whose abilities do not measure up." Walker doubted he would be spared. "This was a blow," he told his diary. "I am marked for relief from command of the division as soon as Clark can find an easy way to do it." When a new commander arrived to replace Colonel Martin in the 143rd Infantry, Walker told him, "Your predecessor has committed no sins of commission or omission as far as I'm concerned."

That was wrong. Every senior officer at the Rapido had committed sins; none emerged unstained. The Army's official history, rarely given to indictment, detected "a series of mishaps, a host of failures, a train of misfortune," including "a mounting confusion that led to near hysteria and panic." Clark soon found himself fighting a rearguard assault on his generalship. "If I am to be accused of something, thank God I am accused of attacking instead of retreating," he declared.

But bluff bellicosity would not serve, as even Clark sensed. In the last diary reference he would ever make to the Rapido, he wrote on January 23: "Some blood had to be spilled on either the land or

the SHINGLE front, and I greatly preferred that it be on the Rapido, where we were secure, rather than at Anzio with the sea at our back." Perhaps so. Some strategists linked the Rapido calamity with Normandy, and with the pinching need for landing craft that had dictated quick action in Italy. "The blame must rest with those who allowed the tyranny of OVERLORD to dominate the tactical as well as the strategic battlefield," wrote W.G.F. Jackson. Certainly Clark and Keyes had failed to enlighten Walker about how his attack at Sant'Angelo fit into larger strategic ambitions at Anzio and in western Europe.

At a cost of two thousand casualties, not even a toehold had been won at the Rapido. That also implied tactical malfeasance. "From a military standpoint, it was an impossible thing to attempt," Kesselring would observe after the war. German defenders were unaware that an entire U.S. division had attacked; despite Kesselring's shift of two reserve divisions from Rome to the Garigliano, no reserves had been diverted to Sant'Angelo, because none were needed. The Americans had failed to seize the high ground, failed to coordinate with the adjacent 46th Division, failed to use tank fire effectively, and failed to neutralize German artillery on the flanks.

"The attack was insufficiently planned and poorly timed," Kesselring added. "No general should leave his flanks exposed." Sergeant Billy Kirby of Gatesville, Texas, was no field marshal, but he concurred. "Anybody who had any experience knew this ain't the place to cross the river," Kirby said. A tank platoon leader expressed the prevalent disgruntlement. "It would be nice to be a private in the ranks," he said, "untainted by association with the leadership."

Those ranks were in a surly mood, "on the edge of mutiny," a lieutenant in the 141st Infantry reported. Some resented being used as "cannon fodder," as the departing Colonel Martin put it, and many shared his conviction that "a fine National Guard division was being destroyed on faulty orders from a West Point commander," presumably Clark. Unknown to Walker, a cabal of his Texas officers met secretly after the Rapido and resolved to request a congressional inquiry after the war.

That resolution would be revived in January 1946, when the 36th Division Association demanded an investigation into the "fiasco"; the Texans accused Clark of being "inefficent and inexperienced," and willing "to destroy the young manhood of this country." Both the Senate and the House of Representatives held hearings, which generated more heat than light. If the Texans blamed Clark, Clark blamed Walker. "Walker's mental attitude, that a defeat was inevitable, was a decisive factor," Clark would tell the Pentagon. The secretary of war determined that the Rapido attack "was a necessary one and that General Clark exercised sound judgment." The investigation ended, but the controversy endured for decades, a nasty, suppurating wound.

For now, as accounts of the carnage spread across Italy, officers shook their heads and thanked their lucky stars to have been spared that particular agony. Brigadier Kippenberger, whose New Zealand troops were still recovering from their own ordeal in the Winter Line, studied the field reports and concluded, "Nothing was right except the courage."

Some hours after the final shots faded on the Rapido, a captured American private who had been released to serve as a courier stumbled into the 141st Infantry command post carrying a written message for "*den englischen Kommandeur*." The panzer grenadiers proposed a three-hour cease-fire to search for the living and retrieve the dead. GIs fashioned Red Cross flags from towels and iodine, and even before the appointed hour paddled across to both regimental bridgeheads.

They found a few survivors, including Private Arthur E. Stark, known as Sticks, who had carried a battalion switchboard across the river for the 143rd Infantry before being hit by shell fragments. For three days he had lain exposed to January weather. "Did you have a big Christmas? You should have

seen mine," he had written his eleven-year-old sister, Carole, earlier that month. "The little boys and girls over here didn't have much Christmas." Sticks lingered for two days after his rescue, then passed over. Other cases ended better: a forward observer with half his face blown away appeared to be dead, but a medic noticed the lack of rigor mortis. Surgeons would reconstruct his visage from a photograph mailed by his family.

For three hours they gathered the dead, reaping what had been sown. Wehrmacht medics worked side by side with the Americans, making small talk and offering tactical critiques of the attack. German photographers wandered the battlefield, snapping pictures. An American reporter studied the looming rock face of Monte Cassino with its all-seeing white monastery. "Sooner or later," he said, "somebody's going to have to blow that place all to hell."

The short peace ended. Dusk rolled over the bottoms. The mists reconvened. A final clutch of medics emerged carrying a long pole with a white truce flag that caught the dying light. More than a hundred bodies had been retrieved. But hundreds more remained, and would remain for months, carrion for the ravenous dogs that roamed these fens. Here the dreamless dead would lie, leached to bone by the passing seasons, and waiting, as all the dead would wait, for doomsday's horn.

The Show Must Go On

MUCH had happened through antiquity in the half-moon port once known as Puteoli. Just inland, at Lake Avernus, Aeneas reputedly entered the underworld, crossing the river Styx to find in the Fields of Mourning "those souls consumed by the harsh, wasting sickness, cruel love." On the Puteoli wharf, St. Paul had at last arrived in Italy aboard a grain packet after his shipwreck on Malta. The Roman amphitheater, third largest on the peninsula, featured sixty trapdoors that could be lifted as one to release wild beasts purchased from theatrical agents in Africa; it was said that the lions here refused to eat Saint Gennaro in A.D. 305, and authorities were forced to cut off his holy head. Modern Puteoli—renamed Pozzuoli—in January 1944 was home to a skinny nine-year-old girl called Stuzzicadenti by her schoolmates. After the war, skinny no more, the Toothpick would be better known as Sophia Loren.

Pozzuoli also was the temporary home for thousands of Allied soldiers. Here, ten miles northwest of Naples, the staging for SHINGLE neared completion even as the first sketchy reports arrived of fighting on the Rapido, fifty miles north. The Anzio assault force in VI Corps comprised two infantry divisions—the U.S. 3rd and the British 1st—plus paratroopers, American Rangers, and British Commandos, for a total of 47,000 men and 5,500 vehicles. Another 11,000 soldiers would follow immediately, including an armored brigade. The four-hundred-ship armada now loading in Pozzuoli and three other ports near Naples included four Liberty ships, eighty-four LSTs, eighty-four LSIs, and fifty LCTs. U.S. Navy and Royal Air Force meteorologists for days had studied their barometers and weather charts with the intensity of augurs scrutinizing entrails. Their forecast for H-hour on Saturday morning, January 22, was heartening: light airs, calm seas, haze, 55 degrees Fahrenheit.

A festive mood infused the docks. Along the Pozzuoli waterfront, LSTs had beached with bow doors yawning on the flat rocks used by fishermen to spread their nets. Columns of jeeps and overloaded trucks snaked through the crooked alleyways toward the ships. Italian vendors sang out from the street corners, offering fruit, wine, and—to the dismay of security officers—postcards of Anzio. Irish Guardsmen marched to their ships as a band played "Saint Patrick's Day"; their commander took his troops' salute while teetering on a statue pedestal. Supplies sufficient for fifteen days of combat were hoisted into the holds—and, upon discovery by vigilant quartermasters, some extraneous items were hoisted out, including a portable organ and several thousand hymnals.

Bum boats swarmed through the anchorage, peddling oranges to Royal Navy tars with shouts of "Good-a luck!" An airman wrote in his diary: "Native dagoes were fast to row alongside our boat and sell everything from nuts & apples to liquers." Troops awaiting embarkation in a nearby warehouse watched a feature film, which was repeatedly interrupted whenever more units were called to the gangways. Soldiers shrugged and gathered their gear, repeating a GI aphorism always uttered with irony if not contempt: "The show must go on."

Robert Capa arrived in Pozzuoli with his camera bag and $150 worth of black-market Spanish brandy. He joined Bill Darby, newly promoted to full colonel and now commanding three battalions that had been melded into the 6615th Ranger Force. "The boys were ordered to spread the rumor they were going home," Capa wrote. Hundreds of Italian girls swarmed to the docks

> to say goodbye, to remind their friends not to forget to send them the visas, and to collect the remaining C-rations. It was a grotesque scene: the soldiers sitting on the docks, having their shoes shined; holding in their left hand a box of rations; their right, the waist of their sweethearts.

Boarding the *Princess Beatrix,* the *Winchester Castle*, the *Royal Ulsterman,* and three LSTs, the Rangers slung their hammocks, filled their canteen cups with "Limey tar" from the coffee urns, and repaired to the weather decks for calisthenics. "They think it's gonna be all love and nickel beer," Darby said, "but I don't think it will be."

On the Naples waterfront, below broad-shouldered Vesuvius, the 3rd Division band crashed through a medley of marches as raw-boned infantrymen tromped past in a panoply of smart salutes and snapping guidons. "All that fanfare didn't seem quite right," a staff officer wrote. "The whole thing had a feeling of unreality about it." When the band struck up the division anthem in march time, soldiers burst into song:

> I'm just a dog-face soldier with a rifle on my shoulder
> And I eat a Kraut for breakfast every day.
> So feed me ammunition
> Keep me in the Third Division
> Your dog-face soldier boy's o-kay!

Aboard the U.S.S. *Biscayne,* a former seaplane tender now converted to a flagship, the roaring voices pleased Lucian Truscott, who stood on the fantail in his leather jacket and lacquered two-star helmet. GIs rarely sang as their fathers had in the Great War. "There was no inclination to lighten burdens with a song," as Truscott later put it. But the chorus now suggested resurgent spirits after the fraught Winter Line campaign. Many new men now filled the 3rd Division; since Sicily, the turnover of lieutenants had exceeded 100 percent. Truscott knew that esprit would be vital in the coming weeks. So, too, would robust health, and for the past month medicos had struggled to bring the division to fighting trim by treating ailments from trench foot to bronchitis to gonorrhea. To soothe his own chronically inflamed vocal chords, Truscott had scheduled three paintings of his throat with silver nitrate during the 120-mile voyage to Anzio.

The thump of drums from the dockside band carried into the crowded *Biscayne* deckhouse that served as the Army's floating command post. Another major general listened to the martial beat with

both pride and irrepressible dread. “I have many misgivings but am also optimistic,” John Porter Lucas had written in his diary after boarding the ship on Thursday afternoon. “I struggle to be calm and collected.”

For Lucas, that struggle had just begun. The commander of VI Corps, and thus of SHINGLE, he hardly looked the part of the warrior chieftain. He was pudgy and gray, with a brushcut widow’s peak, wire-rim spectacles, and a snowy mustache of the sort favored by French field generals in World War I. He puffed incessantly on a corncob pipe, and carried an iron-tipped cane given him by Omar Bradley. “Fifty-four years old today,” Lucas had told his diary on January 14, “and I am afraid I feel every year of it.” One Tommy thought he seemed “ten years older than Father Christmas.” Lucas gave an Irish Guardsman the impression of “a pleasant, mild, elderly gentleman being helped out of layers of overcoats.”

Born in West Virginia, he was commissioned as a cavalry officer at West Point in 1911, then rode into Mexico with Pershing’s Punitive Expedition before being wounded in France, at Amiens. Lucas later commanded the 3rd Division at the time of Pearl Harbor and served as Eisenhower’s deputy in North Africa. This was his third corps command, including a brief stint as Bradley’s successor at II Corps before Marshall and Eisenhower picked him to replace Dawley at Salerno. Clark had privately preferred Matthew Ridgway, but accepted Lucas with a shrug.

Lucas drove a jeep named *Hoot*, quoted Kipling “by the yard,” and had accumulated several nicknames, including Old Luke and Sugar Daddy; at Anzio he would acquire more, notably Foxy Grandpa. Although he considered the Germans “unutterable swine,” one staff officer wrote that he “never seemed to want to hurt anybody—at times, almost including the enemy.” A British general thought Lucas possessed “absolutely no presence”; a Grenadier Guards commander confessed that when Lucas visited his battalion billets above Naples Bay “our spirits sank as we watched this elderly figure puffing his way around the companies.” An odd rumor circulated that he was suffering ill effects from a defective batch of yellow fever vaccine.

For Lucas’s malady there was no inoculation. Empathy might ennoble a man, but it could debilitate a general. “I think too often of my men out in the mountains,” he had written during the winter campaign. “I am far too tender-hearted ever to be a success at my chosen profession.” A few days before boarding *Biscayne*, he added, “I must keep from thinking of the fact that my order will send these men into a desperate attack.” Upon hearing that SHINGLE had been authorized, Lucas portrayed himself as “a lamb being led to slaughter”; accordingly, he revised his last will and testament. The sanguine assurance of his superiors baffled him. “By the time your troops land, the Germans will have already pulled back past Rome,” Admiral John Cunningham, the British naval commander in the Mediterranean, had told him. Alexander claimed that the capture of Rome and subsequent hell-for-leather pursuit northward meant that “OVERLORD would be unnecessary.”

Could Alexander and others, he wondered, have additional intelligence that spawned such confidence? AFHQ asserted that it was “very questionable whether the enemy proposed to continue the defensive battle south of Rome much after the middle of February.” Fifth Army headquarters also claimed that enemy strength was “ebbing due to casualties, exhaustion, and possible lowering of morale.” Four days after landing at Anzio, the SHINGLE force would face no more than 31,000 Germans, according to Fifth Army analysts, and nearly two more weeks would pass before the enemy would be able to move even two more divisions from northern Italy. The designated military governor of Rome had already requested $1,000 for an “entertainment fund” in the capital.

Lucas beheld a different vision. His VI Corps intelligence analysts believed the Germans would muster a dozen battalions and a hundred tanks at Anzio on D-day, which would grow to twenty-nine battalions within a week and to more than five divisions and 150 tanks by D+16. VI Corps also estimated that, “even under favorable conditions,” reinforcement of the beachhead from the Cassino

front “cannot be expected in under thirty days.” Lucas confided to his diary, “This whole affair has a strong odor of Gallipoli”—the disastrous British amphibious invasion of Turkey in 1915.

An old friend shared his premonitions. George Patton flew from Palermo to bid Lucas farewell before returning to Britain for his new army command. “John, there is no one in the Army I hate to see killed as much as you, but you can’t get out of this alive,” Patton told him. “Of course you might be only badly wounded. No one ever blames a wounded general for anything.” Patton advised reading the Bible. To Lucas’s aide he added, “If things get too bad, shoot the old man in the back end.”

Lucas’s milquetoast demeanor obscured a keen tactical brain. He recognized, as did too few of his superiors, that the exalted ambitions for SHINGLE exceeded the means allocated to achieve them. Worse yet, those ambitions were muddled and contradictory, particularly with respect to the vital high ground northeast of Anzio, known as the Colli Laziali, or Alban Hills. Under Alexander’s instructions to Clark on January 12, the SHINGLE force was “to cut the enemy’s main communications in the Colli Laziali area southeast of Rome,” and to threaten the German rear on the Cassino front. The two Allied forces were then to “join hands at the earliest possible moment,” and hie through Rome “with the utmost possible speed.”

Yet the Fifth Army order issued later the same day instructed Lucas to “seize and secure a beachhead at Anzio,” then to “advance on Colli Laziali.” Clark remained deliberately vague about whether VI Corps was to surmount the Alban Hills or simply amble toward them. Through painful experience, the Fifth Army commander now expected the Germans to fight hard, first for the beachhead, then for the approaches to Rome. Alexander might wish otherwise, but he was “a peanut and a feather duster,” as Clark told his diary in an odd, impertinent blend of metaphors.

In a private message, Clark advised Lucas to first secure the beachhead and avoid jeopardizing his corps; if the enemy proved supine, then VI Corps could lunge for the hills to cut both Highways 6 and 7, the main supply routes from Rome to Kesselring’s forces on the Garigliano and at Cassino.

“Don’t stick your neck out, Johnny,” Clark told Lucas. “I did at Salerno and got into trouble.” He added, “You can forget this goddam Rome business.”

Fantasy and wishful thinking suffused Alexander’s SHINGLE plan; Clark added realism, flexibility, and insubordinate arrogance. Now confusion clattered down the chain of command. The XII Air Support Command, which would provide the invasion force with air cover, assumed that SHINGLE was intended to “advance and secure the high ground.” The British 1st Division commander, Major General William R. C. Penney, also had the impression that his troops were to “advance north towards fulfillment of the corps mission to capture Colli Laziali.” But Lucas’s Field Order No. 19, dated January 15, lacked a detailed plan beyond the landings; Truscott’s 3rd Division, for example, was told only to establish a beachhead and to prepare to move, on order, toward the hill town of Velletri. A baffled General Penney told his diary on January 20, “Corps at least talking of plans to break out of beachhead.” Small wonder that Clark’s deputy chief of staff, General Sir Charles Richardson, later observed, “Anzio was a complete nonsense from its inception.”

One other issue added to Lucas’s unease: the rehearsals for SHINGLE, on the beaches below Salerno, had been fiascoes. The British failed to disembark either brigade or division headquarters. The Americans, in an exercise code-named WEBFOOT, did worse. The Navy abruptly changed the landing beach, and only eleven of thirty-seven LSTs showed up. Rough weather and navigation errors on the night of January 17 kept the fleet fifteen miles offshore, and forty DUKWs making for land sank in the high seas, taking twenty-one howitzers, radio gear, and several men to the bottom. “I stood on the beach in an evil frame of mind and waited,” Lucas reported. “Not a single unit landed on the proper beach, not a single unit landed in the proper order, not a single unit was less than an hour and a half late.”

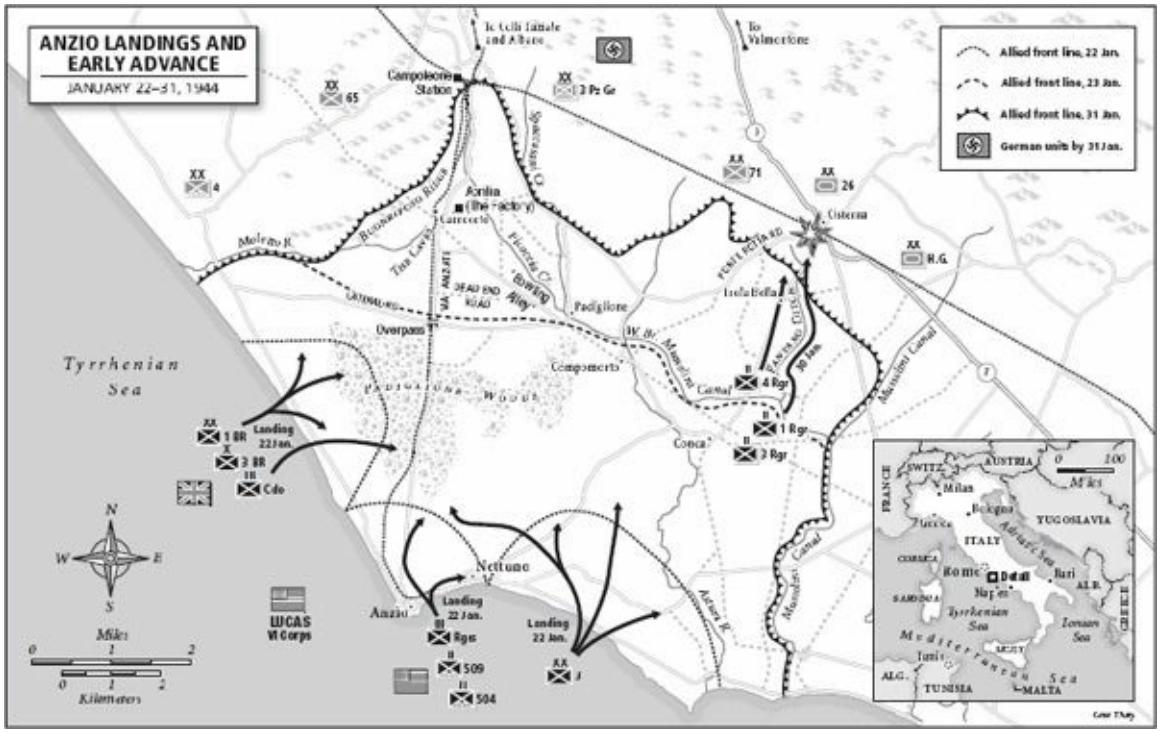
Truscott was so furious about the preparation for Anzio that he wrote Al Gruenther, “If this is to

be a forlorn hope or a suicide sashay, then all I want to know is that fact." Before boarding *Biscayne*, Truscott—with Lucas's blessing—also sent Clark an account of WEBFOOT. The army commander was appalled at "the overwhelming mismanagement by the Navy." But he told Truscott, "Lucian, I've got your report here and it's bad. But you won't get another rehearsal. The date has been set at the very highest level. There is no possibility of delaying it even for a day. You have got to do it."

Italy for eons had been a land of omen and divination, of portents and martial prophecy. During earlier campaigns on the peninsula it was said that two moons had risen in the sky, that goats grew wool, that a wolf pulled a sentry's sword from its scabbard and ran off with it. It was said that scorching stones fell like rain, that blood flowed in the streams, that a hen turned into a cock and a cock into a hen, that a six-month-old baby in Rome shouted, "Victory!" It was said that soldiers' javelins in midflight had burst into flame.

Modern men had no use for bodings or superstition, of course. Still, it was a bit surprising that the SHINGLE force ignored the ancient sailors' injunction against sailing on a Friday, the day of Christ's crucifixion. But at 5:20 A.M. on Friday, January 21, the Anzio flotilla weighed anchor and made for the open sea after first feinting south. Some soldiers fingered their rosary beads or huddled with a chaplain. Others snoozed on deck or basked in the sun, scanning the distant shore for the Temple of Jupiter at Cumae, where an Allied radar team played a recording of "Carolina Moon." "Most talk is of home and regular G.I. stuff," an airman wrote in his diary. Steaming at a languid five knots, the convoys "look more like a review than an invasion armada," one British lieutenant wrote.

In his cabin aboard the crowded *Biscayne*, Lucas spread his bedroll and shoved his kit into a corner. Truscott, who had gone to have his throat painted, would sleep on the couch. "More training is certainly necessary," Lucas wrote in his diary, "but there is no time for it." He had resigned himself to his fate. "I will do what I am ordered to do, but these Battles of the Little Big Horn aren't much fun." The show must go on.


ANZIO LANDINGS AND EARLY ADVANCE
JANUARY 22–31, 1944
Allied front line, 22 Jan.
Allied front line, 23 Jan.
Allied front line, 31 Jan.
German units by 31 Jan.
Tyrrhenian Sea
Campoleone Station
Aprilia (The Factory)
Cisterna
Carroceto
Padiglione
Buonriposo Ridge
Flyover
Overpass
Componente
Conca
Nettuno
Anzio
Landing 22 Jan.
Landing 22 Jan.
Landing 22 Jan.
Mussolini Canal
Moletta R.
Astura R.
Padiglione Woods
LUCAS VI Corps
Miles
Kilometers
N
W
E
S
XX 65
XX 4
XX 3 Pz Gr
XX 71
XX 26
XX H.G.
XX 1 BR
X 3 BR
III Cdo
XX 1
II 4 Rgr
II 1 Rgr
II 3 Rgr
II Rgrs
II 509
III 504
XX 3
SWITZ.
AUSTRIA
FRANCE
YUGOSLAVIA
ITALY
Milan
Bologna
Rome
Bari
Naples
CORSICA
SARDINIA
Tyrrhenian Sea
Adriatic Sea
Ionian Sea
Mediterranean Sea
ALG.
TUNISIA
MALTA
GREECE

8. Perdition

"Something's Happening"

Only the bakers were astir in the small hours of Saturday, January 22. The fragrance of fresh bread wafted through the dark streets from the wood ovens in Margherita Ricci's little shop, past the shuttered tobacco stall and the bronze statue of Neptune riding a huge fish. In Nettuno and adjacent Anzio—the woodlands of the Borghese villa separated the sister towns—bakery workers were among the few citizens still permitted in the coastal exclusion zone established by the Germans four months earlier. More than fifteen thousand exiles lived in shanties in the nearby Pontine Marshes or on the slopes of the Colli Laziali. Anyone caught within three miles of the coast risked a bullet to the nape, usually delivered against a wall in the Via Antonio Gramsci, where the condemned were told to turn their heads for a final glimpse of the sea before the fatal shot.

Dusted with flour and smelling of yeast, Orlando Castaldi shoved his flat wooden peel beneath a batch of rolls browning in the oven. Castaldi had been in Sicily during the Allied invasion six months earlier, eventually fleeing to Nettuno, where his brother and uncle worked in another bakery just two hundred yards north, in the Via Cavour. Brief but plucky resistance to the German occupation in September had been punished with executions, deportations, and the usual kidnapping of able-bodied men for labor battalions. Those consigned to the marshes had endured a bitter early winter, using ashes for soap and living on the loaves carted out from Ricci's each morning. Some chanced reprisals by sneaking into Rome to trade gold earrings or family linen for black-market pasta or a few liters of cooking oil. Allied bombing along the coast had gnawed the waterfront and forced the removal of the Madonna of Graces—an ornate wooden statue of Nettuno's patron—to a basilica in Rome for safekeeping.

Castaldi cocked his head, holding the paddle at high port like a halberd. Through the open window came a noise from the sea, a distant clamor. "Keep still a moment," he told two colleagues. "Something's happening." Clanking metal and the thrum of engines carried on the night. Castaldi recognized the sound, from Sicily. "I can hear them," he said. "I can hear them. The Americans are coming!" Grabbing his jacket, he yanked down the window blinds and sprinted through the door to alert his brother and uncle. As he rounded the corner into the Via Cavour, a brilliant light bleached the night sky and the ground trembled as if Neptune himself had impaled the earth with his trident.

The Americans were indeed coming, and so too the British. Three miles offshore the armada had dropped anchor at 12:04 A.M., four minutes late, in a dead calm and diaphanous haze. Scout boats puttered toward shore and at 1:50 A.M., just as young Castaldi darted into the street, a pair of British rocket boats opened fire with fifteen hundred 5-inch projectiles intended to cow coastal defenders and detonate beachfront mines. The five-minute bombardment "made a tremendous noise, achieved no good results, and was prejudicial to surprise," an intelligence officer reported. Only silence answered the barrage, and shortly after two A.M. the first infantrymen swarmed onto the beach, bent on adding injury to the rockets' insult.

Before the war, before the killings and the expulsions and those last sad looks at the sea, Anzio-Nettuno had been a thriving resort, just two hours from Rome by fast Fiat, with a fine harbor and

garish bathhouses. In waterfront eateries known for their *zuppa di pesce,* patrons could watch the fireworks on feast days. Nettuno had grown a bit larger in modern times, but Anzio, ancient Antium, had greater notoriety. Nero and Caligula had both been born here—the former's fiddling during the conflagration of Rome was said to have occurred in Antium's theater—and the patrician rebel Coriolanus supposedly was slain here in 490 B.C. Silver-throated Cicero owned a villa in Antium; Trajan had enlarged the port; and various emperors bred elephants along the coast. Antium had worshipped the goddess Fortune as the town's protectress, but she proved inconstant. The harbor silted up during Rome's decline, and piracy eclipsed tourism. Through the centuries, the goddess alternately smiled and scowled capriciously.

Now her temper would be tested again. Anchoring the VI Corps' left flank, the British splashed ashore five miles up the coast on Red, Green, and Yellow Beaches. A few desultory rounds of German artillery plumped the shallows, but naval gunfire soon answered and the only resistance across the shingle came from mines and soft sand. Much bellowing with bullhorns accompanied the landings: a subsequent analysis advised that "no amount of shouting through loud-hailers will induce troops to advance through a minefield." British lorries, lacking four-wheel drive, tended to bog down in the narrow dune exits—"The waste of time was fantastic," a beach commander lamented—and tempers flared. When a landing craft coxswain scraped the hull of the flagship H.M.S. *Bulolo,* a naval officer roared, "Don't stand about like a half-plucked fowl. Cast off!"

Soon enough twelve-foot lanes were cleared through the mines and marked with luminous paint. Hundreds and then thousands of Tommies scuffed into the piney Padiglione Woods, searching in vain for an enemy to overrun. Three Germans were found sleeping in a cowshed amid plundered bottles of Italian perfume and nail polish. One surrendered in his underwear, though the other two escaped in an armored car. "It was all very gentlemanly, calm and dignified," the Irish Guards reported. Carrying a large black umbrella as he arrived in a DUKW, the Irish Guards commander "stepped ashore with the air of a missionary visiting a South Sea island and surprised to see no cannibals."

No cannibals appeared on the right flank either. Truscott's 3rd Division made land just south of Nettuno, while Darby and his Rangers beat for the white dome and terraces of the Paradiso, a casino overlooking Anzio harbor. Most troops came ashore wetted only to the knees, if not completely dryshod. A few spurts from a flamethrower encouraged shrieking surrenders in an antiaircraft battery; nineteen enemy soldiers emerged hands-up from a bunker that still sported a scraggly Christmas tree. Engineers found more than twenty tons of explosives stuffed in the docks and doorways, but winter weather had corroded the charges and a new German plan to blow up the mole had not yet been effected. Prisoners trickled in, including Wehrmacht rustlers captured while searching for cattle to feed their unit.

After watching through field glasses from the *Biscayne,* General Lucas advised his diary that he "could not believe my eyes when I stood on the bridge and saw no machine gun or other fire on the beach." At 3:05 A.M. he sent Clark a coded radio message: "Paris-Bordeaux-Turin-Tangiers-Bari-Albany," which meant "Weather clear, sea calm, little wind, our presence not discovered, landings in progress." Later in the morning Lucas signaled "No angels yet, cutie Claudette": No tanks ashore, but the attack was going well.

It continued to go well through the day. Truscott made for shore in a crash boat at 6:15 A.M., mute with laryngitis and so miserable from his inflamed throat that he lay down for a nap in a thicket near the beach. His men hardly needed him. All three regiments pushed the beachhead three miles inland, exchanging a few gunshots with backpedaling German scouts, and then blowing up bridges across the Mussolini Canal to seal the right flank against a panzer counterattack that never came.

By sunrise, at 7:30, Rangers occupied Anzio; paratroopers soon after reported that Nettuno also was secure. Local bakers, including the gleeful Orlando Castaldi, were ordered to bank their oven fires

to prevent German gunners from aiming at the smoke. Soldiers liberated six women found chained to tethering rings in the Piazza Mazzini stable; they had been sentenced to death four days earlier while returning by train from Rome with black market food purchased in the Piazza Vittorio. The Americans gave them powdered milk, chocolate, and underwear, then sent them home.

DUKWs rolled through the streets like parade floats. Prisoners in long green field coats trudged to cages on the beach, "dusty, sweaty and noncommittal," as one witness put it. "Move on, superman," a GI jeered. Outside the former German command post, on a large sign that read KOMMANDANT, someone scribbled: RESIGNED. A few more shells fell along the waterfront and the Luftwaffe staged an ineffectual raid. "Maybe the war is over and we don't know it," said a lieutenant colonel. A GI added, "It ain't right, all right. But I like it." MPs tacked up road signs, and soon jeeps and trucks clotted the streets. An old woman stood at an intersection outside town, kissing the hand of every soldier tramping past. As one private reported, "She did not miss a man."

Success brought sightseers to the beachhead. At nine A.M., to the trill of a bosun's pipe, Alexander and Clark clambered aboard the *Biscayne* from a patrol boat that had whisked them north from the Volturno. Lucas summarized the news with a smile: resistance negligible, casualties light, most assault troops already ashore. Anzio's port was in such fine condition that at least a half dozen LSTs could berth simultaneously, and the first would unload this afternoon.

From *Biscayne* the boating party traveled by DUKW to the beach. Clark—immaculate in peaked cap, silk scarf, and creased trousers—inspected the 3rd Division and pronounced himself pleased. Poor Truscott croaked his thanks. Alexander—no less comely in red hat, fur-trimmed jacket, and riding breeches—motored among the British battalions in the turret of an armored car. To a Scots Guardsman he resembled "a chief umpire visiting the forward position and finding things to his satisfaction." General Alex, in fact, told a British colonel precisely that: "I am very satisfied." Reconvening on *Biscayne,* the two men complimented Lucas on his derring-do, then hopped back into the patrol boat and sped off toward Naples, leaving neither orders nor a sense of urgency in their wake. As one wit commented, "They came, they saw, they concurred."

Left alone to command his battle, Lucas decamped from *Biscayne* to Piazza del Mercato 16, a two-story villa in Nettuno with four bedrooms and an upstairs fireplace. Sycamores ringed the little square, framing the sculpture of Neptune straddling his fish. The previous occupant of number 16, the German commandant, had bolted so quickly—only to die on the beach in the early minutes of the invasion—that a sausage and half-empty brandy glass remained on the dining table.

The Allies had won what they least expected to win: complete surprise. By midnight on D-day, 27,000 Yanks, 9,000 Brits, and 3,000 vehicles would be ashore in a beachhead that was fifteen miles wide and two to four miles deep. Only thirteen Allied soldiers had died. As one paratrooper wrote, most soldiers found it "very hard to believe that a war was going on and that we were in the middle of it."

Lucas also found it hard to believe. From the north window of number 16, he could plainly see his prize. Fifteen miles distant, the Colli Laziali rose above the myrtles and umbrella pines, burnished by the setting sun that kissed the red tile rooftops before plunging into the Tyrrhenian Sea. White haze scarped the hills, which rose three thousand feet above the coastal plain in a volcanic massif nearly forty miles in circumference. Wind-tossed chestnut groves softened the tufa ridges, providing haunts for cuckoos and dryads and ancient enchantresses. Here too lay Castel Gandolfo, the pope's summer home, where in years past the pontiff could have been seen riding a white mule among the cypresses, trailed by cardinals robed in scarlet.

Dusk sifted over the beachhead. Lights winked on in up-country villages, and convoy headlights drifted in tiny chains across the hills like ships steaming on the far horizon. In his tidy, contained cursive, Lucas wrote, “We knew the lights meant supplies coming in for the use of our enemies, but they were out of range and nothing could be done about it.”

Thirty-four miles from this window lay Rome, known in Allied codebooks as BOTANY. Two routes crossed the “hinterland,” as the British called the landscape beyond the beachhead. One road angled northeast from Nettuno, across the Pontine Marshes to Cisterna, twelve miles distant, and then fifteen more miles to Valmontone, astride Highway 6 in the Liri Valley. The other road, known as the Via Anziate, ran due north for almost twenty miles from Anzio to intersect Highway 7, the twenty-three-century-old Appian Way, at Albano.

Both roads led to glory, and Lucas intended to follow both. The world seemed to believe that BOTANY was all but his. The Sunday edition of *The New York Times* reported the Allies “only sixteen miles from Rome.” Radio broadcasts heard in the beachhead were even more optimistic. “Alexander’s brave troops are pushing towards Rome,” the BBC reported on Sunday, “and should reach it within forty-eight hours.”

* * *

Neither the *Times* nor the BBC had consulted Field Marshal Kesselring.

The first alarm had come from a German corporal, a railroad engineer sent to Anzio to buy timber. At four A.M. on Saturday, breathless and mud-spattered, he roared into Albano aboard a motorcycle, babbling about enemy ships as far as the eye could see. A major phoned the news to Rome, where panicked officers began to pack their bags and burn official papers. “The landing,” a German naval log noted, “has come at a very bad time for us.”

Certainly it was unexpected. Hardly a week earlier, Hitler’s intelligence chief, Admiral Wilhelm F. Canaris, had told the Berlin high command, “There is not the slightest sign that a new landing will be undertaken in the near future.” Kesselring’s chief of staff, General Siegfried Westphal, subsequently advised senior commanders in Italy on January 15, “I consider a large-scale landing operation as being out of the question for the next four to six weeks.” Thus reassured, Kesselring had dispatched his reserves—the 29th and 90th Panzer Grenadier Divisions—to confront the Garigliano threat on the southern front. Just three battalions and forty-one guns remained to guard a forty-mile coastal stretch from the mouth of the Tiber River to below Nettuno.

Few combat commanders were enjoying World War II more than Albert Kesselring. Having been bombed out of his Frascati headquarters in September, he now occupied a new command post in the Sabine Hills, twenty miles northeast of Rome on the western lip of Monte Soratte, which Lord Byron once described as “a huge wave about to break.” The views of the upper Tiber Valley were breathtaking, and local wines proved equal to the Frascati whites. Kesselring often hosted dinner parties for visiting dignitaries and diplomats, indulging his vanity by swapping his blue Luftwaffe uniform for khaki regalia of his own design, and displaying his erudition as both a soldier-scholar and a convivial raconteur. Earlier in January he had been shot down yet again while piloting his little Storch. Managing to steer the plane into a pond, he arrived at a conference covered in green slime but smiling as usual with Bavarian bonhomie. Over the past fourteen months, in the invasions of North Africa, Sicily, and Salerno, he had demonstrated similar agility and panache, and it was the Allies’ misfortune to face him again at Anzio.

The first report of the landings reached Monte Soratte at five A.M., an hour after the railway

corporal's alarm. Kesselring instantly recognized the threat to Tenth Army's rear and to Rome, where he ordered roadblocks on all approach avenues. At six A.M. he told Berlin of the landings and received authorization for Operation RICHARD, one of five contingency plans drafted in case of Allied landings at various points on the Italian littoral. At 7:10 he ordered the forces in northern Italy designated for RICHARD to head south, on prearranged march routes with prearranged signage, fuel, and troops assigned to clear the snow-packed Apennine passes. At 8:30 he directed General Vietinghoff to transfer all spare troops from Tenth Army to the beachhead, along with the headquarters of I Parachute Corps. Within six hours, Kesselring had ordered all or parts of eleven divisions to converge around the Colli Laziali in what he would later term a "higgledy-piggledy jumble." By seven P.M., forces were moving not only from northern Italy, but from France, Germany, and the Balkans. Well-wishing Italians would toss flowers to Wehrmacht soldiers rolling toward the beachhead from Croatia. As John Lucas could see from the headlights streaming across the hills, the first reinforcements had arrived even before D-day turned to D+1.

They were just the beginning. Allied air strategists had asserted that the Italian rail system could be disrupted by aerial bombardment to prevent German forces from concentrating around Anzio; the Mediterranean Allied Air Forces now had more than seven thousand aircraft, compared with fewer than six hundred Luftwaffe planes in the entire theater. Yet carpet bombing of marshaling yards proved ineffective, to the pleasant surprise of German logisticians who nimbly rerouted trains around blocked lines and organized truck convoys on back roads. Most Italian rail workers remained at their posts, and within three days portions of eight German divisions would be at or near the beachhead, with five others en route.

They found terrain that favored the defender, as usual. From the Colli Laziali, as a Grenadier Guards history lamented, on "clear days it was possible to see the surf breaking on the shore, and almost every movement in the open country between…. The German gunners could mark the fall of every shell." Muzzle flashes betrayed the position of Allied guns, and the flat ground had few folds to conceal men or artillery. To organize the "higgledy-piggledy jumble," Kesselring ordered the commander of the Fourteenth Army, General Eberhard von Mackensen, to shift his headquarters south from Verona. A square-jawed, monocle-sporting cavalryman, with extensive combat experience in Poland, France, and eastern Europe, Mackensen also boasted good Prussian bloodlines: his father, a hussar whose political patrons included Kaiser Wilhelm II, had occupied Serbia and Romania as a field marshal in World War I.

Kesselring had expected the Allies to seize the Colli Laziali, but by Sunday evening he told Vietinghoff in a phone call that the danger of a flying column severing his supply lines on Highways 6 and 7 had passed. He guessed that VI Corps' strength included three infantry divisions and an armored division—in fact, it was less—which Kesselring considered "insufficient for an attack on a strategic objective" like the Alban Hills, given the need to also protect the exposed beachhead flanks.

Moreover, the Allies suffered from what Kesselring called a "Salerno complex." Only when overwhelming combat power had been amassed, he surmised, would the enemy venture far from the beaches and protective naval gunfire. Before that buildup gained momentum, Mackensen must strike across the entire Anzio front to throw the enemy into the sea. Hitler agreed, and advised, in his own inimitable idiom, "The battle must be waged with holy hatred."

"Please answer the following questions at once," Clark radioed Lucas on Monday, January 24. "How far have your patrols worked? What are your intentions for immediate operations? What is your estimate of enemy situation?" The Fifth Army commander had warned, "Don't stick your neck out,"

but now he confided to his diary, “Lucas must be aggressive. He must take some chances.”

In reply, Lucas correctly surmised that the enemy “will attempt to contain our forces pending arrival of reinforcements with which to counterattack [the] beachhead.” Few tanks had been included in SHINGLE’s initial waves, because the Allies had expected a sharp infantry fight on the beaches. Yet the invasion to date had resembled a camping expedition. Guards Brigade officers slept in pajamas and played bridge, while their troops brewed tea, chain-smoked, and stamped their feet to keep warm: rime glazed the marsh grass at night, and thin panes of ice coated the puddles. Owl hoots carried through the quiet woods. Solders found it easy to dig in the sandy soil if they did not dig too deeply: slit trenches soon grew wet from the high water table. That hardly seemed to matter. An officer in the 56th Evacuation Hospital pointed to the northern horizon and proclaimed, “All those hills are ours, men! No need to dig foxholes.” In the weeks to come, 56th Evac soldiers often greeted enemy barrages and air attacks with a sardonic cry: “All those hills are ours, men!”

As Allied patrols were discovering, the hinterland between the beach and those hills was a strange, haunted place. Fed by streams from the Colli Laziali, the Pontine Marshes for millennia had been a malarial dead zone. In 1928, a census of the entire plain found only 1,637 people and no permanent settlements; the area was said to be inhabited “only by a few web-toed, fever-ridden corkcutters” living in straw huts. The Italian Red Cross reported that during the warm months, four of every five travelers who spent a single night in the Pontine Marshes could expect to contract malaria. The English translations of local place-names suggested a certain obsession with mortality: Dead Woman, Land of Death, Pool of the Sepulcher, and—to honor the sullen ferryman of the dead—Charon.

Mussolini had reclaimed much of the land with an ambitious program known as the *bonifica integrale*, intended to transform the marshes into “smiling fields.” Enormous pumps drained the bogs, aided by ten thousand miles of canals and irrigation ditches, and more than a million pine trees planted in windbreaks. Five model towns were built, plus eighteen satellite villages and hundreds of two-story stone farmhouses, usually painted bright blue. Thousands of Italians seeking work and shelter during the Depression had moved to these virgin lands, which Mussolini envisioned as “human nurseries” for breeding the “great rural warriors” of a new Roman empire.

War wrecked the dream. Kesselring and his engineers saw the marshes as a potential barrier against Allied armies from the south. With Mussolini’s apparent consent after his rescue from Gran Sasso, German hydrographers studied “what measures could be taken to make this area rapidly and completely impassable by flooding.” Demolitionists blew up pumping stations, blocked canals, and bulldozed dikes. Seawater flushed the fields. Eventually 100,000 acres of reclaimed farmland were submerged; in some places “only trees and houses were visible,” a Kesselring staff officer reported. The stout farm buildings would make admirable pillboxes. Not least, German malariologists knew that come springtime the inundations would provide larval nurseries for *Anopheles labranchiae,* a Pontine mosquito proficient at breeding in brackish water. The scheme remains “the only known example of biological warfare in twentieth-century Europe,” according to the Yale University historian Frank M. Snowden.

Into this landscape of “bog, bush, and water,” as one soldier described it, the Allied force began to push. On the VI Corps left, British patrols edged up the Via Anziate, past Italian farmers who shouted from behind their plows, *“Niente tedeschi!”*—“No Germans”—even as occasional shell bursts sent their white longhorn cattle bucking across the fields. Italian women clapped and waved handkerchiefs from their croft doorways, leading a British captain to comment, “These peasants are really damned good people, aren’t they?” Guardsmen with a squadron of tanks drove a panzer grenadier battalion out of Aprilia—one of those five model Fascist towns—and captured a hundred prisoners. By Tuesday, January 25, the British 1st Division was halfway to Albano and the Highway 7

intersection.

On the VI Corps right, the Yanks also extended the bridgehead despite Truscott's lingering indisposition. The commanding general's "throat is worse today and he goes to bed early, after remaining in command post all day," the 3rd Division chief of staff had noted on Sunday. Four companies cantered toward Cisterna on Monday, only to butt against unexpected resistance; a larger American force at dawn on Tuesday also found Hermann Göring Division troops with machine guns or antitank guns in nearly every farmhouse. Cisterna, through which Highway 7 also passed, remained three miles away.

Still, high spirits prevailed. A Ranger lieutenant rummaging through an abandoned villa emerged in a black stovepipe hat and a tuxedo; another Ranger dressed up as a butler to serve him lunch. Churchill cabled Alexander, "Am very glad you are pegging out claims rather than digging in beachhead."

Clark and Alexander came calling again shortly after noon on Tuesday. Now, on D+3, forty thousand American and sixteen thousand British troops occupied the beachhead, along with almost seven thousand vehicles. While warning Lucas to brace for an inevitable counterattack, Clark also urged him to finish seizing Campoleone on the left and Cisterna on the right. Alexander seemed delighted with VI Corps' progress. "What a splendid piece of work," he told Lucas. "This will really hurt the Germans."

"I must keep my feet on the ground and my forces in hand and do nothing foolish," the corps commander confided to his diary after his superiors left. "This is the most important thing I have ever tried to do, and I will not be stampeded."

Kesselring was an airman, and although the Luftwaffe could muster less than a tenth the strength of the Allies, it was from the air that the Germans initially struck back. The first costly raid came at twilight on Sunday, January 23, when an aerial torpedo demolished the bridge and forecastle of the destroyer H.M.S. *Janus*. She broke apart and capsized in twenty minutes, taking 159 men with her. Survivors clinging to the flotsam sang "Roll Out the Barrel."

More than one hundred bombers scorched the transport anchorage on Monday, again at twilight, killing fifty-three sailors aboard the destroyer U.S.S. *Plunkett.* But the most shocking attack came against the hospital ship *St. David,* which had sailed from Anzio at dusk after embarking wounded troops. With all lights burning and an enormous red cross displayed topside, she was ambushed twenty miles offshore at eight P.M. by Luftwaffe planes that sprinkled magnesium flares and then bombs. An explosion staggered the *St. David* and quenched the lights. Patients hobbled on deck or were carried by stretcher. "The ship is sinking," a voice cried. "Jump." Lieutenant Laura R. Hindman, a surgical nurse, leaped into a lifeboat only to hear shrieks from other castaways. Looking up, she saw "the ship turning over and it seemed to be falling right on top of us." Dumped into the sea, she later recalled:

> I was being dragged down by the ship's suction. I fought and tried to swim and moved about but came up only far enough to hit my head against something hard which appeared to be part of the ship…. I struggled frantically and thought I was trapped under the ship when suddenly my head bobbed up. I saw stars.

St. David sank five minutes after she was hit. Of 229 people aboard, 96 perished.

The strikes continued through the week, often with the guided bombs previously seen at Salerno.

Radio chatter by Luftwaffe pilots, who sometimes could be heard even while taxiing on runways near Rome, gave beachhead eavesdroppers fair warning of impending attacks. Allied fighters and antiaircraft gunners parried many raids, shooting down more than two dozen bombers and scattering others. Still, the attacks so menaced the fleet—particularly late in the day, when air cover was weakest—that all cruisers and most destroyers were ordered to retire seaward each afternoon at four. The loss of minesweeper *YMS-30* with seventeen crewmen was typical. "There was a terrific wall of flame," a witness reported, "then the vessel disappeared."

Danger lurked below as well as above. Shortly after five A.M. on Wednesday, January 26, *LST 422* lay anchored twelve miles offshore, waiting for a berth to open at Anzio harbor. Built in Baltimore but crewed by the Royal Navy, she had carried seven hundred men from Naples; among them, two companies of the 83rd Chemical Mortar Battalion were to rejoin Darby's Rangers for extra firepower. Deteriorating weather had built twenty-foot seas under a westerly gale that shoved the ship sideways, dragging her anchor yard by yard, until she tripped a German mine. The blast tore a fifty-foot hole in the starboard hull, igniting diesel oil and barreled gasoline. Flame licked through the ventilators. Within two minutes, the upper deck and bridge were ablaze. Most mortarmen were asleep in the tank deck, which simultaneously flooded and turned into a crematorium. Detonating rockets and white-phosphorus rounds soared through an aft hatch, forcing those topside to cower behind the gun mount shields. With power lost and the ship engulfed, men tumbled into the frigid sea.

Ships churning to the rescue played searchlights across the heaving waves. As *LCI 32* approached, she too struck a mine and was gone in three minutes, taking thirty crewmen to the bottom. "Heavy seas and high winds made it very difficult maneuvering ship alongside the unfortunates," the war log of minesweeper *YMS-43* noted at seven A.M. "Using the boat hook was the best method, except many of the life belts tore under the strain. Survivors were drowning all around us."

At 8:45, with hail falling like grapeshot, the minesweeper's log recorded: "No more floating bodies visible." The mortar companies lost nearly 300 men, among 454 U.S. soldiers and 29 British tars who perished. *LST 422* broke in half and sank at 2:30 P.M. Recovered bodies were sewn into canvas bags weighted with antiaircraft shells and consigned to the sea. The drowned included Private Billy C. Rhoads of Albia, Iowa, whose brother years later said of the fatal news delivered by telegram to the family's front door, "It really was a grief which Mother never was able to be rid of."

As the air attacks intensified, so did German shelling. By midday on January 26, when sodden survivors from *LST 422* arrived in Anzio, the beachhead had assumed the shape of an irregular rectangle, seven miles deep and fifteen miles wide. Truscott's 3rd Division remained three miles from Cisterna, while Major General Penney's British 1st Division held Aprilia but stood more than a mile from the rail and road junction at Campoleone, and ten miles from Albano. Every square inch of the beachhead fell within range of German guns, and every square inch felt vulnerable. One shell hit a fragrance shop, perfuming the air with the odd scent of cordite and cologne. Another hit a British dump, firing ammunition as frantic Tommies dragged away leaking petrol cans. "Everyone was dashing around like demented beings," a Grenadier Guards corporal named E. P. Danger told his diary.

"The heavy shelling was beginning to shake us up a bit," Corporal Danger added. One of his American cousins agreed. "Anzio was a fishbowl," he wrote. "We were the fish."

I will not be stampeded, John Lucas had declared, and he would spend the rest of his life explaining that reluctance. Already skeptics had begun to wonder why the beachhead remained so compact, why the enemy had not been routed, why the campaign was not won. The senior Royal Air Force officer in the Mediterranean, Air Marshal Sir John Slessor, wrote a colleague in London five

days after the landings:

> I have not the slightest doubt that if we had been Germans or Russians landing at Anzio, we should have had [Highway 6] two days ago and maybe Rome by now and the whole right of the enemy line opposite the Fifth Army would have crumpled.

Lucas also sensed that Alexander, despite his effusive praise during two visits to the beachhead, had grown uneasy, perhaps goaded by the impatient Churchill. As if seeking to persuade both himself and history, Lucas wrote in his diary:

> Apparently some of the higher levels think I have not advanced with maximum speed. I think more has been accomplished than anyone had a right to expect. This venture was always a desperate one and I could never see much chance for it to succeed, if success means driving the Germans north of Rome.

The excoriation of Old Luke had begun: for want of pluck, of audacity, of imagination. Long after the war ended, he would be pilloried as the modern incarnation of George B. McClellan, the timid Civil War general who was said to have "the slows." Even those who applauded Lucas's prudence regretted that he had not rushed to seize the road junctions at Campoleone and Cisterna, which would have complicated German encirclement of the beachhead. "Having gained surprise in the landing," the judicious official historian Martin Blumenson concluded, Lucas "proceeded to disregard the advantage it gave him."

Perhaps, although the Allied push to the north and northeast began within forty-eight hours of the landings. More than sixty years after the Allied perdition at Anzio, Lucas's caution seems sensible and even inevitable, given Clark's wooly instructions and Alexander's hail-fellow approbation. Those who most closely scrutinized the VI Corps predicament tended to concur that a pell-mell lunge for the Colli Laziali would have been reckless. Alexander's new chief of staff, the future field marshal John H. Harding, concluded that Lucas "probably saved the forces at Anzio from disaster." Clark came to a similar conclusion. Major General G.W.R. Templer, who would soon command a British division at Anzio and who detested Lucas, believed that if the corps had galloped north, "within a week or fortnight there wouldn't have been a single British soldier left in the bridgehead. They would all have been killed or wounded or prisoners." And George Marshall, who rarely condescended to adjudicate tactical squabbles, noted that "for every mile of advance there were seven or more miles to be added to the perimeter," which would have made the Allied flanks ever more vulnerable.

Five years after the war, Alexander conceded that "the actual course of events was probably the most advantageous in the end." His assessment echoed that of Field Marshal Wilson, Eisenhower's successor at AFHQ, who also concluded that to have pushed "to the Alban Hills with a half built-up force might have led to irreparable disaster." John Lucas might be found wanting as a battle captain, with transparent anxieties and an avuncular mien that failed to inspire men under duress. "He was absolutely full of inertia and couldn't make up his mind," General Templer later complained. "He had no qualities of any sort as a commander." But in staring through the north window of his villa on the Piazza del Mercato, Lucas found courage in convictions that would save his corps even at the price of his reputation. "Had I been able to rush to the high ground," he wrote in his diary as German artillery and air attacks intensified,

> …nothing would have been accomplished except to weaken my force by that amount because the troops being sent, being completely beyond supporting distance, would have been immediately destroyed. The only thing to do was what I did.

Through the Looking Glass

ON a brisk January day in 1752, a column of soldiers more than half a mile long marched through a field outside the village of Caserta, twenty miles north of Naples, in a province famed in antiquity for "the beauty and gaiety of its women," as well as for the slave revolt led by the gladiator Spartacus in 73 B.C. With a quartet of cannons placed to denote four corners, the troops formed a rectangle that outlined the perimeter walls of a future royal palace inspired by Versailles. The building would require twenty years of toil by a regiment of stonemasons, reinforced by prison labor and galley slaves. The finished palace became a monument to Bourbon ostentation: twelve hundred rooms; four interlocking courtyards; a sweeping marble staircase grander than anything Louis XIV ever descended; a theater with forty boxes; a chapel trimmed in lapis lazuli; and interior furnishings said to cost six million ducats. Gold lined the queen's bathtub, and bas-relief figures on the wall had their eyes painted shut to prevent their peeking at the royal derrière; a hole-and-mirror contraption allowed the queen to watch townfolk passing on the street outside while she took her soak. The building's southern face alone was 830 feet long and 134 feet high, with 243 windows. In laying his cornerstone with a silver trowel on that January day, the Neapolitan monarch Charles III had selected a Latin invocation asking that the palace and grounds "remain forever Bourbon."

Alas, nearly two centuries later the Anglo-Americans were firmly ensconced. Captured on October 8, Caserta Palace now served as the headquarters for both Clark's Fifth Army and for Alexander's 15th Army Group, which claimed the fifth floor on January 20. Every map and stick of furniture, including a pair of General Alex's red plush chairs, had to be carried up 124 steps to what a British major described as "a muddling sort of maze through which one wandered." A staff school for Italian aviators had previously occupied the floor, which was cluttered with aircraft motors, wind tunnels, and even a bomber fuselage. "Everything," Harold Macmillan wrote in his diary, "was in disorder." A war room was built, with a sentry on the door and maps on the wall. Alexander messed at the palace kennel and slept in a bivouac two miles distant, so there was a great deal of chuffing up and down those 124 steps. Ultra intelligence agents worked in caravans near the palace, forever burning secrets in an elegant brick incinerator, surmounted by steep steps like a pagan temple.

Fifteen thousand Allied soldiers eventually worked at Caserta, which soon became a baroque parody of the Pentagon. The place was so cavernous that one resident claimed it was "the only house where I've had my hat blown off indoors." After studying a sheaf of palace blueprints, signal officers concluded that to thread wire through walls two feet thick was impossible; cable and phone lines therefore ran "in and out of windows and around the outside," giving the palace an appearance of being trussed if not hog-tied. One OSS officer thought Caserta resembled "a New England cotton mill," while another officer likened it to "Alcatraz without the bay." A brisk breeze caused hundreds of shutters to bang so that the headquarters "sounded like midnight in a madhouse."

The building had little heat, less sanitation, and "a 180-year accumulation of fleas." Staff officers sat at plywood-and-sawhorse desks, "alternately shivering and scratching fleabites." The British wanted the windows open, the Americans insisted they remain shut, and Alexander was forced to issue a Solomonic decree that "whoever arrived first at the office could have the windows as he liked for the day." A polyglot host streamed in and out of the palace: Tommies and GIs, RAF pilots and Red Cross

girls, carabinieri in swallowtail coats and tricorne hats; Indians in turbans; Poles wearing British battle dress with red-and-white shoulder tabs; French colonials in fezzes and Uncle Sam's olive twill. Even an occasional Moroccan *goum* stumped past in the striped burnoose that GIs called a "Mother Hubbard wrapper."

The twelve hundred rooms had been converted into dormitories, dining halls, offices, bakeries, laundries, and a barbershop, where a comb-and-razor cut cost four cents. One spacious salon served as an indoor basketball court, and a three-room suite was devoted to an exhibit on venereal disease, with graphic color photographs intended to infuse soldiers with the fear of both God and loose women. Protective paper strips covered the huge palace mirrors, but nothing could keep GI fingerprints off the silk wall coverings and tapestries in the throne room and ministry chambers.

An errant bomb had bent the organ pipes in the palace chapel, and artillery rumbling sometimes carried from the Cassino front. But war seemed ever more removed for the "garritroopers" at Caserta, as Bill Mauldin called them—"too far forward to wear ties and too far back to git shot." An Army surgeon described the senior officers' mess as "a stuffy, swank private dining room full of elderly colonels dining on broiled steak and other luxuries." The tables were set with gold-trimmed palace porcelain and glassware etched with the royal crown. The chef had once worked at the Ritz in New York, but waiters were mostly "bomb-happy" GI convalescents. "It was said, rather unkindly, that if anyone dropped a plate they all dived for cover," one visitor reported.

Officers in the palace bar drank rum or cognac mixed with Coca-Cola; George Biddle found their faces "soft and puffy" compared with the frontline visages of Jack Toffey and his ilk. At parties, a female captain wrote, "Bill or Ralph or whoever had taken one got lit up on the very cheap wine and made less and less sense and got more and more amorous." Marathon poker games raged in the royal suite, including one in which Colonel Elliott Roosevelt, the president's son, allegedly lost $3,000; it was said that he eventually paid the debt with a sheaf of English five-pound notes "big as cabbage leaves." Twice weekly, the San Carlo Opera Company arrived from Naples to sing *Tosca* or *Madama Butterfly* in the palace theater. A box seat cost $1.25, and the cast was paid mostly in Army rations.

Caserta was a "looking glass world," one officer wrote. He added: "One doesn't hate on a full stomach and a hot bath." To preserve a semblance of Army life, some commanders insisted that their garritroopers at least camp outdoors. Bivouacs soon stretched for two miles through the palace gardens, evincing their own Wonderland qualities, with shower huts, softball diamonds, backgammon tables, and volleyball courts. Grenadier Guards practiced lugging their assault boats through the rose bushes before paddling furiously across the ornamental ponds, which hungry soldiers soon emptied of fish. Clark's floatplane landed among the lily pads on a reflecting pool a quarter mile long.

Just north of the palace, engineers built a colony for generals, known as Cascades. An elaborate fountain nearby depicted the goddess Diana and her handmaidens being surprised while bathing by the hunter Actaeon, who was consequently transformed into a stag and torn to pieces by his own hounds. Cascades included a lounge with a fireplace, a tennis court, a U-shaped dance hall, and a muddy, eel-infested pond that served as a swimming hole. The engineers who built the complex complained in their unit log: "The feeling of the men is that they came over here for the purpose of winning a war. The building of summer houses and swimming pools doesn't fall under this category."

Not least among Caserta's oddities, the 6681st Signal Pigeon Company maintained twenty-two lofts with eight thousand cooing birds, including a blue-check splashed cock named GI Joe who was credited with carrying a message that had forestalled bombardment of a town already captured by the British. Nightingales also filled Caserta's woods with music, leading one officer to write, "Everyone agrees that the nightingale's song is beautiful, but I have never seen it mentioned before that it is also extremely noisy." A British sergeant was blunter: "Wait till you've heard 'em every fucking night, the bloody sound they make will get in your bones."

Clark rarely missed a chance to flee Caserta's fleshpots for the front, and at 3:45 A.M. on Friday, January 28, he hopped in a staff car and sped down the grand driveway, past the silk mills and the rope factories, where hemp plants soaked in shallow pits to soften the fibers. Twenty-five miles due west, near the mouth of the Volturno, a wallowing launch ferried him downriver where a pair of seventy-eight-foot motor torpedo boats, *PT-201* and *PT-216,* bobbed at anchor. After snagging on a sandbar, the little launch shipped so much water that Clark was drenched to the skin by the time he climbed onto a stool behind *201*'s bridge. As the first gray hint of dawn tinted the eastern sky, the triple screws of the two patrol boats hurled them northwest across the indigo Tyrrhenian for the seventy-mile journey to Anzio. Neither boat crew took time to radio a sailing signal to the Allied fleet at the beachhead.

Alexander had prodded Clark to make this trip, wondering aloud on Thursday whether Lucas was sufficiently aggressive. Did the beachhead need "a thruster, like George Patton?" Alexander wondered. Certainly VI Corps should press forward to seize Campoleone and Cisterna. "Risks must be taken," Alexander added. Clark promised to deliver the message.

More than five months had passed since Clark had come ashore at Salerno, and the long season had aged him. During a visit to Caserta in early January, Patton had noted—with evident pleasure—symptoms of stress in the Fifth Army commander. "The left corner of Clark's mouth is slightly drawn down as if he had been paralyzed," he informed his diary. "He is quite jumpy." Clark on January 18 had asked Renie to send him some Kreml hair tonic. "I find that by massaging my hair using that it keeps from coming out, and for a while it was falling out quite badly." The crowding at the royal palace added more strains, and Clark planned to move his own forward command post to a hillside olive grove below Presenzano, ten miles from San Pietro. Alexander "and many lesser lights have moved into Caserta on top of my headquarters," Clark told his diary on January 23. "Never before in the history of warfare have so few been commanded by so many." As for the battle at Anzio, Alexander "apparently feels as though he is running that show. Not much I can do about it."

The solitude of high command oppressed him. "The more stars a man gets, the more lonesome he becomes," he told Renie. Comrades "used to come around in the evening, but they don't any more." He suggested that for companionship she send him Pal, the family cocker spaniel. A dutiful if indifferent letter writer, he at times vented his frustration at her. When she urged him to avoid personal risks, he answered, "You turn your lamb chops on the stove, and I'll run the Army." On January 11, after she told him that she had been too busy to accept a luncheon invitation from Eleanor Roosevelt, he replied, "I am distressed…I think you should take time to do those things."

As he soldiered on, so did she. Traveling for months on end, sometimes with Glenn Miller and other celebrities, Renie was credited with selling $25 million in war bonds. She also lectured widely about the virtues of both the American cause and her husband, whom she described as "working coolly [in] his tent virtually under enemy guns." To twelve hundred ladies at a Scottish Rite luncheon in Indianapolis, she pronounced him "an awfully good man, a rather religious man." Often she read from his letters, and even displayed the trousers, shrunk from immersion in Mediterranean brine, that Clark had temporarily lost during his celebrated secret mission to Algeria in October 1942. George Marshall had warned Clark about publicity mongering, which was so at odds with the selfless ethic embodied by the chief of staff. He also complained to Eisenhower that the army commander was "being victimized by his wife."

"It causes me some embarrassment," Eisenhower subsequently wrote Clark in late November, but "you are being unwittingly hurt by a particular type of publicity in the States…. G.C.M. has specifically noted that certain items so repeated have occasioned some merriment, possibly even

sarcasm."

Clark was furious, rebuking Renie twice. If beguiled by public attention, he preferred to orchestrate it himself. "I do not want you to refer to me in any way in your talks," he wrote after reading Eisenhower's cable. "Positively no quotes from me, for some I have seen lately have been embarrassing…. Hate to write to you about this publicity business, for I feel your work is superior." A month later, after a magazine article cited his letters, he fairly sputtered while writing to her. "I deeply regret that. I have said so much about it and gotten no place that I do not know what to do," he complained. "For goodness sake let's see that no more of that stuff gets out."

Clark's virtues as a commander should have been evident enough without Renie's advocacy. He was disciplined, fearless, and, as one admiring colonel put it, "broad-gauged." He spent most waking hours among his troops, often in harm's way, with one long leg draped over the jeep's fender during what he called "ringside" visits. The enormous logistical and administrative complexities of running a big army fazed him not at all. He was attentive to requests from the front and to the perquisites due frontline troops returning to the rear for a rest. For esprit, he commissioned a Fifth Army song and distributed mimeographed lyrics so that puzzled theatergoers could belt out the anthem in the Caserta opera house. "I want my headquarters to be a happy one," he declared.

There was the rub. "The general was a difficult man to satisfy," recalled a former aide, Vernon A. Walters, who later rose to three-star rank and served as the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations. "I often lay in my sleeping bag at night reading by flashlight my letters of commendation and citations solely to reassure myself that I was not a complete damn fool." Disinclined to seek advice or admit error, Clark conveyed a hauteur made more pronounced by his height: he literally looked down on nearly everyone. "A very impatient man," a senior staff officer once said, and in Italy that was not necessarily a virtue. At times he berated his aides and castigated his staff, including the long-suffering Al Gruenther, whose pale skin, thin nose, and high forehead reminded one observer of "a rather Renaissance Florentine." Early each morning Clark called his corps commanders and then rebuked his staff for knowing less than he about overnight developments; Gruenther responded by dispatching officers to the front late at night so they could phone in reports before Clark awoke.

Already he had begun to think of Rome possessively. In late January, he told Field Marshal Wilson that Fifth Army had fought "a long and bloody battle up the Italian peninsula" and is "entitled to take Rome." He encouraged the reporter C. L. Sulzberger to remain close so "you can tell the world just how Mark Clark took Rome." Another correspondent, Eric Sevareid, concluded that for Clark the Italian campaign was foremost an opportunity for "personal publicity, without which warmaking is a dull job, devoid of glamour and recompense."

Surely that was too harsh. Like his thinning hair and drooping mouth, Clark's growing fixation on Rome was in part a manifestation of stress. The city's capture would not only fulfill a military and political objective but also affirm that this grievous campaign had been worthwhile. Since Salerno, battle casualties alone in Fifth Army exceeded 37,000. If one death was a tragedy and a million deaths a statistic, what would the twenty thousand dead required to take Rome amount to? In a confessional moment, Clark told Vernon Walters:

> Sometimes if I appear to be unreasonable, you must remember the burdens I bear are heavy. The time comes when I have to give orders that will result in the death of a large number of fine young men—and this is a responsibility that I cannot share with anybody. I must bear it by myself.

For two hours the torpedo boats bounded north at nearly forty knots, swinging wide of German shore batteries near Monte Circeo, where the enchantress Circe, daughter of the sun, had turned Odysseus's men into swine. Morning haze draped the sea and the throbbing engines drowned conversation. Clark perched on his stool, lost in thought. Lookouts scanned the waves ahead. "Sometimes," one Anzio veteran warned, "what looked like a piece of driftwood turns out to be a corpse."

At 8:40 A.M., twelve miles south of Anzio, the minesweeper U.S.S. *Sway* blinkered a challenge with its twelve-inch searchlight, asking the boats approaching out of the rising sun to identify themselves. Visibility was poor, air raids at the beachhead had just triggered an alert, and *Sway* several nights earlier had been attacked by German E-boats. Clark stood for a better view as *PT-201* blinkered back at a range of two thousand yards, then fired the day's recognition signal: green and yellow flares.

One minute after the initial challenge, *Sway* opened fire. Three-inch shells screamed across the sea. *PT-216* reversed course to port and sped away, but *201* stopped dead to acknowledge the shot across the bow. The next rounds splintered plywood and mahogany. A shell detonated against *201*'s deckhouse, shattering Clark's stool, and another blew through the tiny galley below. Fifty-caliber and 40mm rounds swarmed around the boat like hornets. "Machine gun bullets and heavier stuff tore the air overhead, making whistling sounds and swooshes," reported Frank Gervasi, the *Collier's* correspondent, who had come along for the ride. The initial salvo wounded five sailors, two of them mortally. Blood slicked the deck from an officer with a severed leg artery and a swab whose kneecap had been blown off. For a few moments, no one manned the helm, until an ensign took the wheel despite wounds to both legs. Clark seized the flare gun and fired more green and yellow flares, unaware that haze made the yellow pyrotechnics look red from *Sway*'s deck. The shooting continued.

"What shall we do?" Clark asked a wounded lieutenant.

"Don't know."

"Let's run for it."

Clark helped brace the helmsman as he opened the throttle and spun the wheel. The boat pirouetted and fled in a great flume of spray, chased by the minesweeper's shells. Half an hour later, *201* rendezvoused peacefully with H.M.S. *Acute,* transferring her wounded to the British warship. The skipper of *216* boarded *201* and guided her into Anzio harbor at noon, although not before another German raid on the port delayed Clark further. *Sway*'s crew was unrepentant. "The goddam light was bad and we couldn't read your goddam signals," one sailor told Gervasi. While averring that the incident was "a weight on the conscience of every officer and man aboard," *Sway*'s captain blamed the torpedo boats for their own misadventure. A Navy inquiry agreed, but Clark privately charged the minesweeper with "as flagrant an error of judgment…as I have ever seen."

If the morning had taken "a downward slant," in Clark's wry phrase, an afternoon in Lucas's command post hardly redeemed the day. Staff officers of VI Corps worked in a former Italian military barracks near Nettuno's Piazza del Mercato, but artillery fire and an unexploded bomb through the ceiling would soon drive the headquarters into the wine cellars under an *osteria* at Via Romana 9. For now, the sandbags around the barracks grew higher by the hour. Sailors steaming into Anzio harbor laid wagers on whether "this white apartment house or that pink villa would be standing on their return."

Wrapped in a belted Army trench coat and pulling on his corncob pipe, Lucas used a large map to show Clark his predicament. Heavy surf occasionally closed the landing beaches, and a sudden storm on Tuesday had marooned all Navy pontoons ashore before they could be hoisted from the water. Enemy raids often disrupted port operations and harassed the cargo fleet. Of greater concern was the imminent return to Britain of most LSTs; as few as a dozen would be left in the Medterranean after

February 10, and at least seventy-two shiploads would be required in Anzio by mid-February. Daily matériel requirements had climbed from 1,500 tons a day to 2,300. Some LCIs sailing from Naples now carried a hundred tons of ammunition, triple the prudent load, and Navy brokers had begun identifying civilian schooners for use as cargo vessels.

As for the enemy, every day Lucas's G-2 identified more German units converging on the beachhead: the 29th Panzer Grenadier Division, then the Hermann Göring, then two armored divisions from southern France, then the 90th Panzer Grenadier. The day before, it had been estimated that four thousand German infantry and armor troops occupied Albano, including two paratrooper battalions and several hundred horse-and motorcycle-mounted troops. If the Allies were not already outnumbered, it was only a matter of time: by Sunday, an estimated 72,000 Germans would face 61,000 Anglo-Americans. The enemy appeared intent on shoving the beachhead into the sea, although that was uncertain. "We deal not with the true," as intelligence officers liked to say, "but with the likely."

Lucas sucked on his pipe stem. As he would soon write in a private note to Brigadier General Robert Frederick, whose 1st Special Service Force was heading to the beachhead, "Our enemies did not react exactly in the manner expected. Troops were rushed in."

None of this surprised Clark. Ultra intercepts had provided transparent detail of German movements under Operation RICHARD, including the shift of troops from fourteen divisions in France, Germany, northern Yugoslavia, and elsewhere. Even the German venereal disease hospital in Rome had been combed out. In many cases, however, only fragments of those enemy units had reached the beachhead. Clark told Lucas that the cumulative opposition "does not exceed three full divisions," with "indications that [Kesselring] is having difficulties reinforcing your front." All the more reason, Clark added, to seize Cisterna and Campoleone quickly.

Lucas agreed. In fact, Truscott today had drafted his order for an attack on Cisterna, to be led by infiltrating Rangers and two 3rd Division regiments, all bound for Highway 7. VI Corps Field Order No. 20 would coordinate a British lunge on the left with that American thrust on the right, both intended to "seize the high ground in the vicinity of Colli Laziali" and to "prepare to continue the advance on Rome." The attack was to begin the next day, Saturday, January 29.

Clark nodded. He hoped this would mollify Alexander, and whoever in London was lashing him on. With a few parting words of encouragment, he strode from the command post and climbed into a jeep for the short ride to the Villa Borghese; in a pine thicket behind the hundred-room seventeenth-century mansion, he planned to install another Fifth Army command post to keep a closer eye on the beachhead.

That prospect pleased Lucas no more than Alexander's hovering presence at Caserta pleased Clark. In his diary, the corps commander wrote:

> His gloomy attitude is certainly bad for me. He thinks I should have been aggressive on D-day and should have gotten tanks and things out to the front…. I have done what I was ordered to do, desperate though it was. I can win if I am let alone but don't know whether or not I can stand the strain of having so many people looking over my shoulder.

In a message to Clark on Saturday morning, Lucas affected a doughty determination. "Will go all out tomorrow," he signaled, "or at once, if conditions warrant." As Alexander had urged, risks must be taken.

The brightest news awaiting Clark at Anzio was not on the beachhead but a mile above it. On January 27 and 28, an obscure fighter unit, known formally as the 99th Fighter Squadron (Separate), made its first significant mark in combat with guns blazing, shooting down twelve German aircraft. Inspiriting as the action was for Lucas's corps, the contribution of a couple dozen black pilots—known collectively as the Tuskegee airmen, after the Alabama field where they had learned to fly—would resonate beyond the beachhead, beyond Italy, and beyond the war.

This moment had been a long time coming. Blacks had fought in every American war since the Revolution; of more than 200,000 to serve in Union uniforms during the Civil War, 33,000 had been killed. After the war, Congress created four black Army regiments, including two cavalry units later known to High Plains Indians as "buffalo soldiers" because of the supposed resemblance of the troopers' hair to a bison's coat.

More than one million blacks also served in uniform in World War I, but only fifty thousand saw combat. The white commander of one black unit denounced his troops as "hopelessly inferior, lazy, slothful…. If you need combat soldiers, and especially if you need them in a hurry, don't put your time upon Negroes." A lieutenant colonel quoted in a 1924 War Department study articulated the prevalent white bias: "The Negro race is thousands of years behind the Caucasian race in the higher psychic development." Between the world wars, military camps in the American south increasingly adopted local Jim Crow laws and customs; a War Department directive in 1936 appended the designation "colored" to any unit composed of nonwhite troops.

There were not many. When World War II began in September 1939, fewer than four thousand blacks served in the U.S. Army; more than two years later, the U.S. Navy had only six black sailors—excluding mess stewards—plus a couple of dozen others coming out of retirement. A seven-point White House policy issued in 1940 began with the premise that "Negro personnel in the Army will be proportionate to that in the general population (about 10 percent)" and ended with a bigot's pledge: "Racial segregation will be maintained." Few leadership opportunities existed. At the time of the Anzio landings, the U.S. Army had 633,000 officers, of whom only 4,500 were black. The U.S. Navy was worse, with 82,000 black enlisted sailors and no black officers; the Marine Corps, which had rejected all black enlistments until President Roosevelt intervened, would not commission its first black officer until several months after the war ended.

Another War Department decree of 1940 asserted that segregation "has proven satisfactory over a long period of years." A survey of white enlisted men in 1942 revealed "a strong prejudice against sharing recreation, theater, or post exchange facilities with Negroes"; of southern soldiers polled, only 4 percent favored equal PX privileges for their black comrades. White soldiers "have pronounced views with respect to the Negro," the adjutant general concluded. "The Army is not a sociological laboratory." Segregation created perverse redundancies—an Army memo in July 1943 noted that "the 93rd Division has three bands, and the 92nd Division has four bands"—but the status quo obtained. "Experiments within the Army in the solution of social problems are fraught with danger to efficiency, discipline, and morale," George Marshall warned.

The 1940 Draft Act banned racial discrimination, but only 250 blacks sat on the nation's 6,400 draft boards; most southern states forbade *any* African-American board members. White America's treatment of the hundreds of thousands of black volunteers and draftees ranged from unfortunate to despicable. The Mississippi congressional delegation asked the War Department to keep all black officers out of the state for the duration. Discrimination and segregation remained the rule in military barracks, churches, swimming pools, libraries, and service clubs. German and Italian prisoner trustees could use the post exchange at Fort Benning, Georgia; black U.S. Army soldiers could not. *Time* reported that "Negro troops being shipped through El Paso, Texas, were barred from the Harvey House restaurant at the depot and were given cold handouts. They could see German prisoners of war seated

in the restaurant and fed hot food." A War Department pamphlet, "Command of Negro Troops," advised white officers in February 1944 that black soldiers preferred not to be called "boy, darky, nigger, aunty, mammy, nigress, and uncle." Churning resentment led to bloody confrontations between white and black troops, not only in the Deep South but also in Detroit, Los Angeles, New York, Arizona, and England. When a whites-only café in South Carolina refused service to sixteen black officers, they shouted, "Heil, Hitler!" Many blacks endorsed the "Double V" campaign proposed by a Pittsburgh newspaper: a righteous struggle for victory over both enemies abroad and racism at home.

Yet getting into the fight was itself a struggle. Among the prevalent stereotypes was a belief that blacks were too dumb, too lazy, or too apathetic to serve as combat troops. An Army study decried their "lack of education and mechanical skill," as well as "a venereal rate eight to ten times that of white troops, a tendency to abuse equipment, lack of interest in the war, and particularly among northern troops a concern for racial 'rights,' which often culminated in rioting." In the summer of 1943, only 17 percent of black soldiers were high school graduates, compared with 41 percent of whites. In Army tests that measured educational achievement rather than native intelligence, more than four in five blacks scored in the lowest two categories compared to fewer than one in three whites. General McNair, the chief of Army Ground Forces, declared that "a colored division is too great a concentration of Negroes to be effective."

Consequently, blacks were shunted into quartermaster companies for duty as truck drivers, bakers, launderers, laborers, and the like. By January 1944, 755,000 blacks wore Army uniforms—they made up 8.5 percent of the force—but only two in ten served in combat units compared to four in ten whites. Under pressure from black civic leaders and a crying need for fighters, three black Army divisions had been created: the 2nd Cavalry, which arrived in North Africa only to be disbanded to provide service troops; the 93rd Infantry, shipped to the Pacific; and the 92nd Infantry, which would arrive in Italy in late summer 1944 as the only African-American division to see combat in Europe.

Officered above the platoon level almost exclusively by whites, the 92nd would endure trials by fire that only partly involved the Germans. Training was halted for two months to teach the men to read, since illiteracy in the division exceeded 60 percent. A black veteran later described "an intangible, elusive undercurrent of resentment, bitterness, even despair and hopelessness among black officers and enlisted men in the division." That sentiment in some measure could be laid at the feet of the 92nd commander, Major General Edward M. Almond, an overbearing Virginian who would oppose integration of the armed forces until his dying day in 1975. "The white man…is willing to die for patriotic reasons. The Negro is not," Almond declared. "No white man wants to be accused of leaving the battle line. The Negro doesn't care…. People think that being from the south we don't like Negroes. Not at all. But we understand his capabilities. And we don't want to sit at the table with them." In a top secret report after the war, Almond asserted that black officers lacked "pride, aggressiveness, [and] a sense of responsibility." His chief of staff added, "Negro soldiers learn slowly and forget quickly."

Such obstacles and more faced the 99th Fighter Squadron. Before the war, only nine black Americans possessed commercial pilot certificates, and fewer than three hundred had private licenses. Training began at Tuskegee Army Air Field in July 1941; the first pilots received their wings the following spring, then waited a year before deploying to North Africa as the only black AAF unit in a combat zone. Commanding the squadron was Lieutenant Colonel Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., the thirty-year-old son of the Army's sole black general. Young Davis at West Point had endured four years of silence from classmates who refused to speak to him because of his race, reducing him to what he called "an invisible man." From that ordeal, and from the segregated toilets, theaters, and clubs at Tuskegee, Davis concluded that blacks "could best overcome racist attitudes through their

achievements," including prowess in the cockpit.

Those achievements proved hard to come by. A week before the invasion of Sicily, a black lieutenant shot down an enemy plane over the Mediterranean. But for months thereafter the 99th was relegated to such routine duty that not a single Axis aircraft was encountered, much less destroyed. Accidents killed several pilots, and the squadron earned a hard-luck reputation. White superiors voiced doubts about "a lack of aggressive spirit," and accused the Tuskegee pilots of shortcomings in stamina, endurance, and cold-weather tolerance. "The negro type has not the proper reflexes to make a first-class fighter pilot," one general asserted. Hap Arnold, the AAF chief, suggested moving the 99th to a rear area, "thus releasing a white squadron for a forward combat area." Citing leaked classified information, *Time* reported in late September that "the top air command was not altogether satisfied with the 99th's performance."

Davis, who was promoted to command an all-black fighter group, returned to Washington to refute the criticisms before a War Department committee in October. Others rallied to the squadron's defense, including one accomplished white pilot who described the 99th as "a collection of born dive bombers." Lieutenant General Ira C. Eaker, the senior American airman in the Mediterranean, concluded that "90 percent of the trouble with Negro troops was the fault of the whites." The 99th moved closer to the action at an airfield outside Naples. Still, the squadron in six months had flown nearly 1,400 sorties on 225 missions without downing a single Luftwaffe plane.

Then came the morning of January 27. A patrol of sixteen P-40 Warhawks led by Lieutenant Clarence Jamison flew at five thousand feet over Peter Beach, several miles north of Anzio, just as fifteen FW-190s pulled out of an attack on the Allied anchorage. The Warhawks heeled over in a compact dive, each pilot firing short bursts from his half dozen .50-caliber machine guns. "I saw a Focke-Wulfe 190 and jumped directly on his tail," Lieutenant Willie Ashley, Jr., later reported. "I started firing at close range, so close that I could see the pilot." Flames spurted from the enemy fuselage, then from another and another. One Luftwaffe pilot dove to the treetops and fled toward Rome only to clip the earth in a flaming cartwheel. Bullets raked a fifth Focke-Wulfe from nose to tail until the plane fluttered in a momentary stall, then fell off on one flaming wing. "The whole show lasted less than five minutes," Major Spanky Roberts said. "It was a chasing battle, as the Germans were always on the move. We poured hell into them."

After refueling in Naples, the 99th returned to the beachhead, then in another snarling dogfight at 2:25 P.M. shot down three more enemy raiders, including one plane that was bushwacked while closing on a Warhawk's tail. On Friday morning, as Clark struggled to reach Nettuno on *PT-201,* the 99th slammed into another raiding party, shooting down four. In two days the squadron tallied twelve enemy planes destroyed, three probable kills, and four damaged. A single American pilot was killed.

It was a chasing battle, as Major Roberts had said, and it would remain a chasing battle. But nothing would ever be quite the same. One black soldier, fated to die in action in Italy a year later, wrote home: "Negroes are doing their bit here, their supreme bit, not for glory, not for honor, but for, I think, the generation that will come."

Jerryland

ON Saturday afternoon, January 29, Lucian Truscott limped up the narrow staircase to the second floor of his new command post, an old stone monastery with a red tile roof in the medieval village of Conca, midway between Nettuno and Cisterna. Gum trees and sycamores gave the compound an arboreal tranquillity, dispelled by the proximate grumble of artillery. A squat tower resembling a blockhouse poked above the roofline; from the peak an American flag had briefly flown until German

gunners began using it as an aiming stake. The 3rd Division war room filled the first floor with maps, jangling phones, and the anticipatory hum that always preceded a big offensive. Truscott had spread his bedroll in the tiled kitchen with no expectation of sleep.

He still spoke in a raspy whisper, although his morbid throat had improved along with his lacerated leg: on Monday afternoon, a falling 20mm antiaircraft round had detonated six inches from Truscott's left foot, peppering his cavalry boot, breeches, and ankle with steel fragments. After a surgeon tweezed out the shards, General Lucas insisted on handing him a Purple Heart. "It is truly superficial, but the doctors have my foot so strapped up that I hobble a bit when I walk," Truscott wrote Sarah a day later. As for the Anzio landings, he told her, no one at home should assume "that the war is about over. Far from it, believe me." He asked her to send his copy of *The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth*, the rationalist edition of the New Testament compiled by Thomas Jefferson beginning in 1804. The Jefferson Bible, as it was commonly called, seemed like good beachhead reading.

A window with casement shutters on the second floor gave Truscott a sweeping view across the Pontine Marshes. The west branch of the Mussolini Canal snaked through the farm fields a mile ahead. From Conca, the northbound road crossed the canal on a plank bridge and ran for three more miles to Isola Bella, a hamlet that marked the beachhead's outer boundary. Two miles farther on lay Highway 7 and Cisterna, known to St. Paul as Three Taverns. Here, while under arrest en route to Rome in the first century, the apostle "thanked God and took courage" after encountering a band of Roman Christians. Modern Cisterna lay at the confluence of five major roads and a rail line. Truscott on Wednesday had suggested seizing the town immediately, using his entire division along with British troops and a newly arrived regiment from the 45th Division. But Lucas preferred to wait until more tanks from the 1st Armored Division arrived to lend heft to the British effort on the left, which offered a more direct route to the Colli Laziali and Rome.

The delay hardly seemed imprudent. Prisoner interrogations and captured German diaries depicted a glum, disheartened enemy. "Spirits are not particularly high since $4^1/2$ years of war start to get on your nerves," a soldier in the Wehrmacht's 71st Division had written on January 26. Two days later, one of his comrades added, "The air roars and whistles. Shells explode all around us. Since January 21 I have not been able to take my boots off." This morning's 3rd Division intelligence report noted that "the enemy's attitude on our front is entirely defensive," with most forces hugging the hills five miles beyond Cisterna. Enemy "patrolling has not been aggressive…. There is evidence that [German] platoon and squad leadership has begun to deteriorate." Hermann Göring troops manned "our right flank and front," with a few other units fed "into the line piecemeal as they have arrived…. It does not now seem probable that the enemy will soon deliver a major counterattack involving units of division size." The VI Corps attack, originally planned for early this morning, January 29, had been postponed until the following morning because of an unfortunate incident in the British sector: on Friday, three jeeps carrying officers from the 5th Grenadier Guards had missed a turn on the road to Campoleone and blundered into a German ambush. Seven men were killed or captured, and with four Grenadier companies now stripped to only four officers, General Penney requested another day to organize his attack. Lucas agreed. Again, it hardly seemed to matter.

Truscott scanned the fenny landscape with his field glasses, unaware that the intelligence assessment was delusional or that the additional delay would carry baneful consequences. Kesselring had planned a massive counterattack for January 28, then chose a four-day postponement to bring more reinforcements through the Brenner Pass. Allied air attacks had temporarily snipped the rail lines across northern Italy, but because foul weather obscured rail targets for at least half of all heavy bombing sorties, Wehrmacht troops and supplies leaked through to the beachhead. On this very evening, the 26th Panzer Division would arrive in force from the Adriatic front, "a possibility that we

had not seriously considered," Clark later confessed. Several thousand additional Germans shored up the thin Hermann Göring line at Cisterna, so that instead of encountering one division along a broad front on Sunday morning, Darby's Rangers and Truscott's infantry would find two. Eleven battalions defended Cisterna, roughly threefold the expected force. All told, German forces encircling the beachhead exceeded 71,000 men in 33 battalions, with 238 field guns. As General Penney noted in his diary, "The Germans don't let mistakes go unpunished and don't give second chances."

Birds sang in the marsh grass and a pale sun glinted off the brimming irrigation ditches. Here and there a soldier scurried from one soggy copse to another. Outside the Conca monastery, graceful sycamore branches nodded in the breeze. Truscott saw it all, and he saw nothing. He clumped down the stairs to finish his plan.

Darby's Rangers spent Saturday afternoon in a piney wood near Nettuno sharpening their blades, cleaning their rifles, and napping on pine-bough beds. A week on the beachhead had left them "solemn, tired, and quiet," one Ranger recalled. Few had shaved since sailing from Pozzuoli—a disgusted paratrooper wrote that they "looked like cutthroats [or] the sweepings of the bar rooms"—and company barbers stayed busy until the light failed. Each rifleman stuffed his pockets with grenades and coiled two extra bandoliers over his shoulders, removing the tracer rounds to avoid pinpointing a shooter's position at night. Bedrolls and barracks bags were stacked on a canvas ground cloth in the custody of the company cooks; souvenirs accumulated since Gela and Maiori were carefully tucked away: a German knife, a British Commando cap, a pumice fragment from Vesuvius. Mail arrived late Saturday, but with no time for mail call—a Ranger never carried personal letters into combat—the clerks promised to haul the sacks to Cisterna on Sunday morning. Teamsters from Nettuno also brought up extra ammunition. Shells rattled in the truck beds like dry bones.

Darby had been busy since dawn. After a war council with his three battalion commanders, at one P.M. he conferred with Truscott in the Conca monastery, then scouted the road to Isola Bella. His 4th Battalion, led by an eight-man minesweeping crew, would press down that road at two A.M. on Sunday, opening a path toward Cisterna for heavy weapons and supplies. The 1st and 3rd Battalions would creep up the Pantano *fosso,* a deep irrigation ditch that roughly paralleled the road from the Mussolini Canal to within a mile of Cisterna. Ranger infiltration had succeeded admirably in Tunisia, and Darby stressed "avoiding contact with the enemy" as long as possible through the terrain the Rangers now called Jerryland. Behind the Ranger spearhead, Truscott's 7th Infantry Regiment on the left and 15th Infantry on the right would advance on a seven-mile front, to cut Highway 7 north and south of Cisterna.

While careful to display only robust confidence to his men, Darby felt uncommon ambivalence about this evening's mission. The size of the attack heartened him, as did intelligence suggesting the road to Cisterna was lightly held, perhaps by a German infantry regiment protecting artillery and antitank batteries. An OSS agent—one of several anti-Fascists recruited in Naples and living in a Nettuno barracks equipped with a radio and a Ping-Pong table—had just returned from two days behind the lines to report seeing only four enemy battalions along the Conca–Cisterna corridor. The Rangers seemed indomitable. When Darby asked a young private first class if he was nervous, the soldier replied, "I'm not nervous, sir. I'm just shaking with patriotism." They were "the finest body of troops ever gathered together," Darby had told an OSS officer. "They don't surrender either. They fight for keeps."

Yet the expansion of the force from one battalion to three, and the loss of veteran Rangers since the TORCH landings fifteen months earlier, had led to a deterioration in fighting skills, noise discipline,

and fieldcraft. Too many men still bunched up when moving cross-country, or failed to freeze when a flare popped. How many knew to muffle a canteen with an old sock, or to suppress a cough with fingers pressed on the Adam's apple, or to dull a helmet's gleam with mud or wood smoke?

The Cisterna plan also nagged at Darby. Was it too risky, too bold? Would Truscott's infantry quickly reinforce the Ranger infiltrators? No Ranger reconnaissance had been possible past Isola Bella for fear of alerting the Germans. Aerial photos had seemed to show fields crisscrossed with hedgerows, which instead proved to be briar-choked irrigation ditches. The loss on Wednesday of two mortar companies aboard the ill-fated *LST 422* had been a blow, and this afternoon Darby realized that the ground was too boggy for other mortarmen to negotiate the Pantano Ditch; the heavy tubes instead would have to come up the road behind the 4th Battalion, along with the machine guns. Finally, a new fragment of intelligence had arrived an hour after sunset, at 6:35 P.M.: "The city may have considerable opposition."

By then the men had begun to filter out of their pine redoubt, singing "Pistol Packin' Mama" as they shambled under an overcast sky in columns of twos toward the line of departure, seven miles north. Usually the passwords chosen for an operation contained sounds difficult for German-speakers to pronounce: the "th" in "thistle" or the rolling "r" in "price." Tonight's challenge-and-parole was simple: "bitter/sweet." Upon reaching Cisterna—known by the unfortunate code-name EASY—the Rangers were to loft several red Very flares to signal their success.

The singing ceased. "Morale of men was excellent," the 1st Battalion log noted. The 3rd Battalion commander, Major Alvah H. Miller, had recently written a poem describing a walk through the Ranger bivouac late at night, listening to the sounds of his slumbering men: one laughs aloud, playing with the son he has never seen; another murmurs his wife's name, Marilyn; another whimpers under dreamy shell fire that unsettles his sleep.

At midnight, Darby met for a final time with his battalion commanders beside the Conca road. The officers stamped their feet against the biting cold as he reminded them to maintain radio silence for as long as possible.

Good luck, Darby told them. With his rolling gait, elbows cocked, he strode to an isolated farmhouse on the right side of the road where his command post had been set up. The commanders rejoined their waiting troops, blue and vague in the moonless night. Only their eyes glinted from faces daubed with burnt cork. Beyond the Mussolini Canal, four miles from Cisterna, the three battalions separated. The 4th veered left toward the road. The 1st and 3rd tramped single file across a fallow field. Soon the column descended into the Pantano Ditch, like a snake slithering into a hole. The officers took compass readings by matchlight, then pressed north.

At three A.M., near Isola Bella, barely half a mile up the Conca road, the 4th Battalion found trouble. A long burst from a German machine pistol tore open the night, and sheets of fire soon poured from several red farm buildings. One Ranger company was pinned down three hundred yards east of the road; fifteen minutes later a second company was immobilized. Enemy rifle pits had been dug every thirty feet and stiffened by machine-gun nests at hundred-yard intervals. Grazing fire swarmed a foot off the ground, killing a Ranger captain, among others. Mortar rounds stomped across a landscape that soon reeked of blown powder and turned earth. A crude roadblock built from two wrecked jeeps and an Italian truck halted the rest of the battalion, and for the rest of the night three hundred Rangers lay flat in their icy furrows, shooting at muzzle flashes fifty yards away. Worse yet, in the Anzio anchorage twelve miles distant a burning ammunition ship exploded at four A.M. in a white pillar of flame, casting long shadows across the Conca road and backlighting the Rangers for enemy snipers.

From his farmhouse command post, Darby kept an ear cocked to the commotion two thousand yards north. “This was the first intimation,” he later wrote, “that all was not well.”

All was not well in the Pantano Ditch, either. Eight hundred helmets bobbed just below field level as the mile-long column meandered through the muddy scarp, often knee-deep in black water. “We could hear mortar and artillery barrages landing to our left flank,” a Ranger later reported. “Someone whispered, ‘The 4th must be having a bad time.’” Two miles from Cisterna, the 1st Battalion commander, Major Jack Dobson, realized that the 3rd Battalion had fallen behind. Ordering three companies to wait, Dobson pressed ahead with his other three. A runner dispatched to find the missing Rangers soon returned with inauspicious news: Alvah Miller, the 3rd Battalion poet-commander, had been blown to pieces by a point-blank panzer shell in a chance encounter at a German outpost. Avenging Rangers fired the tank with sticky grenades, but the column had been sundered.

Dobson’s vanguard of 150 Rangers crept past a pair of Nebelwerfer batteries, near enough to hear German voices and to see whip antennas silhouetted against the sky. A mile from Cisterna, the ditch angled northwest to end in a culvert under the Conca road. German vehicles whizzed past in both directions, and a pair of self-propelled guns two hundred yards away fired at the beachhead with a monotonous thud. In hushed tones, Dobson tried to reach Darby by radio; the enemy force appeared much larger than expected, and with Miller dead perhaps it made sense to swing both battalions to the east, where the Mussolini Canal could shield their flank. After ten minutes, unable to raise the command post, Dobson cradled the handset. Without Darby’s approval, he could not alter the plan.

Across the road the Rangers stole, melting into an olive orchard on the far side. A German sentry flopped beneath a silver bough, blood cascading from his slashed throat. Tendrils of gray light began to bleach the eastern sky. Dobson swerved north on a trail parallel to the Conca road, the Rangers now at a trot, racing the dawn. A shout carried, then another, then a gunshot. Dark figures wrapped in blankets rose from the earth, stumbling about as Dobson’s men realized they had blundered into a German camp. Another sentry fell with his throat opened in a crimson crescent, screaming to wake the living and the dead alike. The mêlée spread across the bivouac—“chaos compounded,” in one description—and the pulpy sound of plunging knives and bayonets could be heard between the grenade bursts and crackling rifles. “I emptied my M-1 so much and so fast that the wood [stock] was smoking,” a Ranger later reported. The butt end of 1st Battalion scampered across the road toward the sound of the guns, followed by several companies from 3rd Battalion, including bazooka teams that shattered two tanks in a brilliant spray of orange flame.

Dawn, that harsh betrayer of predicaments, revealed this one. The Rangers occupied a triangular field half a mile across, bounded by the Conca road on the east, the Ponte Rotta road on the north, and a boggy skein of irrigation ditches to the west. Several hundred yards beyond the intersecting roads lay a rail embankment and the Cisterna train station. A ramshackle farmstead known as the Calcaprini house provided a command post for Dobson, who estimated that at least seven German machine guns now ranged his position from tree lines to the north and west.

Hardly had the Rangers begun to dig in than from the south came the creak of tank tracks. Certain that 4th Battalion had broken through with an armored spearhead, the men cheered lustily, until the underbrush parted to reveal the iron cross insignia of a Mk IV panzer.

“Then it opened up on us,” Corporal Ben W. Mosier recalled. “After the first volley, you felt naked.” Several self-propelled guns also clanked into view. Rangers swarmed forward. Shooting at vision slits, they leaped onto the hulls to lift the hatches and spray the crews with their tommy guns. Dobson shot a tank commander with his .45 pistol and flipped a white-phosphorus grenade into the turret. Milky smoke boiled from the vents; as he leaped from the tank, a bazooka round detonated against the bogie wheels, wounding him badly in the left hip.

From Highway 7 and the hills above Cisterna, German reinforcements boiled into the fight

beneath an overcast sky that kept Allied warplanes at bay. Step by step the Rangers retreated until nine companies had squeezed into an exposed swatch three hundred yards across, just below the Ponte Rotta road; three others went to ground southeast of the main force. Wounded soldiers jammed a stone building near the Calcaprini house that had been converted to an aid station. As a German soldier crept toward the window with a grenade, medic Micky T. Romine shot him in the face with a .45. “I have shot that man a thousand times in my dreams,” he later confessed. Panzer machine guns stitched the ditches and marsh brakes. “You could run about twenty yards and then hit the ground,” Sergeant Thomas B. Fergen recalled. “If you waited longer, they got you.” A Ranger severely wounded in the face asked Fergen to shoot him. “We’re finished,” he said, “and I don’t want them to get me.” Fergen shook his head. “Don’t be crazy,” he murmured.

Rangers held in reserve gave half their ammunition to comrades in the line, but by late morning precious little remained. German snipers fired from trees, houses, holes, and farm silos, each terrifying *pop!* punctuating the larger din. “The tracers were flying close enough to stop them with your hand,” a Ranger said. A platoon leader shot in the chest sprayed blood with every breath; so many leaders had fallen that their inexperienced subordinates struggled to adjust artillery fires.

Shortly after noon someone cried, “Them bastards is giving up!” Three hundred yards to the south, a dozen captured Rangers from the 3rd Battalion walked with their hands high toward the Calcaprini house, trailed by a German paratrooper squad and a pair of armored personnel carriers. As the group approached, Rangers on the flanks opened fire, killing two guards. Other Germans bayoneted two American captives in the back. “Surrender,” a voice called in accented English, “or we shall shoot the prisoners.” More Rangers tossed aside their rifles and with hands raised joined the captives. When the ragged procession closed to within 150 yards of the command post, a Ranger “fired a shot into our column and killed one of our men,” Captain Charles M. Shunstrom later recounted. “This one shot started everybody else firing, and the result was that two or three of our own men were killed in the column plus one or two German guards.” The Germans scattered as grenadiers and armor crews “started to spray our column of prisoners with automatic fire.” More Rangers surrendered, Shunstrom reported, and “even an attempt to stop them by shooting them failed.”

Darby for several hours had labored under the sweet illusion that despite 4th Battalion’s travails the infiltrators were “apparently okay,” as he told Truscott’s headquarters by phone. Shortly before five A.M., he added, “Things are going well.” But by first light he was worried. At 6:15 he reported that the Ranger force “is having a hell of a time. There isn’t any contact with my 1st and 3rd battalions.” A reconnaissance troop barreling up the Conca road in jeeps hit “a solid sheet of machine gun fire and hand grenades”; of forty-three men, only one escaped capture or death.

News from Truscott’s regiments was relentlessly grim. On Darby’s flanks, the 7th Infantry and 15th Infantry were each to have infiltrated a battalion followed by tanks. The 1st Battalion of the 15th Infantry was pinned down immediately and by nightfall on January 30 had covered barely a mile. The 1st Battalion of the 7th Infantry fared even worse, struggling with barbed wire, steep ditches, German flares, and casualties that by sunset pared the unit from 800 men to 150. Sergeant Truman O. Olson, a machine gunner in B Company, fired more than three thousand rounds before being mortally wounded; he was among four 3rd Division soldiers awarded the Medal of Honor for valor at Cisterna, three of them posthumously.

At seven A.M., the first radio dispatch from Major Dobson—with word of Miller’s death—told Darby that his entire command was at risk. An hour later, the news was even more dire, but the radio failed and not until early afternoon could signalers again raise the embattled Rangers at the Calcaprini

house. A weepy 1st Battalion captain sounded so overwrought that Darby asked to speak to Sergeant Major Robert E. Ehalt, one of his original Rangers.

"Some of the fellows are giving up, Colonel." Ehalt spoke slowly, his voice steady. "We are awfully sorry. They can't help it, because we're running out of ammunition. But I ain't surrendering."

An eavesdropping stenographer at Conca jotted down Darby's frantic reply. "Shoot if they come any closer," he said. "Issue some orders but don't let the boys give up…. Who's walking in with their hands up? Don't letthem do it! Get the officers to shoot…. Get the old men together and lam for it…. We're coming through…. Hang on to this radio until the last minute. How many men are still with you? Stick together."

Muffled gunfire crackled through the speaker. "They are coming into the building now," Ehalt said. "So long, Colonel. Maybe when it's all over I'll see you again."

"Use your head and do what is best," Darby said. "You're there and I'm here, unfortunately, and I can't help you. But whatever happens, God bless you…. God bless all of you."

Darby's voice thickened. "Ehalt, I leave everything in your hands," he said. "Tell the men I am with them to the end."

A moment later he phoned Truscott. "My old sergeant major stayed with the last ten men. It apparently was too much for them." Then, asking his staff to leave the room, Darby laid his head on his arms and sobbed. Sergeant Carlo Contrera, who had served as Darby's driver since North Africa, later observed, "He couldn't stand the thought of what was happening to them."

Truscott had stood watch on the second floor of his Conca monastery from two A.M. until first light on Sunday. To the north, German tracers flailed a landscape washed in cold flare light, and artillery flashes limned the horizon. "Situation is confused," noted the 3rd Division log. At dawn a fleet of Sherman tanks and tank destroyers lumbered up the Conca road. "Smoke, dust, the tiny darting figures of men, a great cacophony," wrote another officer, watching through the upstairs casement.

Confusion and cacophony persisted all day. Teller mines halted the tanks just two hundred yards past the 4th Rangers at Isola Bella; eventually the German roadblock gave way, but an even stronger blocking position at Femina Morta—place of the dead woman—again thwarted the American drive. Darby's account of his conversation with Ehalt struck Truscott like a physical blow. "Whole show is folded," the division log recorded. "General very disturbed."

Litter bearers staggered back across the polders, "packing meat." Exhausted soldiers chewed malt and dextrose tablets, their eyelids "heavy as silver dollars," the mortarman Hans Juergensen wrote. Audie Murphy, now a sergeant and recently returned to the 3rd Division after a bout of malaria, described "jeeps drawing trailerloads of corpses…. Arms and legs bobble grotesquely over the sides of the vehicles." A German shell knocked Murphy senseless; upon regaining consciousness, he found the soldier next to him dead. "Living now becomes a matter of destiny, or pure luck," he wrote. "The medics are bloody as butchers…. I see one medic fall dead on a man whose wounds he was dressing. A scrap of metal severed his backbone."

For a renewed push on Monday, January 31, half a dozen generals crowded the Conca monastery, including Clark and Lucas. Lieutenant General Jacob L. Devers, visiting from Algiers, brought a bottle of Gilbey's gin for Truscott's throat, now "considerably worse" from too many cigarettes and too little sleep. Low clouds precluded air support, again, and the high command's hopes rested with Lieutenant Colonel Jack Toffey, whose 2nd Battalion of the 15th Infantry was to veer west of Isola Bella before driving north into Cisterna. Toffey had endured his own close calls at Anzio, escaping with a shredded field jacket and minor wounds when a mine demolished his jeep. "Generally decrepit but still in there

punching okay," he wrote Helen on January 29. His men had deftly seized three bridges over the Mussolini Canal and destroyed four others. "Tired but sleepless; never loses aplomb or sense of humor," Will Lang jotted in his notebook after following Toffey across the beachhead. "Not a man to let a weapon sit around without using it."

"Toffey is rolling," a staff officer noted in the monastery at midday. Yet even with every weapon in the battalion blazing, the enemy entrenchment was too formidable. Toffey covered 2,500 yards, closing almost to the Calcaprini house before a German fusillade drove his troops to ground. On Toffey's left, riflemen from the 1st Battalion of the 7th Infantry crossed the rail tracks two miles northwest of Cisterna, a feat that would not be repeated for another four months; but by early Tuesday the battalion "barely existed as a fighting force," one captain reported. The enemy line buckled a bit, yielding a mile along a five-mile front, and more than two hundred German prisoners were seized around Femina Morta. Then the line stiffened. "All afternoon we throw ourselves against the enemy," Audie Murphy wrote. "If the suffering of men could do the job, the German lines would be split wide open. But not one real dent do we make."

The division was spent, and Truscott knew it. The final mile to Cisterna proved a mile too far. Some companies mustered fewer than two dozen men. Wary of a German counterattack, Truscott ordered his men to dig in and hold tight. He would give Toffey a Silver Star for "fearless leadership" in a lost cause.

As for the Rangers, the sanguinary weekend spilled into Monday. A mortar barrage hit the command post, killing Darby's intelligence officer and five enlisted men. Late in the day, his eyes red, haggard beyond his thirty-two years, Darby drove to the bivouac near the Mussolini Canal where hundreds of bedrolls and barracks bags stood piled on canvas ground cloths, neatly stenciled with the names and serial numbers of men who would never return to collect them.

Captured Rangers shuffled five abreast around Rome's Colosseum for the benefit of German photographers. Italian Fascists jeered and spat from their balconies as the column snaked off to temporary prison pens, including the grease pits in a Roman streetcar barn. A few escaped, but most would spend the duration in German camps like Stalag IIB, sharing huts with men captured a year earlier at Kasserine Pass. In mid-March, a thick stack of postcards would be mailed to wives and parents across America: "I am a prisoner in German captivity, but in perfect health."

The February 1 morning report for the 1st Ranger Battalion listed page after page of Rangers whose status was changed from "duty" to "MIA": Brown and Hendrickson, Hooks and Keough, Padilla and Perry and Hurtado and Buddenhagen. Of 767 men who had trekked up the Pantano Ditch with the 1st and 3rd Battalions, only 8 escaped the calamity at Cisterna. An estimated 250 to 300 were dead, and the others, including Sergeant Major Ehalt, had been captured. Moreover, the 4th Battalion suffered 50 percent casualties. Anglo-American losses on January 30 approached 1,500, more than double the D-day casualties at Salerno. German dead, wounded, and missing for the weekend exceeded 1,000. "The enemy has suffered heavily, but our own losses have been high," the Fourteenth Army log noted on January 31.

The hunt for scapegoats began promptly. Clark told his diary that he was "distressed" to discover that the lightly armed Rangers had been used to spearhead the 3rd Division attack at Cisterna, "a definite error in judgment." Clark blamed Truscott and contemplated relieving him until Lucas pointed out that as corps commander he had approved the plan, even though he was surprised to discover that Darby's infiltration tactic consisted of simply slogging up a ditch. The calamity remained secret for six weeks, when German newsreels of the captive Rangers and tales from the

beachhead inspired febrile newspaper allusions to the Alamo and the Little Big Horn. An inquiry ordered by Clark made little headway—most witnesses were either dead or in German cages—and a VI Corps staff officer suggested that the massacre had been "contributed to by so many factors that it can be ascribed only to chance."

Today eclipsed yesterday, as it always did on the battlefield, and the high command turned to more pressing concerns. The beachhead on the VI Corps right had expanded roughly three miles in three days, while the British and the 1st Armored Division on the left had pushed a salient toward Campoleone four miles deep and two miles wide. Kesselring's counterpunch, postponed yet again because of the spoiling attack at Cisterna, had now been rescheduled for February 4, a fact gleaned by Clark a day in advance thanks to Ultra. In a radio message from Caserta, the army commander advised Lucas that orders to capture Cisterna were "rescinded…. You should now consolidate your beachhead and make suitable dispositions to meet an attack."

The war was far from over for Bill Darby, but it was finished for his 6615th Ranger Force. With three battalions all but obliterated, George Marshall disbanded the unit. In March, nearly two hundred surviving Ranger veterans from the original 1st Battalion would leave Naples for home to help train other units, including new Rangers bound for the cliffs at Normandy. Some 250 other survivors who had joined Darby more recently were transferred to Robert Frederick's 1st Special Service Force, now taking positions near the Mussolini Canal.

As his troops took up their entrenching tools and began to dig in, Lucas invited reporters to his upstairs suite at Piazza del Mercato 16 for a chat about battles past and future. Sitting in an armchair with his corncob before a blazing fire, speaking in a voice so low that those on the edge of the circle could barely hear him, the corps commander presented "the round face and the greying moustache of a kindly country solicitor," wrote Wynford Vaughan-Thomas, a BBC correspondent. In simply carving out a beachhead, VI Corps was already building toward six thousand casualties. "There was some suggestion that we should aim at getting to those hills," Lucas said, vaguely gesturing through the north window toward the Colli Laziali. He turned to his intelligence officer. "What's the name of them, Joe?"

But the enemy was strong, "far stronger than we had thought," Lucas continued. He paused, staring for a long moment into the hearth. Tiny flames danced across his spectacle lenses. "I'll tell you what, gentlemen," he said. "That German is a mighty tough fighter. Yes, a mighty tough fighter."

9. The Murder Space

This World and the Next World at Strife

THE holy road up Monte Cassino made seven hairpin turns, each sharper than the one before. Hillside tombs and a Roman amphitheater stood below the first bend, along with remnants of Augustan prosperity from the ancient market town called Casinum. Wagon ruts still scored the paving stones, and the voluptuary Mark Antony was said by Cicero to have "indulged in his wild orgies" at a nearby villa. At the second turn, the Rocca Janula, the castle of a tenth-century abbot, stood above modern Cassino town "like a preacher above his congregation." Up and up the road climbed for six serpentine miles, through olive and scrub oak, on a track followed for centuries by pilgrims, poets, and armed encroachers. Each ascendant bend offered panoramas of the Rapido River and Mignano Gap to the south, and of the dreamy Liri Valley sweeping northwest toward Rome. The latter vista inspired one eleventh-century Italian versifier to scribble, "From here is the way to the apostolic city."

Rounding the last bend, fifteen hundred feet above the valley floor, the great abbey abruptly loomed on the pinnacle, trapezoidal and majestic, seven acres of Travertino stone with a façade twice as long as that of Buckingham Palace. On this acropolis, in an abandoned Roman tower, a wandering hermit named Benedict had arrived in A.D. 529. Born into a patrician family, the young cleric had fled licentious Rome, avoiding a poisoned chalice offered by rival monks and settling on this rocky knob with a desire only "to be agreeable to the Lord." Benedict's Rule gave form to Western monasticism by stressing piety, humility, and the gleaming "armor of obedience." Black-robed Benedictines not only spread the Gospel to flatland pagans, but also helped preserve Western culture through the crepuscular centuries ahead. It was said that Benedict died raising his arms to heaven in the spring of 547, entering paradise "on a bright street strewn with carpets." His bones and those of his twin sister, St. Scholastica, slept in a crypt hewn from his mountain eyrie. Over the span of fifteen centuries, the abbey had been demolished repeatedly—by Lombards, Saracens, earthquakes, and, in 1799, Napoleonic scoundrels—but it was always rebuilt in keeping with the motto *"Succisa Virescit"*: "Struck down, it comes to new life." After a visit to Monte Cassino, the poet Longfellow described the abbey as a place "where this world and the next world were at strife."

Never more than in February 1944. The town below had first been bombed on September 10, and within weeks more than a thousand refugees sheltered in the abbey with seventy monks. "To befoul the abbey," complained the abbot, Dom Gregorio Diamare, "was a poor way of showing gratitude." As the war drew nearer and wells ran dry, most civilians decamped for the hills or cities in the north. An Austrian lieutenant colonel, Julius Schlegel, who before the war had been an art historian and librarian, persuaded Diamarea to remove the abbey's art treasures for safekeeping. Throughout the late fall Wehrmacht trucks rolled up Highway 6 to the Castel Sant'Angelo in Rome, hauling treasures in packing cases cobbled together from wood found in an abandoned factory. The swag was breathtaking: Leonardo's *Leda;* vases and sculptures from ancient Pompeii; eighty thousand volumes and scrolls, including writings by Horace, Ovid, Virgil, and Seneca; oblong metal boxes containing manuscripts by Keats and Shelley; oils by Titian, Raphael, and Tintoretto; priestly vestments and sacramental vessels made by master goldsmiths; even the remains of Desiderius of Bertharius, murdered by Saracens in the eighth century. An immense thirteenth-century Sienese cross was "so large that it could only be carried diagonally across a lorry." The major bones of Benedict and

Scholastica remained in their monastery crypt, but silk-clad reliquaries holding mortal fragments of the saints also went to Rome after a special blessing by the abbot. Two monks rode with every truck to keep the Germans honest; even so, fifteen crates went missing and later turned up in the Hermann Göring Division headquarters outside Berlin.

As the evacuation concluded, Monte Cassino on Hitler's orders became the linchpin of the Gustav Line. Kesselring in mid-December promised the Catholic hierarchy that no German soldier would enter the abbey, and an exclusion zone was traced around the building's outer walls. But day by day both the town and surrounding slopes became more heavily fortified. A Tenth Army order directed that *"allein das Gebäude auszusparen ist"*—only the building itself was to be spared—and Hitler in late December ordered that "the best reserves must stand on the mountain massif. In no circumstances may this be lost."

More observation posts and weapons pits pocked the south face. German engineers had acquired "every rock-drilling machine in the vicinity of greater Rome," a Wehrmacht officer reported. Sappers demolished abbey outbuildings and blew up selected houses in the town to improve fields of fire. More bunkers, pillboxes, and steel dugouts pocked the landscape; Italian laborers not forcibly press-ganged were offered tobacco bonuses to dig faster and deeper. Cassino schools had served as German field hospitals, full of groaning wounded from Sicily, then Salerno, then the Volturno, San Pietro, and a dozen other southern battlefields. But by late January rear-echelon units and civilians alike had fled the town, leaving only combat killers in their subterranean lairs, with orders to stand or die.

The first stray shell hit the abbey in mid-January. The monks went about their daily rituals, which began with matins before dawn. Seven more times during the day they assembled in the carved walnut choir stalls to recite the hours. The seventy-nine-year-old Abbot Diamare and his monks retreated to half a dozen rooms on two corridors of the lowest floor. German foragers confiscated fourteen cows and more than one hundred sheep, paying a pittance, and soon the remaining beasts, including goats, pigs, chickens, and donkeys, were given sanctuary in the abbey. An entry in the abbey log pleaded, "May God shorten these terrible days."

Hundreds of refugees sheltered against the outer walls, in farm buildings, and even in the rabbit warren. Artillery now rattled across the flanks of Monte Cassino, day and night, fraying nerves and killing innocents. A cannonade on the morning of Saturday, February 5, proved particularly unnerving. Forty terrified women rushed to the abbey's main gate, pleading for admission. Turned away by the reluctant monks, the women pounded on the oak door until their knuckles bled. "Insane with fear, they screamed, imploring asylum and even threatening to burn down the door," one account recorded.

The door swung open, the women rushed in. Soon dozens, then hundreds followed, until perhaps a thousand frightened people jammed the abbey. Fetid encampments sprung up in the porter's lodge and the post office, in the carpentry shop and the curia hall. Four hundred bivouacked on the abbey's grand staircase.

The monks chanted and prayed, seeking God's will in the liturgy of the hours. Day followed awful day, parsed by the rhythms of the divine office: matins, lauds, prime, terce, sext, none, vespers, compline. "Idleness is the enemy of the soul," Benedict had warned them. Beyond the stout walls, the artillery sang its canticles.

The failure of the frontal attack across the Rapido River had forced Mark Clark to look to his flanks in an effort to turn the Gustav Line. On the Fifth Army left, the British X Corps soon spent itself along the Garigliano, incurring four thousand casualties without substantive gains during the last two weeks of January. That left the "rain-sodden and dejected landscape" on the Fifth Army right. By

driving west across a primordial outback of scarps and exposed saddles, Allied commanders hoped to outflank Monte Cassino and punch into the Liri Valley behind the abbey.

The French nearly won through. A force of mostly North African troops led by white officers had arrived in Italy, eighteen thousand strong and uniformed in U.S. Army twill. “Look for the fellow wearing the newest and best clothes, and he’s sure to be French,” one Yank grumbled. In bowing back the German line four miles in four days, the FEC—French Expeditionary Corps—had eviscerated a Wehrmacht mountain division. Under the command of a gallant Algerian, General Alphonse Pierre Juin, recognizable by both his Basque beret and his left-handed salute—his right arm had been maimed in 1915—the French renewed their attack on January 25. A day later, the 3rd Algerian Division occupied Monte Belvedere, five miles due north of Cassino and nearly as far inside the Gustav Line. French troops also briefly held Monte Abate above Belvedere, an escarpment so vital that Kesselring anticipated abandoning the entire Gustav Line if it fell.

“It is ordinary men who do the fighting,” an officer in the 2nd Moroccan Division wrote, “and it is all on a human scale.” Yet humanity was elusive in the Italian mountains. German barrages caused French troops to “scream out curses to the world in general,” another officer reported. “That calmed them.” An Algerian sergeant, whose skull was trepanned by shell fire, “ran screaming, tearing at his brains with his hands, and fell dead.” A Tunisian lieutenant who had vowed to be first atop Point 862 also fell dead with a bullet in his forehead; three *tirailleurs* propped the body upright on a seat fashioned from a rifle stock and lugged him to the summit, “faithful to his oath.”

Six German battalions, some reduced to a hundred men, counterattacked to plug the hole and recapture Abate. A French division log recorded: “Hill 700 has been taken by us four times. Hill 771 has been taken by us three times. Hill 915 has been taken by us and unsuccessfully counterattacked four times by the enemy.” Parched colonials died while dashing to exposed mountain streams for a final sip of water; a note found on a dead French officer read, “Haven’t eaten or drunk since we set out.” Others survived by eating captured rations and firing captured munitions.

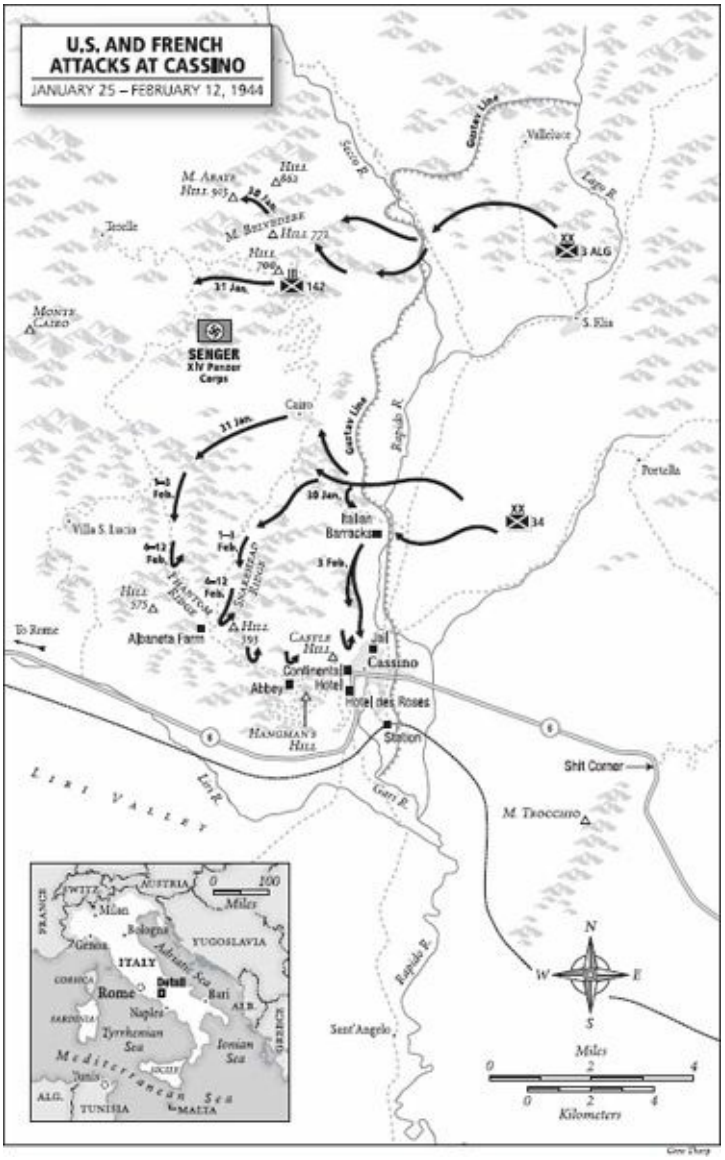
“The human mechanism has its limits,” a French captain wrote in his diary shortly before a machine-gun bullet killed him. Juin reluctantly agreed. To Clark he wrote that his corps had dented the Gustav Line “at the cost of unbelievable efforts and great losses.” One Algerian regiment alone had lost fourteen hundred men, including the commander. German losses amounted to a battalion each day, but Kesselring still held the high ground. To Juin’s regret, the FEC “could do no more.”

Now the thankless task fell to the Americans, specifically the 34th Infantry Division. Originally composed of Iowa and Minnesota National Guardsmen, the 34th in Tunisia had been much traduced before winning redemption at Hill 609 in the final days of the campaign; the division’s newcomers included the 100th Infantry Battalion, fourteen hundred Japanese-American soldiers from Hawaii. Major General Charles W. Ryder, a fellow Kansan and West Point classmate of Eisenhower’s, still led the division, as he had since TORCH. A tall man with big ears, full lips, and a sloping nose, “Doc” Ryder demonstrated a valor in the Great War—two Distinguished Service Crosses, a Silver Star, and a Purple Heart—that in this conflict was matched by his tactical acumen and level disposition.

As the French battered the Gustav Line on Ryder’s right, the 34th attacked north of Cassino where the Rapido ran shallow enough to ford. For three days in late January, the riflemen struggled through plunging fire, minefields, and muddy sloughs. By midmorning on January 27, infantry troops and four Sherman tanks held two small bridgeheads across the river, while engineers corduroyed a road for armor reinforcements. Too late: by one P.M. all four Shermans were in flames, a jittery rifle company slid back down a hill it had just seized, and soon hundreds of soldiers were leaking to the rear in panic. Instead of five companies across the Rapido, Ryder had none.

The attack resumed farther north on January 29, only to stall while tank crews fired a thousand shells point-blank in an attempt to carve a ramp in the Rapido’s steep far bank. A causeway hastily

built with rocks proved more useful; some Shermans sank to their hulltops in mud, but nearly two dozen others gained the west bank. At five miles per hour the tanks crept forward in polar darkness, antipersonnel S-mines popping under their tracks like firecrackers. Each driver followed the faint glow from the tank exhaust pipe twenty yards ahead while a crewman in the turret repelled German boarders with bursts of tommy-gun fire. Riflemen followed in trail, finding shallow defilade against German artillery in the six-inch ruts cut by the tank tracks. Wraiths in field gray stole from their burrows and steel pillboxes—known to GIs as “crabs”—only to be shot down or captured; diehards were flushed with phosphorus. By Sunday evening, January 30, as the French drive sputtered, the Yanks held several key heights and the highland village of Cairo, three miles north of the abbey. “Believe we shall have Cassino by tomorrow night,” General Keyes, the II Corps commander, told his diary on February 1. Clark cabled Alexander, “Present indications are that the Cassino heights will be captured very soon.”



How pretty to think so. Kesselring had shifted the formidable 1st Parachute and 90th Panzer Grenadier Divisions from the Adriatic coast, increasing the Gustav Line defenses from four divisions to six by early February. The opposing armies, as Clark admitted in his diary, now resembled “two boxers in the ring, both about to collapse.” By Thursday, February 3, Ryder’s men had a toehold in the northern outskirts of Cassino town, clearing each house with grenade volleys and a sharp rush through

the door. A day later a battalion from the 135th Infantry closed to within two hundred yards of the abbey; a patrol even brushed the building's eastern face and captured nineteen prisoners. Hills were won then lost, won then lost again, notably Point 593, known locally as Monte Calvario, a mile northeast of the abbey and the highest point on a critical saddle called Snakeshead Ridge. "Every day Cassino is reported taken, every night the rumor is disproved," a 34th Division ordnance officer told his diary.

Each yard, whether won or lost, pared away American strength. In a two-acre field diced by German artillery, survivors counted ninety bodies. Six new lieutenants arrived in the 2nd Battalion of the 135th Infantry; a day later just two remained standing. Medics jabbed morphine syrettes through olive-drab twill without taking time to roll up a sleeve; many kept their sulfa powder in salt shakers for easy dispensing. Snow dusted the dead, and the living woke in dank burrows to find their uniforms stiff with ice. By now few men still had their bedrolls; many had eaten nothing but iron rations and drunk only snowmelt for a week or more. A visiting New Zealand brigadier found the weatherbeaten 34th Division so hobbled by frozen feet that he considered the men incapable of launching another attack.

Still, they tried. In the first fortnight of February, three efforts were made to break through the final mile to the Liri Valley; each failed. On February 11 alone, fifteen hundred grenades could not dislodge German defenders from the cockpit of violence known as the Albaneta Farm, near Point 593; at the end of the day, two reinforcing battalions from the 36th Division mustered only 170 men together, one-tenth the authorized strength. Their regimental commander, who had survived the Rapido debacle three weeks earlier, was killed when a ricochet shell demolished his sandbagged command post.

A German corps commander believed the Americans were "within a bare 100 meters of success." Alexander and Clark had perhaps attacked on too broad a front, failing to exploit cracks in the Axis line with the requisite alacrity. Yet their men had given all they had to give. To eight thousand French casualties could be added ten thousand American; by mid-February, losses in the 34th Division's rifle companies totaled 65 percent. "Personally I'm glad we didn't take our objectives," a soldier in the 135th Infantry wrote home, "else they would think us immortal and make us go on forever, despite fatigue, slaughter, almost annihilation." Allied field commanders looked to the heavens, averting their eyes from the carnage below. "Snow-clad Monte Cairo a beautiful pink," Keyes scribbled in his diary. "Full moon over the monastery."

Enemy flares also drifted above the abbey, hanging "as if suspended by invisible wires," one soldier wrote. A new mortar crew arrived at the front unaware that the building was a no-fire zone; a few rounds smacked the roof, provoking happy whoops from troops along the American line.

Early on February 14, the 4th Indian Division sidled forward to relieve the Americans. Scarecrow Yanks stumbled to the rear or were carried on stretchers, many unable to rise from their holes without help; the 34th Division alone used seven hundred litter bearers. Dead GIs lay stacked like sawed logs to await evacuation on mules that clopped uphill in long, steaming trains; the 34th Division also employed a thousand mules. "Thank God their mothers couldn't see the sadness and indignity of it all," a British officer wrote. A new arrival in the 141st Infantry, Lieutenant Harold Bond, found consolation in Shakespeare. "A man can die but once. We owe God a death," he recited, quoting Feeble in *Henry IV, Part 2.* "He that dies this year is quit for the next." Robert Capa, stumbling among slit trenches crammed with dead boys from the 34th Division, had murmured an invocation of his own: "I want to walk in the California sunshine and wear white shoes and white trousers."

As the Americans began to pull back a few miles to recuperate, a German courier bearing a white flag proposed a brief truce on February 14 to collect the dead near Cairo. Soon German soldiers fashioned litters from saplings and shelter halves; an American detail delivered 150 enemy corpses on

bloodstained canvas stretchers and carried away an equal weight of comrades in olive drab. “There were bodies all over the hill and the odor was bad,” a GI wrote in his diary. During a break the troops swapped cigarettes and family snapshots, chattering about Italian girls and favorite movie stars. An American officer asked *auf deutsch, “Wie geht’s bei Hitler jetzt?”* Wrapped in a slate-blue overcoat, a redheaded sergeant from Hamburg shrugged. *“Gut, gut.”* Rome was pleasant enough, the Germans advised, but the city “could not be compared with Berlin.” From Monte Cassino came the rattle of musketry; the local cease-fire was scheduled to end at noon. *Auf wiedersehen,* they called to one another, trudging off with a last load of dead. *Goot bye.* A German soldier trotted forward for a final handshake. “It is such a tragedy, this life,” he said.

Saddest of all were those who simply vanished, like Otto Henry Hanssen, known to the Army by serial number 37042492 but known to his family in Monticello, Iowa, as Bud. The third of nine children, Hanssen had worked before the war as a farmhand for $10 a week. The pay was a bit better in the Army, and the job had heft: he had ascended to platoon sergeant in Company G of the 168th Infantry. A letter from the War Department reported Sergeant Hanssen missing after Germans ambushed his patrol near the abbey on February 4; the adjutant general expressed “heartfelt sympathy during the period of uncertainty.” Almost a year later, a soldier who had lost a leg and had been captured in the same skirmish would write Hanssen’s family after being medically repatriated from a German camp: “I’m very sorry that I have to tell you that I believe he was killed in action…. Us fellows when over there never thought of being killed.” In April 1945, the government would declare that soldier 37042492 had died in combat—another comrade reported witnessing his death by gunfire—but his body was never found. Bud Hanssen was twenty-nine.

Ernie Pyle had joined Company E of the same battalion near Cassino. Two hundred men, mostly Iowans, had shipped overseas in the company two years before; only eight remained. Of those veterans, Pyle wrote:

> They had been at it so long they had become more soldier than civilian. Their life consisted wholly and solely of war…. They survived because the fates were kind to them, certainly—but also because they had become hard and immensely wise in animal-like ways of self-preservation.

Among the Company E old-timers was Sergeant Frank “Buck” Eversole, a twenty-eight-year-old former Iowa cowboy who had earned two Silver Stars and a Purple Heart, and who, like Hanssen, had risen to platoon sergeant. “I’m mighty sick of it all, but there ain’t no use to complain,” he told Pyle. Still, the losses frayed him. “I’ve got so I feel like it’s me killin’ ’em instead of a German. I’ve got so I feel like a murderer,” Eversole said. “I hate to look at them when the new ones come in.”

I want to walk in the California sunshine and wear white shoes and white trousers.

“They live and die so miserably and they do it with such determined acceptance that your admiration for them blinds you to the rest of the war,” Pyle wrote in January. Few reporters were shrewder than Ernie Pyle, but his admiration may also have blinded him to frontline disaffection. After inspecting the Cassino front in early February at Alexander’s request, Brigadier General Lyman L. Lemnitzer reported that morale was “becoming progressively worse,” with troops “so disheartened as to be almost mutinous.”

Certainly both life and death were miserable at Cassino, beginning at Shit Corner, where

Highway 6 emerged from the shadow of Monte Trocchio. Every movement from that point north came under German observation; so many visiting officers from Naples and Caserta had blundered into the Cassino kill sack that British MPs posted a huge sign: "HALT! *THIS IS* THE FRONT LINE." Fifth Army replacements bound for that line later received an orientation booklet, which urged, "Don't be scared…. Remember that a lot of noise you hear is ours, and not dangerous." That soothing warrant was undercut by chapters titled "If You Get Hit" and "If a Buddy Gets Hit."

The lucky ones found shelter, perhaps a roofless ruin with a tarpaulin stretched overhead where they could cook supper over splintered sticks of furniture, nipping on the Canadian moonshine known as steam or cheap Italian cognac redolent of "perfume and gasoline." "We sit around quibbling and arguing like a bunch of old women about…whose turn it is to get water, who cooked up the last mess of eggs without cleaning the skillet, and who stood mail call last night," a sergeant from Indiana later wrote home. At night they might listen by wireless to Axis Sally, also known as the Berlin Bitch. "Who's sleeping with your wife tonight while you are over here fighting?" she purred before reciting, accurately, Fifth Army's daily passwords.

The unlucky crouched in damp sangars ringed with stone parapets or snow screens, so tormented by snipers that many hesitated to expose themselves even when authorized to strike for the rear. Royal Engineers in greatcoats and wool balaclavas kept the high passes open with wooden plows and rock salt, while skiers supplied the remoter outposts and evacuated the frostbitten. Infantrymen thawed their machine guns with matches and were advised to urinate, if necessary, on frozen rifles. An American tank officer, Lieutenant Colonel Henry E. Gardiner, catalogued his wardrobe in a February 7 diary entry: heavy underwear, "windproof slipover," wool shirt and trousers, sleeveless sweater, turtleneck gaiter, cotton socks, wool socks, one-piece coverall, combat jacket, tank boots, overshoes, wool cap, helmet, trench coat, and goggles. Winter clothing issued to frontline troops in January included kersey-lined trousers and 99,000 sets of what the quartermaster called "mittens, insert, trigger finger"; but "socks, arctic, wool" proved too thick for most GI boots, and parkas designed for Alaska were too bulky for riflemen scaling Italian mountains. An infantryman's lot, as one veteran observed, "is a life of extremes, either not enough or too much."

Rarely was the food excessive, in quantity or quality, although a pork-chop dinner in mid-February provoked Colonel Gardiner to speculate that "the quartermaster must be running for reelection." More typical was a nurse's quip to her parents, "Our meat is dead but not edible." Some troops logged their deprivations. "I've had no fresh milk for nine months, no ice cream for ten months, no Coca-Cola for twelve months, no apple pie à la mode or lettuce-and-tomato sandwiches or chocolate malteds for over a year," one major complained. Lousy food contributed to the mutinous mood Lemnitzer observed. An engineer who referred to himself in the third person told his diary, "Sometimes it felt like he was fighting the whole fucking war by himself. Picks up his rifle, heads toward the line, swearing and burping peanut butter and jelly." Disaffected Tommies had their own cry from the heart: "What's the use of the food coming up if the tea's as cold as a corpse?"

As usual, frontline British troops paid more heed to personal hygiene than their Yankee cousins, who tended to be "disheveled, unshaven, unkempt," as a Royal Engineer officer noted. During lulls each Tommy was expected to whip out his razor, comb, and toothbrush so that "the outer man would be refurbished to the ultimate advantage and benefit of the inner." British tolerance for unorthodox battle dress also found free rein along the Gustav Line, where the finery included leather jerkins with extra sleeves cut from U.S. Army blankets, puttees made of empty sandbags and slathered with mud for insulation, soft-soled desert boots known as brothel creepers, and a sergeant major's hand muff sewn from a panther skin.

Artillery tormented everyone, aggravating the sense of isolation and life's caprice. Day and night the guns boomed, "regular as a scythe-stroke." One GI wrote, "There is something about heavy

artillery that is inhuman and terribly frightening. You never know whether you are running away from it or into it. It is like the finger of God." Allied gunners fired 200,000 shells at Cassino in the first two weeks of February; the cannonade included new U.S. 240mm howitzers with a range of fourteen miles and a projectile weighing 360 pounds. A mortarman whose battalion had fired four thousand shells wrote his family, "That's sure a lot of war bonds." Cairo was said to be "the most heavily shelled pinpoint in Italy," but Cassino town, Shit Corner, Point 593, and other battered landmarks near the abbey vied for the title. An ambulance driver trying to sleep near an artillery battery told his diary in mid-February, "As the guns fire I feel as if someone is pounding the soles of my feet with a heavy board." Massed fires of sixty or more guns on a single target were known as serenades, bingos, stinkos, and stonks; open terrain exposed to complete artillery coverage was known as the murder space. White phosphorus particularly vexed the enemy: a captured German paratrooper document dated January 29 advised, "Extinguish burning clothing with wet blankets…. Scrape phosphorus particles from the body. Stretcher bearers must be issued olive oil. Wet earth gives some relief."

If less profligate, German artillery was just as vicious. GIs consigned to cramped immobility in their holes learned to relieve the overpressure from pounding shells by breathing hard with their mouths agape. A British gunner's diary for three consecutive days in January noted: "Digging and swearing"; then, "Digging and swearing"; then, "Digging finished. Swearing stops." Between barrages the carrion crows strutted and pecked, stiff-legged, unsentimental; when the rounds began to fall again, they rose in a flapping black gyre. "Keep your nut down," a veteran advised newly arriving troops. "Death-or-glory boys don't last."

Those who did last became hard and wise in the ways of war, as Pyle had seen. Cynicism sometimes helped. "Enlisted men expect everything to be fucked up," an American corporal explained. "It is a conceit founded on their experience from the day they are inducted." A British colonel concluded that most platoons under fire had a small number of "gutful men who go anywhere and do anything," plus a few who shirk and a majority "who will follow a short distance behind if they are well led." The "gutful men" who survived at Cassino needed cunning and luck as well as courage. "Use good judgment but use it fast," an Allied tactical study warned.

On few battlefields would soldiers endure harsher conditions or witness worse carnage. "Came across three dead GIs," a twenty-two-year-old American engineer told his diary. "They were killed by a shell concussion, skin on their face was burnt and rolled back, no eyelids or hair." Nearby, a German coal-scuttle helmet had "half a head still in it."

They found grace notes where they could: in the strains of Schubert's "Unfinished Symphony" picked up on the BBC; in a long letter from home, the pages radiant with what one officer called "bright beads of memory and of promise"; or in the apricot glow of another dawn, another dawn that they had lived to see, when the shelling had momentarily ceased and the world seemed new-made and uncorrupted.

A single rifle shot could break the spell. A 4th Indian Division signaler later wrote:

> The initial crack would be answered by a couple of shots which promoted a burst of Bren gunfire which bred a rapid stutter from the German light machine guns which started the mortars off, then the 25s and 88s and finally the mediums and heavies and the whole area would be dancing, booming and crashing.

And so the day began, much like the day before. In a letter to his family, Henry Gardiner summarized the Italian campaign in ten words: "He marched up the hill and he marched down again."

But wherever they marched, or dug, or died, the abbey atop Monte Cassino seemed to loom over them. "You could never lose it," a British soldier reported; "it was always there looking at you." Another young British officer, Fred Majdalany, spoke for many: "That brooding monastery ate into our souls."

A new warlord arrived at Cassino in February, determined to burn and blast the enemy from the Gustav Line by whatever means necessary. As the Americans pulled back to regroup, the Kiwis, Indians, and Tommies moved in under the command of Lieutenant General Bernard C. Freyberg, a former dentist who had become one of the British empire's most celebrated soldier-generals. "The torch is now thrown to you," Al Gruenther told him in a telephone call from Caserta on February 11. Freyberg grunted. "We have had many torches thrown to us," he replied.

He was a great slab of a man, long known as Tiny. "I'm Freyberg the New Zealander," he would introduce himself, in a voice raspy as a gate hinge. "He seemed to be large all over, both broad and deep-chested at the same time," an admirer wrote. Freyberg's enormous head featured a prominent chin, a delicate nose, gray eyes, and, above the inverted parabola of his mouth, a tidy mustache for ornamentation. At age seventeen he had won the New Zealand long-distance swimming championship, and it was said that he could be mistaken for a porpoise in Wellington harbor. Decorations upholstered his massive chest, including a Victoria Cross from the Somme and four awards of the Distinguished Service Order, reflective of a reputation earned at the cannon's mouth in two wars. He believed that "a little shelling did everyone good"; one acquaintance thought "his great fearlessness owed something to a lack of imagination." From the Great War he had emerged with twenty-seven battle scars and gashes—"riddled like St. Sebastian," a friend said—and he would accumulate several more before this conflict ended. "You nearly always get two wounds for every bullet or splinter," he said with a shrug, "because mostly they go out as well as go in." One nurse insisted that he was made not of flesh but of india rubber. Between the wars physicians detected a "diastolic murmur," a diagnosis Freyberg challenged by demanding they climb Mount Snowdon together and reexamine him on the summit. "I love his lack of humour, his frank passion for fighting," a friend wrote of Freyberg in her diary. "There is a distinct grimness about him at all times."

Churchill in North Africa had anointed him "the salamander of the British empire" for his ability to thrive in fire, but Freyberg more resembled the hippogriff, that hybrid of eagle, lion, and horse. He was both sentimental—after digging the grave of his friend Rupert Brooke, he had lined it with flowering sage—and fond of aphorisms, including a line from another friend, J. M. Barrie, the author of *Peter Pan:* "God gave us memory so that we could have roses in December." Upon arriving in Naples he asked, "One used to be able to buy very fine gloves in Italy. Can you still get them?" His impulsiveness led one exasperated subordinate to tell another, "It will be your turn tomorrow to disobey orders."

Even his admirers acknowledged that Freyberg was at his most formidable when leading a division; temporary command of a corps in Africa seemed to overtax his powers, and he had reverted to command of the 2nd New Zealand Division after outflanking the Mareth Line in southern Tunisia. "Wouldn't it be nice if the general would think straight?" said his most talented Kiwi brigadier, Howard Kippenberger. "Or better still, if he wouldn't try to think at all?" Yet it was again as a corps commander that Freyberg arrived at Cassino, for Alexander in early February melded the 2nd New Zealand, the 4th Indian, and the British 78th Divisions into a new creation, the New Zealand Corps.

Described by one British observer as "clean and sprightly, rested and strong," the corps initially was called Spadger Force to confuse German intelligence; Freyberg remained "Spadger" in Allied councils long after the ruse ended. His Kiwis and Tommies were colorful enough, but few units could

match the Indians for flamboyance. The Sikhs, Punjabis, Rajputs, Mahrattas, and Gurkhas, from Nepal, arriving in truck convoys resembled a traveling circus of cutthroats, laden, as one 4th Indian signaler wrote, with "all kind of excrescences such as crates of live chickens, fire buckets, water bags, bits of furniture and clothes drying in the wind."

At first Freyberg considered a wide flanking movement to breach the Gustav Line. But with a shortage of mules and limited experience in mountain warfare, he instead chose a more prosaic plan that followed in trace the failed American attack, targeting "the strongest point in a defensive line of remarkable strength," as the New Zealand official history later noted. To some subordinates, this scheme confirmed that Freyberg had "no brains and no imagination," in the phrase of the 4th Indian Division commander, Major General Francis Tuker. When two of his senior lieutenants proposed a conference on the tactical difficulties at Cassino, Freyberg refused to countenance "any soviet of division commanders."

Yet the longer Spadger studied the bleak silhouette of the ridgeline to the northwest, the more his eye was drawn to the white abbey. Was it possible to take the massif without seizing the building? Would German troops fail to occupy such an inviting observation post? How could Allied soldiers be asked to attack the hill without first eliminating that overbearing presence?

The 4th Indian Division had initially proposed bombing the abbey on February 4, as part of a scheme to reduce any German garrison "to helpless lunacy by sheer unending pounding for days and nights by air and artillery." Increasingly, Freyberg found that approach both prudent and inevitable. After a grim discussion about the challenge of storming the abbey's massive gate, he dispatched a subaltern to comb through Neapolitan bookstalls, where the young man found several studies on the history and structure of Monte Cassino. An 1879 volume contained architectural detail about how the abbey had been rebuilt as a citadel after the French despoliation in 1799, with loopholed, unscalable outer walls ten feet thick and nowhere less than fifteen feet high. A prewar Italian army staff college analysis deemed Monte Cassino impregnable.

Freyberg was convinced. In a memo to Clark and Alexander he wrote:

> No practicable means available within the capacity of field engineers can possibly cope with this place. It can be directly dealt with by applying blockbuster bombs from the air…. The fortress has been a thorn in our sides for many weeks.

Others disagreed. "Spadger still wants to flatten the monastery," Keyes told his diary. "I insist there is no evidence that it is holding up our attack and refuse to accede." Clark too demurred, although he sensed that Freyberg had General Alex's ear. Clark privately considered "Freyburg"—he consistently misspelled the New Zealander's name in his diary—"sort of a bull in a china closet."

Yet Clark was unsure how long he could resist pressure from above and below. Not least in his calculations was a growing bloodlust in Allied trenches. An antiaircraft gunner's letter home in mid-February perfectly expressed the prevailing sentiment. "I would level the Vatican itself with pleasure," the gunner wrote, "if there were Germans to be killed inside it."

The Bitchhead

SIXTY miles away, the 92,000 Allied troops penned up at Anzio had been ordered to dig in, and dig in they did. The clank of picks and shovels sounded across the beachhead, and with each passing hour

life became more subterranean. Soldiers near the Pontine Marshes found water weeping into their holes at eighteen inches, but those burrowing into the sandstone substrata around Nettuno excavated elaborate lairs lined with cardboard from ration cartons and furnished with plundered mirrors, commodes, and even candelabra. Some sheltered in huge empty wine barrels found in farmhouse vaults, the stink of stale *vino rosso* clinging to their uniforms. Catacombs and cellars also housed VI Corps offices—the sandstone seemed to telegraph every surface vibration and concussion—but engineers failed to find a tunnel rumored to have been built by Nero between Anzio and Rome. It all seemed vaguely familiar, as a 6th Gordons soldier noted in his diary:

> So back we go to World War I. Oozing thick mud. Tank hulks. The cold, God, the cold. Graves marked by a helmet, gashed with shrapnel. Shreds of barbed wire. Trees like broken fishbones.

An American medic in the 179th Infantry preferred to stress the positive. In a letter home he wrote, "My cost of living is very low."

Luftwaffe attacks made every man happy to have his hole. "We have found our religion," a soldier told his diary. "Jittery as can be. Five air raids tonight." Bombs punctured all fifteen ovens and damaged the dough mixer in the Army's beachhead bakery; eighty bakers in helmets sifted shrapnel from the flour, patched the holes, and soon turned out fourteen tons of bread a day. As on an island, everything at the beachhead arrived by sea. "Day and night, a thin black line of tiny boats moved constantly back and forth between shore and ships at anchor," wrote Ernie Pyle, who arrived for a visit in February. After German reconnaissance flights left each afternoon, skippers weighed anchor at last light to scramble the anchorage, steaming slowly to avoid raising telltale phosphorescent bow waves. Flares, tracers, and exploding shells illuminated Anzio harbor so garishly that one sailor claimed it was "brighter than Yankee Stadium." As they sailed back to Naples after another harrowing trip to the beachhead, LST crewmen sang, "Anzio, my Anzio, please don't take me back to Anzio."

Among the most exposed troops were those consigned to Hell's Half-Acre, the medical compound outside Nettuno and only six miles from frontline outposts. At 3:30 P.M. on February 7, a Luftwaffe bomber chased by a Spitfire jettisoned five antipersonnel bombs over the 95th Evacuation Hospital, where four hundred patients lay in ward tents. Newly wounded soldiers had just arrived by ambulance, and operating rooms were jammed when flame and steel swept the compound. "I went outside and saw several dead bodies in the parking area in front of the receiving tent," the hospital commander, Colonel Paul Sauer, reported. "One of the nurses in the first surgical tent was crying, 'I'm dying, I'm dying.' I went in to look at her and she was pulseless and white." Twenty-eight died, including three nurses, two doctors, and six patients; another sixty-four were wounded, and the blasts shredded twenty-nine ward tents. The German pilot was shot down and treated in the same hospital. Two days later, a shell fragment killed a VI Corps surgeon as he emerged from Lucas's command post in Nettuno.

"God, help us," a 1st Armored Division mess sergeant prayed after the hospital bombing. "You come yourself. Don't send Jesus. This is no place for children." By early February, General von Mackensen's Fourteenth Army had ringed the beachhead with 370 artillery tubes, putting every Allied soldier at risk—"like a dog on an iceberg," as a Fifth Army supply officer put it. Each German gun caliber sang a different tune, from the crying-cat noise of an 88mm to the railroad gun shells that were likened to "an outhouse going end-over-end with the door open and paper flapping." Shells killed bakers baking, cooks cooking, and clerks clerking. "Sometimes we heard them coming, and

sometimes we didn't," Pyle wrote. "Sometimes we heard the shell whine after we heard it explode." One British officer described a near miss "as though someone had hurled a dining room table against my heart." All too often the fall of shot was followed with a cry, "Morphine, for God's sake, morphine." A company clerk confessed to a growing dislike for Italy: "Too much iron in the atmosphere here."

They did what they could. Deep holes grew deeper, including subterranean garages intended to reduce punctured tires and radiators. Every soldier learned the Anzio shuffle—also known as the Anzio amble or Anzio slouch—which required walking in a crouch, head hunched between the shoulders and helmet pulled low. Engineers clear-cut windbreaks along the Mussolini Canal to eliminate tree bursts, leaving the landscape as flat and shot-torn as Flanders. During one ferocious Nebelwerfer attack, a Scots Guardsman sang out, "The sons of the prophet were hardy and bold / And quite unaccustomed to fear," but an American tanker, lighting a new cigarette from the butt of another with trembling hands, philosophized, "You can't get used to bein' scared." Much discussion was devoted to the fabled "million-dollar wound," which would excuse a soldier from further combat. All agreed that it ought not be disfiguring and must not impair sexual function. "One ear could go, but not two," wrote Paul W. Brown, an enlisted medic who would become a professor of orthopedic surgery at Yale University Medical School. "Fingers and toes were deemed expendable, but no consensus was reached on how many." To channel anger and anxiety, riflemen zeroed their weapons by firing at the helmets of dead Teds—*tedeschi*—on a distant slope. A British company also organized a frontline shooting gallery for snipers, with targets sorted into "Large Teds," "Small Teds," "Crawling Teds," and "Bobbing Teds."

Each day new arrivals stepped onto the harbor jetty, where MPs barked, "Get moving, get moving!" They scurried past waterfront villas gnawed by shell fire—the masonry peeling "like sunburned skin," as the writer John Lardner put it—out to the "small, wet world" now known to its denizens as the Bitchhead. "You could see a squirt of white tracer and it seemed to float toward our lines. That was Jerry. Ours answered with bursts that had red tracer in them," a 3rd Division soldier recalled. Tommies veered to the left toward a sector called the Hatbox of Hell, where local landmarks were named for their shapes on a map or their ambiance: the Lobster Claw, Sheep Pen Farm, Piccadilly, Oh God Wadi. "I was alone in my lonely world," one British sergeant wrote. A British officer excessively steeped in the classics recalled his Virgil with each journey forward: *Facilis est descensus Averni*. Easy is the descent to Hell.

Yanks veered to the right, to a warren of trenches and hovels where young men wheezed like rheumy old men, scraping the muck from their uniforms with trench knives. Strange cries carried across no-man's-land, including a heartbreaking German voice: *"Otto, Otto! Ich sterbe, Otto!"* I'm dying, Otto. "Nerves became frayed," a lieutenant wrote. "The few abrasive personalities in the platoon seemed to become more abrasive." At a salvage dump outside Nettuno, quartermasters each day picked through truckloads of clothing and kit from soldiers killed or wounded—sorting heaps of shoes, goggles, forks, canteens, bloody leggings. "It was best not to look too closely at the great pile," advised Ernie Pyle. "Inanimate things can sometimes speak so forcefully."

Nearby, more trucks hauled the day's dead to a field sprouting white crosses and six-pointed stars. Grave diggers halted their poker game—the trestle-and-plywood table, in a bunker built from rail ties, could seat seven players—and hurried through their offices. Like the rest of the Bitchhead, the cemetery frequently came under fire, so burial services were short and often nocturnal. Grief was brief. The diggers tried to stay fifty holes ahead of demand, but keeping pace could be difficult when shells disinterred the dead, who required reburying.

Life went on, miserable and infinitely precious. "Remember," a gunner wrote in a note to himself, "it can never be as bad as it was at Anzio."

It got worse. Allied air attacks and the star-crossed American attack at Cisterna had disrupted Mackensen's timetable for reducing the beachhead, even as he massed 96,000 troops, nearly 100 tanks, and more than 200 heavy antitank and assault guns, plus all those artillery tubes. "Our grand strategy demands that the beachhead be wiped out promptly," Mackensen told his lieutenants, and they would begin by obliterating the exposed salient—four miles deep and two miles wide—held by the British 1st Division near Campoleone, on the VI Corps left.

The attack fell heaviest on the Irish Guards and 6th Gordons, positioned, respectively, on the left and right flanks of the salient. A thousand sheep, dragooned as minesweepers, led the German attack against the Irish Guards early on Friday morning, February 4. "Like a dirty, ragged wave, a huge flock surged over the crest of the Vallelata ridges and scampered crazily through No. 3 company," the battalion reported. Tanks and grenadiers followed the bleating vanguard through hard rain, threatening to trap the entire British 3rd Brigade by cinching the salient at its base. "The Germans are at the door," a British company commander radioed. Panzers demolished the rear walls of farmhouses, then drove inside to shoot through the front windows. Fire raked the Via Anziate. "I never saw so many people killed round me before in all my life," an Irish Guards corporal said later. Only valor and Allied artillery—VI Corps now massed 438 tubes, including 84 big guns on destroyers and cruisers—staved off annihilation. "You'd better get your boys out of it," Lucas advised Major General Penney, the 1st Division commander.

They retreated by the glare of burning hayricks. "All the shells in hell came down on us," a young soldier told the BBC. "Nothing but black smoke and what smelt like the stink of frying bodies." By Saturday morning nearly three miles was forfeit at a cost of fifteen hundred British casualties, including nine hundred captured; Mackensen's losses were also severe, with almost five hundred dead.

The attack resumed on Monday evening, February 7, and by midnight had spread through the badland gullies along the 24th Guards Brigade front. "Nothing heard of Number 1 company for forty-five minutes," a Grenadier Guards captain radioed. "Numbers 3 and 4 believed overrun. Ourselves surrounded, and there is a German on the ridge above me throwing grenades." By Tuesday enemy troops west of the Via Anziate held a key slope misnamed Buonriposo—place of good rest—and were hunting Tommies by looking for breath plumes in the frosty air. "It's very awkward," a Grenadier officer complained. "If we lie on our stomachs we are hit in the arse. If we lie on our backs we are hit in the balls." German infiltrators crept so close that British mortars fired almost vertically at targets only a hundred yards away. The sight of feral swine feeding on a dead comrade provoked an anguished sergeant to ask, "Is this what we are fighting for, to be eaten by pigs?"

Aided by a captured map that revealed British minefields, four German infantry regiments and Mk V Panther tanks swarmed toward the high ground at Carroceto, bagging another eight hundred prisoners on February 8. A Scots Guards battalion held the Carroceto rail depot, with an observation post tucked into the stationmaster's apartment on the second floor; when two German platoons went to ground in a nearby ditch, the Scots propped a Vickers machine gun in the window, with bags of grain to steady the tripod, and slaughtered them. The enemy answered with a tank, which halted forty yards from the station and stitched each window and door with machine-gun fire at such close range that bullets chewed through brick; then the main gun opened, gouging great holes in the station walls until the staircase inside collapsed. "This was even more unpleasant," reported the Scots, who scrambled back three hundred yards to shelter behind a rail embankment.

More unpleasant yet was the loss by infiltration and frontal assault of Aprilia, the model Fascist town known as the Factory because a severe tower atop city hall gave the settlement an industrial aspect. By Wednesday evening, February 9, Wehrmacht troops held twenty buildings, including a

police barracks, wine store, and theater; panzers refueled in the Piazza Roma, where a bronze St. Michael clutched a sword in one hand and a dragon's head in the other.

The salient was gone, the beachhead imperiled. Ominous noises drifted from the wadis and woodlands, the sounds of an enemy massing. "Where is the sea?" a captured German officer asked. "I just wanted to know, since you will all soon be in it."

On sleepless nights—and there were many now—John Lucas puffed his corncob and chatted with his watch officers about West Point, or Sherlock Holmes, or home sweet home. Rarely did he emerge from the VI Corps command post, now twenty feet beneath the Osteria dell' Artigliere, where engineers had punched through a wall to link two sets of cellars. Naked bulbs dangled above huge oak casks banded with iron hoops, and ramps for rolling barrels up to the Vicolo del Montano bracketed the steep steps to the sandbagged entrance. Staff officers hunched over plywood desks beneath the great stone arches, their brows furrowed as they pondered dispatches from the front. Jangling telephones echoed in the alcoves; even whispers carried to the dark corners of the crypt. A large wall map with grease pencil markings showed VI Corps positions in blue and the enemy in encroaching red. Clockwise around the semicircular perimeter the Allies stretched from U.S. 45th Division troops along the Moletta River, on the left; through British and U.S. 1st Armored Division regiments in the center; to American paratroopers, 3rd Division GIs, and 1st Special Service Forcemen on the right.

"The old Hun is getting ready to have a go at me," Lucas had advised his diary as the attack on the salient began. "He thinks he can drive me back into the ocean. Maybe so, but it will cost him money." The bravado dissolved as the salient melted away. "The situation changed so rapidly from offensive to defensive that I can't get my feet under me," he wrote. Although Allied air forces in the Mediterranean now exceeded twelve thousand planes—the largest air command in the world—clearly the effort to interdict German reinforcements had faltered: twenty-seven enemy battalions had already reached the beachhead from northern Italy, and an entire Wehrmacht division had traveled from southern France in just ten days. Lucas's own reinforcements failed to keep pace with his losses: of an average eight hundred Allied casualties each day—tantamount to a battalion—barely half were replaced. Lucas calculated that VI Corps was shrinking by nine thousand soldiers per month.

He blamed the cousins. "A terrible struggle all day trying to get the British to move," he told his diary on February 8. "I wish I had an American division in there." Blending the two nationalities produced a corps of "hermaphrodites." To Clark, a day later, he wrote, "My only present concern is the inability of one of my divisions to maintain its vigorous resistance." Clark had no doubt about *which* division; he derided General Penney—a meticulous, pious, high-strung engineer, who had been Alexander's chief signals officer in North Africa—as "a good telephone operator." When Clark confided that Lucas did not hold Penney in esteem, Alexander snapped, "Well, I do."

Lucas's disdain was fully reciprocated. "Complete gaff, no decision," Penney had told his diary after one rambling conference with Lucas. Later Penney added, "Quite infuriating delay and weakness…[Lucas] very vague and no corps order." Doubts about "Corncob Charlie," as the British now called him, had spread up the chain of command. "We'll lose the beachhead unless Lucas goes," Major General G.W.R. Templer, whose 56th Division was just arriving, warned Alexander. Even Whitehall was uneasy. "I trust you are satisfied with leaving Lucas in command at the bridgehead," Churchill cabled Alexander on February 10. "If not you should put someone there whom you trust." As each day ended without the ballyhooed sally into Rome, the prime minister grew ever more dour. The Allies now had eighteen thousand vehicles at the beachhead, he noted in a cable to Field Marshal Wilson in Algiers, adding, "We must have a great superiority in chauffeurs." No one bore greater

responsibility for Anzio than Churchill, and he kept a pale eye peeled for possible scapegoats; a report from Washington that Marshall believed "Clark might be the man to go" intrigued him, but Lucas seemed the more likely candidate. "All this," the prime minister sighed, "has been a great disappointment to me."

As Mackensen tightened his grip on Aprilia and Carroceto, awaiting Hitler's personal authorization for his next move, the Allies struggled to regroup. At 5:30 A.M. on Thursday, February 10, Penney warned Lucas that the "situation cannot go on." His division had been halved. Some regiments were all but obliterated: more than three hundred North Staffords had been killed, wounded, or captured in eight hours, while the 5th Grenadier Guards had lost almost three-quarters of their eight hundred enlisted ranks, plus twenty-nine of thirty-five officers. In a tart note that afternoon, Penney asked Lucas for "the immediate corps plan, the corps plan for the future and the general programme, including the intentions of the higher command." In his diary, Lucas wrote, "Things get worse and worse."

He popped out of the command post long enough to brace the line with two reserve American infantry regiments from the 45th Division, the 179th and 180th. As usual, his plan lacked precision and nuance, having been drawn from a map rather than from careful reconnaissance. "Okay, Bill," he told the division commander, Major General William W. Eagles, "you give 'em the works. Go places." To Penney he wrote, "Reinforcements are on the way."

Too few, too late. A counterattack at dawn on Friday won a foothold in Aprilia's southeast corner, but poor coordination between U.S. rifle and tank companies hamstrung the assault. Grenadiers boiled from the Factory cellars, and panzers—followed by "deep ranks of gray-coated infantry"—drove the Yanks out on Saturday morning, February 12. A soldier in the 179th Infantry conceded, "The Germans just beat the holy hell out of us."

General Alex had long been celebrated for beachhead verve. His panache at Dunkirk was legendary, and his visitation during a dark hour at Salerno braced Yanks and Brits alike. Now he arrived, a deus ex machina, aboard a Royal Navy destroyer on Monday morning, February 14, wrapped in his fur-lined jacket and reading Schiller in German to hone his language skills. On this Valentine's Day, however, the old magic seemed elusive. After briefly touring the front, where American soldiers complained that his red hat drew fire, he repaired to a barren cell in the VI Corps headquarters just as air raid sirens began to wail across Nettuno. A covey of reporters, summoned to hear his assessment, filed in past wall posters that depicted wholesome American girls urging their soldier boys to "come home clean."

The campaign had not unfolded precisely as planned, Alexander acknowledged. "We wanted a breakthrough and a complete answer inside a week," he said. "But once you [have] stopped, it becomes a question of building up and slogging." No one should assume that the drive to Rome had stalled; any whiff of defeatism only helped the enemy. "I assure you the Germans opposite us are a very unhappy party," he said. "Don't compare this situation to Dunkirk or Salerno." Dispatches from the beachhead had been filled with "pessimistic rubbish." Ignoring the fact that all stories were censored at the beachhead and again in Naples, he worked himself into a fine pique. "Were any of you at Dunkirk? I was, and I know that there is never likely to be a Dunkirk here." Alexander was "very disappointed that you should put out such rot." Henceforth, access to the radios used to transmit news dispatches from the beachhead would be severely restricted—Churchill had urged just such a suppressive action—and reporters could expect even more vigorous censorship.

Lucas tried to intervene, noting that any defeatists had long since left. "I tried to stop the tirade and tell him he had the wrong people but he refused to listen," the corps commander jotted in his diary. Alexander tromped from the command post and soon sailed off on his destroyer, uncommonly overwrought and in need of a shave. The reporters trudged through cold rain to the decrepit waterfront

villa they shared, perplexed and incensed; one hack consoled himself by picking out a tune from *La Traviata* on a battered upright piano.

Lucas was left alone to ponder the blue and red runes covering his wall map. Alexander seemed convinced that the enemy had been repulsed, but the map suggested otherwise. He also appeared indifferent to VI Corps' shortages of manpower and artillery ammunition. This time there had been no hail-fellow accolades from General Alex, no "splendid piece of work" encomium.

"I am afraid the top side is not completely satisifed with my work," Lucas wrote. "I can't help it. They are naturally disappointed that I failed to chase the Hun out of Italy."

General Mackensen, the Hun himself, hardly needed his monocle to appreciate the magnificent panorama of the beachhead he now intended to destroy. From his forward command post on the western lip of the Colli Laziali, in a farmhouse two miles southwest of mystical Lake Nemi, "not a flash of a gun or explosion of a shell from either side escapes him," a German visitor reported. With a telescope, between breaks in the Allied smoke screen that swaddled the waterfront, Mackensen could even make out the Liberty ships, LSTs, and zigzagging destroyers eighteen miles away.

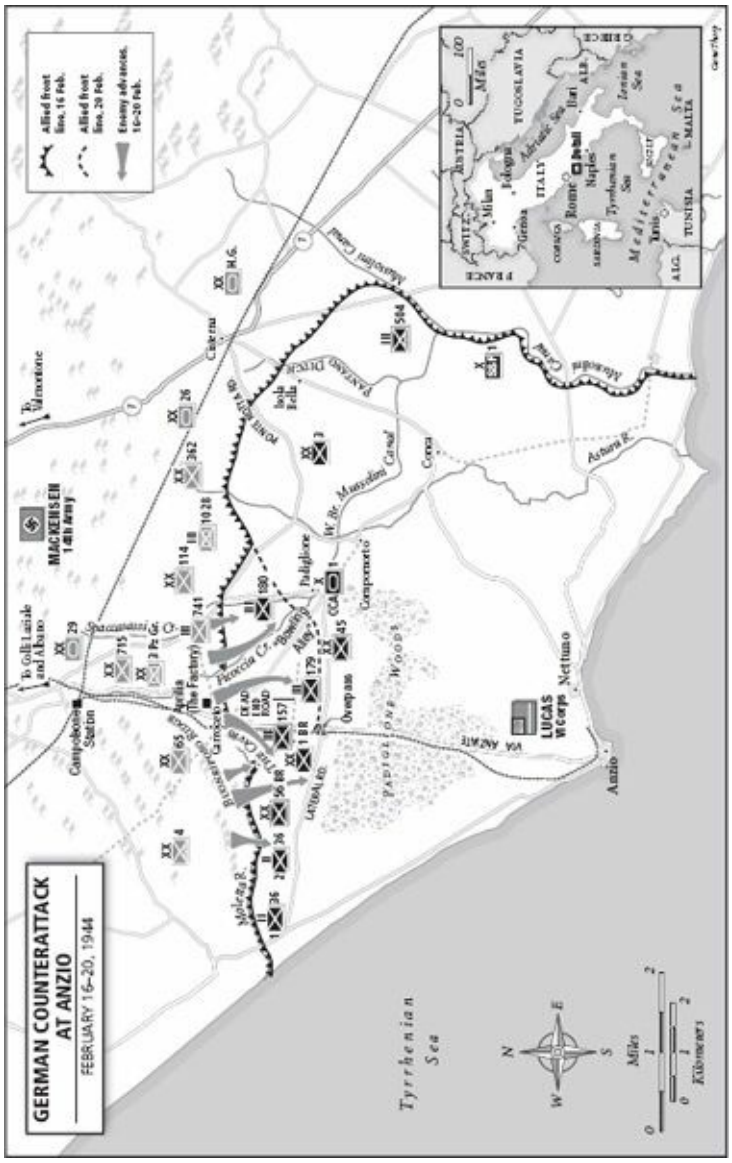
But it was closer terrain that held the Fourteenth Army commander's interest as daylight faded on Tuesday, February 15. Three miles of open country stretched between Aprilia and the final Allied defensive line, like a moat around an inner keep. If German assault troops now massing around the Factory and Carroceto could cross that three-mile stretch to reach the scrub pines of the Padiglione Woods, they would almost surely be able to infiltrate the final four miles to the sea, splitting the beachhead in half much as Vietinghoff's forces had almost done down the Sele River corridor at Salerno. Here the counterattack would fling six divisions into the Via Anziate corridor; two more divisions would remain in reserve to exploit the cracked Allied line, along with two hundred Tigers, Panthers, and other tanks. A hard freeze tonight would give the panzers good footing, although the attack could not begin until first light on Wednesday because regiments just arriving were too unfamiliar with the ground to attack in darkness.

In truth, both Mackensen and Kesselring deplored this attack plan, which had been foisted on them by Hitler. The Führer, ever more entangled in tactical minutae half a continent away, had ordered a "concentrated, overwhelming, ruthless" assault on a narrow front, massing German armor and artillery. Excision of the beachhead "abscess," Hitler concluded, would compel the Anglo-Americans to delay their invasion of northwest Europe, which he expected in the spring or summer; he had turned a deaf ear to protests from his field commanders, who warned that a massed attack across open terrain offered lucrative targets to Allied gunners.

Still, great pains had been taken to ensure the success of FISCHFANG, Operation FISHING. So secret was the attack date that officers visiting from Berlin were forbidden to use the telephone. Luftwaffe strikes and artillery barrages would mask the clank of approaching panzers. Ammo shortages precluded a rolling barrage in front of the attack formations, but happily most streambeds ran perpendicular to the Allied line, providing sheltered approaches in the bottoms. Units imposed draconian measures to conserve fuel and vehicle wear: this week, the Hermann Görings had issued three bicycles to each platoon "to use for short errands."

Darkness cloaked the battlefield on this twenty-fifth night of the Anzio beachhead. Stars shone brilliantly without kindling the slightest hope of a better tomorrow in either camp. Shells arced back and forth as usual, then subsided after midnight for a few hours of uncommon tranquillity. To the BBC's Vaughan-Thomas, "It was as if the house lights were being lowered in the theatre."

At 6:30 on a cold, foggy Wednesday morning the curtain rose to the percussive roar of German artillery. For seventy-five minutes, shells fell in sheets on either side of the Via Anziate, the detonations melding “like the rolling of a drum,” in one soldier’s phrase. Birds tumbled from the trees, killed by concussion. Then from the swirl of smoke and mist came whistles and shouts and the thrum of panzer engines that reminded a GI of “so many coffee grinders.” Gray-green waves of shouting, singing German infantrymen in ankle-length coats spilled down the road and across the fallow fields.



They were not unexpected. Aerial surveillance and captured prisoners had alerted VI Corps commanders to “a noticeable increase in enemy activity,” and Ultra decrypts in the small hours Wednesday provided details on the “timing, direction and weight of assault.” Still, few forward units had sufficiently girded themselves with mines, wire, sandbags, and tank obstacles. Compressed into a six-mile front, the German spearhead smashed into the 45th Division and, on the American left, the British 56th Division. Rifle battalions in the U.S. 157th and 179th Infantry Regiments—entrenched, respectively, left and right of the road below the Factory—buckled; only stalwart reserves and thawing mud slowed the enemy advance. Cries of “Medic!” swept the field, swallowed by the din. Panzer crews, intent on obliterating the second-story machine-gun nests that covered German infiltration routes, fired as many as ten rounds to kill a single soldier. A gunner on a tank destroyer with the 157th

lashed himself to his .50-caliber machine gun with a leather strap, shooting until German fire killed him. “I watched the dust spurt out the back of his jacket as the bullets hit him,” an officer reported. Company E in the same regiment was soon pared to fourteen riflemen. They, along with the rest of the encircled 2nd Battalion, would hold fast for a week in “a savage, brutish troglodyte existence” among the Caves, a sandstone badlands of vaulted tunnels east of the Via Anziate. Of nearly 1,000 men in the battalion, only 231 would survive their heroic stand in what one called “a bastard of a place.”

Forward companies of Royal Fusiliers and the Oxford and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry disintegrated. So many enemy bullets swarmed across the landscape that a paratrooper reported “a strange chirping sound, like a flock of canaries.” German artillery severed phone lines, punctured radios, and killed or wounded forward observers calling for counterfire, including a half dozen in the 179th Infantry alone. An urgent message to Nettuno reduced the plea to seven syllables: “Give us everything you’ve got.”

Grim as the day had been, by dusk the German gains were limited to a mile or less here and there, at a cost of seventeen hundred casualties. “Enemy resistance was strong and determined,” the Fourteenth Army log noted. The Infantry Lehr Regiment, stocked with ardent Nazis and touted by Hitler as a killer elite, had been smacked about below the Factory before skedaddling without permission. Another of the Führer’s innovations—the Goliath, a small armored vehicle packed with 250 pounds of explosives and controlled remotely with a five-hundred-yard cable that unspooled from a drum—also failed abjectly. Of thirteen Goliaths sent into battle on Wednesday, Allied artillery disemboweled three, and Wehrmacht handlers reeled in the other ten after they were thwarted by mud, ditches, and gunfire; derisive GIs dubbed them Doodlebugs. Scanning dispatches in his headquarters near Rome, Kesselring voiced dismay at the dwindling of German artillery ammunition stocks, and he pressed Mackensen to commit his reserves in the 26th Panzer and 29th Panzer Grenadier Divisions. Mackensen phoned his reply just before 6:30 P.M.: “The time has not yet come.”

That time was coming, though, and Wednesday night brought it closer. Thousands of infiltrating German soldiers crept down streambeds and goat paths, bobbing helmets silhouetted against the skyline. At eight A.M. Thursday, after a softening raid by Luftwaffe bombers, sixty panzers and infantrymen from three divisions pressed along the Via Anziate and angled east, ripping the seam between the 157th and 179th Regiments. By noon, more air strikes and fourteen howling German battalions had driven a wedge two miles wide and a mile deep into the midriff of the 45th Division. The 179th commander, Colonel Malcolm R. Kammerer, ordered two battalions to fall back a thousand yards; fully exposed despite a milky smoke screen, the men were sliced to ribbons. Survivors stumbled back an extra thousand yards to a narrow farm lane known as Dead End Road. “Men on the verge of panic,” one company commander reported.

“179th lost 1,000 men, mostly by surrender,” Brigadier General Ray McLain, the division artillery chief, told his diary. “Poor leadership.” Major General Eagles agreed and ordered Kammerer relieved. Staggering back alone after his squad had been destroyed, a sergeant squatted on his haunches and “for two hours tears rolled down his cheeks unchecked.” A platoon leader bringing reinforcements from the Padiglione Woods ambled past a pile of dismembered corpses. “I wish to God I hadn’t seen that,” he muttered. A young soldier next to him cocked an ear to the raging battle ahead and asked, “Lieutenant, should I load my rifle now?”

Four hundred Allied gun tubes barked and barked throughout the day, spitting “murder concentrations” at German gun flashes. Smoking piles of spent brass littered the pits, and gunners stained black with powder shouted to uncomprehending mates long deaf from the relentless roar. Three dozen tanks joined the bombardment, along with four batteries of 90mm antiaircraft guns shouldered into the line to snipe at ground targets. Along the shingle, destroyers and two cruisers pressed “close enough for the Germans to count the rivets,” according to a U.S. Navy account; their

shells traced crimson parabolas into the enemy rear. Eight hundred planes dumped a thousand tons of explosives along the front line, the heaviest payload in a single day of close air support in the war thus far. A third of that weight fell from heavy bombers flying tactical missions, as they had at Salerno. Bombs landed danger-close, some within four hundred yards of Allied lines. Nary a rifleman complained.

Another day faded with the beachhead intact, if shrunk by several square miles. Bodies lay stacked so high in front of the 157th Infantry that marksmen had trouble peering over them for fresh targets. Jeeps careering to the rear often carried half a dozen corpses. In the Nettuno crypt, staff officers parsed the fragmentary reports. “Don’t leave the phone, son,” a colonel shouted to a besieged lieutenant. “Let me know what is going on.” No one really knew, of course; such was the way of desperate battles. Some things were best unknown: the Ox and Bucks battalion adjutant reported that when a machine gunner who had been killed by a sniper was found stiff with rigor mortis, still hunched in a sitting position, two men “were obliged to sit on the knees of the body in order to bring the Bren into action.”

The crisis came on Friday, February 18. After parrying a weak midnight counterattack by three American battalions, field-gray wraiths flitted through pelting rain down the Moletta River ravines. Another German barrage fell before dawn, and cold, wet, heartsick GIs lay in their holes, defecating into helmets or C-ration cans and flinging the contents over the lip in the general direction of the enemy. Wounded soldiers still in the line smeared their bandages with mud to dull the white glint. *Now* the time had come to commit the reserves, Mackensen concluded, even if the Allied line had not yet fractured. Fresh battalions of panzer grenadiers, veterans of Sicily, Salerno, and the Winter Line, swept into battle, singing and shouting taunts, while predatory tanks roamed the fields, undaunted by the occasional shell that caused panzer hulls to peal like church bells. A sergeant in the 157th Infantry told his men, “Get as small as you can.”

By noon the 179th Infantry had been eviscerated. Survivors retreated almost to the Flyover, a road overpass that marked the last defensive line before the Padiglione Woods. “Men trickled back in small groups, hysterical and crying,” a company commander later recalled.

At two P.M., a reassuring, square-jawed figure sauntered into the regimental command post: Colonel Bill Darby had been sent by Lucas to take command. “Sir,” a major said, “I guess you will relieve me for losing my battalion?” Darby smiled. “Cheer up, son,” he replied. “I just lost three of them, but the war must go on.” He pointed to the sparkle of muzzle flashes from a hundred artillery batteries to the rear. “Just look at that. That’s the most beautiful sight in the world,” Darby said. “No one can continue to attack through that.”

He was right, although eight German divisions tried, carving a bulge from the Allied line almost three miles deep and four miles wide. Confusion swept the field; so, too, terror, valor, and profound sacrifice. Leaders fell, other leaders rose. A German shell burst in a tree above General Penney’s trailer in a piney thicket. Peppered with shrapnel, his uniform in shreds, he crawled from the wreckage. “My face,” Penney subsequently wrote his wife, “is not very attractive at the moment.” General Templer took command of the 1st Division, as well as his own 56th.

In the midst of the crisis, Lucas was nonplussed to read in a message from Clark that Truscott had been appointed deputy VI Corps commander; the 3rd Division would go to Brigadier General John W. O’Daniel, a short and ebullient former Delaware National Guardsman known as Iron Mike for his foghorn voice. Truscott arrived in the command-post crypt, affecting insouciance but worried enough. If the beachhead fell, he suggested, “we’ll fight our way back to Cassino.” In his diary Lucas wrote, “I think this means my relief and that [Truscott] gets the corps. I hope I am not to be relieved…. I have done my best. I have carried out my orders and my conscience is clear.”

For the moment, he had a battle to command. Shell by shell, bomb by bomb, bullet by chirping

bullet, Allied firepower began to tell. Scudding clouds kept most planes grounded on Friday, but shortly before noon a Piper Grasshopper pilot spotted 2,500 Germans tramping south from Carroceto; in twelve minutes, VI Corps gunners unlimbered 224 tubes and chopped the formation to pieces. “Bits of Kraut all over the place,” an Irish Guards sergeant reported. The same observation pilot massed fires on four additional targets in the next hour. The British 1st Loyals reported “clouds of exhausted, struggling field-grey figures.” Wehrmacht officers shouted threats at men beyond threatening, and the clank of falling truck tailgates signaled the arrival of more fodder for the cannons. When artillery caught additional Germans on a lane from Carroceto, a forward observer radioed, “Please don’t stop now. We are knocking them over like pins in a bowling alley. They keep on coming, marching right over their own dead.” The road became better known as the Bowling Alley. A single British machine-gun company fired 32,000 rounds on Friday, and when the enemy attack axis swerved to the east the U.S. 180th Infantry held the right shoulder and threw them back. An American officer later described how some grenadiers “turned and ran up the slope with their tin mess kits shining on their back.” With assault battalions pared to 150 men, German losses were likened to “the Light Brigade without the horses.”

At 9:30 P.M. a lull settled over scarlet fields glazed with flare light. Tanks lurched forward from dumps in the Padiglione Woods, hauling water and rations to the parched and hungry. Men peered over their leaking sandbags at the scattered hummocks of olive drab and field gray that had once been men. General Mackensen had reached his high-water mark; this wrack of dead grenadiers and smoking wreckage marked the falling tide. The terrain proved “not suitable for tank employment as had been presumed,” a staff officer wrote in the Fourteenth Army log, then added, “No decisive breakthrough.”

Lucas sensed his shifting fortunes. At Truscott’s urging, he ordered a counterattack for dawn on Saturday, February 19, the fourth day of a battle that had become an existential struggle between two exhausted armies. A preemptive German surge down the Via Anziate at four A.M. nearly spoiled his plan—Allied cooks, drivers, and Anzio dockworkers rushed forward to caulk the line. Sea mines dumped in the roadstead by Luftwaffe raiders kept British reinforcements from joining the counterattack as planned. But at 6:30 A.M., two rested American regiments—the 30th Infantry and 6th Armored Infantry—emerged from the Padiglione Woods with two dozen Sherman tanks and pivoted northwest up the Bowling Alley. Barrages of American artillery danced up and down the road ahead of the advancing troops.

Lucas had the right man in charge: Major General Ernest N. Harmon woke every morning spoiling for a fight. The Old Ironsides commander was barrel-shaped, with stubby legs, lungs like a blacksmith’s bellows, and a cowcatcher jaw only slightly softened by a Clark Gable mustache. Raised in Vermont, Harmon had been Mark Clark’s classmate at West Point, where he held the academy middleweight boxing title. Having ridden in the only U.S. horse cavalry unit to see combat in the Great War, he still wore breeches and knee-high boots. Admirers considered him a “poor man’s George Patton”: he lacked Patton’s personal wealth, and his profanity, while just as intense, was marginally less inventive. “He was independent as a hog on ice,” said Hamilton H. Howze, a subordinate who later rose to four-star rank. “But he loved to fight.” Never reluctant to condemn “the stupidity of the high command,” Harmon had castigated Lucas only a week earlier for the lack “of a well-established plan” to defend the beachhead. “The enemy has his troubles,” Harmon told his men, “and is scared the same as you are.”

Now he set out to make the German troubles worse. From foxholes lining the road, 45th Division soldiers cheered the passing platoons in their rain-slick ponchos. “Give ’em hell!” they cried. Harmon

quickly won back a mile, but at 8:30 the attack stalled under galling panzer fire from the scrub-brush bottoms north of the Bowling Alley. For five hours engineers toiled to repair a blown bridge, as tank and machine-gun rounds sang all about. Harmon paced and snarled, cadging cigarettes from subordinates, until at 1:30 P.M. the attack resumed with a clattering drive into the German line. Stunned grenadiers threw up their hands or scorched to the rear. A dozen Shermans bulled north for a mile, crossed Spaccasassi Creek, and clanked toward the Factory until Harmon called them back at dusk to laager for the night.

Two hundred prisoners trotted with them; uncounted other Germans lay dead, shoring the red-stained creeks or corduroying the Bowling Alley. Initiative, that turncoat, had returned to the Allied camp. Asked by reporters in Nettuno to assess the enemy's intentions after the rout, the VI Corps intelligence chief replied, "We've made him worried."

Mackensen's troops poked and jabbed for two more days, but without conviction. Kesselring late on Saturday proposed suspending his counteroffensive, and Hitler agreed. "In the end, many hounds will kill even the swiftest hare," a German staff officer lamented. FISCHFANG had cost Fourteenth Army 5,400 casualties. "It has become very difficult to evacuate the wounded," the army log noted. "All ambulances, even the armored ones, have been lost, making it necessary to use assault guns and Tiger tanks." Some units existed only in name: the 65th Infantry Division on February 23 mustered 673 men.

If the hares had been hurt, so had the hounds. VI Corps casualties also exceeded 5,000. The 45th Division alone counted 400 killed in action since Wednesday. Their scrubs blood-caked, surgeons donned nurses' summer fatigues instead. In the month since the Anzio landings, 200,000 Axis and Allied troops combined had suffered 40,000 battle and nonbattle casualties, a double decimation that would impose at least a temporary stalemate at the beachhead.

One more casualty remained to be counted. "Message from Clark," John Lucas wrote on Tuesday, February 22. "He arrives today with eight generals. What the hell."

As Tommys and GIs fought their valiant fight, the delicate issue of what to do with their commander had obsessed the high command. Alexander, who privately told London that Lucas had "proved to be an old woman," complained that he lacked "the necessary drive and enthusiasm to get things done." A proposal by Brooke that a British general command VI Corps raised hackles in the Pentagon; Eisenhower, now in London, took a rare moment away from planning OVERLORD to send Marshall an eyes-only warning, then wrote Brooke, "It is absolutely impossible in an Allied force to shift command of any unit from one nationality to another during a period of crisis." Truscott would make an admirable corps commander, he added, although if necessary Patton could serve at the beachhead for a month.

Clark still resisted sacking Lucas, arguing that he had "done all he could at Anzio." But with the battle in the balance, Alexander shrewdly recognized that the Fifth Army commander was "a man whose own ambition was key to his actions." Complaining that Lucas was "old physically and mentally," Alexander told Clark: "We may be pushed back into the sea. That would be very bad for both of us—and you would certainly be relieved of your command." Clark continued to balk at changing commanders in midbattle, but he had hedged his bet by agreeing to Truscott's appointment as deputy commander, privately telling him on February 18—without informing Lucas—that he would likely take over "in four or five days."

Now the moment had come. At midmorning on February 22, Clark and his entourage boarded two patrol boats in Naples. They arrived at the beachhead just as Anzio Annie, a German railway gun with

shells the size of a refrigerator, raised several enormous geysers in the harbor. Clark toured the front, dodging desultory panzer fire, then at four P.M. repaired to his command post in the seventeenth-century Borghese Palace. Canadian miners from Gibraltar had carved out rooms beneath the mansion, linking the cellars to an abutting railroad tunnel, rigging lights and ventilators, and installing a rope-pulley elevator. They also converted an ancient Roman well into a septic tank instantly known as "Clark's Shitter." A sign on the tiled latrine read, FOR GENERAL OFFICERS ONLY.

At eight P.M., behind a closed door in Clark's subterranean office, Lucas took the news like a good soldier. Clark advised that "he could no longer resist the pressure," Lucas told his diary that night, adding wryly, "And I thought I was winning something of a victory." He would serve briefly as deputy Fifth Army commander at Caserta, swallowing his bitterness toward Clark and the British, then return home to command a training army in Texas. In a letter to his son, Lucas quoted Sir Walter Scott:

> One hour of life, crowded to the full with glorious action, and filled with noble risks, is worth whole years of those mean observances of paltry decorum, in which men steal through existence, like sluggish waters through a marsh, without either honor or observation.

Truscott was also summoned to the palace cellars. Despite persistent ailments—nasal polyps, abscessed tooth, raging throat—he had, in effect, served as the VI Corps shadow commander for the past five days; among other innovations, he authorized a gifted young artillery officer, Walter T. "Dutch" Kerwin, Jr., to coordinate every gun at the beachhead so as to better mass fires—setting a brigadier general at Kerwin's side to ensure that gunners heeded the twenty-six-year-old major. Yet in a voice reduced to a raspy whisper, Truscott now objected to Lucas's formal ouster as unwarranted and unfair. When Clark said he hoped to avoid wounding Lucas's pride, Truscott growled, "You can't relieve a corps commander and not hurt him." Clark waved away the protest. The decision had "already been made." Privately, he wondered whether Truscott "in the event of a reversal would prefer to be second in command."

The new corps commander returned to his Nettuno villa to have his throat painted yet again with silver nitrate. After a late supper, he sat by a crackling fire past midnight with a bottle of B&W scotch. "My one and only purpose is to serve my country," he wrote Sarah. "If this command offers a bigger opportunity, I must accept it even though I may feel my own inadequacy."

If Clark felt inadequate, he kept the sentiment to himself. A staff officer in the Borghese command post described him as "cool, level, taciturn." No one wore the mask of command better than Mark Clark. Yet the weight pressed. In his war diary he noted that as of this day Fifth Army had sustained 72,982 casualties since landing at Salerno, a man down every three minutes for more than six months. Now another had fallen, wounded in spirit if not in body. "Bringing Johnny back with me in the morning," he cabled Gruenther. "May send him direct to Sorrento for rest." To his daughter, Ann, Clark scribbled a note thanking her for a buoyant V-mail letter. "As you can well imagine, I don't have much to laugh about these days. I was pleased to hear you express confidence that you had in your dad. I hope that I will never disappoint you."

Only in a letter to Renie did his frustrations spill out. The officers and men at Anzio "have done all that could have been expected of them," he told her. The on-to-Rome carping of armchair generals in London and Washington infuriated him. "It is sheer nonsense for these people to criticize them for not having moved on to Rome. The troops would have been cut off," he wrote. "It is no use arguing. We will let history take care of that."

Prodded by Hitler, Kesselring and Mackensen would attack again on February 29, this time against the Allied right. The usual singing, shouting gray-green swarms advanced across the polders only to be flattened by 66,000 Allied artillery shells in a single day; German casualties topped 3,500, for no gain. When Alexander asked General O'Daniel how much ground his 3rd Division had lost to the counterattackers, Iron Mike replied, "Not a goddamned inch, sir."

Truscott pinned a Bill Mauldin cartoon over his desk, with one shabby GI telling another, "Th' hell this ain't th' most important hole in th' world. I'm in it." His jaw jutting, Truscott told reporters, "We're going to have a tough time here for months to come. But, gentlemen, we're going to hold this beachhead come what may."

Still, February was sobering for the Allies. For the Americans it would be the bloodiest month in the Mediterranean to date, with nineteen hundred dead. There would be no quick, decisive success via the beachhead flank. Alexander believed the battles at Anzio and Cassino had revealed alarming Allied weakness and German strength. "He is quicker than we are," he wrote Clark, "quicker at re-grouping his forces, quicker at thinning out a defensive front to provide troops to close gaps at decisive points…quicker at reaching decisions on the battlefield. By comparison, our methods are often slow and cumbersome."

This was true enough, but it was not the whole truth. The greater revelation was of Allied strength and German weakness. "Without air support," a German staff officer complained, "all planning was an illusion." Lieutenant General Ira C. Eaker, the senior American airman in the Mediterranean, concurred. "In the air in Italy," Eaker wrote, "the Hun is absolutely flat on his back." If less prostrate, German artillery had proved another deficiency, particularly because of ammunition shortages. VI Corps fired 158,000 rounds during FISCHFANG, a ten-to-one advantage over German gunners. American artillery, singularly good since the Mexican War, kept getting better, aided by aerial spotting, the profusion of radios, nimble fire control, and those murderous queens offshore. Truscott soon demanded, and got, counterbattery fire in four minutes, less than half the time previously required. A single 105mm howitzer shooting every thirty seconds could, in one hour, seed 43,000 square yards with two tons of lethal steel fragments. Allied artillery inflicted three-quarters of all German battle casualties at Anzio.

The failure to exterminate the Allied beachhead carried sober implications beyond southern Italy, and even Kesselring's optimism dimmed. Not only were German forces overmatched in the air and outgunned on the ground, but "a perceptible weakening of the daredevil spirit" afflicted the ranks, he told a visiting general from Berlin in late February. This, he believed, was "the last year of the war." By the calculation of Kesselring's chief of staff, General Siegfried Westphal, more combat matériel had been brought to play in FISCHFANG than on any German battlefield since 1940, with the exception of Sevastopol, and the grim result revealed the "progressive exhaustion of the army after more than $4^1/2$ years of fighting," Westphal said. "The blanket had become too thin and too short."

Believing that the high command must hear that "a turning point had been reached in the war," Kesselring sent Westphal to deliver this revelation in a three-hour meeting with the Führer and his military brain trust at the Berchtesgaden retreat. "Hitler was very calm," Westphal reported, and he approved Fourteenth Army's shift to the defensive at Anzio. Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel, the Wehrmacht chief, voiced surprise that Hitler had listened to "so many unpleasant things." Upon returning to Italy, Westphal told Kesselring that "the Führer appeared bowed down with care."

Such strategic nuances were beyond the ken of those consigned to the beachhead for the duration. German engineers trucked in forced-labor Italian carpenters from Rome—including movie set craftsmen from Cinecittà, the studio complex built by Mussolini—to fashion decoy panzers and gun

tubes, as well as other military illusions in the Colli Laziali. In Allied camps, the departure of General Lucas stirred little sentiment beyond the hope, as one British gunner later put it, that his "successor would soon get us out of the mess we were in." Most licked their wounds, of body and soul, and steeled themselves for battles still ahead. "I'm a little tired," an Irish Guards sergeant confessed after emerging from the hellish Moletta gullies. "But then, I'm an old man now."

"Man Is Distinguished from the Beasts"

AS FISCHFANG played out at Anzio, another crowded hour ticked away for Monte Cassino and the armies encircling the abbey. Freyberg the New Zealander had become ever more insistent on obliterating the building before launching an attack, and his bellicosity was soon to be inflamed by word that his only child, a young officer in the Grenadier Guards, had gone missing at Anzio. A Royal Artillery gunner said of the looming white edifice, "Somehow it was the thing that was holding up all our lives and keeping us away from home. It became identified in an obsessional way with all the things we detested."

Willy-nilly bombing of priceless cultural icons was discouraged by custom and forbidden by law. Months earlier the Combined Chiefs had reminded Eisenhower that "consistent with military necessity, the position of the church and of all religious institutions shall be respected and all efforts made to preserve the local archives, historical and classical monuments, and objects of art." Eisenhower in turn warned his lieutenants in late December that "military necessity" should not be abused as an expedient for military convenience. Alexander's headquarters in mid-January identified the Monte Cassino abbey and the papal estate at Castel Gandolfo as two preeminent "eccelesiastical centres which it is desired to preserve." An Allied pamphlet, titled "Preservation of Works of Art in Italy," included a section headed "Why Is Italy So Rich in Works of Art?" and the assertion that "man is distinguished from the beasts by his power to reason and to frame abstract hopes and ideas." Bomber-crew briefing packets included street maps, copied from Baedeker guidebooks, that highlighted historic buildings to avoid. Allied staff officers assigned to repair inadvertent damage were known as Venus Fixers.

Already the Venus Fixers had been busy. Bombs had damaged forty churches in Naples alone; the magnificent bronze doors on a cathedral north of the city were reduced to particles. Errant bombs hit Castel Gandolfo several times in early February, and one such misadventure killed seventeen nuns. But deliberate destruction of Monte Cassino would escalate this "war in a museum," as Kesselring called the Italian campaign, and within Allied war councils arguments for and against were marshaled with warm intensity.

The unit ordered to capture the massif, the 4th Indian Division, remained keenest to "drench" the hill with bombs. A dubious report from a captured German prisoner, who claimed that paratroopers had put a command post and an aid station within the abbey, led the 4th Indian on February 12 to publish an intelligence summary titled "Violation of Geneva Convention." Other imagined sightings included those by an Italian civilian who reported thirty machine guns, a 34th Division colonel who saw the flash of field glasses in an abbey window, and U.S. gunners who swore that hostile small-arms fire had streamed from the building. A British newspaper on February 11 printed the incendiary headline "Nazis Turn Monastery into Fort."

On February 14, two senior American generals, Ira Eaker and Jacob Devers, flew in an observation phase at fifteen hundred feet over Monte Cassino and reported seeing "Germans in the courtyard and also their antennas," as well as a machine-gun nest fifty yards from the abbey wall. Another American airman, Major General John K. Cannon, pledged, "If you let me use the whole of

our bomber force against Cassino, we will whip it out like a dead tooth." An American artillery commander told *The New York Times,* "I have Catholic gunners in this battery and they've asked me for permission to fire on the monastery." Indeed, the wolf had risen in the heart. A U.S. air wing intelligence analysis declared on February 14, "This monastery has accounted for the lives of upwards of 2,000 boys…. This monastery *must* be destroyed and everyone in it, as there is no one in it but Germans."

Others passionately disagreed. The French commander, General Juin, pleaded with Clark to spare the building. General Keyes, also a devout Catholic, took his own plane above the abbey on the morning of February 14 and saw "no signs of activity." Bombing the building would be "an unnecessary outrage," he told his diary, particularly because II Corps intelligence detected as many as two thousand refugees now sheltering inside. Moreover, "a partially destroyed edifice is much better for defensive purposes than an untouched one." Keyes's irritation at Freyberg grew so intense that Clark rebuked him for "your somewhat belligerent attitude"; the men exchanged peace offerings, with Keyes sending a package of butter, catsup, and Nescafé, and Spadger reciprocating with New Zealand lambs' tongue, canned oysters, and honey. Still fuming, Keyes wrote, "Why we Americans have to kowtow to the British and by order of our American commanders is beyond me."

Freyberg was not to be denied, and with Clark at the beachhead he pressed Gruenther for a decision, even though he put the odds of capturing the massif after a bombardment at no better than "fifty-fifty." If Clark refused to destroy the building, Freyberg added darkly, he would "have to take the responsibility" for New Zealand Corps casualties. Alexander's new chief of staff, Lieutenant General John H. Harding, also pressured Gruenther. "General Alexander has made his position quite clear," Harding said in a phone call. "He regrets very much that the monastery should be destroyed, but he sees no other choice." General Alex "has faith in General Freyberg's judgment."

Clark had no such faith. "I now have five corps under my command, only two of which are American, all others of different nationalities," he wrote in his diary. "I think Napoleon was right when he came to the conclusion that it was better to fight allies than to be one of them." But he sensed that yet another die had been cast. In a phone call from Alexander, Clark made a last effort to forestall the attack. No clear evidence placed Germans in the abbey. "Previous efforts to bomb a building or a town to prevent its use by the Germans…always failed," he added. "It would be shameful to destroy the abbey and its treasure," not to mention any innocent civilians inside. "If the Germans are not in the monastery now, they certainly will be in the rubble after the bombing ends," Clark said.

Alexander conceded the points, then shrugged them off. "Bricks and mortar, no matter how venerable, cannot be allowed to weigh against human lives," he argued. Freyberg was "a very important cog in the commonwealth effort. I would be most reluctant to take responsibility for his failing and for his telling his people, 'I lost five thousand New Zealanders because they wouldn't let me use air as I wanted.'" Not least, Alexander felt scalding pressure from London. "What are you doing sitting down doing nothing?" the prime minister demanded in a preposterous cable. "Why don't you use your armour in a great scythe-like movement through the mountains?"

Clark capitulated. If Freyberg were American, he told Alexander, he would deny the request. But "due to the political daintiness" of the circumstances—Spadger in effect commanded a small national army—there was little choice but to procede with the plan now code-named Operation AVENGER. In a dictated memo, Clark condemned Alexander for "unduly interfering with Fifth Army activities," adding, "It is too bad unnecessarily to destroy one of the art treasures of the world."

The attack would be launched quickly, to exploit a narrow window of fair weather. Freyberg had proposed dropping a single token bomb as a warning to refugees hiding in the abbey. Instead, on Monday night, February 14, Allied gunners lobbed two dozen shells that burst three hundred feet above Monte Cassino, showering the abbey with leaflets. *"Amici italiani, ATTENZIONE!"* they read:

Now that the battle has come close to your sacred walls we shall, despite our wish, have to direct our arms against the monastery. Abandon it at once. Put yourselves in a safe place. Our warning is urgent.

A pleasant morning sun peeped above the Abruzzi peaks on Tuesday, February 15, the harbinger of an Italian spring that surely must come soon. A battered, roofless Volkswagen sped downhill from a decrepit palazzo in Roccaseca, past the ruined castle where the saintly Thomas Aquinas had been born, then left onto Highway 6 in the Liri Valley. Beyond the village of Piedimonte, barely three miles northwest of the gleaming abbey ahead, the car turned onto a farm road and lurched to a stop. A tall, slender man wearing the high-collared tunic of a Wehrmacht lieutenant general climbed from the front seat, scanning the knifeblade ridges for enemies even as he admired the luminous vision crowning Monte Cassino.

For five months Fridolin von Senger und Etterlin had rambled across these hills, swinging his six-foot ashplant, his loping gait said to resemble a sailor's more than a soldier's, often chatting up peasants in his passable, lisping Italian. Since October he had commanded XIV Panzer Corps in Vietinghoff's Tenth Army, responsible first for defending part of the Bernhardt Line and now a fifty-mile stretch of the Gustav Line; no man contributed more to Allied miseries at San Pietro, the Rapido River, and Cassino than Senger. His high forehead, hooked beak, and sunken cheeks gave him the air of a homely ascetic, although his long fingers and aesthete's mannerisms suggested a man "more French really than Prussian," as his daughter later claimed. Descended from an ancient family of lesser princes that lost its estates in the Napoleonic Wars and its wealth in the Weimar inflation, Senger had studied at Oxford as a Rhodes scholar before finding his calling in the Great War; when his younger brother was killed at Cambrai in 1917, Senger dug for hours through a mass grave in no-man's-land, determined to give him a more dignified interment. "At last we got the body out, which had lain in the lowest of the three levels," he later wrote. "I took hold of my brother's legs and dragged him thus into my car. On the seat beside me sat my lifeless brother."

In this war he had helped capture Cherbourg, then commanded a panzer division near Stalingrad before serving as Kesselring's senior liaison to Italian forces in Sicily. Later, as commander of German troops on Corsica and Sardinia, Senger had refused Hitler's order to shoot turncoat Italian officers, an impertinence only pardoned after he successfully evacuated the entire German garrison. Since taking over the Cassino front he had scrupulously followed orders to keep his troops away from the abbey lest they anger the Vatican; when Abbot Diamare invited Senger to Christmas dinner and mass in the Monte Cassino crypt, he avoided looking out the windows rather than violate the abbey's neutrality by scanning Allied positions below. German observation posts were dug below the hill crest, where they were better camouflaged anyway.

"The rotten thing is to keep fighting and fighting and to know all along that we have lost this war," he told an aide, his brushy eyebrows dancing. Now, with his corps at times losing a battalion or more each day, "annihilation was only a matter of time." Kesselring's cheery attitude baffled him; after five months in the Italian mountains, Senger insisted that "optimism is the elixir of life for the weak." He bore the burden—and the stain of serving a National Socialist cause he despised—as best he could, sipping wine in his Roccasecca refuge while listening to evening concerts on his service radio, or sitting with comrades to again watch his favorite movie, *Der Weisse Traum*—The White Dream—about a lovesick Viennese theater manager. He read Aquinas and found cold comfort in the theologian's teaching that "no man can be held answerable for the misdeeds of those over whom he has no power." Upon learning of German atrocities in Poland, Senger wrote, "Oh the loneliness when one hears of such things on which one must be silent."

Now he heard something else. At 9:45 A.M., as he conferred with grenadier officers in a cylindrical concrete command post near Piedimonte, the drone of bomber engines drew Senger outside. He craned his long neck and shaded his eyes. Tiny cruciforms filled the blue sky three miles above Monte Cassino, their paths etched by milky contrails. Then swarms of bright pellets tumbled toward the abbey, as if heaven itself were throwing silver stones.

* * *

An officer in the 4th Indian Division wrote in his battalion log, "Someone said, 'Flying Fortresses,' then followed the whistle, swish and blast as the first flights struck against the monastery." To a B-17 pilot peering down from his cockpit, "the mountain seemed to gust upward like a volcano." As the initial bombs struck the abbey roof, dust spurting from the windows reminded a 34th Division lieutenant of "smoke coming out of a man's ears."

They were the first of 250 bombers—B-17s, B-25s, B-26s—that by day's end would dump nearly six hundred tons of high explosives and incendiaries on Monte Cassino. Hundreds of artillery rounds joined the bombardment, including enormous shells from 240mm and 8-inch howitzers. In the Rapido Valley, a stand of poplar trees that had been sawed three-quarters through were now pushed over to give gunners a clear field of fire.

Soldiers on both sides of the hill watched spellbound as a caldron of smoke and flame boiled from the hilltop. "Scores of us—Yanks, British, Indians and Kiwis—line the ridge, looking at the destruction through glasses," an American ambulance driver noted in his diary. "Three lieutenants jump up and down with excitement every time a rack of bombs breaks over the hill." The sight was "gigantically stimulating…comparable to seeing the early Christians being eaten by lions," a Royal Artillery gunner wrote. "We all started cheering wildly and hugging each other. Here we are, cheering the destruction of one of the great monuments of Christendom." The reporter Martha Gellhorn found herself braying "like all the other fools," while her colleague Frank Gervasi heard someone murmur, "Beautiful precision." Maoris and Kiwis preparing to storm the Cassino rail station bellowed, "Shovel it on!" and "Give the fuckers hell!"

Hell they got. The leaflet barrage the previous evening had terrified the abbey's refugees—their numbers were estimated at between 800 and 2,500—but confused attempts to contact German troops about safe passage down Monte Cassino had failed. Some refugees suspected the monks of counterfeiting the warning leaflets as a ruse to clear the abbey of riffraff.

Abbot Diamare planned to evacuate the abbey in his own time, on Wednesday morning. His monks had been distracted by the death from fever of a young brother, whose corpse, dressed in a robe and laid in a coffin he himself had built from bed planks, was given to God in the little chapel of St. Anne. This morning they had observed the liturgy of the hours as usual in the abbey's deepest cells, and were on their knees before a painted Madonna, singing "Beseech Christ on Our Behalf," when the first stupendous shudder shook the building. Explosion followed explosion, the corridors filled with choking dust, smoke, and shattered masonry. The abbot offered absolution to each monk. They stuffed their ears with cotton wadding against the roar of the bombs and the screams of women and children overhead.

By two P.M. the abbey was a smoldering memory. Thirteen hundred bombs and another twelve hundred high-explosive incendiaries had smashed the cloisters, shearing off courtyard palms and decapitating the statue of St. Benedict. The grand staircase lay in ruins. Drifts of rubble fifteen feet high filled the basilica aisles, where frescoes, an ancient organ, and choir stalls carved by Neapolitan

artisans were reduced to flinders. Protected in their subterranean vaults, the monks forced a passage upstairs through the wreckage to find scores of dead refugees—including many cut down by artillery fire as they fled outside—and those still alive "crazy with terror," in one monk's description. "Parents abandoned their shrieking children and fled to safety," according to a German account. "Sons fled, leaving their aged parents to their fate. One woman had both her feet blown off."

No mortal would ever know how many died. Estimates ranged from more than one hundred to more than four hundred; the official British history put the figure at "three or four hundred." After the war, 148 skulls would be found in the debris, with others no doubt pulverized. "Some of the bodies were found in small rooms in which they had suffocated, such as an old man who had tried to protect a child with his body," wrote Herbert Bloch, a Harvard classics scholar and author of *Monte Cassino in the Middle Ages.* The attitudes of the dead reminded archaeologists of Pompeii.

Alexander's headquarters asserted that two hundred Germans were seen fleeing the abbey ruins, a ludicrous claim. Shortly after noon, Senger tore himself away from the mesmerizing spectacle atop Monte Cassino to send Vietinghoff the message that damage was extensive and that "numerous civilian refugees are in the abbey." Under orders from Berlin, grenadiers searched the grounds soon after the bombing ceased; they found the abbey's outer walls battered but not breached at ground level. As Clark had foretold, Senger promptly ordered his troops to burrow into the rubble. Machine guns nested in the masonry, artillery observers perched on the broken ramparts, and a field kitchen opened in Benedict's cell.

Not until dawn on Thursday did Abbot Diamare lead the remnants of his flock out of the ruins. Forty monks and refugees emerged from the abbey's arched entryway, still intact with the inscription PAX carved in the stone lintel above the great oak door. A monk holding a large wooden crucifix led the procession down the serpentine road from one hairpin curve to another. A paralyzed boy rode on a monk's shoulders, and the old woman without feet was carried on a ladder until the burden grew too great and she was laid on the mountainside to die. Down they trudged, past yawning craters gouged in the roadbed and the rocky knob of Monte Venere, now called Hangman's Hill because the wrecked funicular tower resembled a gibbet. Down, down the procession wound toward the seething valley, as the old abbot and his monks mumbled the rosary in contemplation of God's deepest mysteries, the joyful and the luminous, the glorious and the sorrowful.

The 4th Indian Division had expected Operation AVENGER to begin Wednesday afternoon, and only fifteen minutes before the bomber fleet appeared overhead on Tuesday morning did frontline troops learn that the attack had been accelerated to exploit the fair weather. Unable to retreat to better cover from their forward holes, two dozen Indian troops were injured in the bombardment, many by flying masonry. "They told the monks, and they told the enemy, but they didn't tell us," an enraged Royal Sussex commander said.

From that point, nothing was right except the courage, again. Hours passed without a follow-on assault. Freyberg's tactical incompetence in failing to couple the bombardment with a prompt attack by swarming infantrymen was aggravated by the loss of the 4th Indian's capable commander, Major General Tuker, whom malaria and rheumatoid arthritis had laid low. His replacement, Brigadier H. W. Dimoline, an artilleryman with little infantry experience, was "far out of his depth," another senior officer later complained. "There did not appear to be a glimmer of intelligent leadership anywhere from division up."

Not until Tuesday night did the attack begin, and then with but a single company sent to seize Point 593, that troublesome knuckle a mile behind the now ruined abbey. German machine guns and

mortars killed or wounded half the men before they covered fifty yards. Another attack on Wednesday night by a full battalion collapsed when enemy defenders happened to fire three green flares, which by foul luck mimicked the Royal Sussex signal to withdraw. Early on Friday morning, February 18, Gurkhas assaulted the abbey directly, but booby traps, grenades, a dense thicket of throat-high thorns, and sleeting machine-gun fire drove them back. Dozens of dead Gurkhas would later be found with their legs trussed in tripwires.

In the town below, Maori riflemen at dawn on Friday routed grenadiers from the Cassino train station and roundhouse. But nine thousand Kiwi smoke shells fired to obscure those gains also hid German infiltrators, who counterattacked late in the afternoon to win back the lost rail yard. Supply columns trying to slip through the Rapido bottoms at night found the enemy on the frowning heights more omniscient than ever. "A star shell went up, followed by another," a 4th Indian signaler wrote. "As we had expected, Jerry had become suspicious and soon a string of flares lit the whole valley with an eerie blue light." Of two hundred mules clopping toward the front lines, twenty won through. AVENGER petered out after nearly six hundred 4th Indian casualties and more than two hundred New Zealanders killed or wounded. Understrength, uncoordinated, and unimaginative, the attack "could not hold any surprise," Senger later wrote. "There was nothing new in it." Obliterating the abbey "brought no military advantage of any kind," the British official history concluded, and—as the U.S. Army's own history added—gained "nothing beyond destruction, indignation, sorrow, and regret."

Efforts to justify the bombing began even before the smoke had blown clear of Monte Cassino. Military authorities pressured the OSS, without success, for evidence that German troops had occupied the abbey. In a cable to London, Field Marshal Wilson wrote, "Suggest that we should confine our statement to the fact that military authorities on the spot have irrefutable evidence that the Cassino abbey was part of the main German defensive line." Long after the war, the U.S. Army claimed that no civilian bodies had been found in the abbey. Assuming that Rome would soon become a battleground, Allied propagandists began a campaign to blame Germany, in hopes of regaining the moral high ground and of pressuring Berlin to eschew scorched-earth tactics in the capital.

Yet Senger and Kesselring had already stolen a march. As Abbot Diamare worked his way down the hill on Thursday morning, a German staff car picked him up and drove him to the XIV Panzer Corps headquarters, where he spent the night. The next day, with movie cameras rolling and a German radio reporter present, Senger staged an interview.

"Everything was done on the part of the German armed forces," Senger said, "in order to give the opponent no military ground for attacking the monastery."

"General, I can only confirm this," the abbot said. "Until the moment of the destruction of the Monte Cassino abbey there was within the area of the abbey neither a German soldier, nor any German weapon, nor any German military installation."

Senger nodded. "It came to my attention much too late that leaflets which gave notice of the bombing were dropped over the area of the monastery."

"We simply did not believe that the English and Americans would attack the abbey," Diamare said. "We laid out white clothes in order to say to them, do nothing to us…. They have destroyed the monastery and killed hundreds of innocent people."

Senger leaned forward solicitiously. "Can I do anything more?"

"No, General. You have done everything."

Berlin overplayed its hand by pressing the abbot to sign a more venomous statement. He refused, but the damage was done; posters of the ruined monastery and Diamare's commentary appeared on Roman streets and in Vienna. A week after the bombing, the president of the Pontificia Accademia Romana di Archeologia condemned the destruction as "an everlasting shame to our age and to our civilization"—as if the Second World War were anything less. The British military strategist J.F.C.

Fuller later denounced the bombing "not so much a piece of vandalism as an act of sheer tactical stupidity," confirmation that, "as in the years 1915–17, tactical imagination was petrified."

The ruined abbey—"that tomb of miscalculation," in one U.S. Army corporal's phrase—quickly came to symbolize the grinding war of attrition that the Italian campaign had become. Fifth Army's latest seven-mile advance had exhausted eight divisions and cost sixteen thousand casualties. Only "endless vistas of deadlock" seemed to loom ahead, as a New Zealand assessment put it. The search for scapegoats on the Cassino front also began: Marshall in a message to General Devers on February 18 suggested that Keyes and his division commanders "appear below [the] stern standard required…. Let nothing stand in the way of procuring leadership of the quality necessary."

Public opinion in the United States seemed largely indifferent to the destruction. Twenty-seven months of total war had severed sentimental attachments to the Monte Cassinos of this world. A Gallup poll taken shortly after the bombing found that if military leaders believed it necessary to bomb historic religious buildings and shrines in Europe, 74 percent of Americans would approve and only 19 percent disapprove. The wolf had risen in the heart at home, too.

Yet as shell fire and the odd bombing sortie continued to carve away Monte Cassino's crest, those entrenched in the Rapido flats could not help but feel that once again something had been lost in this dark epoch of loss. Even Major General Walker, whose 36th Division had been gutted on the Rapido in Cassino's shadow, felt unease. "Whenever I am offered a liqueur glass of benedictine," he wrote in his diary, "I shall recall with regret the needless destruction of the abbey." Of course the deeper regret extended beyond ecclesiastical landmarks. War was whittling it all away: civility and moderation, youth and innocence, mountains and men.

Part Four

10. Four Horsemen

A Fairyland of Silver and Gold

The trolleys were running again in Naples, along with the stinking diesel buses and the trams that clacked uphill to the swank villas above the city. Few motor vehicles could be seen, except for jeeps and Army deuce-and-a-half trucks, but hundreds of dogcarts and rattletrap barouches pulled by swaybacked nags filled the boulevards. "The bay was as blue as ever, Vesuvius as black, and the pines as green," Fifth Army's OSS chief reported. Neapolitans in shabby clothes and shabbier shoes strolled the Via Francesco Caracciolo, "arm in arm, talking, laughing, crying, arguing, gesticulating," Frank Gervasi observed. Scavengers hunted cigar butts in the gutters, and slatterns with rented babies begged in the piazzi where quacks peddled their nostrums and shoeblacks, called *lustrini,* signaled their services by rapping on their wooden boxes. "Hubba, hubba," the urchins sang in mimicry of GIs. "Chicken-a shit, second-a lieutenant." In the public gardens, "storytellers have been drawn out by the sun to take up their positions," the British officer and writer Norman Lewis noted in late February. For a coin they "chanted recitations of the deeds of Charlemagne and the Paladins," using their hands to "build up their thoughts, like a potter at his wheel."

Naples over the centuries had lured the likes of Petrarch and Goethe, Rossini and Donizetti, Dickens and James Fenimore Cooper. While writing the *Aeneid,* Virgil was said to have driven the snakes from a city he adored, although two millennia later John Ruskin found it "the most loathsome nest of human caterpillars I was ever forced to stay in—a hell with all the devils imbecile in it." Now resurgent Naples drew hordes of Allied soldiers. Given that Cassino lay only fifty miles north and Anzio but ninety, the city conveyed "a complacency and lack of realism worse than that prevailing in New York City," the reporter Homer Bigart complained. But for many on leave from the front, Naples was "the nearest symbol of every man's immediate aspirations," wrote the British officer Fred Majdalany.

> It was a fairyland of silver and gold and great happiness…. You could buy things in the shops; you could get drunk; you could have a woman; you could hear music.

Of course the war intruded at times. Each afternoon, a hospital train pulled into the Piazza Garibaldi station with broken boys from Cassino shelved in triple-tiered berths, the most grievous cases in the bottom bunks. Luftwaffe raiders still struck the port and anchorages, and "every ship opened up with its guns until there were a hundred necklaces of red tracer bullets over Naples bay," wrote Alan Moorehead. Just the rumor of an attack triggered orders to "make smoke," and within eight minutes a thousand soldiers manning fog-oil generators and smoke pots would lay a dense blanket along twenty miles of Neapolitan coast, thick enough that jeep drivers had to shine flashlights at the curb to follow the road. Despite the smoke and the swarming tracers, an occasional bomber got through, followed immediately by looters, who staggered from bombed-out buildings with "perhaps a door, a bedstead, a couple of kettles, a birdcage," wrote Margaret Bourke-White. After a raid in early spring, Norman Lewis watched as dead children were lifted from the rubble and laid out side by side with dolls "thrust into their arms to accompany them to the other world. Professional mourners…were

running up and down the street tearing at their clothing and screaming horribly."

Yet for most soldiers Naples was a haven, a tabernacle of *la dolce vita* into which they poured for "I&I"—intercourse and intoxication—aboard trucks known as "passion wagons." Italian porters lugged their packs to the Volturno Enlisted Men's Hotel on Via Roma or to the city jail, which Fifth Army renovated as a rest center for twelve hundred men. "The Americans had control of the whole city," complained a British sapper, C. Richard Eke. "Everywhere were GIs and military police, the burly, truncheon-swinging Yanks." The Red Cross auditorium showed a new movie every day at four P.M., drawing big crowds despite frequent interruptions from power failures. A music hall on Via Constantinopoli sponsored dances several nights a week, and Irving Berlin's show *This Is the Army* drew packed houses; roars invariably greeted his rendition of "Oh, How I Hate to Get Up in the Morning." When a soldier spotted Humphrey Bogart in the Hotel Parca, he asked how he could purchase a pistol like the one the actor had used in *Sahara*, which "could fire sixteen shots without reloading." Bogart flicked away his cigarette and replied, "Hollywood is a wonderful place."

So, too, was Pompeii. Each morning at eight, a commuter train hauled hundreds of soldiers to the ruins, where guides offered tours of "The House of the Two Bachelors Who Were Never Married" and intimated that the city's awful fate resulted from "too many different positions." A 3rd Division soldier wrote home that "the old Romans certainly knew how to get the most out of life," but a diarist from the 56th Evacuation Hospital concluded that the lost city had been "built by a clever, wine-drinking, sensuous, evil-minded people."

Soldiers also jammed the reopened San Carlo opera house, despite the fleas in the padded seats and a lack of heat that kept everyone bundled up. From the balcony tiers they chattered like parrots, gawking at the depictions of Parnassus on the domed ceiling. Then the crimson curtain rose, the overture swelled, and the spell was cast. A private from Ohio slapped his knee during the second act of *La Bohème*. "That's good," he murmured, "that's real good." Soldiers spilled into the night humming arias, so many Carusos in olive drab.

New Neapolitan cabarets opened every week. The Orange Club above the Via Posillipo was said by Bourke-White to be "the most lively and popular night club on the European continent." Patrons on the circular terraces gazed at Vesuvius's ruby glow and the winking signal lights from warships in the bay below. Nurses danced the Jersey Bounce, and inebriated officers aimed champagne corks at the brooch on a singer's décolletage. No I&I to Naples was complete without a tour of Capri, where room and board could be had for a dollar a night, and the bars opened at nine A.M. The island struck Alan Moorehead as "a curious little nodule of lotus-eating," with "the slightly beaten air of a worn-out roué." Soldiers lounged on the rocks in straw hats and sandals, or rode to the Marina Piccola in carriages pulled by plumed horses. In hotel dining rooms, waiters served supper from silver chafing dishes to men who had not held a fork since leaving the United States. One visitor was happy simply to list the shades of the sea: turquoise, emerald, purple, peacock, violet.

"I could never forget," wrote Bourke-White, "that many of these boys would go back into the rain and mud and screaming dangers of the hills, never to return."

"The people are terribly poor and everything in the shops is shabby," an American nurse wrote home from Naples. "They all stand outside the mess hall and go through the 55-gallon drums into which we empty our mess kits." For most Neapolitans, there were no lotuses to eat, nor much of anything else. War had moved north, but famine, pestilence, and death tarried through the winter. Most of occupied Italy still relied on Allied food imports to stave off starvation. Ernie Pyle, described by Bill Mauldin as "a tiny wizened bundle of misery with two sharp eyes" who spent his I&I nights

nipping brandy in an Air Force compound known as Villa Virtue, watched Italian mobs on the docks battle for scraps tossed from LST decks by soldiers sailing to Anzio. “Every time a package of crackers went down from above,” Pyle wrote, “humanity fought and stamped over it like a bunch of football players.” A British lieutenant eating chops in a Pozzuoli café was astonished when “a ragged old woman dashed in and snatched the bones off my plate.”

For two months, a particularly virulent strain of typhus raged unchecked, infecting more than two thousand Neapolitans of whom it killed one in four. Carts hauled away the dead at night, as in medieval times. Typhus, which had killed three million people in Russia and Poland during and after World War I, is spread by lice, and 90 percent of the civilian population in Naples reputedly harbored head lice. Each night “a disordered throng of miserable, frightened and soapless citizens” jammed the city’s air raid shelters, which became disease incubators.

Army physicians had quarantined Naples on January 1; for weeks, soldiers on leave were diverted to Caserta. Mass delousing was planned for the entire population, which would be sprayed “on the hoof” at fifty “public powdering stations.” Transport planes brought emergency supplies of a chemical first synthesized in 1874 but only recently recognized as a potent insecticide: DDT. A year earlier, the entire U.S. stockpile had amounted to a few ounces; now a chemical plant in Cincinnati was making seventy thousand pounds of DDT each month, and eventually sixty tons would be shipped to Italy. At one commandeered palazzo, MPs carrying sacks of the stuff stood by with spray guns. “People queued up in two lines many blocks long and marched slowly in and up the marble stairs,” according to a witness. “The men were sprayed from head to foot. The women were shot down their bosoms and backs and were sprayed back and front.” Other spray teams prowled caves and shelters, and soon the typhus epidemic ended. Like DDT itself, the spraying of more than a million Neapolitans remained a military secret for months. Only one Fifth Army soldier had been infected.

Venereal disease was another matter. “A victorious army found in Italy good-looking and amorous women, and cheap intoxicating vino in good supply,” a British analysis concluded. As a result, “the damned army is all clapped up with slit-trench romances,” a Fifth Army surgeon complained. Soldiers joked that Naples would be the world’s largest bordello, if someone could roof it. “There’s pox galore out here,” a sergeant warned British soldiers arriving in the Piazza Dante. “One good screw and yer prick will swell up like a marrow and yer balls drop off.” A crestfallen Tommy muttered, “Now why doesn’t Thomas Cook put *that* in his brochures?”

With the average worker earning only sixty lire a day—sixty cents, less than the cost of a kilogram loaf of bread—thousands of desperate, destitute Neapolitan women turned to prostitution, which typically paid one to two thousand lire per night. On New Year’s Day, after dubious studies and laboratory tests suggested that “60 percent of all women in Italy had some form of venereal disease,” Neapolitan brothels had been placed off-limits; the skin trade simply moved into the streets and to nearby towns where “they have developed the most loyal and finest pimp system in the world,” according to a provost marshal’s report. Battalions of streetwalkers paraded down Via Roma, their tresses frosted in “DDT hairdos”; one soldier grew so weary of pimps plucking at his sleeve that he hung a sign around his neck: “NO.” A strumpet on Capri who insisted on fixed-price services was known as “Madame Four-Dollars.”

The “perfunctory jogging of the haunches,” in Norman Lewis’s phrase, brought dire results to Fifth Army. The VD rate exceeded one in ten for white soldiers—it was much higher for blacks—with the average gonorrhea infection in February requiring ten days’ recuperation. “The Italian strain of gonococci proved to be 70 percent sulfa resistant,” British doctors reported. Another new wonder drug, penicillin, was generally not available in Italy until mid-February, and then in such limited stocks that it commanded the same black market price as morphine. A secret debate raged over whether penicillin should be given to infected troops or reserved exclusively for those valorously

wounded. Churchill himself directed that "it must be used to the best military advantage," and soon enough the drug would be administered to bedroom libertines and battlefield heroes alike.

Until then, Allied commanders struggled to curb their troops' lascivious impulses. GIRLS WHO TAKE BOARDERS PROVIDE SOCIAL DISORDERS, street signs warned. Twenty "personal ablution centers" operated around the clock in Naples, providing the postcoital GI with soap, water, an iodine solution, and a receipt for his trouble. Still, as battles raged at Cassino and Anzio, 15 percent of all American hospital beds in Italy were occupied by VD patients. Another five hundred beds in Naples were reserved for infected prostitutes, in clinics dubbed "whorespitals." At the Bagnoli racetrack outside Naples, the 23rd General Hospital filled hundreds of beds with diseased Lotharios, whose hospital tunics were stenciled with a large red "VD"; despite the barbed wire and sentries ringing the compound, an Army provost marshal reported that some patients were "jumping the wall and consorting with the prostitutes in the immediate neighborhood." An exasperated major who discovered a tryst under way in a Bagnoli cave flushed the miscreants with tear gas grenades.

Near Avellino, in the hills above Salerno, even sterner measures were taken. "The chaplains thought the whores from Naples had been using the straw huts up and down the valley," one infantryman reported, "so they set fire to all of them."

The Orange Club was pleasant enough, and the opera house and the Capri chafing dishes offered an interlude from the war. But above all else Naples was a port, and by late winter 1944 it was among the world's busiest. Here "that huge and gassy thing called the war effort"—John Steinbeck's words—took solid form as the broad-shouldered avatar of Allied logistical hegemony. To keep a single GI fighting for a month in Italy required more than half a ton of matériel. Can do. For every artillery shell fired at Anzio, for every bomb dropped or Sherman tank lost at Cassino, two more seemed to levitate from the holds of arriving cargo ships, winched out by gantry cranes and placed on rail cars, truck beds, or LSTs bound for the front.

By now the American war machine had become the "prodigy of organization" so admired by Churchill and so dreaded by German commanders. U.S. production totals in 1943 had included 86,000 planes, compared with barely 2,000 in 1939. Also: 45,000 tanks, 98,000 bazookas, a million miles of communications wire, 18,000 new ships and craft, 648,000 trucks, nearly 6 million rifles, 26,000 mortars, and 61 million pairs of wool socks. Each day, another 71 million rounds of small-arms ammo spilled from U.S. munitions plants. In 1944, more of almost everything would be made.

The nation's conversion from a commercial to a military economy was as complete as it ever would be. An auto industry that had made 3.5 million private cars in 1941 turned out 139 during the rest of the war while shifting to tanks, jeeps, and bombers. In artillery production alone, makers of soap, soft drinks, bedsprings, toys, and microscopes now built 60 species of big guns; they were among 2,400 prime contractors and 20,000 subcontractors in the artillery business, from a steam shovel company building gun carriages to an elevator firm fashioning recoil mechanisms.

In February 1944, the U.S. Army shipped 3 million tons of cargo overseas, parsed into 6 million separate supply items that included not only beans and bullets but mildew-resistant shoelaces and khaki-colored pipe cleaners. Enormous consignments throughout the war went to Allied armies under the Lend-Lease program, including 43,000 planes, 880,000 submachine guns, and enough cans of Spam that sardonic Russian soldiers called them "Second Fronts." Inevitably, largesse fueled resentment, "the constant irritation to have to live to a large extent on American bounty," as one British general acknowledged. Tommies could not help but bristle when the British Army's daily toilet paper allotment was 3 sheets per soldier compared to the U.S. Army ration of 22½.

The prodigy also was prodigal, nowhere more than in the Mediterranean. Pilferage and ineconomy meant that "as much as one ship out of every five is stolen or wasted," the U.S. Army's supply chief, General Brehon B. Somervell, calculated in a letter to senior commanders on March 23. From Algiers to Naples, "we are losing gasoline, oil, food, clothing and other items which nobody can see why anybody would steal," Major General Everett S. Hughes replied from AFHQ headquarters. A Fifth Army study estimated that two-thirds of the Naples economy "derives from transactions in stolen Allied supplies." Thieves punched holes in moving rail cars and tossed out the contents, or surreptitiously tapped fuel pipelines running to Foggia. Frank Gervasi reported that an entire trainload of sugar had vanished, along with the train itself; the sugar supposedly sold for 400 lire a kilo on the black market, while the engine and rail cars were traced to a steel mill scrapheap. Horse-drawn funeral hearses were found stuffed with stolen goods from the docks. Whispered offers—"Pork. Beef. Pork. Beef"—could be heard in Neapolitan alleys, and a civil affairs officer claimed that "even an uncrated German fighter plane could be bought on the black market."

A separate prison was built at the port, where a drumhead court-martial heard up to eighty cases a day. Still, despite the fifteen hundred American MPs on duty in the city, it was said that local thieves could "whip the gold out of your eyeteeth while you're yawning." Norman Lewis described stolen Allied kit arrayed on the Via Forcella, with a sign: IF YOU DON'T SEE THE OVERSEAS ARTICLE YOU'RE LOOKING FOR, JUST ASK US AND WE'LL GET IT.

It hardly mattered. "Total war" was largely a German concept, conceived by General Erich Ludendorff as an alternative to the grinding stalemate of World War I. But the Americans had made it their own, stamping it with a Yankee efficiency and management genius that outproduced the Axis fourfold in heavy guns, fivefold in bombers, and sevenfold in transport planes. U.S. tank production in 1943 alone exceeded Germany's during the entire six years of war. In the last eighteen months of World War II, Germany produced seventy thousand trucks; the Allies collectively turned out more than one million.

Even though Kesselring's divisions tended to get more men and matériel than other theaters, German forces in Italy had begun to feel a severe pinch as winter drew to an end. A dearth of fuel drums was followed by shortages of fuel itself; by summer, the allocation for Italy would be halved, and mechanics concocted ersatz fuel distilled from wine, the residue of grape presses, and even acetone salvaged from varnish factories. Tire shortages forced a reduction of truck speed limits from sixty to forty kilometers per hour, and led to experiments with wooden wheels. German motor pools contained three thousand different types of vehicles, a mélange that complicated spare parts supplies.

Wehrmacht quartermasters reported dwindling stocks of iodine, soap, insulin, plaster of Paris, X-ray film, insecticide, dentures, and glass eyes. Kesselring's total ration strength topped one million men, including the Luftwaffe and various support units, and the daily supply allocation was fixed at a lean one kilogram per man. Not least was the difficulty in also victualing 95,000 horses, which required 900 tons of fodder every day and 200 tons of horseshoes and nails each month. Shortages of trucks and of dray horses sometimes forced gun teams to harness oxen and even cows to pull their tubes. A scheme to produce German munitions in northern Italian plants collapsed when factory managers realized that virtually all raw materials would have to be shipped south from the Fatherland, from coal and brass to tungsten and molybdenum.

Allied quartermasters had their own woes, including shortages of 155mm ammunition, watches, and binoculars. The incessant shelling at Anzio also took a grievous toll in water cans and kitchen equipment, not to mention men. Three hundred varieties of ammo, from carbine cartridges to bunker-busters, required extravagant inventory controls: bimonthly ordnance requisitions, in sextuplicate, weighed sixty pounds each. Fifth Army's supply arm, known as the Peninsular Base Section, by early spring of 1944 employed 65,000 soldiers; like rear-echelon troops in every war, they provoked

snarling resentment among frontline veterans—one account called them “the most hated folk in Italy, the Germans running a poor second.” Yet it was only necessary to visit the shoe section in the VI Corps supply dump at Anzio to sense the miracle of Allied preponderance: on any given day, clerks could instantly lay hands on new combat footwear ranging in size from 4AA to 16EEE.

As the fifth year of carnage played out, more than ever the total war had become a struggle not between rival ideologies or opposing tacticians but between systems—the integration of political, economic, and military forces needed for sustained offensive power. Certainly courage, audacity, and sacrifice would be required to win through to Rome, and to prevail globally. But every pallet of bombs, shells, and 16EEE boots hoisted from a Liberty ship in Naples harbor amplified and complemented those battlefield virtues, ensuring that valor would never be practiced in vain.

The Weight of Metal

OF Italy’s 116,000 square miles, none tormented Fifth Army more than the 600-acre swatch occupied by Cassino town. Now overwatched by the gray stub of the ruined abbey, the town boasted four churches, four hotels, a botanical garden, and a jail. All 22,000 citizens had fled or died, ceding the cobbled streets to General von Senger and German paratroopers in their brimless helmets, who in late February replaced the panzer grenadiers previously holding this sector of the Gustav Line.

All approaches from the south in this “small, peculiar and unhealthy piece of Italy,” wrote Martha Gellhorn, were marred by “sliced houses, the landslides of rubble, the torn roofs.” Highway 6, now scorched and lifeless, ran “straight as a bar of steel” for three miles from Monte Trocchio into town before swerving up the Liri Valley. Riflemen traded potshots and gunners exchanged artillery barrages, but drear stalemate took hold, in an “endless vigil that is never a quiet one,” as one Gurkha officer wrote. In his diary he added:

> Time seems to have stopped. It is as if we have been condemned to live forever in a cold, damp hell on earth, each of us obtaining but meagre shelter behind rocks or in holes in the ground.

Not far from here, in 217 B.C., Hannibal had found himself hemmed in by mountains and Roman troops. Lashing dry twigs to the horns of two thousand rustled cattle, his soldiers set fire to the faggots and drove the herd onto the heights above confused enemy sentinels who mistook the flaming beasts for an encircling army of men carrying torches. Fearful of being outflanked, the Romans fled, Hannibal escaped, and his Carthaginians went on to win one of the greatest victories in Western military history at Cannae a year later.

No such stratagem occurred to Alexander, Clark, or their lieutenants. The high command seemed in the grip of a plodding fatalism, as if no man “was master of his own destiny,” wrote a British officer. “There was no firm conviction among the leaders that victory would result.” Alexander was inclined to lie low until spring weather dried the ground and cleared the skies, as both his staff and General Juin urged. Yet, under pressure from London and Washington, he felt obliged to tie up as many German divisions as possible before the Normandy invasion; he also hoped to prevent Kesselring from massing for further blows at Anzio. The tail now wagged the dog: the Anzio landings had been launched to break the Gustav Line impasse at Cassino; now another attack at Cassino was deemed necessary to help the beachhead.

In meetings at Caserta in late February, Alexander decreed that come spring the Allied front would be reconfigured to concentrate more combat power around the maw of the Liri Valley. Fifth Army was to shift to the left, taking over a coastal sector with a force that was mostly American and French. Eighth Army would also shift left, leaving a small presence on the Adriatic, while assuming responsibility for the Cassino front with the British X and XIII Corps, as well as I Canadian Corps and the newly arrived II Polish Corps. Clark privately rejoiced at unshackling himself from the British. "Anything that will divest me of the terrific responsibilities that I have had in trying to command McCreery's [X Corps] and Freyberg's corps will be welcome by me," he told his diary on February 28.

Before that happy day arrived, however, Fifth Army was to make one final attempt to bull through at Cassino with Spadger Freyberg's Kiwis, Brits, and Indians. But how? For the past two months, beginning with the French thrust northeast of Cassino and the American debacle at the Rapido, Allied attackers had avoided a direct assault into the town. Minefields and inundations hemmed both sides of Highway 6, turning the roadbed into a narrow, exposed funnel for any battalion approaching from Monte Trocchio. Yet Freyberg saw no alternative to a head-on attack. Convinced that a wide flanking movement around Monte Cassino was impossible, he "put his faith in the weight of metal," as the Indian official history later observed.

As the abbey had been pulverized, so now the town. New Zealand intelligence analysts proposed dropping three 1,000-pound bombs for each of the estimated 1,000 German paratroopers believed to be sheltering in Cassino. Freyberg calculated that just half that payload—perhaps 750 tons, reinforced by 200,000 artillery shells—would allow Allied infantry and armor forces to "walk through" the town, which he asserted could be cleared by tanks in six to twelve hours after the bombardment.

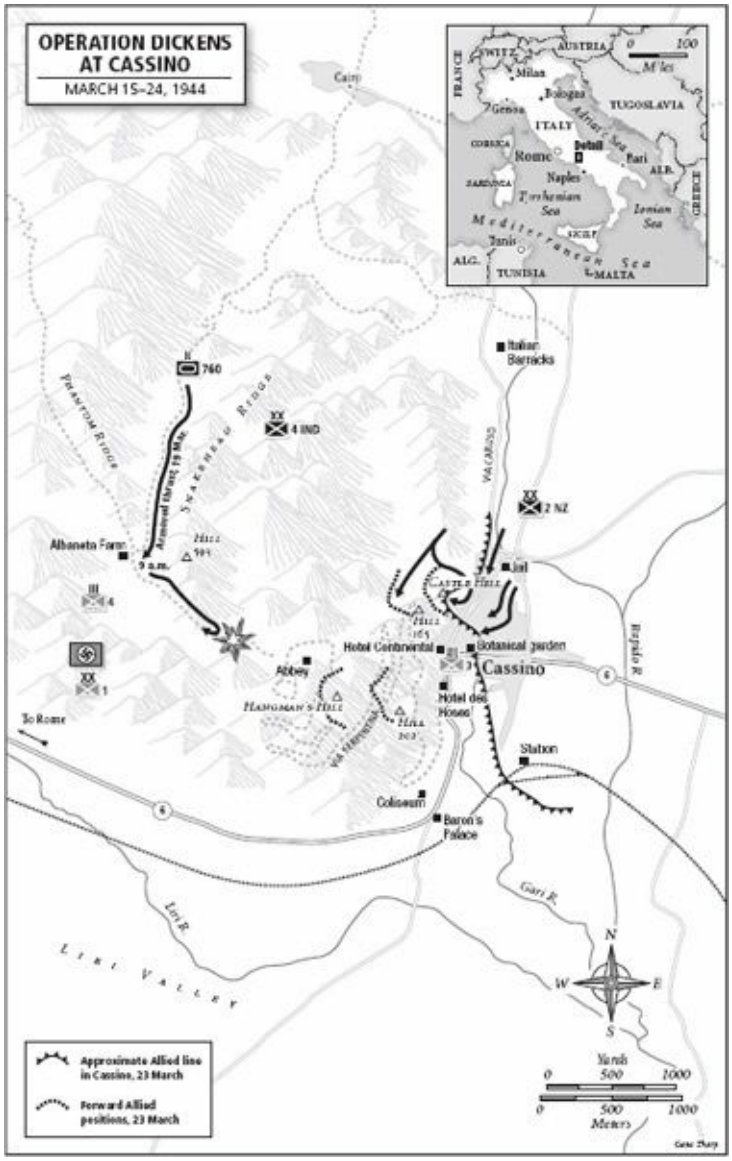
The use of airpower to bludgeon a hole through the Gustav Line found favor with Hap Arnold, the Army Air Forces chief, whose cables from Washington had become increasingly shrill. Why were daily air sorties in Italy running at 1,500 or fewer when "you with the British have a total of approximately 5,000 airplanes?" he asked Ira Eaker on February 24. "Why not 3,000 [sorties] until the situation is more in our favor?" In a petulant letter a few days later, Arnold condemned "the lack of ingenuity in the air action," adding, "We are all very greatly disturbed here at the apparent bogging down of the Italian campaign." Was it not possible to "break up every stone in the town behind which a German soldier might be hiding?" Such an attack "could really make air history," he wrote. "The whole future of the air forces is closely knit into this whole problem." Behind Arnold's military advice lay a larger political calculus: Air Force success in breaking the impasse at Cassino would strengthen his campaign to make the service independent of the U.S. Army.

Lieutenant General Eaker yielded to no man in airpower enthusiasm. Born in Texas and raised in southeast Oklahoma, he had been commissioned as an infantry officer in 1917 before transferring immediately to the flying service. As chief pilot of *Question Mark* in 1929, Eaker demonstrated the potential of airborne refueling by remaining aloft over Los Angeles for six days; several years later he made the first transcontinental flight while navigating solely by instruments. Coauthor with Arnold of three books on what they fondly called "this flying game," Eaker personally had persuaded Churchill a year earlier to endorse the Combined Bomber Offensive, a round-the-clock pummeling of Axis strategic targets with U.S. heavy bombers by day and British bombers by night. "There is nothing that can be destroyed by gunfire that cannot be destroyed by bombs," he once proclaimed. Before taking over the Mediterranean air forces in January, he had commanded the U.S. Eighth Air Force in Britain, where appalling crew losses and irregular bomb accuracy failed to shake his belief that the Third Reich could be gutted from the air.

He was less certain about Cassino. Obliterating the abbey had simply given German defenders both the moral and topographical high ground. Contrary to Freyberg's sunny estimate, an Army Air

Forces study warned that “due to cratering and debris, tanks would probably not be able to pass through the town for 48 hours after the bombing.” To Arnold, Eaker wrote on March 6, “Do not set your heart on a great victory as a result of this operation. Personally, I do not feel it will throw the German out of his present position completely and entirely, or compel him to abandon the defensive role.” Unless ground forces attacked promptly, “little useful purpose is served” by bombardment. “We shall go forward and capture Rome when the weather permits,” Eaker added, “and not before.”

Yet in the absence of a plausible alternative—the latter-day equivalent of flaming livestock—Freyberg’s plan carried the day: after bombers flattened the town, the 2nd New Zealand Division with help from Indian troops and American tanks would occupy the ruins and forge a bridgehead across the Rapido, while Indian troops seized Monte Cassino and opened the Liri Valley for armored forces to trundle up Highway 6 toward Rome. The scheme was code-named Operation DICKENS in honor of Charles Dickens, who after visiting Monte Cassino abbey had written a lugubrious account of “the deep sounding of its bell…while nothing is seen but the grey mist, moving solemnly and slowly, like a funeral procession.”



Freyberg insisted that the bombing coincide with three consecutive days of fair weather to dry the ground for attacking tanks. This demand fell on the Fifth Army meteorologist, Captain David M. Ludlum, a former high school history teacher who had earned his Ph.D. at Princeton and who was

admired for his panache in wearing pajamas to bed during the darkest hours at Salerno. Perhaps to encourage a favorable forecast, the actual bombardment of Cassino town was named Operation LUDLUM.

Alas, the honor failed to inspire meteorological favor. Beginning in late February, rain fell day after dreary day. The eponymous captain studied his weather charts from dawn until midnight only to report yet again: more rain. A week passed, then another. In the hills behind Monte Cassino, Indian troops waited in their soggy holes, emerging only at night to briefly stretch their cramped muscles. Sickness or battle wounds claimed another Indian soldier every twenty minutes on average. Nebelwerfer fire raked the Allied positions, and by mid-March fifty-five German mortars had been counted around Cassino. With the entire New Zealand Corps keyed to attack on twenty-four hours' notice, "staleness, physical and psychological, was inevitable," as the official Kiwi history noted. Worse luck: on the afternoon of March 2, the able New Zealand division commander Howard Kippenberger climbed Monte Trocchio to survey the approaches along Highway 6 and tripped an undetected S-mine. The blast blew off one foot and mangled the other so badly that surgeons trimmed it away. In less than a month, Freyberg had lost his two best lieutenants, Tuker of the 4th Indian Division and now Kippenberger.

Never in his legendary career had he faced "so difficult an operation," Freyberg admitted in early March. The newly arriving commander of XIII Corps, Lieutenant General Sidney C. Kirkman, found Freyberg "very gloomy about the proposed attack" and furious at Clark, who, he complained, had "no ideas except to launch a succession of attacks regardless of casualties."

Unknown to Freyberg, Kirkman carried a note from the Eighth Army commander, General Leese, authorizing him to take command from Freyberg "if I saw fit." After several long conversations with the New Zealander, Kirkman chose to keep the warrant in his pocket, not least because Freyberg "would have been most annoyed and humiliated." But Operation DICKENS, he warned Leese on March 4, would likely gain little and cost much. The ground was too boggy for a sprightly advance and Allied reserves too meager to exploit any rupture in the Gustav Line.

The ground grew boggier: rain fell for a third week. Each evening, as twilight's gray tint faded to black in the west, the ravines and mountain roads leaped to life. Quartermasters hurried forward with supplies stacked in the beds of their grinding trucks, the cat's-eye blackout lights creeping up the muddy inclines until the track grew too steep or the enemy too bold. Swaying mule trains clopped behind the ridgelines, moving no quicker than a mile per hour despite whispered exhortations from the skinners; each animal could lug eighteen mortar rounds or an equivalent load, and a report from the front observed that "the mules are tranquil during shell fire, the Italian mule leaders are not." Only men could scale the steepest slopes, and panting bearers trudged toward the forward outposts with water cans and ammo belts lashed to their packboards, every ear cocked for the whine of a sniper's bullet or the telltale *pumpf!* of a mortar shell leaving its tube.

At dawn the landscape again grew still except for greasy smoke spiraling from one detonation or another. German ambulances rolled down Highway 6 with impunity until observers spied armed troops climbing from the rear; Kiwi artillery sent the next one fishtailing back up the Liri Valley. Careless enemy soldiers risked the frustrated wrath of the entire Fifth Army: a gunner on Monte Trocchio reported that when a solitary German strayed from his hole in Cassino town one morning "he was engaged by a holocaust of fire, including that of 8-inch howitzers."

At seven A.M. on Wednesday, March 15, Clark and Gruenther left the Fifth Army command post in Presenzano and drove by jeep past Monte Lungo to Freyberg's headquarters near San Pietro.

Captain Ludlum had at last delivered good news. His Tuesday night forecast reported that a "frontal system over France yesterday morning has moved rapidly south-eastward" to provide perfect bombing weather in Italy for the ides: sunshine, dead calm, a few thin clouds. The long-awaited warning order, drawn from cricket terms, was broadcast to all units: "Bradman will be batting tomorrow." Troops closest to Cassino crept back a thousand yards.

After a brief stop in the New Zealand encampment, Clark and Gruenther pressed ahead in a cavalcade that sped through Purple Heart Valley and past the rubble once known as San Pietro. Operation LUDLUM had attracted an eager crowd, including Devers, Eaker, Keyes, and Freyberg. Alexander appeared from Caserta in his own jeep with a gaggle of reporters in tow. Dressed in his fleece-lined jacket and red cap, he appeared as "calm, detached and attractive as usual," one admirer wrote; in a letter to his three children a few days earlier, Alexander had sketched a child in a nightshirt watching a hag with a pointed hat sail past on her broom. "So," the caption read, "there are witches after all!"

Before reaching Monte Trocchio, the convoy turned right to climb through San Vittore to the hill town of Cervaro. Clark followed a Kiwi officer into the decrepit stone house that would serve as his grandstand. After scanning the valley with his field glasses from a second-floor balcony, Clark climbed to the roof and straddled the ridgepole, his long legs dangling over the eaves. Three miles due west across the Rapido flats lay Cassino: the four churches, the four hotels, the botanical garden, the jail, all gleaming in the morning sun, all doomed.

He hardly cared. As of Tuesday, Fifth Army comprised 438,782 soldiers—205,000 Americans, 172,000 British, 49,000 French, 12,000 Italians—and to each of them Clark felt responsible for breaking the stalemate in Italy by whatever means necessary. The rain, the casualties, the internecine bickering, the impasse at Anzio, the brouhaha over the abbey—all had worn him down, even as the long winter made him harder, more obdurate. Every visit to a ward full of wounded boys left him "very depressed." When a sympathetic admiral wrote to remind Clark that "whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth," he replied, "Chastening already ample. Surely time has come to spare the rod." In early March he told Renie:

> I know you are upset about the Italian situation, and so am I, but there is nothing I can do about it except continue to do my duty…. You must look upon this Italian campaign as one little part of a world war where perhaps we do something the hard way in order to make successes in other places easier.

If broad-gauged and resolute, with what he described as "a keen and abiding interest in the little problems" of his men, he could also be pinched and querulous. To Geoff Keyes on Monday he had mused aloud about personally taking command at the Anzio beachhead. The feckless Lucas was gone, but Clark found Truscott "a difficult subordinate to handle. He makes demands, knowing full well that many of them can not be granted." Yet it was the British who annoyed him most. "I am convinced that Alexander is floundering in his effort to solve the tactical situation here," Clark told his war diary on March 8. Even Churchill seemed bent on provoking him from afar: an AFHQ staff officer reported that "all dispatches sent personally to the prime minister should spell 'theater' 't-h-e-a-t-r-e' and should not spell 'through' 't-h-r-u.'" When Churchill in early March ordered that troops at Anzio be known as the "Allied Bridgehead Force," Clark in a note to Alexander counterproposed "the Fifth Army Allied Bridgehead Force." He confessed in his diary to being "greatly annoyed," then added, "This is part of the steady effort by the British to increase their prestige."

For Clark, too, there were witches after all. Ever more convinced that others conspired to steal his thunder and deprive Fifth Army of battle honors fairly won, he struggled to keep his equilibrium against stress, exhaustion, pride, and insecurity. Only when he stood triumphant as an American pro-consul in Rome would the world see that the sacrifices from Salerno to Cassino were justified. A gifted soldier, with a brain big enough and a spine stiff enough to wage the total war required in 1944, Mark Clark at times seemed to battle his own demons as bitterly as he fought the Germans.

A few days earlier he had mailed Renie a brooch set with red, white, and blue stones to form the Fifth Army insignia; it matched the three-star earrings she sometimes wore. “My problems get no less worrisome as the days go on,” he confided in the accompanying note. “However, things will work out, and I am waiting for the day when I can lead my Fifth Army into victory.”

At precisely 8:30 A.M., a faint sound overhead broke Clark’s reverie. “Into the silence obtruded a drone, no louder than the buzz of a bee, but becoming louder by the second,” wrote a British sapper. Heads swiveled, glasses glinted. Swarms of B-25 medium bombers appeared from the east at seven thousand feet, escorted by fighters. As the formation approached Cassino, the planes banked to the left. Bomb bays blinked open like a hundred dark eyes.

“The object of the attack,” each flight crew had been told, “is to accomplish complete reduction of Cassino town.” To terrorize German defenders, the lead squadrons were advised to “attach whistling devices”—known as screamers—“to as many bombs as practicable.” The planes carried only thousand-pound blockbusters, with fuses set to detonate at basement depth: .1 seconds after impact in the nose and .025 seconds in the tail. Bombardiers had no aim points other than a quarter-mile radius around Cassino’s heart. Medium bombers—the B-25 Mitchells and B-26 Marauders—were to strike the northern hemisphere, known as “A,” while the heavies—the B-24 Liberators and B-17 Flying Fortresses—would hit the southern sector, “B.” No Luftwaffe fighters appeared, and only a few flak blossoms blemished the cerulean sky.

The screamers screamed. Cassino abruptly vanished. “Sprout after sprout of black smoke leapt from the earth and curled upward like some dark forest,” wrote Christopher Buckley. From Clark’s ridgepole—it shuddered and swayed as each distant stick detonated—the first eight hundred bombs seemed to swallow the town in smoke and flame. “Target cabbaged real good,” a crewman in the lead bomber reported. Soon after the first mediums flew off, Fortresses appeared, then more mediums, then more heavies, alternating between sector A and sector B.

“After a few minutes, I felt like shouting that’s enough,” wrote a Gurkha officer dug into a spur behind Monte Cassino. “But it went on and on until our ear drums were bursting and our senses were befuddled.” Between bomb payloads, nearly nine hundred guns fired artillery concentrations code-named LENTIL, TROTSKY, and, improbably, GANDHI.

For more than three hours, the squadrons appeared at ten-to-twenty-minute intervals. Some bombs drifted into 4th Indian Division positions, provoking an adjutant’s cry over the radio, “Stop those damn maniacs!” Even Freyberg was struck by the “terrible one-sidedness of the spectacle.” But Buckley, who had been in Warsaw on September 1, 1939, wrote, “I remember from the evidence of my own eyes who was responsible for letting loose this terrible weapon.”

At 12:12 P.M., as the last B-26 flew from sight, a lone P-38 swooped across Cassino, snapping reconnaissance photographs. They revealed buildings reduced to exoskeletons, a gray hive of door lintels and window frames, with the “peaks of broken buildings still standing, but the overall landscape only a misshapen pile of rubble.” Cassino, the Army Air Forces reported, was “as flat as a stone city can be.” The photos also showed that many craters already had begun to fill with groundwater.

Into the afternoon the artillery continued, six shells per second sweeping that piled rubble until nearly 200,000 rounds had fallen on the town and adjacent hills. Two New Zealand Corps divisions

prepared to surge forward, the 2nd New Zealand through the town and the 4th Indian across Monte Cassino's flanks. Clark left his rooftop, strode half a mile down the road toward the town for a closer look, then circled back to other observation posts in Cervaro before once again dangling his legs over the eaves of his stone house. Alexander kept watch until two P.M. "Nothing," he declared, "could still be alive in the town." Eaker, keen to help Hap Arnold in the sacred quest for Air Force independence, publicly announced, "Today we fumigated Cassino and I am most hopeful when the smoke of today's battle clears we shall find more worthy occupants installed with little loss to our men."

He should have known better. Even before the bomb runs ended it was evident that more than a few payloads had fallen wide. At 10:15 A.M., several dozen Liberators plastered Venafro—eleven miles from Cassino. Six bombs hit the town and others splattered across an adjacent mountain. At 10:30, another Liberator group struck Venafro, followed by yet another at 11:25. Bombs battered General Juin's headquarters, killing fifteen French soldiers and wounding thirty others. More bombs hit the Eighth Army command post in a glade near Venafro, ripping open a mess hut and sending staff officers diving beneath their desks. "Ah," said General Leese upon returning to his headquarters, "I see our American friends have called." In an icy phone call to Clark, Leese said, "Tell me, as a matter of interest, is there anything we've done to offend you recently?"

Other bombs fell on the 4th Indian Division, the 3rd Algerian Division, a Moroccan military hospital, and a Polish bivouac. In a dozen incidents of imprecision during a two-hour period, nearly 100 Allied soldiers died and another 250 were wounded; in Venafro alone as many as 75 civilians were killed. Of 2,366 bombs dropped in LUDLUM, more than 300 were jettisoned or aimed at the wrong target. Less than half the total payload landed within a mile of central Cassino, while fewer than one bomb in ten struck inside the thousand-yard radius of sectors A and B.

Investigators found that flight leaders had flown no previous reconnaissance of the area. Some commanders treated LUDLUM too casually; heavy bomber crews, accustomed to hitting targets deep in enemy territory, often lacked the finesse required for a target tucked among friendly forces. Fifteenth Air Force also permitted bomber groups to select their own altitudes, and most flew too high despite the lack of enemy opposition. In the 459th Bomb Group, a malfunction in Liberator Dog 1-2 caused four bombs to drop prematurely; three other planes followed suit, despite orders to salvo their bombs only when the flight leader did. Similar violations in other groups "precipitated a contagious release throughout the entire attack unit." Through inexperience and "careless navigation," aircrews mistook Venafro, Isernia, Pozzilli, Montaquila, and Cervaro for Cassino. To make matters worse, the bombardier in a B-24H could not see the planes in front release their bombs and therefore relied on a bombs-away signal—usually a sharp kick in the back—from the navigator peering through a window. Clark and his fellow brass hats were fortunate not to fall in with the fratricidal dead.

Eaker and Devers favored prosecuting fourteen Air Force lieutenants, most of them bombardiers. Courts-martial proceedings began after an investigative report found "negligence, or at least poor judgment on the part of the accused"; yet the investigating officer, Brigadier General Joseph H. Atkinson, also recommended clemency for the airmen, whose average age was twenty-three. Charges subsequently were dropped against all but two lieutenants, who later went missing on subsequent missions.

"Let these young officers get on with the war," General Atkinson advised. "There is a lesson for all to learn from this very unfortunate incident."

Freyberg's intelligence had assumed that a thousand 1st Parachute Division soldiers occupied Cassino, but in fact only three hundred or so happened to be in the town when the first bomb fell.

Thousands more held fortifications on Monte Cassino, Point 593, and neighboring slopes. Known as the Green Devils for the hue of their uniforms, the division's three regiments were considered the most formidable German troops in the Mediterranean. German paratroopers had fought ferociously against the New Zealanders on Crete in 1941, and against the Canadians at Ortona in December. After heavy losses in the winter campaign, replacements had nearly brought the division back to scratch under the portly, cigar-smoking Major General Richard Heidrich. Of Heidrich a 4th Indian Division assessment later concluded, "He was ruthless and not overnice."

Roughly half the paratroopers caught in Cassino on Wednesday morning outlived the day, and they described a maelstrom unlike anything experienced before or after. Explosions tossed men about like "scraps of paper," entombing them in cellars and tunnels. "We could no longer see each other," a German lieutenant recalled. "All we could do was to touch and feel the next man. The blackness of night enveloped us and on our tongues was the taste of burnt earth." To another lieutenant, "We were just like a submarine crew whose U-boat was being pursued by depth charges." Artillery fire proved especially devastating to German gun batteries, quickly destroying eighty-nine of ninety-four tubes in one regiment. The stench of decaying corpses soon seeped from Cassino's broken stones as it did from the abbey above; one sergeant thought the very dust tasted of bone. "The men clung to one another as if we were one lump of flesh," he said. "There was nothing we could do except weep and rage." A *Feldwebel* who was later captured told interrogators that the Allied bombardment was so unnerving that his men were forbidden to discuss it. "Speak about women, or anything else," he said, "but not about Cassino."

The town was "blown asunder and beaten into heaps of rubble," the official British history reported. Yet hundreds of bombs and thousands of shells failed to pound the town to powder, contrary to Allied expectations, nor were the surviving defenders "rendered comatose," as planned. A subsequent Air Force analysis found that although roofs and upper floors were obliterated, just south of the Hotel Continental "two rows of houses remain intact as to first floors and cellars," preserved by stout masonry arches and domed ceilings. The Continental's basement also survived, along with various "immensely solid" cellars, dugouts, caves, and a long tunnel from the Roman coliseum to Castle Hill. Munitions specialists later concluded that the .025-second tail fuses caused bombs to detonate just after punching through Cassino roofs; better to have set a slower fuse to penetrate deeper into the buildings, and to have followed them with incendiary bombs that would have ignited splintered floor timbers and smoked out any survivors. Other paratroopers survived in steel, bell-shaped bunkers designed for two men but into which as many as six squeezed during the attack. "Bombs falling three to four yards from a pillbox lifted it out of its position without seriously harming the men inside," a prisoner later reported.

Under orders from Vietinghoff's Tenth Army, General von Senger told Heidrich to stand fast. The paratrooper commander eagerly agreed, convinced that he held an impregnable redoubt. Heidrich believed, he later said, that "Cassino was so ideally situated from a defensive standpoint that no frontal attack could have succeeded." Dust-caked paratroopers dug out of the rubble, stood to arms, then dug back in to prepare for the inevitable Allied assault. Sappers shored up the sagging ceilings in cellars around the Continental. The conversion of Cassino from crossroads market town to stand-or-die citadel was complete.

Still, Eaker continued to talk as if the Air Force had unlocked the gates of Rome. "The Germans would do well to bear in mind," he told reporters, "that what we have done to Fortress Cassino on the ides of March we will do to every other position they decide to hold."

Three hundred and fifty Allied tanks waited in the shadows to sweep through Cassino at one P.M. on Wednesday as a single New Zealand infantry battalion tramped south on Via Caruso along the Rapido River. Pushing into the smoke-draped town, the Kiwi riflemen found "a perplexing and dangerous shambles," with entire blocks reduced to "sprawling cairns of stone and brick." As scouts crept past the broken walls of the city jail, a spatter of picket fire broke the silence. Bullets nickered overhead and the cough of mortar tubes carried from Monte Cassino's lower slopes, along with the demented whine of a German machine gun.

The planned pace of one hundred yards' advance every ten minutes slowed to one hundred yards an hour. A squadron of Sherman tanks also trundled into Cassino, pitching up and down across the rubble "like a flotilla headed into a stormy sea," as the New Zealand official history described it. Crews dismounted with picks and shovels to clear the road for a few yards' advance only to find bomb craters so deep, so wide, and so plentiful that sappers would have to build bridges across them—some as long as seventy feet. After surveying the pocked landscape, now lashed with plunging fire from Monte Cassino's east face, Kiwi engineers calculated that they would need two days to bulldoze a path to the town center, even in peacetime.

Teeming rain fell at dusk, mocking Captain Ludlum's forecast and quickly turning the craters into moats. A second battalion followed the first into town; ordered to capture the rail station on Cassino's southern lip, the riflemen failed even to reach Highway 6 in the moonless labyrinth, "each soaked man…clinging miserably to the bayonet scabbard of the man in front," as Fred Majdalany recounted.

In the dying light, a single intrepid company had scaled the sheer hillside below the Rocca Janula, seizing the ancient bailey walls and the crumbling abbot's keep on Point 193, known as Castle Hill. It was the first good news of the day, and the last. Heidrich's paratroopers held several strongpoints on the rising ground of Cassino's southwest quarter, including the Hotel Continental, the Hotel des Roses, and a palazzo known as the Baron's Palace: each commanded views of Highway 6 in both directions. Hours passed before Kiwi reinforcements surged into the fight, and they amounted to a single rifle company; not for two days would as many as three battalions invest the town. By noon on Thursday, March 16, only nine tanks could be counted in Cassino, most of them immobilized by debris, craters, and galling fire. Rain and shell fire ruined radios and cut phone lines, leaving isolated companies to fight a dozen desperate, disconnected battles. Momentum stole away, and with it the chance to win through. The great armored fleet waited in the shadows, listening for a summoning trumpet that never sounded.

Several hundred feet above the town, the 4th Indian Division had its own miseries. Two companies of Rajputana Rifles reached Castle Hill with orders to seize the upper hairpins on the Via Serpentina. But artillery chopped two trailing companies to pieces, scattering the survivors and killing or wounding the battalion officers almost to a man. Another battalion, the 9th Gurkha Rifles, scuttled six hundred yards across the mountain face through gusts of mortar and machine-gun fire; one wounded captain commanded his company from a stretcher while clutching a pistol. By dawn on Thursday, March 16, the Gurkha vanguard held Hangman's Hill, a prominent shoulder only three hundred yards from the abbey walls.

However valiant, the feat proved a mixed blessing for Freyberg and his commanders. This isolated, eight-acre lodgment of five hundred Gurkhas on a steep brow of limestone became "a moral lien on the efforts of the corps," as the official Kiwi history acknowledged. Operation DICKENS quickly became as much about supporting the doughty, beleaguered Gurkhas as about breaking into the Liri Valley.

Beleaguered they were. "The fire was so heavy we could not lift our heads up," one survivor recalled. Riflemen built breastworks from stacked corpses and rummaged through the haversacks of

dead comrades for crackers and grenades. Medics equipped with just scissors and pocket-knives amputated limbs in an open culvert. A courtyard well in a ruined farmhouse provided water, whose sharp flavor was found to derive from a dead mule at the bottom. Indian porters ordered to Hangman's Hill mutinied rather than cross half a mile of shell-swept no-man's-land; after the second day, resupply came only by air, in belly tanks dropped by A-36s from fifty feet, or by parachute. Gurkhas marked their position with colored smoke, which German paratroopers quickly mimicked to confuse the pilots. In 160 sorties, most bundles tumbled out of reach, including bags of blood for transfusions that floated onto the abbey to be seized by German surgeons.

Enough food and ammo fell within the perimeter to sustain the little redoubt on very short rations; a cask of rum helped comfort the wounded in their culvert. Yet unable to ascend or descend, tormented by mortar fire and creeping snipers, the Gurkhas remained marooned hour after hour, day after day. "Surely," a Gurkha officer, E. D. Smith, wrote in his diary, "it is pointless to keep on attacking the Monastery defences." He added, "God help us all."

An anxious Clark kept vigil at Presenzano, where the grumble of distant guns spilled down the valley like a drumroll. Hesitant to intrude on Freyberg's fight—meddling in a subordinate's tactical operation was considered bad form—Clark seethed at the plodding pace of the New Zealand attack.

"Freyberg's handling of the ensuing attack has been characterized by indecision and lack of aggressiveness," he told his diary on Friday. In visits to Spadger's command post, he urged that more infantry battalions be committed to battle. Freyberg and his staff resisted, convinced that three battalions in town and three more on the slopes sufficed; others must be held in reserve for a pursuit up the Liri Valley. Clark persisted, proposing that the British 78th Division attack the base of Monte Cassino while tanks struck from the north and more New Zealanders swept into town.

"I told Freyberg the tanks to be employed were American," Clark added in his diary entry on Friday. "He could lose them all and I would replace them within 24 hours." Freyberg replied that when casualties in the 2nd New Zealand Division reached a thousand he intended to abandon the attack unless success seemed imminent. By Saturday, Clark's exasperation was bitterly terse: "Freyberg is not aggressive; is ponderous and slow."

Whether additional firepower could have sundered the German line is problematic. Kiwi riflemen had captured Cassino's rail station and fought through the charred botanical gardens to within two hundred yards of the Hotel Continental. "Push on, you must go hard," Freyberg urged. But an attempt to capture the hotel "through the servants' entrance" by swarming downhill from the hairpin turn known as Point 202 ended badly: machine-gun slugs cut down the lead attackers and sent others scampering back up the slope. Freyberg finally threw a fourth battalion into the town late on Saturday, but paratroopers had reinforced their strongpoints as well as the battered houses below Castle Hill.

"Almost every building or stump of a building contained a sniper's or machine gunner's post," the New Zealand Corps noted. "The town was a place of unexpected encounters." Paratroopers reinfested structures already cleared; forty Maoris would share a house with the enemy for three days, occasionally shooting through the walls, and a dressing station was evacuated from one cellar so that Sherman tanks could blast an enemy machine-gun nest on an upper floor of the same building. Soldiers began referring to Cassino as "Little Stalingrad."

On Sunday, March 19, as the battle for the town stalemated, two death struggles on opposite faces of Monte Cassino decided the battle for the mountain. Just before dawn, three hundred paratroopers bounded down the slope from the abbey, green ghosts skidding on the scree and shooting from the hip. An outpost of Essex and Rajputana soldiers at Point 165 was said to have "disappeared

in a smother of enemies"; moments later, howling Germans beat against the bailey walls from three sides on Castle Hill. Stick grenades twirled over the parapets into the inner courtyard, where 150 defenders fired their Brens and tommy guns through arrow loopholes. Scarlet, green, and orange tracers spattered off the walls, and German mortar rounds crashed among the tumbled stones in great sprays of red and silver.

An arcing signal flare after twenty minutes recalled the attackers, but as night thinned in the east they struck again, hammering the castle gate like insolent Saracens while Heidrich's gunners in the town below added more streams of fire. A sniper's bullet drilled the British commander through the brain—"We talked a bit and then he died," a fellow officer later reported—but once again the defenders, now reduced to barely sixty men, beat back the attack. In a third assault, at nine A.M., eight paratroopers drew close enough to detonate a demolition satchel beneath a buttress on the west wall; dust and smoke billowed through the bailey, and twenty-two Essex soldiers lay interred beneath the masonry. Yet every German who leaped into the breach was cut down with savage bursts of gunfire from the courtyard. Tommies ran the gauntlet from Via Caruso up to the castle keep, lugging sandbags stuffed with ammunition. Mortar barrels glowed like pokers in a hearth; after fifteen hundred rounds, several tubes lay bent and useless. By early afternoon the shooting had subsided to a sullen bicker and Castle Hill, unconquered, was paved with dead paratroopers; every Essex officer was dead or wounded. A captured German sergeant major offered congratulations and, lacking a sword, tendered his fur-lined gloves as a trophy. But the 4th Indian purchase on Monte Cassino's eastern slope was more precarious than ever.

Two thousand yards across the crest, below the mountain's west face, the second struggle also played out on the Sabbath morn. Over the past two weeks, sappers had built a rough road along Snakeshead Ridge, using bulldozers and a ton of explosives to chew through the limestone. With orders to "cause chaos and consternation in the ranks of the Hun"—not unlike Hannibal crossing the Alps with his elephants—an armored fleet moved south in two columns on the virgin road at six A.M.: sixteen Kiwi Shermans, eight Indian tanks, and sixteen light M-3 General Stuarts from the U.S. 760th Tank Battalion. By nine A.M., the road had narrowed to a corrugated lane as the procession turned toward the abbey at Albaneta Farm. Around Point 593, the weather-gnawed bodies of 34th Division soldiers killed six weeks earlier still lay wedged among the rocks, lost boys turned to bone and stone. Tankers could peer down into the Liri Valley on their right, then swivel left to see the abbey's fractured walls half a mile across the rift to the left known as Death Valley.

Then the noose cinched. A German lieutenant managed to lay three mines on the path, blowing the tracks off the lead Stuart. Immobile and angry, the Yank crewmen opened fire on an enemy mule train clopping toward the abbey, killing fifteen Germans and five animals with more than 80 tank shells and 2,500 coaxial machine-gun bullets. "I hated to shoot the mules as they looked like good ones," the tank commander later confessed. But the column was stuck, unable to maneuver on the narrow trail and insufficiently protected by lagging infantry. As more tanks came to grief, striking mines or brewing up from mortar fire, German snipers picked off crewmen squirming through their belly hatches. At 5:30 P.M. those tanks still capable of movement began to creep back up Snakeshead Ridge, turrets reversed, firing over their exhaust vents. Three Shermans and three Stuarts had been destroyed, and sixteen others damaged. As night descended on Sunday, flaming hulls stood like orange beacons along the futile path past Albaneta Farm.

General von Senger on several occasions had skirted the spiny ridge northwest of Point 593 as he stalked the battlefield with his walking stick. Using the abbey as a pole star, he traveled alone and on

foot to be less conspicuous—an adjutant trailed several hundred yards behind the corps commander—and always in daylight, to see as much as possible. “No tree escaped damage, no piece of ground remained green,” Senger noted. When shell fire drew near, he went to ground or zigged and zagged, aware of “the whistling of splinters, the smell of freshly thrown-up earth…smells from glowing iron and burnt powder.” At times he imagined that he had been “carried back thirty years and was wandering across the battlefield at the Somme.”

Little reliable information had seeped from Cassino during the first two days after the bombing. Senger knew that Heidrich often failed to report lost ground on the assumption that his paratroopers would soon reclaim it. At times it seemed the town must surely fall, rupturing the Gustav Line. “Things are not too splendid here,” Tenth Army had advised Kesselring on Friday morning. Some battalions had been pared to platoon size: forty men. Machine gunners were even forced to fire sparingly lest the raised dust betray their nests. Senger hoped for more rain.

Yet the failed Allied tank foray on Sunday and the paratroopers’ near seizure of Castle Hill gave renewed hope. Entrenched Germans held the abbey ruins with mortars, machine guns, and phones linked to a network of artillery observers; no one heeded the addled monk flitting through the ruined cloisters. Allied smoke was noxious—on Saturday alone 22,000 smoke rounds had been fired in an effort to blind the German observers—but the paratroopers simply donned their gas masks, which also mitigated the stench of decay. Falling smoke canisters caused “a number of unpleasant wounds,” but Indian troops themselves complained that the smoke “screened nothing from nobody.”

As for the town, Senger thought the initial Allied attacks lacked urgency. Enemy assault companies continued to butt against German strongpoints rather than skirting them to let follow-on forces mop up. The rubble canalized Allied armor, and German gunners, if overmatched, managed to mass fires with artillery, rockets, and even antiaircraft guns. Much had been learned from the catastrophes at Stalingrad and Ortona about urban warfare. Savage fighting remained, but there was a chance the town would hold. Perhaps the most heartening sign came from the irascible Heidrich, who despite Senger’s offer to reinforce him with an entire panzer grenadier regiment balked at sharing the glory of defending Cassino with any forces not wearing paratrooper green.

General Freyberg also prowled the lowering hills—one morning, he stopped within mortar range of Monte Cassino to listen for nightingales—and he was reaching the same conclusion as his German adversary: the town would not fall. “Another lovely day—climatically,” he told his diary on Monday, March 20, yet there was no climax, only more death and misery for niggling gains. Each day he parsed the casualty returns, his arithmetical scribbles covering the pages as the New Zealanders approached and then far surpassed his threshold of a thousand killed, wounded, and missing. “I think you and the Boche are both groggy,” Clark told him, but Freyberg chose to press the fight despite private doubts. In a conference on Tuesday afternoon, March 21—the date St. Benedict died on Monte Cassino—he rallied Alexander, Clark, and Leese with hope of a breakthrough. “Surely the enemy is very hard pressed too,” Churchill cabled Alexander.

No breakthrough obtained. “Unfortunately we are fighting the best soldiers in the world—what men!” Alexander wrote Brooke on Wednesday with perhaps excessive admiration. German troops still held the northwest and southwest corners of Cassino and enough of the beetling slope to isolate the Indian troops on Hangman’s Hill and the Kiwis holding the lower hairpin at Point 202. On Thursday, eight days after the bombing, Freyberg asked to pull back. When Field Marshal Wilson urged him to soldier on, Freyberg replied with the single proper noun that froze the blood of any British general: “Passchendaele,” the grisly Flemish battlefield of 1917.

Alexander concurred, as did Clark, who proposed keeping Kiwi casualty figures secret to avoid alarming the home front. “The NZ Division has shot its bolt, as well as the Indian Division,” Clark told his diary, “but I wanted the recommendation to call off the attack to come from the British…. I

hate to see the Cassino show flop. It has been a most difficult situation…. The New Zealanders and Indians have not fought well."

That calumny betrayed the valor of several hundred dead men, as well as several hundred still alive after eight days on bleak and wintry Hangman's Hill. The Gurkhas' daily rations had dwindled to one sardine and a single biscuit per man; weak with hunger, hectored by sniper fire from the abbey gardens, at dusk they nestled together like spoons and shivered until dawn. To evacuate the survivors without the risk that German eavesdroppers would intercept a radioed order, three officers below volunteered to carry the word uphill. Each in his tunic tucked a paper bag holding a carrier pigeon, respectively named St. George, St. Andrew, and St. David. Two of the officers reached Hangman's Hill, where they informed the Gurkhas of the withdrawal and released the birds to confirm that the message had been delivered. Despite what was described as "a considerable spot of shooing," St. George and St. Andrew flew just thirty yards before settling on a rock outcropping. There they remained "in full view of the enemy and preened themselves for about twenty minutes, watched by the anxious Gurkhas" before flying back to the brigade loft.

At 8:15 P.M. on Friday, March 24, some 259 Gurkhas crept down the slope, quiet as cats, between parallel walls of covering artillery. At Point 202 they picked up forty-five Kiwis and left their badly wounded with a keg of rum and a large red cross snipped from parachute silk. Swinging left down the Via Serpentina, the column slipped over the lip of Castle Hill at eleven P.M. Jeeps met them on the Rapido's far bank, ferrying the men to Portella for food and hot tea. "Never will I forget that nightmare of a march," a Gurkha officer wrote. "At times we had no alternative but to strike soldiers who just gave up interest in anything, including a desire to live."

By late Saturday, a swastika flag flew above Hangman's Hill. Heidrich's patrols counted 165 Gurkha corpses, now dusted in white. "There has been a heavy fall of snow," a German machine gunner jotted in his diary on March 25. "You would think we are in Russia."

The New Zealand Corps disbanded at noon on Sunday, March 26, having outlived its usefulness. In the past eleven days the corps had suffered 2,100 casualties, nearly twice as many as Senger's defenders. The 4th Indian Division in particular had been grievously injured at Cassino, with more than four thousand casualties since mid-February. Leaving behind what one British general called "that valley of evil memory," the Rajputs and Gurkhas limped to a quiet sector on the Adriatic to lick their wounds. Other divisions were to stand by for orders. "We are now to assume an attitude of 'very offensive defensive probing,'" Keyes advised his diary. "What in God's name is that?"

Operation DICKENS was the third Allied attempt in two months to break through at Cassino, and the third failure. Through the ranks spread "a persistent feeling that something, somewhere, had gone wrong," the official U.S. Army history later acknowledged. Most of the terrain won had been seized early by the Americans in their futile escalade in January; since then, little had been gained and many had been lost. In this most recent assault, as a Gurkha officer wrote, "The strongest defences in Europe were attacked by a single corps, consisting of two divisions, on a narrow front in the heart of winter without any attempt at diversionary operations." The New Zealand official history conceded that "the attack showed little of that tactical originality which is commonly called surprise."

Something *had* gone wrong. For Allied soldiers, each battle had become an attritive bloodletting on ground not of their choosing. No coherent master plan governed the offensives, but rather a succession of unsynchronized schemes that lacked the requisite heft: a division here, a division there, probing for soft spots. Limitations on the weight of metal had been revealed, first at the abbey, then in the town, which in addition to all those bombs absorbed almost 600,000 artillery shells. The Kiwi

history concluded that “Cassino was a battle of the First World War fought with the weapons of the Second,” but at times it resembled a battle of the Second fought with weapons of the First.

Failure in combat usually implies inadequate leaders, and brilliant Allied generalship was conspicuously absent at Cassino. Freyberg and other Commonwealth commanders fretted at Clark’s insouciance about casualties. Just so, but the strategy of “naked attrition”—as the British official history called it—belonged to Alexander. The British also still considered the tank a decisive arm, as if the Apennines were Alamein, rather than recognizing it for “what it was in Italy, a crawling monster which produced little except congestion, confusion and delay.” Freyberg had six hundred tanks parked around Cassino, sixfold Senger’s armored fleet, but he never could fling more than a tenth of them into the fight simultaneously. Other martial axioms had been forgotten or brushed aside at the Gustav Line: that command of the sea gave an open flank into the enemy’s rear, often obviating the need for terrestrial frontal assault; that rubbly, cratered battlefields impeded mobility, as had been seen, in fact, at Passchendaele in July 1917; that the ancient requisite for an attacker to muster a three-to-one manpower advantage rarely was truer than in mountainous terrain, which devoured battalions. The New Zealand Corps never managed even a two-to-one ratio. General Tuker, sidelined in his sickbed, considered these accumulated miscalculations “military sins no less.”

“Bombardment alone never had and never will drive a determined enemy from his position,” Clark wrote, with the thin satisfaction of a man vindicated by calamity. Cassino had thrice proved “a terrible nut to crack,” as Ernie Harmon observed in a sympathy note to Clark on March 28. If Heidrich was right, if direct assault was doomed to fail, then only a wide flanking maneuver through inaccessible terrain by a division or two of agile, well-provisioned troops would break the deadlock.

Juin, Keyes, and others had for months urged such a course, and Alexander now saw merit in their petition. To the prime minister he wrote, “A little later when snow goes off [the] mountains, the rivers drop, and the ground hardens, movement will be possible over terrain which at present is impassable.” Churchill, whom one British strategist described as the “presiding deity throughout this soft underbelly campaign,” replied sourly, “The war weighs very heavy on us all just now.”

It weighed heavy on the far side of the mountain as well. Senger continued his lonely tramps over hill and dale, proud to still hold the superior high ground. Hangman’s Hill, Point 593, the abbey itself—all remained in German hands. Yet Senger was too good a soldier for self-delusion. “All this,” he wrote, “did not blind me to the fact that our successes were of a temporary nature.”

Dragonflies in the Sun

THE war weighed heaviest on the men actually fighting it, of course. Nine months of combat in Italy had annealed those whom it had not destroyed. The fiery crucibles from Sicily to Cassino left them hard and even hateful. “After you get whipped and humiliated a couple of times and you have seen your friends killed, then killing becomes a business and you get pretty good at it pretty fast,” one Tommy explained. Plodding up the Italian boot, they left their peaceable civilian selves on the roadsides like shed skins. In a letter to his family in Indiana, a lieutenant who had once been a newspaper reporter described “a callousness to death, a bitter hatred of the Jerries, a burning desire to avenge what they have done to us. This supersedes fear for ourselves.” Every payload dumped by a B-17 became a personal token of malice. “We get quite a kick out of the devastation wrought by our Fortresses,” another soldier wrote home. “War is like that: you actually enjoy the knowledge that you are killing countless numbers of your enemies.”

For soldiers in twenty or more Allied divisions, war by the early spring of 1944 seemed ever more primeval. “One goes on fighting, killing, simply because one has to,” wrote Raleigh Trevelyan, a

British lieutenant at Anzio. A 1st Special Service Force soldier from St. Louis told Eric Sevareid, “It’s so easy to kill. It solves all your problems, and there are no questions asked. I think I’m getting the habit.” Daily life in combat units resolved itself into noise, filth, isolation, confusion, fatigue, and mortality; everything else seemed extraneous. Soldiers distrusted the gung ho, the cocksure, and anyone less miserable than themselves. “We learned to live as perhaps once we were long ago, as simply as animals without hope for ourselves or pity for another,” wrote John Muirhead, a B-17 crewman. The conceits of fate, destiny, and God comforted some, but believers and nonbelievers alike rubbed their crucifixes and lucky coins and St. Christopher medals with a suspicion, as Muirhead said, that “one is never saved for long.”

They saw things that seared them forever: butchered friends, sobbing children, butchered children, sobbing friends. “Watched an amputation last night,” an ambulance driver wrote in his diary. “A Tommy stretcher bearer had stood on a mine and he had to have both legs taken off. One above the knee and one below the knee.” It made soft men hard and hard men harder. A counterintelligence officer noted that combat veterans “are sometimes possessed by a fury that makes them capable of anything…. It is as if they are seized by a demon.” Soldiers walking through a killing field sometimes stomped on the distended bellies of dead Germans to hear the flatulent noises the corpses made. “Slowly I am becoming insensitive to everything,” wrote one soldier in his diary. “God in Heaven, help me to keep my humanity.”

Many considered humanity an impediment to survival. A survey of infantry divisions in the Mediterranean later found that 62 percent believed hatred for the enemy could help them through tough times. “The more you hate, the better soldier you become,” explained one command sergeant major. “Love is completely absent in the heart of a rifleman.” Like lightning seeking a ground, the high-voltage animus surging through Allied combat regiments discharged on one conducting rod: the German. “He has no right to do this to me,” the commander of the 132nd Field Artillery Battalion wrote his wife, “and I shall do something to him for it.” From Anzio, a 3rd Infantry Division officer wrote, “They sure cause a lot of unnecessary suffering. I wouldn’t mind participating in their complete elimination—like a rabid dog.” Rancor at the beachhead grew intense enough that wounded German prisoners were isolated in a separate hospital ward for their own protection. “Those Krauts,” a paratrooper in the 504th Parachute Infantry said, “I sure hate their guts.”

Many atrocity stories circulated, particularly of German white-flag ruses. Some were true, all were believed. “There’s no rules in this war,” a 45th Division soldier said. “If they want to fight like that, it’s okay with us.” Because of a supposed German tendency to shoot surrendering Yanks, one soldier reported, the 6th Armored Infantry Regiment’s unofficial slogan had become “Take No Prisoners.” He added, “We now do the same thing, and we have plenty of Germans to do it to.”

From the Tunisian campaign, four U.S. combat divisions had emerged full of killers. Italy created many more, American as well as British, Canadian, French, New Zealand, Indian, Polish, and others. Together they would form an avenging and victorious army, a terrible sword of righteousness. A VI Corps officer proposed that every soldier embody the “three R’s—ruthless, relentless, remorseless.” As the abbey and Cassino town had been pulverized, so would a thousand other strongholds. God could sift the guilty from the innocent. The war had come to that.

“This is a war for keeps,” an Air Force captain wrote his mother from Italy. “We will not rest satisfied until starvation and butchery have been visited upon German soil. There can be no parleying with the Devil.”

* * *

Eager boys no longer scaled Rome's clock towers to watch for the Anglo-American legions pressing north from Anzio. For days after the SHINGLE landings in January, tens of thousands of Romans had kept vigil on their rooftops in the Eternal City. Allied flags flapped from balconies, and bookstores reported a run on English dictionaries. Jumpy German sentries one night fired on a sinister platoon of figures, which proved to be the stone saints lining the façade of the basilica of St. John Lateran.

Those heady hopes for imminent liberation had long faded. These days the nearest Allied troops flew four miles overhead in air armadas said to resemble "dragonflies in the sun." Nervous Romans kept their weather eyes peeled for the clear skies of what came to be called *una giornata da B-17*, a B-17 day. The worst bombing of the capital since July occurred on March 14, when various rail yards were pummeled; civilian casualties proved particularly grim among those queued up for water at street fountains. Graffiti on city walls now chided the liberators for dawdling. One mordant gibe proclaimed: "Allies, don't worry! We are coming to rescue you!"

Eight months of occupation had sharpened Roman cynicism. At first the German fist only lightly swiped the city. Wehrmacht looters plucked clean the palaces of the turncoat royal family, such as the Villa Savoia, where Mussolini had been arrested. "Everything went," one witness reported, "including the nails in the walls." But the cinemas soon reopened, and the royal opera house. Recruiting posters for German labor battalions showed a smiling Italian tradesman with a flower in his buttonhole, smoking a cigarette. "Do you want to work? Are you in need?" the caption asked. "Employment only within your country. You are assured good clothes, good food, good pay, and good fellowship." Fifty thousand Italians, volunteers and otherwise, still toiled on fortifications along the country's west coast.

The shadows soon deepened. Berlin had always considered Mussolini to be weak-kneed on the Jewish question, and on September 24, 1943, with the Duce reduced to a pathetic puppet, the Reichsführer-SS, Heinrich Himmler, secretly ordered the Gestapo chief in Rome, Lieutenant Colonel Herbert Kappler, to arrest all Jews in the city. The thirty-five-year-old Kappler, gray-eyed son of a Stuttgart chauffeur, had lived in Rome since 1939. He was described as "intolerant, cold, vengeful, unhappily married and with interests in Etruscan vases, roses, and photography"; when he grew annoyed, the dueling scar on his cheek reddened. Two days later, Kappler gave Jewish community leaders thirty-six hours to deliver fifty kilograms of gold or face the deportation of two hundred men. On September 28, a convoy of taxis and private cars pulled up to the Gestapo headquarters at Via Tasso 155 number with the ransom, which was laid on a scale pan amid much haggling over the last gram. Three weeks later, at dawn on Saturday, October 16, storm troopers swept through the Roman ghetto anyway, seizing twelve hundred Jews; sixteen of them survived the war. Most were promptly shipped to Auschwitz and gassed, including an infant born after the roundup. Mussolini on December 1 ordered the arrest of "all Jews living on the national territory." Italians showed admirable pluck in sheltering Jewish compatriots: nearly five thousand hid in Roman convents, monasteries, and the Vatican. More than forty thousand Jews in Italy would survive the war; nearly eight thousand perished.

Even for Romans not facing extermination, the occupation winter proved long and grim. Several hundred thousand refugees crowded the city, felling trees and chopping up park benches for firewood. Electricity supplies grew erratic: alternating neighborhoods went without power two nights each week. Tuberculosis and infant mortality spiked. Kesselring's retreat to the Gustav Line hampered efforts to feed the city, for much of Rome's granary lay in southern Italy; the destruction of supply trucks by Allied warplanes further complicated the task.

Prices doubled, and would redouble by early summer. Hungry livestock could graze on the new spring grass at the Villa Borghese, but the Romans had begun to starve. On downtown sidewalks

women peddled their furs, scholars their books, children their shoes. The daily bread ration dwindled to the equivalent of two slices per person, from loaves made with ground chickpeas, maize flour, elm pith, and mulberry leaves. As spring arrived, so did bread riots; after one bakery was ransacked, SS troops dragged ten Italian women to a nearby bridge and shot them as they faced the Tiber.

Terror also doubled and redoubled. Blackshirts finding a film too tedious shot up the screen; another thug with a submachine gun leaped on stage at an opera and threatened to murder those who failed to stand for the Fascist anthem "Giovanezza." In the central telephone exchange, five hundred eavedroppers reportedly listened in on local phone calls. Men were plucked from trams or rounded up in the Via Nazionale for labor battalions, with no mention made of good pay or good fellowship. A priest condemned for subversion blessed his firing squad as they shouldered their rifles.

Soon half of Rome was said to be hiding the other half. Interrogators in the Via Tasso extracted confessions by pushing pins through a suspect's penis or by stuffing his ears with cotton and lighting it; others had their shoes removed and their toes inserted between the cylindrical drum and base plate of a mimeograph machine. "They pulled out the hairs of my mustache, and by means of screws and a steel bar, they compressed my temples until I thought my eyes were going to burst out," a survivor said of his interrogation on the night of March 18. On the eve of his execution, one man scratched a message on his cell wall: "From my mother I ask forgiveness because in being faithful to myself I must be faithless to her love…. Long live Italy."

Allied planes flying from Brindisi dropped tons of supplies and scores of agents behind the lines. Intended to inspirit Italian insurgents and dishearten German troops, OSS "morale operations" ranged from the clever to the puerile. Scattered pamphlets listed the bombed streets in every German city. Leaflets instructed Wehrmacht soldiers on how to defect to Switzerland, and a "malingering booklet" prescribed methods to avoid combat by feigning various illnesses. *Scheisse*—shit—stickers mimicking the runic double "S" of the SS were designed to "be licked on the tongue and slapped on a wall in an instant." Small stencils could leave a painted message in seven seconds, including one in Italian that read, GERMANS OUT. Tiny rubber stamps, equipped with tiny ink pads, depicted a skull and crossbones over the word "Nazi." Project CORNFLAKES dropped 320 sacks of counterfeit mail along bombed Italian rail lines, as if the bags had been scattered from wrecked train cars; some envelopes—carefully franked with German postmarks—included forged subversive letters and copies of *Das Neue Deutschland*, the ostensible newspaper of an underground peace party. A "Father Schiller," who wrote a column advocating German capitulation, was in fact a pair of U.S. Army sergeants.

In Rome, the OSS by March 1944 had established a dozen observation posts on the main roads leading from the capital, with coded information about traffic radioed to the Anzio beachhead several times a day; one clandestine shortwave station operated in a boathouse belonging to the Italian Finance Ministry. An Italian operative in Kesselring's headquarters, an ardent royalist who served as a liaison with the Fascist command in Rome, also secretly provided the German order of battle and details about the FISCHFANG counterattack.

No OSS spy in Rome was more flamboyant than a twenty-four-year-old American named Peter Tompkins, who had lived in the city as a boy after his parents moved there to study art. Educated at English boarding schools—thanks in part to the patronage of his mother's alleged lover, George Bernard Shaw—and then at Harvard, Tompkins had worked as a foreign correspondent before joining the OSS. In late January, a Royal Navy patrol boat put him ashore near Rome carrying a Beretta pistol and papers that identified him as a Roman prince. Tompkins had expected to greet Fifth Army liberators in a few days; instead he waited week after week, jumping from safe house to safe house: a dressmaker's shop on the Via Condotti, a room in the Piazza Lovatelli.

Favoring a blue sharkskin suit with loose strands of Italian tobacco sprinkled in the pocket for verisimilitude, Tompkins collated the traffic reports, the order-of-battle lists, and other intelligence

tidbits into daily radio bulletins to the beachhead. OSS operations in Rome, as in Italy at large, proved confused and often bootless, riven with rivalries and petty quarrels. Meaningful intelligence paled compared with that plucked from the airwaves by Ultra, of which Tompkins was ignorant.

Still, it was part of the good fight, requiring ingenuity, luck, and unspeakable courage. Tompkins kept moving, exchanging an identity card that identified him as Luigi Desideri, born in 1912, for one on which he was Roberto Berlingeri, born in 1914, or an employee in the War Ministry, or an archivist in the Corporations Ministry, or a corporal in the Italian African Police. Sprinkling bottled ammonia around his doorstep to discourage bloodhounds, he played cutthroat bridge, sipped brandy, and read Faulkner's *The Wild Palms* while waiting to transmit the next coded dispatch. "In a way it's a pleasant life," he told his diary in mid-March, "if it weren't for the nightmare of knowing that all the time you are hunted."

Nearly twenty highway watchers, most of whom earned $1 a day, were captured and shot; shot, too, was the spy in Kesselring's headquarters, after two months of torture that failed to break him. Yet German repression only steeled resistance. An estimated 25,000 Italian partisans were actively fighting in Italy in March 1944, and their number would triple in the next three months; later Alexander claimed they were "holding in check six German divisions." Some attacked bridges or looted supply trains; others encouraged civil disobedience, such as the strike by 800,000 Italians in early March that almost paralyzed industrial Milan. And still others plotted how to answer terror with terror, vengeance with vengeance, blood with more blood.

The clap of several hundred boots on cobblestones carried up the narrow Via Rasella at 3:40 P.M. on Thursday, March 23, another lovely *giornata da B-17*. As the 11th Company of the 3rd Battalion of the Bozen Police Regiment wheeled left into the street from the Via del Traforo, the men burst into song, an annoying martial ditty called "Hupf, Mein Mädel"—"Skip, My Lassie." "Singing at the top of our lungs," as one trooper later recalled, "chests pushed forward like a bunch of crowing roosters."

From the Piazza del Popolo they had marched three abreast, as they marched each afternoon, through central Rome: past the Spanish Steps and the house where Shelley lived and Keats died, skirting the royal gardens of the Quirinal as they angled back to the Interior Ministry compound in the Viminale barracks. Their accents identified them as men of the South Tyrol; crow's-feet and graying temples beneath their helmets suggested that most were too old for combat regiments. Today they had taken the precaution of loading their rifles, but the capital seemed placid and benign in the afternoon sunshine.

They huffed uphill, past the barber and the photo shop and the laundry that took in German uniforms. Geraniums spilled from the sill pots of the five-story buildings and palmettos peered over the gutter lines. No one heeded the moonfaced Italian street sweeper smoking a pipe and cleaning the gutter near the head of the street, fifty yards or so from the intersection with the Via delle Quattro Fontane.

He was in fact a medical student named Rosario Bentivegna, known to his fellow partisans as Paolo. Earlier that afternoon he had eaten lunch in a little trattoria before changing into a sanitation department uniform, lacing his battered shoes with red string for authenticity. Then Bentivegna had muscled his ash cart—stolen from a city depot behind the Colosseum—through the streets before parking it against the curb at Via Rasella 156, a dilapidated palazzo where, coincidentally, Mussolini had lived in the 1920s. In the cart, beneath a thin stratum of rubbish, lay a powerful bomb: twenty-six pounds of TNT in a steel case stolen from the gas company, plus another thirteen pounds in loose bags and several iron pipes packed with explosives.

As the singing troops approached, Bentivegna lifted the cart lid and touched his pipe to a twenty-five-second fuse, carefully timed to detonate in the middle of the column. “There was a lot of ash and it took a while to ignite,” he later reported. “Then I heard the sizzle.” Removing his black-visored blue cap, Bentivegna laid it atop the cart as a signal, then wheeled around and hurried up the street before vanishing down a Roman alley; after tossing the uniform into a dark corner near the Church of St. Peter in Chains, he would spend the evening playing chess to calm his nerves.

The blast struck the column as if it had been “blown down by a great wind.” Other partisans stepped from the shadows to lash the company with grenades and gunfire before melting away. Shards of broken window glass showered the street, along with smashed dishes, furniture, and dislodged stucco. Severed limbs and at least one head lay in the gutter; one victim was said to resemble “pulp with a coat over it.” A few survivors staggered to their feet, firing wildly at the building façades.

Lieutenant Colonel Kappler was enjoying a late lunch at the Hotel Excelsior with Lieutenant General Kurt Mälzer, military commandant of Rome, when word arrived of the carnage in Via Rasella. Arriving on the scene, they found thirty-two men dead and sixty-eight wounded; ten Italian civilians had also died in the explosion, among them six children. Fascist troops sent as reinforcements ransacked shops and houses, and the crackle of rifle fire carried to the Trevi Fountain and the Palazzo Barberini. Mälzer paced about bellowing, “Revenge! Revenge!” and calculating how best to raze the entire block. On his orders, two hundred Italians from the neighborhood were arrested and marched off with their hands raised to the Viminale barracks. A sanitation crew—genuine this time—arrived to scrub the bloody cobblestones with water and salt.

Late that afternoon the Berlin high command phoned Kesselring’s headquarters at Monte Soratte to report that Hitler, then brooding at his Wolfsschanze headquarters in the East Prussian woods, wanted “an entire quarter of Rome to be blown up, including any living soul dwelling therein.” If that reprisal was not feasible, fifty Italians should be shot for each Bozen martyr. Kesselring, who found this crisis awaiting him upon returning to Monte Soratte from an inspection trip, wondered whether the Via Rasella ambush presaged the long-awaited Allied breakout from Anzio. After phoning Kappler for further details, Kesselring retired to bed at 8:30 P.M. and left the matter to his chief of staff, Siegfried Westphal.

Shortly after ten P.M., General Alfred Jodl, Hitler’s military chief, phoned to denounce the *Schweinerei*—swinishness—in Rome. “I am giving you now a Führer order which is in front of me in this matter,” Jodl told Westphal. “This is the final version.” Westphal scribbled down the edict: “The Führer’s order is that for every German soldier killed in this treacherous attack in Rome, ten Italian hostages will be shot.” That ratio, previously announced as the appropriate riposte for “outrages,” was intended to “achieve a deterrent effect,” Jodl added. Westphal phoned Kesselring in his bedroom. “I agree,” Kesselring said. “Pass on the order.”

Kappler spent all night compiling the inevitable typed lists. By noon on March 24—another luminous spring day—the roster had grown to 320 names; when a wounded man succumbed to his injuries, Kappler added fifteen more on his own initiative. None of those listed had participated in the Via Rasella ambush. At two P.M. several canvas-covered trucks normally used to deliver meat arrived at Via Tasso 155; others pulled up at the Regina Coeli, a sprawling prison across the Tiber. Cries of “Murderers!” echoed through the cell blocks as prisoners were led away with their hands bound behind their backs, some hobbling because their toenails had been yanked out. The convoy from Via Tasso rolled past the sightless saints atop St. John Lateran and through the Aurelian wall at Porta San Sebastiano, where the Appian Way begins its journey south. Turning onto Via Ardeatina beyond the city, the trucks passed the Catacombs of St. Calixtus, then halted at a remote warren of tunnels left by miners quarrying volcanic tuff used to make concrete.

“I feel the flowers growing over me,” John Keats had said on his Roman deathbed. At the

Ardeatine Caves, sweet tuberoses perfumed the air. The first batch of five men tumbled off the tailgate. An SS officer, Captain Erich Priebke, checked their names from the fatal list. A German storm trooper prodded them into the cave, where candles guttered in the chill draft. Kneel, he ordered. They knelt. Five sharp cracks sounded, as evenly spaced as a tolling bell.

Five by five by five they staggered into the cave, each to receive a machine-pistol bullet in the brain before pitching forward into the volcanic dust. The pile grew: actors and architects, lawyers and mechanics, shopkeepers and physicians, an opera singer, a priest. An uncommon number worked in the wood trades—cabinetmakers, carpenters, joiners. The youngest was fourteen, the oldest seventy-five. Communists, atheists, Freemasons, freethinkers, Catholics, and seventy-five Jews. Ten had been seized near Via Rasella, propinquity their only crime. A few shouted *"Viva l'Italia!"*; others recited the rosary.

Five by five by five, each quintet now forced to clamber over the corpses of those who had come before. Kappler fetched a bottle of cognac to fortify his killers, but liquor only made them sloppy: some victims required up to four bullets before the writhing ceased.

By 8:30 P.M. the last of the 335 lay in a heap. Flashlight beams flitted across the cave mouth, then went dark. The trucks rumbled away into the night.

Relatives of the dead from the Bozen Regiment would be flown to Rome at the Reich's expense for a grand funeral. The procession snaked down the city's boulevards and across the piazzi, led by a military band playing somber dirges. No one sang "Hupf, Mein Mädel."

A brief public statement on March 25 announced, without elaboration, that severe reprisals had been exacted. Kappler ordered garbage to be heaped at the Ardeatine Caves, hoping to mask one stench with another. A few days later, German soldiers blew up the shafts.

But some odors could hardly be hidden. Frantic women crisscrossed Rome in search of their husbands, their fathers, their sons. Word quickly spread of a horror near the Via Appia. A parish priest stood at the cave mouth to offer absolution. Weeping pilgrims trudged to the site, now swarming with flies. Someone left a large laurel wreath with a note: "You will be avenged." Accounts of the atrocity soon reached Allied intelligence. "When Rome falls, please do utmost to assure adequate flow of colorful material on hunger, disease, misery under the Germans," a memo from an American propaganda office in London urged. "Also do anything you can to get correspondents to dig up facts on reported massacre of 320 Italian hostages by Germans in reprisal for bomb explosion about March 23."

Not for three months would the tomb be excavated and the dead—reduced to rag-clad skeletons—exhumed by forensic pathologists. Justice and vengeance would take much longer. But shortly after the killings, some Roman families received a curt note, *auf deutsch:* Your relative died on March 23, 1944. You may collect his belongings at the German security police offices at Via Tasso 155.

Into that malevolent place they walked, emerging with pathetic little bundles: a coat, a cap, perhaps a frayed pair of trousers. In the seam of a soiled shirt, one family found a hidden note. "I dream of the hills around Siena, and of my love whom I shall never see again," the doomed man had written. "I shall become one gaping wound—like the winds, nothing."

11. A Kettle of Grief

Dead Country

Fifth Army meteorologists for months had occupied the Royal Vesuvius Observatory on Savior's Hill, less than two miles from the crater's lip. For those eyeing the summit through the observatory's Palladian windows in the late winter of 1944, the fateful signs of vulcanic distress were difficult to ignore. Vesuvius always slept with one eye open, the locals warned; some three dozen eruptions had been documented since the cataclysm that destroyed Pompeii in A.D. 79. Beginning in early January, magma had seeped from the inner conelet like molten tears. "Flamboyant banners of light" played above the crater, according to one witness, and a smoke plume was "washed back and forth by the wind across the summit." Then the weeping subsided and, on March 13, the smoke stopped, ominously. Naples—already plagued with typhus, hunger, and war—grew ever more anxious. It was said that dogs barked with uncommon urgency.

The eruption began at 4:30 P.M. on Saturday, March 18. By midnight, orange cataracts of lava spilled down the slopes to the west and southwest, carrying trees and brush like burning boats. Huge dust clouds billowed above the summit, brilliantly illuminated by blue forks of static electricity that danced across the sky. Neapolitans watched from their rooftops, pinked by the distant glow, and reporters trudged up the cone until a guide shouted above the roar, "Gentlemen, no farther, please! The risk of life!" On Sunday evening, tongues of lava licked the first houses in San Sebastiano, which exploded in flame. Priests carried "plaster statues of their saints out of the church and placed them before the advancing river of fire," wrote Eric Sevareid. The ubiquitous Norman Lewis watched several hundred kneeling villagers plead for intervention from Saint Gennaro, the patron of Naples. "Holy banners and church images were held aloft, and acolytes swung censers and sprinkled holy water in the direction of the cinders." Young men formed a skirmish line and advanced "brandishing crosses within a few yards of the lava," Lewis wrote. "Voices somewhere in the rear had begun to sing a *Te Deum*." Peasants wept at the ruination of their fields.

Just after nine P.M. on Tuesday, March 21, soldiers in a cinema at the Torre del Greco garrison were watching the 1934 British musical *Sing as We Go* when a violent paroxysm shook the theater. Shouting men beat for the exits, even as, onscreen, Gracie Fields belted out, "Blues, where are you now?" Great fountains of lava boiled three thousand feet above Vesuvius before falling back in incandescent sheets. Near the crater, a cascade of falling tephrite stones the size of golf balls were followed by stones the size of softballs. A vast gray nimbus rose twenty thousand feet overhead before showering purple ash up to three feet deep across the coastal plain. As Pliny the Younger had written to the historian Tacitus in describing the A.D. 79 eruption: "I believed that I was perishing with the world and the world with me, which was a great consolation."

The world, then and now, survived, but for another week the Vesuvian apocalypse persisted. "Smoke of a thick oily character like a factory chimney in the north of England," wrote Harold Macmillan, still Churchill's envoy in the Mediterranean. "The smoke practically obscures the whole Bay of Naples." A Scots Guards account noted that "the streets became strangely quiet, as after a snow"—stranger still when, on March 26, snow showers fell on Naples. "We cannot help but admire this gesture of the gods," a BBC correspondent wrote. Soldiers trooped up the hairpin road toward the undamaged observatory to gawk at molten tributaries forty feet deep and to buy ashtrays a local

entrepreneur made from cooling lava.

At last the pyrotechnics faded, ceasing altogether on March 29: the last eruption of the twentieth century. The damage had been done. Twenty-six deaths were reported, some from roofs collapsing under the weight of ash. Rail lines remained blocked for days while Italian crews manned shovels, snow plows, and bulldozers to free the tracks and switches. A heavy fall of soot, ash, and vitrified clinkers pummeled the Pompeii airfield, destroying more than eighty B-25 bombers parked there —"the only group," said one wag, "to lose its planes to enemy rocks."

Ash mixed with rain formed an abrasive mud that ruined brake drums and curtailed military transport because of a critical shortage of replacement brake linings in the theater. Pumice scoured the bearings in ship engines, forcing captains to flee seaward for safety. Across the fleet, from Salerno to Pozzuoli, bosuns mustered their swabs on the ashy weather decks and called out, "Sweepers, start your brooms!" A B-25 bombardier who had lost his plane to Vesuvius wrote home on April 1, "Never trust a volcano."

The world had not ended, and neither had the war. Along the Neapolitan docks, soldiers scuffed through drifted ash to the gangplank queues, where boys hawked an English-language newspaper with the headline "Anzio Worse Than Salerno." On average, five hundred men sailed each day to reinforce the so-called Beachhead Army, including those from the U.S. 34th Division, which after duty at Cassino had spent two months resting and rehabilitating before embarking for another maelstrom.

Wide-eyed they lined the rails as the ships slid into Anzio harbor—now known as Bomb Bay—utterly unconvinced by a memo from higher authority that declared, "The chances of being hit by a shell from a shore battery are negligible, being approximately 37,000 to 1 for every shell actually falling in the anchorage." Stevedores moved with feline agility, unloading fifty vehicles from an LST tank deck in four minutes or stacking three tons of cargo into a DUKW in six minutes, all the while straining for the whistle of artillery or the glint of an enemy plane. In twelve weeks the port and anchorage had sustained 277 Luftwaffe raids, one every seven hours. Radio-controlled Fritz X bombs had been largely neutralized by electronic jammers on destroyers and minesweepers, but torpedoes, aerial mines, machine-gun strafings, and conventional bombs—plus shells by the tens of thousands—continued to batter both roadstead and beachhead. The toll could be seen in the hundred or so casualties waiting dockside each day for the return convoy to Naples: wounded men on litters clutched their own X-rays in big brown envelopes, and those in casts wore medical descriptions of their injuries scribbled on the plaster. When German rounds began to fall, patients lashed to stretchers sometimes outscreamed the screaming shells. One commander greeted a new consignment of troops by telling them, "You're going to suffer. You came here to suffer."

A British officer arriving in March described Anzio as "a small town rapidly getting smaller." Beyond the barrage balloons along the seawall "there was hardly a building intact. Lonely walls leaned drunkenly against piles of rubble; roofs seemed to have gone out of fashion: and wires dangled everywhere." The captain of H.M.S. *Grenville* concurred that "the whole waterfront had a very moth eaten look about it." Upon making shore with reinforcements for the 1st Armored Division, tank commander Henry E. Gardiner told his diary, "Our first sight as we drove inland was a shockingly large United States cemetery."

Most of the cargo hoisted from the arriving ships was ammunition—150 truckloads every day—which was hauled to seven American dumps under constant attack. Bulldozers cut trenches and L-shaped bunkers to contain fires, several of which blazed each week. Firefighters at first had only shovels to battle the blazes, but now they used Sherman tanks with dozer blades and steel tracks. Still,

the loss of ammunition to fire averaged more than sixty tons a day.

That the cost was not greater reflected ferocious antiaircraft defenses—a thousand guns made the beachhead among Europe's most fortified precincts—and an elaborate smoke screen that blinded enemy pilots and gunners. With each dawn, hissing smoke generators spaced half a mile apart spewed a light haze that stretched fifteen miles along the coast and four miles inland. Technicians with flatbed trucks stood by to move the generators like chess pieces should changes in wind direction, air temperature, or convection currents thin the miasma. At night, smudge pots and a different set of generators hid the port, although GIs swore the smoke simply attracted more fire.

Six Allied divisions—approaching 100,000 troops—now occupied eighty square miles, a plot slightly larger than the District of Columbia. Since the epic struggles of February, a sullen stalemate had obtained. Newcomers found that life in the Beachhead Army was not only subterranean but nocturnal, with a battle rhythm known as "Dracula days." Soldiers near the "dead country"—the no-man's-land between the opposing armies—often slept in their holes until four P.M., patrolled until three A.M., ate a hot meal before sunrise, then slipped underground until the next afternoon. Rumors "slide from hole to hole," wrote Audie Murphy, now a platoon sergeant in the 3rd Division. "We believe nothing, doubt nothing." At night the beachhead turned restless, with raids, patrols, harassing fire, and chandelier flares that stretched men's shadows grotesquely. Mines and shell fire grew so nerve-racking, wrote Robert Capa, that "every time I sat in my jeep I put my bedroll between my legs." Bill Mauldin noticed that during barrages, military policemen remained in their crossroads trenches and controlled traffic by "holding up a wooden hand to point directions."

The demand for sandbags and barbed wire along the thirty-two-mile perimeter had reached Flanders proportions. The "Anzio Ritz" was an underground cinema, given to grainy showings of Cary Grant in *Mr. Lucky*. On fine mornings, a British soldier wrote, men beyond sniper range sunned themselves on the lip of their holes "but with one ear cocked, like rabbits ready to pop back in again." Soldiers kept their helmets on so long that they wore bald spots in their scalps. "Men dreamed of steaks, milk, toilet seats, running water, and the exquisite problem of what color clothes to wear," a 179th Infantry account noted. Everyone grumbled at the static "Sitzkrieg" war. One physician compiled a beachhead glossary that included "anziopectoris"—a general indisposition—and "anziating," a distant look in the eyes. Beachhead denizens called themselves "Anzonians," and not without pride.

"The main thing you want is not to be alone," wrote Ernie Pyle, who had come to Nettuno for a few days and stayed for a month. With a dozen other reporters, he lived at Via Gramsci 35, a four-story waterfront villa that "trembled like a palsied old gentleman" whenever the guns barked. Plagued by anemia and intimations of mortality, Pyle wrote a friend, "Instead of growing stronger and hard as good veterans do, I've become weaker and more frightened…. I don't sleep well, and have half-awake hideous dreams about the war."

Those perturbations only intensified at seven A.M. on March 17 when a German five-hundred-pound bomb detonated thirty feet from the villa. Pyle had taken the top floor for better light, and the blast flung him to the floor, ripping doors and windows from their frames. Glass and broken brick sprayed the room. "The only wound I got was a tiny cut on my right cheek," Pyle reported, although he found himself combing his wispy hair with a handkerchief. He lingered at the beachhead for another week "to get my nerve back," then sailed for Naples. On April 5, he left Italy forever. "There's such a thing," he wrote, "as pressing your luck too far in one spot."

Lucian Truscott had also pressed his luck by moving to the spacious top floor of a three-story

Nettuno house. The VI Corps headquarters remained in the cellars beneath the Osteria dell' Artigliere, but Truscott believed a commander must display conspicuous sangfroid. Engineers sandbagged the doorways of his billet and laid rail ties across the roof, just in case.

"I have almost become oblivious to the passage of time," Truscott wrote Sarah in mid-March. "One day is just another group of problems and each day seems to bring its own regardless of the situation." A week later he added, "I do not want to return until the job is done and I can return to an America on the way back to normal—and then I want *peace* in large doses!" Two years had passed since he left her for "the great adventure, and what an adventure it has been…. I can only do the best I can. It is your faith in me that has brought me this far on the road."

His throat still nagged him, along with a hacking cough, nasal polyps, and aching teeth. After an examination on March 31 the doctor recommended voice exercises and cigars rather than cigarettes. Truscott quit smoking for ten days, then resumed after complaining of weight gain. The "lack of voice really affects my efficiency," he told Sarah. Cognac, scotch, gin, and two ounces of rye before supper remained staples in the Truscott mess, but without evident impairment of the commander. He remained energetic, buoyant, and intensely absorbed in every detail of his beachhead domain.

"I can close my eyes and imagine Virginia's countryside now," he wrote in April as the weather warmed. "The redbud and dogwood must be beautiful, and the blue mountains and green trees. There may be something romantic about southern Italy, but personally I have not found it yet." On Easter Sunday, April 9, he slept eight hours straight for the first time since reaching Anzio; more typically he was awakened each night by emergencies small and large, trudging downstairs in bathrobe and slippers, gray hair tousled and face lined with fatigue, but ready to take command. In his rare free moments he studied French—like Patton, he suspected it might be useful—or listened to a German radio broadcast of Handel's *Messiah*.

But heartbreak was never further away than the next letter, such as one in early April from the mother of a nineteen-year-old corporal who had vanished during the FISCHFANG attack on February 16. "Please tell me if you think it could be possible he is a German prisoner, or tell me if the worst has happened, and there wasn't even his dog tag left from him," she wrote from Ohio. "I have dreamed of my baby son every night."

Truscott had ordered the beachhead evacuated of all twenty-two thousand civilians, and by early April every Anzonian except for 750 Italian laborers wore a military uniform. After treatment with DDT, families gathered at the church of St. Teresa to await passage to Naples. Some carried mattresses on their backs; others clung to cardboard suitcases or a wheel of cheese, scooping up a little sand as a token of remembrance. A few screeched in protest, hurling curses at the sky or gnawing their fists. "They hate Mussolini, the Germans, and I believe they hate us," Lieutenant Ivar H. Aas wrote his parents in Minneapolis. "I don't think they go for this liberation idea too well." Soldiers purchased livestock from departing farmers—$4 for a lamb, $20 for a pig. When a pregnant cow was mortally wounded by a shell fragment, an enterprising soldier performed a Cesarean delivery with an ax, delivering a calf, which he fed from his helmet.

"This beachhead is the craziest place I have ever seen," Lieutenant William J. Segan, a signal officer, wrote to his brother in New Jersey. "The boys have their own private horses, chickens, livestock, bicycles, and everything else that the civilians left." Near Borgo Sabatino, soldiers hitched mule to plow and planted fields of cabbage and potatoes. "I can't do a thing with those sons of bitches," a 1st Special Service Force officer complained. "They patrol all night and they farm all day." Other soldiers angled for eels in the Astura River, or hunted pheasant and rabbit with shotguns used to guard German prisoners. After finding that grenade fishing ruined the sashimi, Japanese-American troops in the 100th Battalion seined with mosquito netting and gathered watercress garnishes from the Mussolini Canal.

Troops played baseball on improvised diamonds, using folded T-shirts for bases and slit trenches for dugouts. Daredevil water-skiers slalomed across the Tyrrhenian Sea behind a DUKW. A private who called himself the Baron ambled around the beachhead in a tuxedo, performing magic shows with Chinese rings and a pet duck. Bike steeplechases, lizard races, sniper contests, and husbandry—including cattle-breeding experiments—kept the men busy while they waited for their fates to unfold. The Anzio Derby, organized by a former Baltimore handicapper now wearing sergeant's stripes, was run over a shell-pocked course laid out with tent pegs and engineer tape. As each steed clopped from the vineyard paddock, a bugler blew the call to the post. A quartermaster bay named Six-by-Six beat a half dozen other nags and a jackass named George, surmounted by a 240-pound jockey from Brooklyn; judges ruled that in future races all steeds must outweigh their riders. Pretty nurses awarded the purse, a two-pound box of chocolates.

More than thirty Anzonian newspapers covered such activities; the *Beachhead Bugle* also printed travel notes, including a roster of departing reporters that began: "The following rats deserted the sinking ship yesterday…" No sport aroused greater passion than beetle racing, in which insects—stabled in jam jars and daubed with racing colors—were dropped in the center of a six-foot circle; the first to reach the perimeter was declared the winner. Thousands of dollars were wagered on big sweepstakes, and it was said that shady bookmakers fixed one race by purchasing the favorite and stomping it to death.

Alcohol provided some consolation to losing bettors, as well as "catacomb courage" to the frightened and lonely. Distilleries built from fuel cans and tubing salvaged from aircraft wreckage produced "gasoline," a potent hooch flavored with pineapple juice. Bootleggers from the 133rd Infantry blended fifty pounds of fermented raisins and a dash of vanilla to make "Plastered in Paris," while others preferred fermented fig bars from Army rations. "The still blew up," a corporal wrote in his diary, "but they got some good liquor while it lasted." In April the first authorized beer arrived at the beachhead, roughly a pint per man each fortnight, brewed in Naples under specifications provided by Budweiser. To prevent pilferage, sutlers rolled the kegs ashore and stored them under guard behind barbed wire.

Lieutenant Colonel Jack Toffey's change-of-command party featured whiskey sours made from C-ration lemon powder and medicinal alcohol. Having led an infantry battalion in combat with little respite since TORCH in November 1942, Toffey in mid-March left his 2nd Battalion of the 15th Infantry to become executive officer—second in command—of the 7th Infantry, another 3rd Division regiment that also had bivouacked at the beachhead. Truscott personally ordered the change to give Toffey a bit of relief while allowing a larger unit to benefit from his battle expertise.

"There are days and other days in this game—some good—some bad," he wrote Helen in Columbus. "All in all it is a terrific strain on health, mind & body…. I am somewhat easier in the mind than I was and more confident of our ability to kick hell out of this damn Hun." He apologized for letters that are "dumb, dull and stupid—but perhaps I'm getting that way." To his old friend George Biddle he confessed, "Efficiency in general and combat efficiency in particular suffer when individuals remain too long and too constantly under the gun." In joining the 7th Infantry, he had come full circle: his father had served as the regimental adjutant at Fort Wayne, Michigan, when Jack was born in August 1907. After moving into a tiny subterranean trailer outside Nettuno, with light provided by a jeep battery and Helen's photo hung on the wall, Toffey wrote, "I have seen about enough of Italy and enough of war…. I live in a cave-like place which is damp and makes me stoop over. I'm full of kinks and aches as a result."

Only a few miles from the beetle races and volleyball tournaments, the dead country remained as dangerous and forbidding as any battle zone in Italy. “For four months no man dared stand upright by day,” wrote the BBC reporter Wynford Vaughan-Thomas. Unable to bury the dead, soldiers in the foremost foxholes crawled out at night to sprinkle creosote on the ripening corpses; others swapped shouted insults with the enemy. “Roosevelt is a Jew” would be answered with “Hitler is a bastard.” Tommies trapped rats in empty sandbags and slung them into German observation posts. Private First Class Robert W. Komer described watching no-man’s-land through field glasses: “Here a few helmeted heads peeping cautiously from a foxhole, there a couple of tanks snuggled against the side of a shattered house…. A squad of infantrymen straggled by across the field toward their positions, an ambulance came tearing down the road, litter bearers picked their way carefully among the ditches and the holes.”

No field glasses could reveal how badly the Germans at Anzio had been bruised and bled. From 133,000 men on March 9, the Fourteenth Army in the next six weeks would shrink, through battle losses and transfers to the Cassino front, by 43,000 men, 170 guns, and 125 tanks, while Allied strength steadily grew. Kesselring condemned the “lack of aggressiveness by both officers and men,” and Berlin insisted that “we must continue the attack in the Nettuno sector in order to keep the initiative.” General Mackensen replied angrily that “German divisions are battle weary,” with some reduced to three thousand men or less. For every German shell fired, the Allies now answered with fifteen—“quantities hitherto hardly imaginable,” complained one German commander, who also lamented the “enormous blast and gouge effect” of naval gunfire. Even Sherman tanks joined the barrages, their barrels elevated with logs stacked beneath the tracks. Crews slammed another shell into the breech and sang out, “Call the roll, Kesselring. Here we come.”

To be sure, the biggest German guns remained terrifying. A pair of seventy-foot barrels, called Robert and Leopold by the Germans but known variously to the Allies as Anzio Annie or Whistling Pete, each fired a six-hundred-pound shell as far as thirty-eight miles. Near misses in the anchorage raised water spouts two hundred feet high; even duds ashore burrowed fifty feet into the earth. Mounted on rail flatcars, the guns after firing a half dozen shells withdrew into a tunnel two miles from Ciampino. Despite muzzle flashes brighter than any dragon’s fire, Allied pilots and gunnery observers never pinpointed the battery. Perhaps the only saving grace was a shortage of shells: Robert and Leopold by the end of April would together throw just 523 rounds.

Yet it was the close fight, at distances from bayonet length to potshot range, that remained most sinister and most intimate. Toffey organized three “battle patrols” of fifty ruthless men each, ensured that they got regular hot meals and dry clothing, then sent them out to wreak havoc. Pulling a wicked blade from his leggings, one soldier slashed at the air. “My friends back home gave me this knife,” he said. “I’m saving it to use on Hitler when I see him.” Snipers, known in the 7th Infantry as “pickers-off,” sprayed themselves with camouflage paint, shielding their eyes with scraps of cardboard, then lay motionless for hours in hopes of one clean shot.

“The march up is something that no one likes,” a soldier told his diary on April 1. “If you stumble into each other, the procedure is to blast away for a short time and then take off in a hurry.” Patrols navigated in the dark by using various corpses as landmarks—“just skeletons in clothes.” Scouts sniffed the air for the telltale scents of tobacco and fresh-turned earth. Audie Murphy earned the first of his many valor decorations for leading a patrol near Cisterna to fire an immobilized panzer with a grenade through the hatch. Like most of his comrades, he distrusted bravado—“All the heroes I know are dead,” he later said—but he had concluded that “audacity is a tactical weapon. Nine times out of ten it will throw the enemy off-balance and confuse him.”

Propaganda tried to do the same. Leaflets covered the beachhead like Vesuvian ash. More than four billion Allied leaflets would be printed in the Mediterranean, the equivalent of four thousand

truckloads; among the many variants dropped or fired at Anzio was *"Fünf Minuten Englisch,"* a glossary of handy phrases for Germans contemplating surrender, such as "Where is the hot water?" and "Some more coffee, please." German propagandists replied with their own paper barrages. The "Abe Levy" series showed a Jewish contractor at home molesting the girlfriend of a wounded soldier; another leaflet, aimed at British units, showed a scantily clad Englishwoman pulling on her stockings as a GI reknotted his tie. "What goes on at home whilst you are away?" the caption asked. "No woman can resist such handsome brutes." As one Tommy observed, "Jerry has become very cheeky."

Enemies who could not be talked from their works must be winkled out. Night after night, "house-blowing" patrols whittled away the beachhead skyline between the opposing armies: tanks, mortars, and 8-inch howitzers pulverized the upper floors of suspected strongpoints while riflemen screened by thick smoke splashed across the polders to exterminate any survivors. On the foreheads of dead Germans, Forcemen left calling card stickers with a spearhead insignia and a warning that *das dicke Ende kommt noch:* the worst is yet to come. Every haystack, every manure bin, every outdoor oven—anything that could hide an enemy soldier with a machine pistol—came under seething fire. "Houses 5 and 6 are in our possession," reported a battalion commander after suffering fifty-three casualties in one nameless skirmish. "Our front line is now 500 yards closer to Rome. We turn our faces grimly toward Houses 7, 8, 9."

In this "kettle of grief," as one Anzonian called it, death seemed not just capricious but cruel and willful: a random shell killed six men watching a movie; another killed eight more at supper; a bomb on a combat engineer bivouac killed twenty-one; two died when an artillery shell pierced their Piper Grasshopper a thousand feet up. A German mortar round through a barn roof left a corporal "holding his face together with his hand," a witness reported. A Forceman whose leg was blown off rode to the aid station atop a tank. "Hey, doc," he yelled to the battalion surgeon, "you got an extra foot around this place?"

All frayed, some broke. "Yesterday made 60 days of hell on this blessed beachhead," wrote a soldier in the 15th Infantry. "The fact that it cannot last forever seems to be the only thing that keeps us going." After weeks in the line, "foxhole-itis" made even pugnacious sergeants reluctant to leave their burrows. "All the boys who never prayed before now pray with devotion, and they cry when they are faced with death," a soldier in the 6th Armored Infantry reported. The Beachhead Army comprised "common ordinary men in whom the instinct of self-preservation is very strong," the 3rd Division headquarters advised new platoon leaders. By late March, an entire hospital ward was filled with what the Army labeled S.I.W.—self-inflicted wounds—usually a bullet to the heel or toe. One battalion commander in the 3rd Division kept a bottle of tranquilizers for officers who seemed especially jittery, and doctors formed the Anzio Beachhead Psychiatry Society to discuss intriguing "neuro-psychiatric" cases. "I saw him as they led him past my foxhole," a young soldier in the 179th Infantry wrote of one comrade, "a pathetic, shaking and stumbling figure."

All frayed, yet many also grew flinty and remorseless, as victorious armies must. "This war has become a very personal affair to lots of us here in the beachhead," one Forceman wrote. An American Indian in the 45th Division was said to have collected a sheaf of German scalps; comrades nauseated by the odor forced him to stop. In a letter to his family in New Haven, a soldier wrote in April that his friend Henry had shot a German climbing over a fence. The dead man lay on the wire "all day long. About once every hour Henry would shoot him again just for the hell of it." Nocturnal pleas for *Mutter* mingled with cries for Mama from those trapped and mewing in the dead country. "The wounded struggle so hard to tell us so much," said one GI. But a captured German paratrooper surmised that those "who simply refused to die and screamed and screamed were the ones who changed the soldiers' reactions from pity to hatred as the night progressed." When a pathetic voice repeatedly called in English, "My name is Müller. I am wounded," a GI heaved a grenade and muttered, "What's your

name now, you sonofabitch?"

The days warmed, the season advanced. Crews in the 1st Armored Division painted their tanks a darker, vernal green. Reforestation teams in early April began camouflaging craters and defoliated patches for concealment along the beachhead perimeter. Malaria returned, but much had been learned from the Sicilian debacle. Aware that "mosquitoes alone could accomplish what the German counterattacks had failed to achieve," Truscott in April sent two thousand VI Corps soldiers to "anti-malaria training." The consumption of Atabrine tablets was enforced by watchful sergeants. "Dusting patrols" sprayed more than one hundred miles of streams and ditches with DDT and kerosene, while repairing pumps, dikes, and canal banks. Soldiers complained that if they spilled a cup of water someone either drained the puddle or sprayed it. Barely two thousand malaria cases would be reported in June among Fifth Army troops, a tiny fraction of the previous summer's epidemic.

The warming weather also brought hope to badly wounded boys whose cases would have been hopeless just a few months earlier. "We seem to be having phenomenal success with a new drug called penicillin," wrote Lawrence D. Collins, a physician in the 56th Evacuation Hospital. Gas gangrene had killed two of every three soldiers afflicted in Italy; now the rates plummeted. "We've snatched them right out of the grave," Dr. Collins told his diary. "We're pleased, the survivors are pleased." Less pleased were wounded German prisoners, "upon whom we're not allowed to use penicillin that is in short supply," Collins noted. "No one doubts that war is hell."

The new season stirred the dull roots. Lilacs and violets blossomed even in the dead country. A 45th Division soldier told his family in April that he had just eaten fresh eggs for the first time in five months. "Maybe," he surmised, "they are getting us fat for the kill." Maybe so. If Anzio remained "the largest self-supporting prisoner-of-war camp in the world," as Axis Sally insisted in her nightly broadcasts, every soldier at the beachhead sensed a change in the air.

The advancing season also sharpened their loneliness and made them long, as Truscott did, for those redbuds and dogwoods, for children's laughter and for baseball played with dugouts instead of slit trenches. To his son John and daughter Anne, now twelve and seven, Jack Toffey wrote, "Next to missing you all terribly I think that big league ball is the one great void in my life."

There was only one way home. The greening breast of the Colli Laziali loomed above the hazy coastal plain, beckoning and enchanted. The hours ticked toward a more fateful hour, inexorable if still unknown. Soon they would leave this pestilential plot, this woe, this kettle of grief. None would leave it unchanged. "Anzio," one officer wrote, "was the place where many of us ceased to be young."

"Put the Fear of God into Them"

HIGH above the mud and the misery, far from the house-blowers and the pickers-off, one phase of the Allied war had long been won. The Mediterranean Allied Air Forces owned the skies with a swaggering hegemony comparable to Allied naval dominion of the high seas. Ira Eaker's legions now included 13,000 aircraft and 300,000 troops, although several thousand of those planes, notably in the RAF's Middle East squadrons, were "non-operational." The 8,000 or so that *could* fly had reduced the Luftwaffe to hit-and-run niggling. Barely 500 German planes now stole from bases in southern France and northern Italy. Antiaircraft defenses against Allied raids were also puny, given the crying need to defend the Fatherland and the Eastern Front; of 4,300 German flak batteries, only 260 were deployed in Italy, along with just 14 of 470 searchlight batteries.

By contrast, Hitler's robust defense of central Europe had made the Allied strategic bombardment of German cities and war industries a protracted death struggle at thirty thousand feet. The sanguinary vision of pummeling the Reich from two directions—with Fifteenth Air Force in Italy

complementing Eighth Air Force and British Bomber Command in England—was only now showing unambiguous promise. Although a crewman flying from Italy listed in his diary all the countries he had bombed—Germany, France, Italy, Austria, Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, Yugoslavia—the contributions from Fifteenth Air Force during the winter had been curtailed by impenetrable clouds crowning the Alps, unexpectedly nasty Italian weather, fighter escort shortages, and growing pains. As late as March 1944, Eaker was still describing the Fifteenth as "a pretty disorganized mob."

Losses in the fall of 1943 at deathtraps like Regensburg and Schweinfurt had been so appalling that the Allies temporarily lost air superiority over much of Germany. Still, by November the fate of forty-one German cities could be reduced by Bomber Command to a single sheet of paper, starting with Berlin: "480 acres of housing devastation and great industrial damage has already been caused so that Berlin is relatively as badly hit as London." Ruination elsewhere ranged from Hanover ("largely destroyed") to Frankfurt, Stuttgart, and Munich ("seriously damaged"). Entire regions were reduced to a fatal phrase: "the Saar—small coal and steel towns to be mopped up." A memo from Hap Arnold, also in November, compared the bomb damage at Coventry in central England (120 of 1,922 acres devastated) with that at Hamburg (6,220 of 8,382 acres) and Cologne (1,785 of 3,320 acres). And they had only begun. "Are we beasts? Are we taking this too far?" Churchill wondered aloud. Later the prime minister, who had ardently pressed for some of the most ruinous raids, would voice regret "that the human race ever learned to fly."

As the war's fifth winter ended, the Combined Bomber Offensive was well along in dropping more than a million tons of explosives on German targets, which would kill or wound over a million civilians and destroy almost four million dwellings. American commanders belatedly realized that despite the hundreds of .50-caliber machine guns bristling from B-17 Flying Fortress formations, long-range fighters were needed to escort the bombers deep into the Reich. That need had been answered with the swarming arrival in early 1944 of P-51 Mustangs, which by March had a range of 850 miles, well beyond Berlin; truculent P-51s dropping their wing tanks to meet oncoming Luftwaffe fighters were likened to "barroom brawlers stripping off their coats." American pilots were ordered "to pursue the Hun until he was destroyed. Put the fear of God into them."

In late February, a long-delayed bombing offensive code-named ARGUMENT attacked almost two hundred industrial and military targets, from aircraft factories to rubber plants. Nearly 4,000 bombers from Britain and Italy struck for days on end in a relentless bashing soon known as Big Week. Eighth Air Force dropped almost as much bomb tonnage in six days as it had during its first year in combat. Allied losses were bitter: 226 bombers, 28 fighters, and 2,600 crewmen. Hopes of crippling Germany's aircraft industry fell short; more Luftwaffe planes rolled from German plants in 1944 than in any other year of the war, although at the expense of bomber production. Factories dispersed underground and into remote forests. Yet the blow was severe. The Luftwaffe in February lost more than one-third of its single-engine fighters and nearly one-fifth of its fighter pilots. The latter loss was especially grievous; the combat career of a new German pilot now lasted, on average, less than a month.

The weight of metal had begun to "un-gear the German war economy," in Eaker's phrase. Daylight bombing by the Yanks and night bombing by the Brits finally achieved the synergy that air theorists had promised for more than a year. With better weather, Allied heavy bombers in April dumped on average two tons of high explosives on German targets every minute of every day. The Luftwaffe would become almost as ineffectual in central Europe as it already was in the Mediterranean. German synthetic oil facilities, the Achilles' heel of Hitler's war machine, were now clearly within range and attacks began in earnest in mid-May.

Even so, the hard winter for airmen yielded to a hard spring. Allied air forces flying from England lost twenty bombers a day in March; another three thousand Eighth Air Force bombers were

damaged that month. Morale problems could be seen in the decision of nearly ninety U.S. crews in March and April to fly to neutral countries, usually Sweden or Switzerland, to be interned for the duration. The Army Air Forces hardly helped their reputation for precision when they repeatedly bombed Switzerland. One pummeling, on April 1, left a hundred casualties in the town of Schaffhausen.

Losses remained dreadful from flak that was thicker than ever. Only one in four Eighth Air Force bomber crews flying in early 1944 could expect to complete the minimum quota of twenty-five missions required for reassignment to the United States; those not dead or missing would be undone by accidents, fatigue, or other misadventures. Bomber Command casualties were comparable to those of British infantrymen in World War I. Here was a pretty irony: airpower, which was supposed to preserve Allied ground forces from another Western Front abattoir, simply supplemented the butchery. A B-17 pilot described one harrowing mission:

> When a plane blew up, we saw their parts all over the sky. We smashed into some of the pieces. One plane hit a body which tumbled out of a plane ahead. A crewman went out the front hatch of a plane and hit the tail assembly of his own plane. No chute. His body turned over and over like a bean bag tossed into the air…. A German pilot came out of his plane, drew his legs into a ball, his head down. Papers flew out of his pockets. He did a triple somesault through our formation. No chute.

"When I fly a mission, I'm scared," John Muirhead told a friend. "When I'm not flying, I'm bored. When they get killed, I'm glad it's not me." Crewmen sang a parody of the theme song from *Casablanca:* "You must remember this / The flak can't always miss / Somebody's gotta die." Accidents alone killed 13,000 U.S. airmen; by war's end, 140,000 Allied crewmen would be dead. "On my last four raids I have been hit three times," a flier in the 17th Bomb Group wrote home in late February. "The flak was so thick I couldn't see the planes in front of me, and that's no lie." Many fuselages were quilted with the aluminum patches used to repair bullet holes and flak perforations. A B-25 bombardier in a letter home described "the enlarged pupil, the quickened breath, the dry mouth…. It is a terrible responsibility not to hit a hospital."

Propeller turbulence, faulty electrical suits—temperatures in unheated bombers could reach -60 degrees Fahrenheit—and anoxia from defective oxygen masks all added to the risk. Enemy fighters modified their tactics to break through bomber defenses; Allied airmen were warned about Luftwaffe attack profiles dubbed the "Sisters' Act," the "Twin-Engine Tailpecker," and the "Hun in the Sun." A flight leader's momentary lapse could have catastrophic consequences. One squadron commander, a Hollywood actor named Jimmy Stewart, later said, "I didn't pray for myself. I just prayed that I wouldn't make a mistake."

In the Mediterranean the Air Force steadily increased mission quotas, especially for medium bombers, whose sorties tended to be shorter and less hazardous than the heavies, at least in theory. In February the "fixed tour" was abolished altogether in favor of "a variable one subject to local conditions." Airmen now wore T-shirts that read, "Fly 'til I die."

Among those affected by the ever spiraling quotas was a twenty-one-year-old bombardier from Brooklyn, whose B-25 bomber group moved to Corsica with new airplanes in April after being violently evicted from Vesuvius airfield by the volcano's eruption. Lieutenant Joseph Heller would fly sixty sorties over Italy and southern France, refracting his experiences through the story of an iconic B-25 bombardier named John Yossarian in the greatest novel to emerge from the war, *Catch-22.*

"They were trying to kill me, and I wanted to go home. That they were trying to kill all of us each time we went up was no consolation," Heller later wrote in a memoir. "They were trying to kill *me*…. I began crossing my fingers each time we took off and saying in silence a little prayer. It was my sneaky ritual."

Command of the Italian skies emboldened Allied airmen to aver that they could extend their dominion to the ground. An interdiction campaign that severed enemy logistical lines in central Italy would force "a German withdrawal made necessary by his inadequate supply," Eaker wrote Hap Arnold in early April. Starving Kesselring's armies of food, fuel, and ammunition might even make a "ground offensive unnecessary," opening the road to Rome while saving countless lives. The campaign would be code-named STRANGLE.

Extravagant claims for airpower's efficacy had been made before, at Messina, Salerno, and Anzio, and at Cassino, twice; Eaker had even promised Truscott that his pilots would silence Anzio Annie. STRANGLE was the boldest assertion yet "of the airmen's claim to be able to win the land battle for the soldiers," as W.G.F. Jackson wrote. Italy seemed an ideal laboratory for air interdiction, given the narrowness of the peninsula, the long supply lines from Germany, and the steep terrain, which canalized rail tracks through narrow defiles with many bridges and tunnels.

Much of the thinking about how best to hurt the Germans from on high had been entrusted to a South African–born anatomist and primate specialist named Solly Zuckerman, who had moved beyond studies such as *The Social Life of Monkeys and Apes* to consider the pernicious effect of bombs falling on human beings. A Churchill favorite whose friends before the war included Evelyn Waugh, Lillian Hellman, and the musical Gershwins, Zuckerman with his logarithms and probabilities had loomed large in AFHQ's bombardment planning since before the invasion of Sicily. In a report endorsed by the British Air Ministry in late 1943, he posited that the best way to "isolate the battlefield" in southern Italy was through the relentless bombardment of rail marshaling yards, especially those with big repair shops. Zuckerman's influence had led to a keen focus in the last several months on such rail center bottlenecks in central and northern Italy.

But Zuckerman had decamped to join Eisenhower in London, and at Caserta a backlash developed against his theology. Intelligence analysts noted that since the capture of Naples more than eight thousand tons of bombs had fallen on Italian marshaling yards "without critically weakening the enemy supply position." The Italian rail system under German control included at least four dozen major marshaling yards, and a hundred other centers with ten or more tracks; all were hard to cut and easy to either fix or circumvent. Kesselring's divisions on the Cassino, Anzio, and Adriatic fronts needed an estimated four thousand tons of supplies each day, hauled on fifteen trains that used less than a tenth of the Italian rail capacity. Germany also had so many locomotives—63,000 in all of Europe—that it "could have afforded to discard at the end of each haul the locomotives needed for the fifteen trains," according to Allied intelligence.

Eaker and his apostles, particularly Brigadier General Lauris Norstad, insisted that the campaign must also target bridges, defiles, and even open track across an "interdiction belt," forcing German logisticians to rely on inefficient, fuel-guzzling trucks, which also would be attacked. Fighter-bombers and medium bombers would be well suited to pinpoint attacks on viaduct spans and the like. With approval from the Combined Chiefs, Eaker on March 19 had laid out the campaign objectives in Bombing Directive No. 2: "to reduce the enemy's flow of supplies to a level which will make it impossible to maintain and operate his forces in central Italy." STRANGLE began badly. On the early morning of March 22, an OSS team of fifteen uniformed American soldiers—mostly Italian-speakers

from greater New York—paddled ashore northwest of La Spezia in three rubber boats with orders to blow up a tunnel on the main rail line from Genoa, which Eaker's planes could not reach. The mission was code-named GINNY. A pair of patrol boats that had ferried the men from Corsica returned to extract the team on two subsequent nights without success. Light signals from the beach flashed in the wrong color sequence, and aerial photos showed trains still traversing the tunnel. "Assumed lights were German trap," the OSS reported. "Mission assumed lost."

Lost it was. An Italian fisherman who spotted a dinghy cached in the rocks had alerted local Fascist authorities. German troops surrounded the Americans before they reached the tunnel and captured all fifteen men after a brief firefight. Under a Führer directive to exterminate all saboteurs, including those in uniform, the German corps commander, General Anton Dostler, ordered them executed. At sunrise on March 26, the men were marched to a glade near the village of Ameglia, hands lashed with wire behind their backs. On command, a firing squad cut them down; a German officer delivered the coup de grâce by pistol shot. An Ultra intercept from Kesselring's command post to Hitler reported that American "terror troops" in Italy had been "liquidated," but the precise fate of the GINNY team would not be known for another year. Justice, again, would take longer.

The bombing campaign proved more potent. Attacking planes swarmed across the interdiction belt, ultimately flying more than 50,000 sorties and dumping 26,000 tons of high explosives. By mid-April, twenty-seven bridges had been severed, despite spotty weather that grounded the medium bombers every other day. Some targets were pounded relentlessly, including the Florence–Rome line, which was hit at twenty-two points.

Stations, bridges, engine repair shops, and parked trains were all fair game. Fighter-bombers averaged one direct hit on a bridge span every nineteen sorties, a tenfold improvement in the accuracy of heavy bombers; they also shot up rail electrical conduits, a tactic that aggravated the shortage of German electricians. The number of cuts in Italian rail lines on any given day tripled to seventy-five. By mid-April, all tracks to Rome were blocked, and trains often halted in Florence so supplies could be unloaded and trucked south. Fuel drums necessarily replaced tanker cars, but drums ran short. Troop movements slowed, timetables unraveled; on occasion, enemy victualers were forced to choose between hauling food or hauling ammunition.

Kesselring in early April ordered supply columns to move only in darkness, which, as the days grew longer, made it impossible to complete a round-trip in a single night. Some expeditions from Florence to Perugia—barely two hundred miles round-trip—took nearly a week. Italian drivers proved "distressingly unreliable" under fire, despite the opening of a convoy school to improve night-driving skills. "The difficulties seemed to pile up," a German transportation officer later acknowledged.

Yet they did not pile up high enough. With that maddening blend of dexterity and purpose that so characterized German warmaking in Italy, the Wehrmacht simply made do. Traffic slowed but never stopped. Coastal lighters and dray carts supplemented a fleet of twelve thousand trucks. Several rail engineer companies arrived from France to mend tracks and bridges. For every boxcar destroyed, ten replaced it: the Germans owned two million in Europe. Extravagant camouflage, such as the threading of new bridge spans across the Po River through the wreckage of the old, made targets harder to find. Kesselring's ammunition and fuel stocks remained steady. "The supply situation," said General Walter Warlimont, Jodl's deputy in the Berlin high command, "could be viewed satisfactorily as a whole." STRANGLE "achieved nothing more than nuisance value," the official U.S. Army history later concluded. That was unduly dismissive; the campaign complicated Kesselring's life and eroded his ability to resist a sustained ground offensive. Rail traffic in central Italy grew sclerotic. But even true-blue aviators voiced disappointment. Airpower "cannot absolutely isolate the battlefield from enemy supply or reinforcement," Eaker's British deputy, Air Marshal John C. Slessor, wrote in late spring. Nor could bombardment "by itself defeat a highly organized and disciplined army, even when that

army is virtually without air support."

The most succinct appraisal came from General Norstad in a seven-word sentence that foreshadowed the terrestrial fight to the death now required of a million men along the Gustav Line.

"The enemy," Norstad said, "was *not* forced to withdraw."

"You Are All Brave. You Are All Gentlemen"

SPRING crept up the Italian boot, gaudy and fecund. Green wheat emerged in April, as it had for millennia in war and in peace. Hawks wheeled on the thermals in the perfect blue sky, and flowers enameled the fields: buttercups, primroses, massed violets. The leggy poplars leafed out, along with wild quince and hawthorn. Rivers danced across the black rocks to the sea. Pink and white blossoms stippled the almond trees, the delicate scent mingling with the cruder whiff of charred villages.

Herders tended their white, sloe-eyed cattle and goats collared with clanking bells. Children with big mallets trailed the ox-team plows, breaking up dirt clods in the furrows. Wires were restrung in ruined vineyards to tease out new tendrils. "I have been in Italy so long I feel like a Dago, probably look like one too," a soldier in the 45th Division wrote home. "We speak about half Dago and about half English now, with a lot of Army slang thrown in." Shell craters floored Purple Heart Valley; after a rain shower they glistened in the sun like scattered coins. In a letter to a friend in California, a sergeant in the 141st Infantry described "a field of blood red poppies…. It makes one fill up inside and wish to cry." As for comrades gone west, he added, "There are so many of them sleeping under the sod, waiting for us, the living, to pick up and carry on the torch of liberty and freedom…. Life over here boils down to the simple essentials. No frills, decorations, or frivolities."

Only at Cassino did spring seem hesitant, as if repelled. Where acacia and olives should have silvered the hillsides, blackened stumps climbed the slopes toward the abbey, now dubbed Golgotha by a British padre. In the flats below, a patina of powdered stone whitened the drifted rubble with a spectral pallor. "If ever there was a dead town, this is it," the ambulance driver John G. Wright observed. "Shelled down to bedrock, for acres." Even with a telescope from the shaley brow of Monte Trocchio the town looked empty—"Ghost Village," some Tommies called it. The great trunk road of Highway 6 had been crimped to a goat path, littered with helmets and discarded bandoliers. Wayside graves dotted the landscape, usually in expedient clusters of three or four, but many corpses lay where they had fallen. "I realized I was smelling my own kind," the rifleman Alex Bowlby later wrote. "The unseen, unconsecrated dead assumed a most terrifying power."

Yet in Cassino the living were also unseen and surely unconsecrated. Fifteen hundred soldiers—half German, half British—inhabited the rubble. Neither STRANGLE nor any other Allied gambit had persuaded General von Senger's paratroopers to withdraw a single centimeter. They still held both the high ground and various Cassino strongpoints, including the Hotel Continental and the Hotel des Roses. Freyberg's Kiwis in early April had yielded to the 1st Guards Brigade, who occupied a wide crescent from the jail in the north to the rail station in the south.

Each evening Guardsmen porters smoked a last cigarette in the lee of Trocchio, then removed their wristwatches to avoid fatal glints in the moonlight and shouldered knotted sandbags stuffed with another day's provisions: food, ammo, mail, periscopes, rat poison, wire screening to thwart enemy grenades, quicklime to unstink the dead. Most wore gym shoes, or wrapped their boots in burlap sacking to muffle the footfall. The final stretch from Shit Corner into town—the Mad Mile—was navigated both by familiar landmarks, such as the dead American nurse unaccountably pinned beneath a bridge girder, and by "smell marks," like the ripe mule at one intersection. Sometimes an enemy gunner, Spandau Joe, opened fire on the crepuscular column, raking Highway 6 with bullets that

caromed off the roadbed like sparks shed from a grindstone. The porters scuttled forward and dropped their loads, then hurried back to Trocchio to lay up until the next night. One Royal Artillery lieutenant who made frequent runs into Cassino found it "increasingly difficult to speak without a fairly serious stammer."

The Guards' command post occupied the crypt beneath a Catholic church, entered only on hands and knees through a hole scratched in the rubble. A decomposing German soldier lay near the entrance and those passing in or out would subsequently bow to him for luck, whispering, "Good evening, Hans." Shell fire and bombs had sliced open the burial vaults in the upper walls, scattering skeletons about the nave, and Tommies hung flypaper in a losing battle against insects. Pickets occupied three forward outposts, known as Jane, Helen, and Mary, in wrecked buildings barely a hundred yards from the German line. Sentries cradled their Bren guns beneath cockeyed wall prints of the Virgin, whose eyes remained fixed on heaven.

"There is no day, only two kinds of night—a yellow, smoky, choking night, and a black, meteor-ridden night," wrote one soldier consigned to a Cassino cellar. Guardsmen plugged their nostrils with mosquito repellent against the stench, and took turns standing watch at their periscopes, like submariners. "We looked out upon a dead world," a Black Watch soldier reported. "Nothing stirred in the ruins. Even so, hidden eyes watched everything." They scribbled letters and sipped tea, saving a half inch in their morning mugs to shave. Endless hours were devoted to discussions about sex, politics, and life's absurdity, all to stave off what Fred Majdalany called "that deadly sameness which is the hardest thing of all to bear in war." German shells tumbled about; British gunners answered, targeting suspected strongholds code-named for film stars—Ginger Rogers, Fred Astaire. At dusk they crept out to relieve themselves, Majdalany recalled, ranks of buttocks "showing white in the semi-darkness like grotesque friezes."

Life across the rubble was no finer. German paratroopers in baggy smocks and chamber-pot helmets soaked bandages in cologne and tied them over their mouths and nostrils. Others wore bandages over their eyes, damaged from stone splinters. A German order dated April 16 warned, "Effective at once the word 'catastrophe' will be eliminated in all reports and orders, as well as from the conversational vocabulary." Half a dozen swastika banners adorned the rubble on April 20 to mark the Führer's fifty-fifth birthday, but if "catastrophe" was removed from the lips it was never far from the mind. German gunners fired leaflets that depicted Death holding a pair of calipers and measuring on an Italian map the scant 123 kilometers—76 miles—covered by the Anglo-Americans since landing at Salerno in September; the rest of the peninsula was marked with phase lines and projected dates, including a putative crossing of the Swiss border in April 1948, and then, "to Berlin, another 650 kilometers, arrival about 1952." If illustrative of Allied dawdling, the map also reminded each *Gefreiter* how far he was from home.

"Everything is in the hands of the fates, and many of the boys have met theirs already," a German machine gunner wrote in his diary. "I badly want to get home to my wife and son. I want to be able to enjoy something of the beauty of life again. Here we have nothing but terror and horror, death and damnation."

For all its inhumanity, a peculiar dignity obtained at Cassino for those condemned to share its squalor. Every Guardsman could appreciate the German voice that abruptly broke into the Coldstream radio network one evening to acknowledge, in English: "You are all brave. You are all gentlemen."

Shortly after seven A.M. on Monday, May 1, the entire Fifth Army staff, along with the army band, tiptoed through the olive grove beyond the carp ponds and marble statuary in the Caserta Palace

gardens. Without a sound, they encircled the new caravan recently built for their commander in an ordnance depot. Slathered in green and brown camouflage paint, the trailer featured not only fluorescent lights and a flush toilet, but full-length mirrors and an extra-long bed.

Mark Clark was a meticulous creature of habit, so it was a bit odd when 7:30 A.M. passed without his usual ring for an orderly to bring his breakfast. Al Gruenther, who had organized this fête for Clark's forty-eighth birthday, impatiently glanced at his watch before finally ordering the air-raid siren sounded. As a shrill wail carried across the palace grounds, the bandsmen hoisted their instruments and struck up "There'll Be a Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight," followed by a new ditty, "The Fifth Army's Where My Heart Is," with music and lyrics by Irving Berlin.

The trailer door swung open and out stepped a smiling Clark—"His Highness," as Gruenther jokingly called him—clad in blue pajamas, bedroom slippers, trench coat, and cap. After the band crashed through a rousing rendition of "Over There," Clark thanked the assembled crowd, reminded them that there was "still much to be done in the war," and predicted that many in the Fifth Army would eventually "see action in the South Pacific." As he stepped back inside, the band took leave with "The Old Gray Mare." Later in the day, Clark flew to the beach below Castel Volturno for a swim in the frigid Tyrrhenian Sea. A birthday celebration that night featured two cakes, a hypnotist, comedians, and a "card manipulator." "He is a hard-boiled soldier, of course," Gruenther wrote after the party, "but he does get homesick every now and then."

Curiously, he had just been home. While Alexander rearranged his armies for the spring offensive now planned for mid-May, Clark had proposed returning to Washington for the first time in nearly two years. Marshall at first demurred, complaining that the visit "comes at a most inopportune moment," then relented. At three A.M. on April 11, wearing an unadorned olive-drab uniform and the green silk cravat that had become his trademark, Clark shambled down the plane ramp at Bolling Field, along the Potomac River. Renie, "as fluttery as a schoolgirl," was stunned at how haggard he appeared, "thin and tense and tired." A War Department colonel handed Clark a note from Marshall that contained no hint of welcome or praise, while stressing the need to keep the visit secret. A staff car took the Clarks past Arlington National Cemetery to Marshall's residence at Fort Myer for a few hours' sleep. "There was a strained sort of strangeness between us," Renie later wrote. "He might just as well have been in Italy for all the attention he was able to pay me."

Mrs. Clark had been promoting General Clark's career again, apparently without his knowledge, and the cool reception Marshall gave him may have reflected his annoyance. In a recent note to the chief of staff, Renie assured him, "Certainly Wayne is trying." She also enclosed a personal letter from her husband. "I never get things the easy way, my poor men have to do it the hard way," Clark had written her. He continued:

> You will never know, darling, the tense moments, and hours and days I have…. I go to the hospitals and see them and talk to every man in a big tent…. They lie there with their legs off and stomach and chest wounds and smile and never complain…. At times I need you to talk to—have no one I can go to and express my real feelings.

If Marshall was sympathetic, he kept the sentiment concealed. The chief returned the letter as Renie had requested, but not before making a copy. "You are aware," he warned in a frosty note addressed to "Remi" in early March, "of the necessity of guarding the confidential nature of letters which you receive from your husband."

The ten-day furlough flew past. A week after his arrival, with Marshall hovering over his

shoulder at the Pentagon, Clark dictated a note to his mother, who also lived in the District of Columbia: "I know it will be somewhat of a shock to you to know that I am here in Washington…. It is absolutely imperative that you tell *no one* of my presence here." With Marshall's permission, she joined her son for a brief stay in a secluded cabin at the Greenbrier Hotel, a resort in West Virginia now converted to a rehabilitation hospital. Clark played golf and talked of retiring. When he whacked three consecutive drives into a lake, several German prisoners of war who were working as hotel groundskeepers chortled in glee. Clark stalked from the tee, grumbling, "I'm sorry I took those guys prisoner."

Before returning to Italy, Clark was whisked one evening from the basement garage of Renie's apartment building on Connecticut Avenue to the private entrance of a nineteenth-century town house at 1806 I Street in downtown Washington. Here in the Alibi Club, the well-heeled and well-connected of Washington's elite gathered to "cook oysters, lobsters and ducks to suit themselves, play poker, and put away a lethal sort of drink based on Medford rum," as Marshall's biographer wrote. To hear Clark's progress report on the war in Italy, Marshall had assembled a dozen powerful figures, including Vice President Henry A. Wallace and Speaker of the House Sam Rayburn. For more than an hour, while his auditors slurped oysters around the table and tossed the shells into a bowl, Clark in his deep, mellifluous voice described campaigns past and future: the desperate fight at Salerno, the march across the Volturno, the struggle at the Winter Line, the Anzio gamble, and now, soon, the great thrust that would carry Fifth Army into Rome. None of these men, Clark concluded, had any inkling of what it was like to wage war in mountainous Italy.

The "long and bloody battle up the Italian peninsula," as Clark had called the ordeal in a note to Field Marshal Wilson, had only grown longer and bloodier. But the moment was approaching that would make it all worthwhile. Flying back to Italy, Clark carried both the family cocker spaniel, Pal, for companionship, and packages from Katherine Marshall, the chief's wife, for two sons from her first marriage who were now serving as young officers in Italy. The brief trip home, Clark wrote Renie from Caserta, "seems like a dream."

Under Alexander's reorganization of the Allied legions in Italy, Clark now commanded thirteen divisions—seven American, four French, and two British—a force quadruple the size of the army he had brought to Salerno nine months earlier. Even as he took pride in leading such a formidable host, the increased demands—and another fifty thousand Fifth Army casualties since mid-January—weighed heavily. Cool and remote, yet capable of conviviality and brilliance, Clark could also be picayune and mulish, protective of his prerogatives, and as the war went on he grew increasingly ready to take offense at slights real or imagined. The nickname Marcus Aurelius Clarkus never seemed to fade.

At times, Clark seemed to feud with every senior general in the Mediterranean. "He treats his corps commanders as he would a company commander—and of course with less consideration for us Americans," Geoff Keyes told his diary. Weary of Clark's carping, Truscott twice reminded him that he had the authority to sack the VI Corps commander "at any time"; in his diary, Clark decried Truscott's "whining attitude." An ancient grudge with his former West Point mathematics instructor, Lieutenant General Devers—now the senior American commander in the Mediterranean—grew so toxic that Devers refused to deal directly with Clark; he used Lyman Lemnitzer, Alexander's American deputy, as an intermediary. "They could not be together three minutes without being in a fight," Lemnitzer said later. Clark considered Devers "a dope" and informed him that he had "too many bosses already." To Field Marshal Wilson, Devers said of the Fifth Army commander, "He

thinks he is God Almighty. He's a headache to me and I would relieve him if I could, but I can't."

Clark's frictions with the British had only intensified in the spring. He complained that the Royal Navy "acted in many high-handed ways" and was "in no way cooperating with me." On several occasions he grew so insolent with Alexander that Lemnitzer expected him to be fired, and warned Clark accordingly. The British high command in the Mediterranean so resented Clark's "vexatious attitude" that in March there had been talk of requesting his relief; the insurrection collapsed after word of it leaked to the Pentagon, and for lack of support from Churchill.

"Many happy returns of the day," the prime minister had written in a birthday greeting to Clark. If still fond of the man he called "the American eagle," Churchill was not above using other wildlife metaphors to assail the stalemate at Anzio. "We hoped to land a wildcat that would tear out the bowels of the Boche," he told Eisenhower. "Instead, we have stranded a vast whale with its tail flopping about in the water." Churchill also fretted, as he told Wilson, about "a feeling of bitterness in Great Britain when the claim is stridently put forward, as it surely will be, that the Americans have taken Rome"; he urged that credit be "fairly shared." While refusing to countenance a coup in Caserta, Churchill mused aloud about having Alexander command the Beachhead Army while Wilson took over the Cassino front, a crackpot notion that caused poor Brooke to confide, "I feel like a man chained to the chariot of a lunatic."

The task of handling Clark fell to Alexander, who demonstrated both patience and the shrewd eye of a gifted draftsman. From his palette of adjectives, Alexander later captured the man with precise brushstrokes: "Temperamental, very sensitive, extremely ambitious, vain, learned a lot as the campaign went on." Although General Alex would have preferred to see Omar Bradley or Patton in command of Fifth Army—even if he suspected the latter was "too restless for slogging"—he rated Clark a fine commander. "Always cool in battle," he added. "Never saw him frightened."

Never frightened, perhaps, but often anxious. A thousand cares weighed him down. Air cover at the beachhead remained spotty, and Clark disrupted his birthday festivities at Caserta on May 1 for a snarling row with Alexander over the disproportionate fighter and bomber support given Eighth Army at the expense of the Fifth. Casualties had become so corrosive that each U.S. infantry division in Italy could expect to lose its entire allotment of 132 second lieutenants in less than three months of combat. Although basic training had expanded from thirteen to seventeen weeks, many enlisted replacements arrived with marginal military skills, and some were unable to read. The newest units to join Fifth Army—the 85th and 88th Infantry Divisions, both in Keyes's II Corps—were the first into combat of fifty-five U.S. divisions built mostly from draftees; their worth had yet to be proven. Four of six infantry regimental commanders in those two divisions had already been relieved, as Clark advised Marshall, "for a combination of age and physical reasons."

There was more: the two British divisions still at Anzio remained so weak that both Truscott and Clark believed they would contribute little to any renewed offensive. The British Army since Salerno had suffered 46,000 battle casualties, with thousands more sick, yet replacements had not kept up with losses. Moreover, as Gruenther also noted, "Many British troops have been fighting for four or five years, and are in some cases pretty tired."

Few British commanders disagreed. "Absenteeism and desertion are still problems," wrote General Penney, back in command of the British 1st Division at Anzio after recovering from his wounds. "Shooting in the early days would probably have been an effective prophylactic." On average, 10 British soldiers were convicted of desertion each day in the spring of 1944, and an estimated 30,000 "slinkers" were "on the trot" in Italy. "The whole matter is hushed up," another British

division commander complained.

Nor was the phenomenon exclusively British. The U.S. Army would convict 21,000 deserters during World War II, many of them in the Mediterranean. Clark condemned the surge of self-inflicted wounds in Fifth Army and the "totally inadequate" prison sentences of five to ten years for U.S. soldiers convicted of "misbehavior before the enemy." A psychiatric analysis of 2,800 American troops convicted of desertion or going AWOL in the Mediterranean catalogued thirty-five reasons offered by the culprits, including "My nerves gave way" and "I was scared."

A twenty-two-year-old rifleman who deserted at Cassino after seven months in combat was typical. "I feel like my nervous system is burning up. My heart jumps," he said. "I get so scared I can hardly move." Those symptoms affected tens of thousands, and added to Clark's worries. "Combat exhaustion," a term coined in Tunisia to supplant the misnomer "shell shock," further eroded Allied fighting strength in Italy, as it did elsewhere: roughly one million U.S. soldiers would be hospitalized during the war for "neuro-psychiatric" symptoms, and half a million would be discharged from the service for "personality disturbances."

All troops were at risk, but none more than infantrymen, who accounted for 14 percent of the Army's overseas strength and sustained 70 percent of the casualties. A study of four infantry divisions in Italy found that a soldier typically no longer wondered "*whether* he will be hit, but *when* and how bad." The Army surgeon general concluded that "practically all men in rifle battalions who were not otherwise disabled ultimately became psychiatric casualties," typically after 200 to 240 cumulative days in combat. "There aren't any iron men," wrote Brigadier General William C. Menninger, a prominent psychiatrist. "The strongest personality, subjected to sufficient stress a sufficient length of time, is going to disintegrate."

Treatment by "narcosynthesis," often using sodium amytal or nembutal, healed some combat-exhausted soldiers with deep sleep. The 45th General Hospital in Naples, which would admit more than five thousand neuropsychiatric patients in 1944, also used extensive electric-shock therapy. But generally fewer than one "NP" patient in five returned to duty.

All of these issues impaired Fifth Army's ability to reach Rome, and it was Rome that increasingly obsessed Clark. In Washington, he had learned that OVERLORD was now scheduled for early June; to capture Rome and invade Normandy concurrently would provide a glorious double blow to Axis morale. Even if the Eternal City was of dubious military value, it offered a dramatic symbol, a rightful and prestigious prize after so many months of struggle.

But getting there quickly was paramount, before OVERLORD eclipsed the Italian campaign—and before the British could steal Fifth Army's thunder. Churchill's suspicion was well founded: Clark had no intention of sharing credit for capturing the capital. He had, in fact, begun to exhibit signs of paranoia about British designs.

"I know factually that there are interests brewing for the Eighth Army to take Rome," Clark confided to his war diary in early May, "and I might as well let Alexander know now that if he attempts anything of that kind he will have another all-out battle on his hands. Namely, with me."

"On the Eve of Great Things"

ALEXANDER often quoted Lord Nelson's observation on the eve of Trafalgar that "only numbers can annihilate," and for weeks he had devoted his waking hours to amassing that annihilative amplitude without Kesselring's knowledge. The Allied host in Italy now exceeded half a million men in the equivalent of twenty-eight divisions, with huge advantages in artillery, armor, and aircraft. Under a battle plan drawn by Alexander's chief of staff, Lieutenant General A. F. "John" Harding, the Allies

intended not only to drive the enemy north of Rome, but to exterminate so many Germans that Hitler would be forced to shore up his jeopardized southern flank even as OVERLORD swept into France from the west.

This grand offensive, code-named DIADEM and set to commence on May 11, required a three-to-one edge in infantrymen to knock the Germans from the Gustav Line at a familiar point of attack: the Cassino redoubt and adjacent heights looming above the Liri Valley. For this paramount honor, Alexander had chosen Eighth Army. "Between ourselves," he privately told Brooke, "Clark and his army HQ are not up to it, it's too big for them." Fifth Army, including Juin's French Expeditionary Corps, would attack on the left through the Aurunci Mountains, advancing "on an axis generally parallel to that of Eighth Army." Once the Gustav Line was pierced, Truscott's VI Corps would burst from the beachhead, shouldering aside the German Fourteenth Army to help destroy the Tenth.

Alexander's final order, issued in early May, remained silent on which force would seize Rome and thus further inflamed Clark's suspicions. But for weeks the battle plan had clearly laid out a scheme in which Eighth Army bulled up Highway 6 before veering east of the capital toward either Florence or Ancona on the Adriatic, depending on whether the Combined Chiefs chose southern France or Austria as Alexander's ultimate destination. Fifth Army would follow the Tyrrhenian coastline to Viterbo and then Livorno.

There would be glory enough to go around. Still, sensing fraternal rivalries, AFHQ informed all reporters that "no invidious comparison [should] be made between Eighth and Fifth armies and the FEC; no exaggeration, no overcolorful narratives…. Speculation should be avoided."

Monochrome proved difficult, given the vivid legions assembled for DIADEM. On the Allied right, Eighth Army—having tramped from Cairo across two continents in the past nineteen months—now secretly sideslipped more than a quarter million men east to west over the Apennines. Their commander, Lieutenant General Oliver W. H. Leese, was as tall as Clark and much stouter, with a black mustache and twinkling brown eyes that could darken in sudden rage—"a big ungainly bruiser," in Keyes's tart description. Blooded at the Somme, with the scars to prove it, Leese was bluff and toothy, given to khaki plus-fours and a straw hat. He remained a Montgomery protégé at heart, fond of thunderous artillery barrages, cheap smokes tossed to the lads, and conferences with subordinates while he soaked in his tub. "Never frig about on a low level," he liked to advise. Leese later became an expert in horticultural succulents, such as cacti and begonias; now he settled for tending his tulips.

He compared this, his first big battle as an army commander, to "having a baby." Alexander thought him methodical to a fault. "Not the pusher Clark was," he said after the war. "Some army commanders have to be pushed with a little ginger, like Leese, who always needed a little prodding." A Canadian general at one point decried his "prancing about waving his hands like a whore in heat." Yet Leese's guffaws and ribald humor masked a shrewd cunning. "I think I can work with Clark," he wrote his wife. "He thinks I am a bloody fool. He will have a great awakening."

Leese's seven infantry and three armor divisions included a new contingent in the Allied panoply: 56,000 Poles, who had been assigned to take Monte Cassino itself. They were led by General Władysław Anders, a slender, handsome cavalryman with "the ardour of a boy," in Macmillan's phrase, and the grit of a man intent on settling scores. Anders had fought both Germans and Russians in 1939; wounded three times and captured on crutches, he spent twenty months in Moscow's notorious Lubyanka prison and other dungeons, much of it in solitary confinement. After Hitler invaded Russia, he was released—reportedly wearing only a shirt and underpants—to eventually form a Polish corps against the common Nazi foe. His men were drawn from prison camps scattered as far away as Siberia; in an anabasis that took them through Iraq and Persia, they joined other Poles who had fled through Hungary and Romania to fight with valor in the Middle East under British patronage.

Anders's two divisions were understrength but as ardent as he: they drew lots to see which would

have the privilege of liberating the abbey itself. “We never take prisoners,” a Polish colonel told one Grenadier Guardsman. “It’s such a nuisance having to feed them and, after all, they started it.” None of the Poles would hang back on May 11, as Anders later said, “for we had no men to spare for reserves.” For II Polish Corps, the way home led through the Gustav Line.

On the Allied left, wedged into a twelve-mile front from the Tyrrhenian Sea to the lip of the Rapido flats, Clark’s army also included a contingent for whom DIADEM was a grudge match. “The eyes of suffering France are fixed upon you,” Juin told his FEC. His corps had swelled to nearly 100,000 men, parceled among four divisions and three groups of *goumiers*, irregular Berber tribesmen known for agility and ruthlessness. After enduring eight thousand casualties in the winter fighting around Cassino, Juin had spent the spring retraining his forces in mountain warfare, with a stress on speed, stealth, and infiltration. Only by “invading the mountains,” he believed, could the Allies widen their front and circumvent the constricted tank trap in the Liri Valley.

That meant scaling the Auruncis, a primeval upland three thousand to five thousand feet high forming a broad belt between the valley and the sea. Sculpted by defiles and pinnacles, the range was crowned by the Petrella Massif, a height peopled mostly by shepherds and charcoal makers, and deemed impassable by Germans and Anglo-Americans alike.

But not by Juin. Wrapped in a greatcoat, with his blue Basque beret pulled down around his ears, useless right arm dangling, and an unlit cigar clamped between his crooked teeth, he stumped through the shadows below the range, eyeing approaches and saddles. Photo reconnaissance showed two narrow trails winding over the massif—and little enemy fortification. With patience and persistence, in passionate French and fractured English, he had persuaded first Keyes and then Clark to broaden and deepen the Fifth Army attack. “The Americans are not people one can hustle,” he wrote a French colleague. “They like us a lot, but they are also imbued with their sense of omnipotence and with a touchiness that you could hardly imagine.”

Rather than employ the FEC as a battering ram to punch a hole in German defenses, which would then be ploddingly exploited by Keyes’s II Corps, Juin proposed attacking full-fury with both corps abreast: 170,000 men, 600 artillery tubes, 300 tanks. Given the tilt of the Italian boot, the attack would initially angle into the mountains from east to west. To provision a single corps in such terrain would be difficult; to supply two would be herculean. But Fifth Army could outflank German defenses and unhinge the Gustav Line. Once across the Auruncis, the Americans could sweep up the coast toward Anzio and Rome while the FEC veered into the Liri Valley from the southwest.

Clark’s admiration for Juin had only deepened since their first encounter in Algiers during Operation TORCH. It was no accident that Fifth Army headquarters assigned him the radio call-sign Hannibal. Among other gallantries, the Frenchman had voluntarily surrendered one of his four stars in order not to outrank his army commander. “Radiate confidence,” Juin advised, “and enjoy taking risks.”

Audacious and improbable, the plan also offered Fifth Army a bigger role than the vague, subordinate mission outlined in Alexander’s order. Clark still cherished one bit of arcana memorized by every West Point plebe: “A calculated risk is a known risk for the sake of a real gain. A risk for the sake of a risk is a fool’s choice.”

He knew the difference.

Half a million players scurried to find their places before the curtain rose. The landscape seethed with activity, concealed from German eyes by darkness or deception. On the far left, Italian laborers built dummy pillboxes at the mouth of the Garigliano under orders “not to camouflage too well.”

Farther upstream, twenty undetected French battalions squeezed into a swale barely four miles across; Juin's men donned British soup-bowl helmets to obscure the departure of McCreery's X Corps to the far side of Cassino. At night, engineers hacked trails into the Aurunci foothills with hand tools to minimize the noise, then scattered brushwood before dawn to hide their tracks.

Canadian signalers in April had gone off the air along the Adriatic; now they began broadcasting again near Salerno to persuade German eavesdroppers that an amphibious operation was being mounted. In truth, barely two hundred men operated sixty-one radios in a carefully scripted electronic deception. At Termoli, on the Adriatic, the 1st Palestinian Camouflage Company floated dummy landing craft in the harbor and spread garnished nets over two acres of jetties to inspire the imagination of any German reconnaissance pilot. To discourage collaborators, Allied leaflets resembling funeral announcements displayed the names and photos of those executed for espionage or sabotage.

Military traffic signs appeared in Polish, English, French, and Hindi. Engineers built new trails along the front, concealed with lime, straw, stones, and turf. Long screens made of chicken wire festooned with steel wool hid roads, bridges, and depots. Timber parties carefully thinned the olive groves to create fields of fire for artillery, sawing the trunks three-quarters through and bracing the trees upright until H-hour, when they would be tipped over. Anders's troops blackened their kit, donned seven thousand mottled sniper suits, and slapped six thousand gallons of camouflage paint on their vehicles.

Scouts in canvas shoes and dark pullovers swam the Rapido at night, creeping among fireflies blinking in the reeds. Indian sappers crawled along the banks, probing for mines left by the Yanks in January. Five hundred yards from the river, South African troops lay low in their sangars and foxholes during daylight, which now lasted from 4:30 in the morning until 9:30 at night.

Every tree along Highway 6 leading to Shit Corner concealed supplies. Dumps grew mountainous: Fifth Army alone stockpiled 11,000 tons of ammunition for the first two days of DIADEM, including 200,000 105mm shells. One hundred miles of six-inch fuel pipeline stretched from Naples to forward depots, and forty-three Italian sawmills turned forests into engineer lumber. Fifth Army artisans, working at their casting tables in twelve-hour shifts, made intricate models depicting every quarry, cliff, and monastery on the approaches to Rome. Map depots stocked millions of sheets on four different scales. To produce the five-color maps requested by Clark's headquarters, cartographers mixed ersatz inks from mercurochrome, tobacco juice, and Atabrine tablets, which turned paper as well as soldiers bright yellow.

Endless supply convoys crept forward at six miles an hour behind trucks outfitted with water sprayers to keep down telltale dust. Specially tuned jeeps crept to the forward dumps with their hoods wrapped in rubber pads to muffle any squeaks. And all night long the clop of hooves could be heard from the Garigliano to the Sangro. Fifth Army alone had mustered ten thousand mules and two thousand horses into pack trains. "No mules," Juin told anyone who would listen, "no maneuver."

* * *

Truscott in early May returned to the beachhead, tanned and rejuvenated after a five-day furlough in Naples. "I think of you every day when I look at my garden," he wrote Sarah from Nettuno. "The roses are blooming in great profusion. You know how I love them." At his request, orderlies snipped bouquets for the hospital wards in Hell's Half-Acre. He reminded his wife that he had now served in uniform for twenty-seven years. "I suppose the passing years have taken their toll and left their marks.

Strange to say I actually feel younger than I did at the time." In another note he added, "I hope that I have not become conceited or swell-headed, and I do not believe that I have. I have retained my sense of humor and am still able to laugh at myself."

At the beachhead, too, preparations for DIADEM took on a febrile intensity. More than one million tons of matériel would be stockpiled at Anzio to supply Fifth Army during the drive north. Engineers crushed stone from demolished houses for roadbeds and fashioned three hundred brush fascines for marshy ground. Phone lines toward the front were buried in trenches dug with a jeep-drawn plow. A stockade for five thousand prisoners sprang up near Conca.

Patrols reclaimed small swatches of dead country, and battalions took turns firing every weapon for a minute or two before dawn to discomfit the enemy. Truscott pestered Clark for "at least one additional infantry division," and soon he would receive Fred Walker's 36th Division. The entire 1st Armored Division also consolidated at the beachhead, giving Ernie Harmon 232 tanks and bringing the Anzio force to seven divisions. For weeks, a dozen or more Shermans had trundled forward each night to fire harassment rounds before retreating at first light; now each morning a few slipped into concealed forward laagers, joining a hidden armored spearhead gathering near the front. Some crews built extra ammunition racks with angle iron, cramming 250 shells inside and another 40 on the back deck, plus 16,000 machine-gun rounds. "It was crowded," a company commander said later, "but we went out shooting."

In a letter to his old friend Lesley J. McNair in Washington, Harmon reported that commanders at the beachhead wanted to be sure "that we have left no stone uncovered." Even so, Harmon confessed, "I am very tense." As for Truscott, he focused on the victory that must surely come. "We are on the eve of great things," he wrote Sarah. "I hope that this summer will carry us a long way toward the end of the war in Europe."

It was precisely this issue that General Alex intended to discuss when he ambled into the VI Corps cellars at Nettuno on Friday morning, May 5. When should the Beachhead Army break out, and in what direction? Pointing to a wall map with a thick forefinger, Truscott quickly described the four options developed by his staff. He and Clark favored a plan code-named TURTLE: Allied forces would knife up the Albano road toward the Factory, swerve northwest at Carroceto to turn the German right flank on the west side of the Colli Laziali, then follow Highway 7—the Appian Way—into Rome.

The quizzical tilt of Alexander's red-hatted head suggested that he had different ideas. For weeks he had eyed the stretch of Highway 6 that angled *east* of the Colli Laziali, and which gave Vietinghoff's Tenth Army both its main supply route to the Liri Valley and a line of retreat to Rome. Once the DIADEM attack lured German reserves to the Cassino front, the beachhead forces could thrust northeast to cut the highway at Valmontone, a crossroads town fourteen miles beyond Cisterna. Truscott's staff officers had drawn precisely such a plan, code-named BUFFALO, as one of their four options. Merging the Beachhead Army with the Cassino front might take a month, Alexander believed, but by seizing Valmontone VI Corps could trap Tenth Army in a decisive battle of annihilation. So certain was he of his course after talking to Truscott that Alexander issued an order of uncommon clarity, dated May 5, directing Fifth Army "to cut Highway 6 in the Valmontone area, and thereby prevent the supply or withdrawal of troops from the German Tenth Army."

Clark had spent the morning in Caserta conferring with Juin, Keyes, and other lieutenants, followed by a lunch of cold cuts and beer. At two P.M. an aide handed him a coded radio message from Truscott, reporting that Alexander seemed intent on BUFFALO.

> Gen. Alex arrived this morning. When I informed him of the four plans on which I'm working, he stated that I was paying too much attention to alternate plans…. I assume that

you are fully cognizant of Gen. Alex's ideas on the subject, but I want you to know what he told me today…. You know that I am with you all the way. Truscott.

Clark was furious. "Alex trying to run my army," he told his diary. In a phone call across the Caserta compound to Lemnitzer, he railed at Alexander for "issuing instructions to my subordinate commanders" that contradicted Clark's desire to remain flexible by keeping several plans in play. Upon reaching General Alex himself, he complained of being offended and "thoroughly astounded." In a memo of the conversation, Clark quoted himself as insisting that "under no circumstances would I tolerate his direct dealings with my subordinates…. He assured me that he had no intention of rescinding my order."

Unappeased, Clark fumed. In a visit to Nettuno on Saturday, he told Truscott, "The capture of Rome is the only important objective." The British, he added, were hatching nefarious schemes to get there first. Moreover, BUFFALO was tactically dubious. Too many roads ran north from the Cassino front to trap Tenth Army by severing Highway 6. German forces, Clark believed, would simply detour onto other routes.

On Monday morning, May 8, he confronted Alexander directly in his Caserta command post. "I told him he had embarrassed me. He replied that he had no intention to do so," Clark recorded. Alexander "kept pulling on me the idea that we were to annihilate the entire German army…. I told him that I did not believe that we had too many chances to do that; that the Boche was too smart." Alexander asked whether the American had doubts about DIADEM. "I assured him," Clark wrote, "that the Fifth Army attack would be as aggressive as any plan or attack he had ever been in or read of." The tense session ended with Alexander solicitous but resolved: the Beachhead Army would strike for Valmontone, as ordered on May 5 and embodied in BUFFALO. "I am thoroughly disgusted with him and with his attitude," Clark confided to his diary.

At four P.M. on Tuesday, Clark met with thirty-one reporters at Caserta. Using a large map and a pointer, he was both calm and commanding in describing DIADEM in detail. Fifth Army now mustered 350,000 men, including the two new divisions under General Keyes. Each U.S. division had received an extra 750 men to accommodate expected casualties; the British divisions, Clark noted, "are not quite up to strength." Kesselring's force totaled 412,000 men in twenty-three divisions in Italy, including nine along the Cassino front in Tenth Army and five more at Anzio in Fourteenth Army. Clark kept to himself other particulars, which Ultra had revealed: Kesselring possessed 326 serviceable tanks, 616 antitank guns, and 180 assault guns—and that he rated only two of his divisions as "fit to take the offensive."

The animating principle behind the initial Allied attack scheduled for Thursday night was simple: "Everybody throws everything they have at the same time." At long last, "the total resources" of both Fifth and Eighth Armies would fall on the enemy simultaneously. The subsidiary attack out of the beachhead would depend on progress in cracking the Gustav Line. Clark expected a tortuous grind, with daily progress limited to two miles or less. In view of the German scorched-earth tactics in Naples, he assumed that Rome would be despoiled. In a veiled allusion to OVERLORD, he added, "The more Boche we can hold down here, the more we can kill, the more we will contribute to operations which will overshadow this one."

He made no mention of his quarrel with Alexander, or his assertion to Truscott that Rome "is the only important objective." Nor did he hint that he already had begun to consider disobeying orders.

"The attack I would like to make under proper conditions is right out toward Route 6, to cut it," Clark told the scribes. He gestured on the map toward Valmontone. "Rome is of political value and we hope to take it," he added, with studied nonchalance. "But our first mission is to kill as many Germans

as we can."

General Alex would be pleased. The Americans had fallen into line.

Albert Kesselring knew nothing of the dispute within the Allied high command, but that condition was of a piece with his larger ignorance of enemy strength, deployment, and intentions. Axis troops—including Russian prisoner-of-war volunteers armed with antique Italian weapons—peered seaward on both coasts for the amphibious landing Kesselring was sure would fall. German intelligence analysts had identified nine of twenty-two Allied regimental command posts on the Fifth Army front, but could pinpoint none of them; nor could they identify or locate most Allied division headquarters. German gunners so consistently fired leaflets in the wrong language to the wrong troops—Urdu to the Kiwis, Arabic to the British, English to the French—that Clark's G-2 believed "it could be only a deliberate attempt to conceal his knowledge of our order of battle." In fact, Kesselring was blind.

A Moroccan deserter several weeks earlier had sworn that the Allied offensive would begin April 25. Senior Wehrmacht officers packed their kit and rose early, only to feel "rather sheepish" when the front remained quiet. "Whenever you are well-prepared," complained Major General Fritz Wentzell, the Tenth Army chief of staff, "nothing happens." Now the attack was predicted for May 20 or later. After telling his subordinates on May 10 that he did "not expect anything in the immediate future," Vietinghoff left for the Führer retreat in Bavaria to collect another medal. In late April, General von Senger also had taken a month's leave to receive a similar decoration and to attend a conference in Berchtesgaden, along with Ernst-Günther Baade, his most trusted division commander. Siegfried Westphal, Kesselring's exhausted chief of staff, had departed two weeks earlier on convalescent leave.

If Kesselring was blind and misinformed, he was not stupid. He assumed the Allied main attack would follow Highway 6, the only avenue where armor could deploy in mass. To strengthen defenses around Cassino, he rearranged his line, summoning LI Mountain Corps from the Adriatic and shifting Senger's XIV Panzer Corps across the Liri Valley. With the Führer determined to fight for every Italian hilltop, engineers since December had built yet another bulwark across the peninsula: the Hitler Line, a fortified string of redoubts five to ten miles behind the Gustav Line. Some 77,000 German troops shored up the beachhead perimeter, and another 82,000 held the southern front, seventy miles away. The German strategy in Italy, Kesselring now declared, was "simply to make the enemy exhaust himself."

Still, he misread the omens: the bridging equipment unloaded near the Garigliano; the Allied patrols unspooling white tape; the oppressive silence. On Wednesday, May 10, Wentzell phoned Kesselring's headquarters with his daily report. "To my great pleasure, everything is quiet," he told a staff officer. "Only I do not know what is going on. Things are becoming ever more uncertain."

"I have told this to the field marshal," the officer replied. "He looks very intently towards the coast."

"In past times one heard at least once in a while that such-and-such division had left Africa. But now one hears nothing," Wentzell said. "I think it is not impossible that things are going on of which we have no idea."

Red Cross volunteers behind Monte Trocchio handed out sandbags filled with cigarettes, dates, and oranges to Allied troops tramping toward the Rapido staging areas. "It was like a goodbye gift," one soldier said. Mule hooves now were sheathed in sacking to quiet the clop, and conspicuously

white animals had been culled from the trains. Every brake and copse along the front grew stiff with soldiers. Some thumbed through a GI's guide to Italian cities, which stressed Leonardo da Vinci's military inventions—"hand grenades, shrapnel, the parachute"—and assured them that Rome's Colosseum "wasn't wrecked by Long Toms. It got that way through the passage of time." A battalion surgeon recorded in his diary, "Blackjack for twenty dollars a card…I win over two hundred dollars and now worry where to carry all that money."

A Canadian soldier scrutinizing the blasted landscape near Cassino asked, "Who the hell would want to live here, let alone fight over it?" But Fred Majdalany concluded that "Cassino had become what in the earlier war Ypres was to the British, Verdun to the French. It was a cause in its own right, a cause to die for." Many had, more would. Polish troops swapped their boots for canvas slippers or wrapped their feet in rags before creeping toward Snakeshead Ridge behind the abbey. The scent of red clover mingled with ruder scents, and the Poles tried covering Indian corpses with blankets to contain the smell. "The place was alive with rats," a platoon leader in the 3rd Carpathian Division complained.

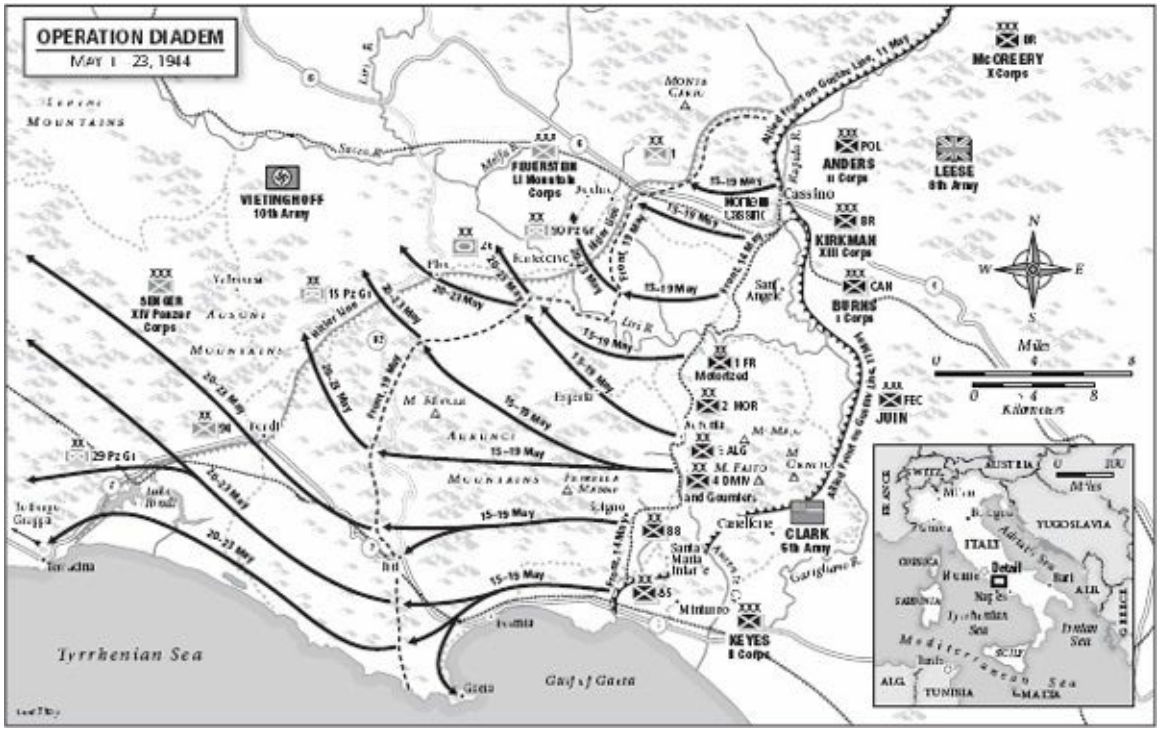
A dozen miles to the southwest, an officer in the 88th Division listened to the murmur of his men praying aloud. Between the lines, the blackened bodies of soldiers killed in earlier skirmishes reminded him of "irregular pieces of driftwood on a rocky beach." Jumpy Senegalese sentries fired at what appeared to be the glowing cigarettes of approaching strangers but proved to be fireflies, which they had never seen.

On the gun line in the rear, engineers blasted pits for a recently arrived 8-inch battery; each tube required thirteen cannoneers to manhandle the forty-five-foot staff used to swab the barrel after each round. Others stacked shells with new molybdenum fuzes capable of penetrating steel-reinforced concrete. Small holes were drilled in the casings to intensify the scream in flight.

From the beachhead to the Apennines, scribbling men struggled to find the right words in their letters home. "Busy days, nerve trying days," Jack Toffey wrote Helen. "One smokes too much—drinks too much if he can get it, and sleeps too little if he can get that." He burned most of Helen's letters to lighten his load. "This hurts me to do," he told her, "but space had become such a factor that I found it necessary to retain only yours of April and May." While certain that "the Kraut is going to catch hell from all sides at any time," Toffey confessed that "I am a bit war weary." He had resigned himself to fighting for the duration. "I'll be home when they build a bridge and we march over it," he told her. "How long Oh Lord—how long?"

Commanders evinced the requisite public élan while privately venting their anxieties. "If Alex is a military genius, I'm Greta Garbo," Keyes told his diary on May 10. "He is obsessed with the idea that the Germans are going to give up and run." A few hours later Alexander cabled Churchill: "Our objective is the destruction of the enemy south of Rome." As for the prime minister, a note of desperation had crept into the message he sent George Marshall. "We must throw our hearts into this battle for the sake of which so many American and British lives have already been sacrificed, and make it like OVERLORD—an all-out conquer or die."

H-hour was fixed for eleven P.M. on May 11, half an hour before moonrise. The day dawned gray and damp enough to lay the dust, then faired in the afternoon. A grizzled French spahi told a young American liaison officer, "I do not know where my son is tonight, and your father does not know where his son is. So tonight we will be father and son." The Frenchman had ten days to live. Shelling on both sides dwindled to a mutter at last light, then ceased entirely, yielding to what Alexander called "a strange, impressive silence." Stars threw down their silver spears. "New boys with fear and nerves and anxiety hidden under quick smiles," a Canadian chaplain wrote. "It is the hardest thing to watch without breaking into tears."


OPERATION DIADEM
MAY 11 - 23, 1944
VIETINGHOFF
10th Army
FUERSTEIN
LI Mountain Corps
HEIDRICH
LXXVIII
SENGER
XIV Panzer Corps
ANDERS
II Corps
POL
LEESE
8th Army
KIRKMAN
XIII Corps
BR
BURNS
I Corps
CAN
McCREERY
X Corps
IR
JUIN
FEC
KEYES
II Corps
CLARK
5th Army
1 FR Motorized
2 MOR
1 ALG
4 DMN
88
65
90 Pz Gr
15 Pz Gr
29 Pz Gr
Hitler Line
Front, 11 May
Front, 14 May
Front, 19 May
15–19 May
20–23 May
Tyrrhenian Sea
Gulf of Gaeta
Apennine Mountains
Aurunci Mountains
Miles
Kilometers
Detail
ITALY
YUGOSLAVIA
GREECE
TUNISIA
MALTA
Mediterranean Sea

12. The Great Prize

Shaking Stars from the Heavens

THE BBC pips had not finished signaling the top of the hour at eleven P.M. on Thursday, May 11, when gusts of white flame erupted in a thirty-mile crescent across the hills of central Italy. Light leaped from two thousand gun pits, laving the cannoneers as they danced bare-chested at their breechblocks, shoving home another shell, and another, and another. Ruby tongues licked from the muzzles, as drifting smoke rings lassoed the constellations and concussion ghosts chased one another through the night. "It seemed it must shake the very stars out of the heavens," a Black Watch soldier wrote.

Men peered from their trenches or crowded into farmhouse doorways to watch the spectacle, their faces reddened in the glow and their helmets jarred by the percussive shock. "Rome, then home!" they bellowed. Nightingales had sung in the silence before the cannonade; now they sang louder but to small effect. "The roar of the guns is so deafening that you can shout at the man next to you and still not be heard," a medical officer in the 88th Division wrote. "Sheets of flame spring behind every bush. The hills to our north are spattered with phosphorus bursts that illuminate the entire horizon." Above the abbey and Cassino town, scores of German flares added their own sibilant brilliance, tiny red and silver supernovas that stretched the shadows. "The sky," a Royal Hampshire account noted, "was full of noises."

Gunners draped wet rags over their sizzling barrels or poured cans of water down the muzzles, then reloaded. Fifth Army alone would fire 174,000 shells in the first twenty-four hours of DIADEM, requital for months of peninsular misery. "I felt as if a bridge of iron was being erected overhead, and wondered how it was that shells did not collide," a Polish corporal in the 3rd Carpathian Division reported. As the barrage continued, Alexander sent Churchill a prearranged confirmation that the offensive had begun: "Zip, repeat, zip."

Rome, then home. At midnight on the Allied right, the Eighth Army assault battalions shook out and surged forward through the vibrating air like wasps from an angry hive. Where the Americans and then the New Zealand Corps had attacked enemy strongpoints months before, Eighth Army would also attack but with twice the strength and more: two Polish divisions up Monte Cassino rather than just the 4th Indian, two British divisions across the Rapido—with two more to follow, and then the entire Canadian Corps—rather than just the U.S. 36th Division. Shell fire scythed the enemy redoubts. "We were confident," a British platoon commander said, "that no Germans could possibly outlive such a devastating bombardment."

The Poles found otherwise. "Soldiers! The moment for battle has arrived," General Anders told his men. "We have long awaited the moment for revenge and retribution over our hereditary enemy." Troops surged up Snakeshead Ridge toward Point 593, that scabrous knuckle, following trails marked with painted phosphorescent arrows. Within five hundred yards they were burrowing beneath the bodies of dead comrades, seeking cover from murderous machine-gun and mortar fire. By mischance, the hereditary enemy had chosen the night of May 11 to relieve defenders behind Monte Cassino with fresh troops: the hillside garrison was nearly double its normal strength. Nine German battalions opposed the Poles.

"Many of us had lost our exact bearings and there was a great deal of confusion," a Polish platoon leader reported. To keep secret the presence of the Polish corps at Cassino, Leese had refused

to let Anders reconnoiter the terrain. Hand-to-hand fighting clattered across the slopes in what Anders called “a collection of small epics.” The 5th Kresowa Division seized Phantom Ridge, a mile northwest of the abbey, but took a savage pounding on the exposed hogback. A 3rd Carpathian battalion captured Point 593 but an attack on nearby Point 569 collapsed after Polish artillery fire—hampered by a shortage of observation posts—lifted too quickly and riflemen were slaughtered in a saddle below the hill. When Polish sappers later balked at clearing a minefield, a Carpathian commander barked over the radio, “If they do not obey orders, shoot them.” They obeyed: of twenty engineers in one minesweeping detail, eighteen would be killed or wounded. “You don’t know how dreadful death can be,” a dying Pole told his comrades. “Now I shall have to miss the rest of the battle.”

At dawn, the rising sun fired the hilltops as if they had been dipped in copper. All morning and past the meridian the killing continued. German snipers used the light to lethal advantage, picking off Poles “like sitting birds.” Anders had been given sixteen flamethrowers but little instruction in how to use them; most were ruined by German artillery and mortar fire, including two that burst into flame. “I was working on my knees. I was smeared all over with blood,” a Polish surgeon reported. “A corporal came and stood among the wounded…. Through his torn tunic I saw a wound the size of two hands, the shoulder-bone bared.” The corporal told him, “I shan’t let you evacuate me until I’ve thrown all my grenades.”

Yet even Polish valor could not win through. Hundreds of dead men sprawled among the poppies and wild irises. By four P.M. on Friday, May 12, all momentum had seeped away. With his assault battalions depleted by half, Anders ordered both divisions back to their starting lines. The attack, one Polish writer noted, “was really no more than a very costly reconnaissance.”

A British officer who arrived at General Leese’s command post late in the afternoon found him rambling through a field. As the officer began to deliver the bad news—attack repulsed, fearsome Polish losses—Leese held up a huge hand. “Let’s pick some cornflowers,” he said. They picked until their arms were laden with blue-headed stalks, then Leese said, “Right! Now tell me about the casualties.”

Upon driving to the Polish II Corps headquarters, Leese found the usually elegant Anders slumped in his caravan, disheveled and in need of a shave. His eyes red, his face gray, the Polish commander turned and asked, “What do we do now?”

What, indeed? If Eighth Army’s right wing had failed, the left wing was hardly capering toward Rome. Along the Rapido, the 8th Indian Division had been assigned to cross the river and capture Sant’Angelo, the dolorous village that had so bedeviled the 36th Division in January. As the barrage lifted early Friday morning, vapors from the river swallowed the rising moon. Khaki-drill columns wended through the fens, following white tape and hooded hurricane lanterns to the east bank. Vehicles crept forward, hauling boats or towing antitank guns. From upstream, a rude clanking carried on the night: a squad of 6th Lancers, crouching in defilade, banged angle iron against pieces of rail track as a deception to draw fire.

Fire they drew, but so did the rest of the bridgehead. Assault troops splashed and paddled across the Rapido only to trip both antipersonnel mines left five months earlier by the Yanks and smoke canisters emplaced by German gunners as aiming stakes. Within minutes smoke, mist, and cordite billowed through the bottoms “like a yellow London fog,” in Leese’s phrase. Visibility dropped to two feet.

Men stumped about in flame-stabbed confusion, pitching into ditches and walking in circles.

British gunners fired Bofors tracers overhead to show the azimuth of liberation, but "in the mist the shells quickly dimmed and were lost to sight," a reporter observed. Royal Fusiliers reached the west bank above Sant'Angelo with few casualties, each soldier clinging to the bayonet scabbard of the man ahead. But now the ground between river and village was covered by a vermilion loom of enemy bullets, and stick grenades showered the bottoms from the Sant'Angelo bluffs. "Oh, God, don't let me die yet," Fusilier F. R. Beacham pleaded. "I promise that I will always be good if you let me live." Coming upon a mortally wounded comrade, Beacham lifted a water bottle to his lips. "Thanks a lot, mate," the man said, then passed over.

Twelve of sixteen Gurkha boats sank or floated away. The four surviving craft ferried men through the small hours, with much shouting above the din from bank to bank. Farther upstream, all forty boats manned by a brigade of the British 4th Infantry Division were soon gone. Drowned men drifted on the dark current that had drowned so many before.

By midday, no battalion in either the 8th Indian or the 4th Infantry had gained more than five hundred yards of an intended two thousand. Barely half of Leese's objectives had been secured on the left, none on the right. Snipers whittled away the British as they did the Poles. After a major in the Derbyshire Yeomanry fell dead with a bullet in the brain, a subordinate offered a terse elegy: "He was an autocratic man but a good leader, and we came to regret his death." A Fusilier who spent May 12 facedown in a ditch listening to the "sough and whiffle" of shells overhead later noted, "The day passed ever so slowly."

Yet the enemy had missed his main chance. The absence of Vietinghoff, Westphal, Senger, Baade, and others impaired German dexterity; so did 350 tons of Allied bombs that battered Kesselring's command post and demolished the Tenth Army headquarters near Avezzano, with "an unsteadying effect upon the occupants." Confusion, error, fear—the usual frictions—played hob on the far side of the hill, and the crushing counterattack that might have crippled DIADEM never took shape.

Three bridges, dubbed Cardiff, Oxford, and Plymouth, had been planned for the Rapido near Sant'Angelo. Cardiff was abandoned, but engineers carved ramps and filled ditches under scorching fire to throw a small span across at Oxford before nine A.M. on Friday. Two hours later and a thousand yards downstream, a pair of Sherman tanks muscled a one-hundred-foot Bailey bridge over the stream at Plymouth. Canadian tanks pelted for the far shore, "camouflaged with green boughs and looking like a harvest festival."

Upstream between Sant'Angelo and Cassino town, dead and dying engineers shored the riverbank. But by first light on Saturday, May 13, another span—Amazon—slid into place. A pipe major crossed, skirling, then fell mortally wounded. "Cries for help from the wounded…could be heard inside the tanks even though the crews were wearing headphones," according to a 6th Armoured Division account. The tanks bulled ahead, riflemen clinging to their hulls with one hand and shooting with the other. Every so often the smoke and marsh mist parted to allow glimpses of the abbey, floating toward heaven.

Gurkhas twice surged into Sant'Angelo on Friday, and twice machine gunners embedded in the rubble threw them back. Cairn by cairn, cellar by cellar, attackers rooted out defenders with grenades and curved kukri knives. A pair of Canadian tanks flanked the village, gunning down those who sought to slip away. By three P.M. Saturday, resistance had ended but for the odd sniper, at a cost of 170 Gurkha casualties. White dust floured the quick and the dead alike.

Putrefying corpses were soaked in gasoline and set ablaze, then shoved into a trench. Some captured Germans were found to have wounds dressed with paper: enemy medics had run short of bandages. "This is real war," a squadron commander in the 17th Battalion of the 21st Lancers scribbled in his notebook, "and makes Africa seem a picnic." A Royal Artillery gunner in the 78th

Division studied the consequences of his fall of shot: splintered rifles, smashed field glasses, dead Germans. “This is the terrifying thing about war,” he wrote. “When I saw what I had achieved, I had no regrets at all.”

They pushed on, across the shot-torn fields, edging toward the mouth of the Liri Valley, where objectives had been code-named after famous Midlands hunts. A Canadian in the 48th Highlanders described being snagged by barbed wire with another soldier: “He was thrashing and fighting with the wire like a man gone insane. The bullets started socking into him, and he jerked and kicked with each new hit. Then he crumpled beside me. Nothing was very bad in the war after that.”

Two secure bridgeheads merged to form a shallow purchase across the Rapido. Six more bridges opened, and thousands of smoke shells kept Monte Cassino swaddled in white. But unless the abbey and adjacent hills fell, German batteries threatened to flay anyone pushing up Highway 6 through the valley. “Flames of Jerry guns almost beautiful at dusk,” a Guards officer observed. “Spitting crimson, amber and opal.”

In four days Eighth Army would advance just four miles, at a cost of more than four thousand casualties—a man down every five feet. Still, Leese took satisfaction where he could, even as he pondered how to convert his fragile bridgehead into the battle of annihilation that Alexander coveted.

“Mark Clark has laid 4–1 against our crossing the Rapido,” Leese wrote. “As they say at a private school, ‘Sucks to him.’”

* * *

Clark had troubles enough without British maledictions. Fifteen miles downstream from Cassino, on the far left of the Allied line, Geoffrey Keyes’s II Corps—composed of the 85th and 88th Divisions—had used its foothold across the Garigliano to push forward from Minturno in DIADEM’s early hours. Soldiers nervously worked their rifle bolts as they strode ahead, blankets and raincoats tied to their combat packs. Each man wore white adhesive strips or squares of white cloth on the back of his helmet and uniform sleeves to prevent fratricide; platoon leaders added extra white-tape chevrons to make themselves more recognizable to their men. Officers gobbled Benzedrine tablets. “Rome, Rome,” a lieutenant in the 88th Division chanted, “who gets Rome?”

No one in II Corps, at least not yet. Sheaves of fire from the entrenched 94th Grenadier and 71st Infantry Divisions lashed the American ranks from the Gulf of Gaeta on the left to Ausente Creek on the right. Fifth Army intelligence had pinpointed 161 German machine-gun positions among some 600 along the front; that left more than 400 unaccounted for, until now. “The noise was all of a piece, an ocean of noise,” one soldier recalled. Smoke and haze clotted so that no amount of identifying tape was visible much beyond arm’s length. Red tracer vectors fired every few seconds pointed the way and demarcated unit boundaries—.50-caliber for companies, 40mm for battalions—but confusion still held sway. “What’s going on, fella?” a soldier yelled to Eric Sevareid. “They never tell us nuthin’.”

The rising sun dried their uniforms: GIs scuttling into the mountains looked to one soldier like “a serpentine column of steam.” Sevareid described “bodies of men moving down narrow defiles or over steep inclines, going methodically from position to position between long halts.”

Yet neither division moved far. The defiles grew narrower, the inclines steeper, the long halts longer. Most of all, the fire grew fiercer. An attack by the 351st Infantry against the hilltop village of Santa Maria Infante failed to take two critical hills known as the Tits. One company lost eighty-nine men; another fell for a German white-flag ruse, with fifty men captured. Among those killed in the day’s fighting was Frederick Schiller Faust, a prolific writer known as the King of the Pulps, who,

under the pen name Max Brand, had turned out nearly four hundred westerns, including *The Rangeland Avenger* and *Gunman's Reckoning.* Intent on writing a narrative about one platoon's odyssey to Rome, Faust died from German 88mm fire only three hours and six hundred yards into the journey. As Sevareid observed, "Those who live are incredibly alive, and the others are stupefyingly dead." By early Saturday morning, to Keyes's chagrin and Clark's dismay, the American attack had stalled.

That left Juin's FEC, which had pitched into the largest set-piece battle fought by the French army since 1940 with rousing choruses of the "Marseillaise" and "C'est nous les Africains." As thirty or more artillery rounds fell on every charted German battery with little enemy fire in return, three divisions abreast surged into the craggy Auruncis.

Plunging fire greeted them with the incivility of a slammed door. Moroccan infantrymen were pinned down in minefields beyond the Garigliano; those who breached the barbed wire and booby traps found flamethrowers and interlocking machine-gun fire waiting. Behind concrete German pillboxes stood more bunkers and blockhouses. French troops near Castelforte picked their way into a badlands teeming with snipers and mortarmen. Soon the landscape smelled of singed hair and burning flesh, human and mule. Counterattacking grenadiers slashed at the French flanks with such fury that FEC officers on Monte Faito called artillery onto their own positions to avoid being overrun.

By midmorning on Friday, May 12, Juin's legions were hardly beyond their starting lines. Ten assault battalions in the French center had achieved little penetration, and the FEC, like II Corps and the Poles, could claim few of its objectives. Fifth Army casualties approached sixteen hundred. Losses among French officers were particularly grievous, and it was said that German ferocity had triggered "considerable alarm in FEC headquarters." An officer with the Tunisians observed, "Due to the intense heat, the dead take on a waxy look. They're everywhere."

Juin went forward shortly before noon, beret tugged down to his ears, cigarette smoldering in its holder. First by jeep, then by hard climb, he scaled the flank of Monte Ornito on a path carpeted with dead mules, the odd mortar shell bursting nearby. Stretcher bearers passed him on the narrow trail, carrying three wounded battalion commanders to the rear. "This thing got off on the wrong foot," he announced at the 2nd Moroccan Infantry Division command post. "We must begin again."

Through much of the afternoon he scrambled up and back, watching, assessing. Upon returning to his headquarters at Sessa Aurunca he summoned his staff, rapped on a table, and said in his smoky voice, "It's gone wrong. But they are as tired as we are." Before defeating the Germans, the FEC must first "conquer the ground." Corps artillery would be redirected to support, preeminently, the 2nd Moroccan in a push through the center of the line toward Monte Majo, a three-thousand-foot limestone bastion that served as a gateway to the Petrella Massif. Infiltrators would first outflank enemy strongpoints on the right. Engineers could blow gaps in the barbed wire with bangalore torpedoes, and moonlight in the small hours on Saturday would suffice to lay a barrage just ahead of the attacking infantry. Juin also would fling his only reserve division into the fight. "We'll start again tomorrow morning after a full-scale artillery preparation," he said, "and it will go."

It went, spectacularly. A deft shift of artillery caught German counterattackers in the open at 5:30 A.M. on May 13, chopping them to pieces. Indifferent to enemy shells thudding nearby, Juin watched his Moroccans vanish into a ravine below Monte Faito, then emerge on the far slope, chanting *"La Allah ihl Allah"* as a column of prisoners in field gray streamed to the rear. Four hundred French and Fifth Army guns set the mountains ablaze. By midafternoon, Moroccan soldiers reported Monte Majo captured and a two-mile gap torn in the Gustav Line. The enemy 71st Division—mostly flatlanders from Lower Saxony who had considered the Auruncis impregnable—was cut in half, leaving both flanks open to exploitation. An intercepted German radio message advised, "Accelerate the general withdrawal."

By Sunday the French had advanced seven miles across a sixteen-mile front, unhinging German defenses beyond the Garigliano. *"En avant!"* Juin urged. FEC casualties exceeded two thousand, but nine hundred prisoners had been captured; many complained of shelling worse than in Russia. On Monte Majo's summit appeared an enormous tricolor, measuring twelve by twenty-five feet and visible from Cassino to the sea. "This," Juin said, "is warfare to which we are accustomed." The 71st Division commander's assessment was terser: "Most unpleasant."

The unpleasantries had only begun, for with the capture of Castelforte by Algerian troops on the French left, Juin was able to slip the leash from his Berber irregulars. The vanguard of twelve thousand *goumiers*—invariably shortened to *goums* by the Yanks—had passed through the north end of town on Friday night, many on horseback. Five hundred yards beyond the last house the column swung west off the road, following a narrow trail into the Aurunci wilds with orders to cut Highway 82 between Itri and Pico—nearly twenty miles in the German rear—and thus turn the enemy's right flank.

"Dark men, dark night," Montgomery had once said of the *goums.* "Very hard to see coming." Most wore sandals, wool socks, gloves with the trigger fingers snipped off, and striped djellabas; a beard, a soup-bowl helmet, and a foot-long knife at the belt completed the ensemble. "It was as if troops of the last century had been reincarnated and suddenly appeared at our side," said an American colonel in the adjacent 88th Division. Juin considered them "vigorous, reliable, [and] very abstemious"; another French general said they "lived only for brigandage and war." Some wore their booty, an Algerian officer observed: "dozens of wristwatches on their arms, collections of rings on their fingers, and strings of shoes and boots hanging on their backs." One unit kept a tiger as a mascot. Upon encountering their Anglo-American confreres they typically gestured for a cigarette, calling, "Smokie, smokie, Joe?"

It was said that in Sicily they took not only enemy ears as trophies but entire heads. It was said that *goums* creeping through the night would feel a sentry's bootlaces for the unique German loop before deciding whether to cut the man's throat. It was said that a *goum* had sold a GI a quart jar of fingers pickled in brandy. A U.S. military hospital treating French casualties handled so many *goums* with the same single names that doctors assigned numbers on their charts—Abdullah 4, Muhammed 6. "Their long hair is braided in pigtails. They sing, chatter, and howl," one physician wrote. "Many carry chickens under their arms." A nurse admired their skill in "cracking nuts with their teeth," but lamented the theft of hospital towels for turbans. "The Arab soldier is interested in just three things: women, horses, and guns," a French officer told an American colonel, who replied, "The American soldier is the same, except that he doesn't care anything about horses and guns."

Up and up they climbed with a Moroccan infantry regiment and Algerian artillery, splitting into three forces, each angling west and then north through nearly trackless terrain, including one vertical stretch that rose four hundred feet in less than a half mile. "The sky was a changeless blue, the heat implacable," a French officer reported:

> From a soil glistening with mica, the hard little hooves of the Arab horses struck up clouds of grasshoppers. Beside their horses and mules, the *goumiers* loped tirelessly onwards with long ambling stride, forage caps askew, an eternal rictus on the lips, ignoring the heat despite woolen *djellabas.*

By four P.M. on May 15, the lead scouts had scaled the forward heights of the Petrella Massif; by the next morning, they stood on the crest of Monte Revole, more than four thousand feet up and a dozen miles beyond the Garigliano. When an unwitting Wehrmacht battalion blundered into a nearby valley, *goumiers* encircled both flanks in a horseshoe ambush, then swept down the slopes "like falling boulders." German survivors later described "grinning savages with knives in their hands, obviously quite eager to begin the butchery."

Men and beasts had exhausted themselves and far outrun their supply lines. Just past noon on May 17, a fleet of U.S. bombers dropped forty tons of food and ammunition across the mountain peaks. The *goumiers* would spend a day recovering the crates and recuperating, then push on.

On the French left, the Americans also were on the move after punching through the stout but brittle enemy line that had thwarted II Corps for two days at a cost of three thousand casualties. With ample replacements in the wings, Keyes replenished his ranks and threw fresh troops against the depleted grenadiers on the same narrow front. Santa Maria Infante fell on May 14 after relentless pummeling by fighter-bombers and white-phosphorus shells. Soon the 85th Division was pressing along the Via Appia in the coastal flats with a dust-churning flotilla of men, trucks, mules, tanks, and tank destroyers. On the heights to their right, the 88th Division lunged through Spigno and onto the Petrella Massif, guided by local peasants along goat paths a few miles south of the FEC.

The enemy had been "rushed off his feet," in Juin's phrase. On the Fifth Army right, the nearly extinct 71st Division had suffered five thousand casualties, mostly from 150,000 artillery rounds; the division told Kesselring's headquarters that no more than a hundred riflemen were still fit to fight. Allied shells and aircraft battered the German rear, terrorizing horses hitched to gun carriages and supply wagons. After a gallant stand by one grenadier unit, Kesselring told Vietinghoff, "One could cry with admiration."

All this buoyed the Allied high command after so many miscarriages. Alexander bounded into Clark's command post to pronounce himself "very pleased" with the attack. Juin swanned about in his jeep, barking, "We've got them." The replenished *goumiers* would cut Highway 82 while the rest of the FEC converged on Pico in the German rear, within rifle range of the Liri.

Only Clark remained somber. He sent Juin two congratulatory bottles of whiskey, but the "delinquency" of II Corps irked him. The FEC had averaged about two miles a day since DIADEM began, compared with just over one for II Corps. The Americans also seemed unprepared for headlong pursuit, so much so that Clark threatened "disciplinary action" against all laggards. Keyes's troops overran surprised German artillery batteries at Spigno and then seized Itri on Highway 82. But traffic snarls at the narrow crossroads delayed the 88th Division's push toward Fondi, nine miles to the northwest and a linchpin of the Hitler Line.

"I am disappointed in the rigidity of II Corps plans," Clark told his diary with the reproachful tone of a man determined to disapprove. "They have not shown a flexibility of mind and an aggressive attitude." Keyes in turn wrote of Clark:

> Called me about 6 times. Each time finding fault, saying he was embarrassed and his face was red at the French and Goums doing so well and getting so many prisoners…. He acts like a 15-year-old kid…. A [shell] fragment tore a hole in the seat of my jeep. I wasn't in it.

Even as he lashed his commanders, and as much as he wanted to lead the liberation procession into Rome, Clark harbored tactical anxieties about his troops surging too far beyond the British. By

May 18, the FEC would be six miles ahead of Eighth Army, putting the Allied front on a severe slant and exposing Fifth Army's right flank to counterattacks. Clark could only conclude, again, that Leese and the British were not pulling their weight. "I am disappointed," he wrote, "in the effort of the Eighth Army."

That same Eighth Army was about to claim the grandest prize on the Gustav Line. With British and Canadian troops inching past Cassino town to force the Liri Valley, Leese at seven A.M. on Wednesday, May 17, once again ordered Anders and his Poles into the breach. Once again the 5th Kresowa Division sortied against Phantom Ridge, a mile north of the abbey, while the 3rd Carpathian swarmed up Snakeshead Ridge, shooting at every silhouette suggestive of a paratrooper's chamber-pot helmet.

All through the night the fighting raged, with rifle butts and tank fire. Polish troops low on ammunition threw stones and sang their national anthem. German paratrooper units were reduced to "oddments," some battalions having fewer than one hundred men. "Impossible to get wounded away," a German major in the 3rd Parachute Regiment wrote in his diary. "Great number of dead on the slopes—stench—no water—no sleep for three nights—amputations being carried out at battle headquarters."

In danger of encirclement from the north and west, German defenders began slipping away—although only after Kesselring personally ordered the recalcitrant General Heidrich to fall back to the Hitler Line: the 1st Parachute Division had become as possessive of Cassino as a jealous husband of his bride. Across the hill in Cassino town, British loudspeakers blared, "To fight on is senseless…. Cassino is lost to Germany." From the Baron's Palace and the Continental Hotel, shadows darted up over Hangman's Hill. Fearful of vengeful Poles, a few surrendered by walking hands-high to the Crypt or up Highway 6, where the British 78th Division bagged eighty paratroopers creeping to the rear. By three A.M. on May 18, the town was empty of living Germans.

The struggle for the high ground behind the abbey ended with the dawn. At seven A.M., Point 593 finally fell for good. Two hours later a Polish lieutenant from the 12th Podolski Lancers led a six-man patrol up a slope carpeted with poppies and corpses, among them Poles and Germans wrapped in death embraces. Across the ruined parking lot the Lancers scuffed, past charred debris and a cracked church bell. A sergeant climbed on his comrades' shoulders to scale the broken wall, then helped hoist the rest inside. Fresco fragments and shards of marble statuary crunched beneath their boots. They found two German orderlies attending sixteen badly wounded paratroopers, including several lying in St. Benedict's candlelit crypt.

Just before ten A.M. the lancers' regimental pennant, fashioned from a Red Cross flag and a blue handkerchief, rose on a staff above Monte Cassino's western wall. A bugler played the "Hejnał Mariacki," a medieval military call once used to signal the opening of Kraków's gates. Then the red-and-white Polish flag rose against the midday sky. Anders's soldiers wept.

At 11:30 A.M. British signalers broadcast a single code word—WYE—to proclaim Cassino's fall. Leese arrived for tea in the Crypt, then toasted Anders with champagne. Polish casualties for the week exceeded 3,700, including 860 killed; 900 unburied German dead were counted. Alexander cabled Churchill: "Capture of Cassino means a great deal to me and both my armies."

For the first time in five months, men in the town stood erect during daylight. They discovered roses blooming near the jail and an undamaged statue of the Virgin in a stand of splintered trees; a panzer was found parked in the Continental lobby. Grenadier Guardsmen emerged from Jane, Helen, Mary, and other dank hovels, then marched from the town toward Shit Corner for a respite. Some

2,500 British and South African engineers stood ready to clear Highway 6 only to find the drifted rubble so dense that just a few hundred could get close to the roadbed; to bulldoze a one-mile stretch would take fifty-two hours.

In the abbey itself, further investigation brought further horrors: children killed in the February bombing; the bones of a nineteenth-century cardinal, robbed of his ring and pectoral cross, dumped in a garden tub; corpses tucked into large drawers used to store vestments. “The whole effect,” one Venus Fixer reported, “is like that of a Mesopotamian tell.” Polish, British, and Indian soldiers wandered about, scribbling graffiti and collecting souvenirs, including a carved angel’s head yanked from a choir stall. Among German sketches found in the rubble was a portrait of Frau Göring and a river scene titled “On the Lovely Banks of the Rhine.” A skillful cartoonist had also drawn a cigar-smoking Churchill standing on the Cassino plain while a German paratrooper straddled the abbey ruins. The caption read *“Denk’ste”*—“Think it over.”

A solitary American fighter pilot flew low over the abbey and tossed a bouquet of roses from the cockpit. Gun flashes limned the northern horizon, a reminder that for most the war had moved on. “Don’t expect normal letters from me because I won’t be normal for some time,” Lance Corporal Walter Robson of the Queen’s Own Royal West Kent Regiment wrote his wife on May 18.

“We’ve been Stuka’d, mortared, shelled, machine-gunned, sniped, and although we’ve taken Cassino, the monastery, none of us feel any elation,” Robson added. “The losses sadden and frighten us…. When, when, when is this insanity going to stop?”

General von Senger, freshly bemedaled, had returned from his month’s leave on May 17 to find Vietinghoff, the bombed-out Tenth Army commander, squatting in his command post near Frosinone, thirty miles up the valley from Cassino. Senger also found the Gustav Line ruptured, his XIV Panzer Corps bisected, and German intelligence uncertain where on the Petrella Massif the French irregulars had gone. Vietinghoff pronounced the XIV Corps predicament “frightful.” “For the first time in nine months the corps had been breached,” Senger later wrote. Moreover, the Hitler Line had been assigned a new name to forestall embarrassment to the Führer in the event that it too failed: the Senger Line.

That line by any name must be held, particularly the seventeen-mile western stretch from Terracina on the Tyrrhenian coast to the hill town of Pico, where the Auruncis spilled into the Liri Valley. Here Fifth Army with its phantom *goumiers* now posed the greatest threat. “It was left to me,” Senger added, “to prevent the annihilation of the corps.”

The task was formidable. Longer days and better weather made the German rear ever more vulnerable to enemy aircraft, including the little spotter planes that adjusted Allied long-range artillery. “Constant, unremitting Allied fighter-bomber activity makes movement or troop deployment almost impossible,” the Tenth Army war diary reported on May 18. So many horses had been killed that equipment had to be manhandled to the rear or abandoned. The fifty-nine German battalions on the southern front now averaged under 250 soldiers each; the 15th Panzer Grenadier Division, stalwarts of Troina and other southern battlegrounds, on May 20 reported only 405 men fit to fight.

Italian supply-truck drivers were now deserting en bloc despite mass executions for “cowardice in the face of the enemy”; round-trip convoys to northern Italy sometimes took up to three weeks. Artillery barrages severed phone lines, forcing German commanders to use radios, which were vulnerable to eavesdropping and to finicky reception in the mountains. “I demand a clear picture,” Kesselring told Tenth Army in a peevish message, but there was no clear picture to be had: even Ultra cryptologists were baffled by the babel from German units.

In truth, Kesselring had been outgeneraled. Slow to recognize the Aurunci threat on his right, he

also was slow to realize that another Allied amphibious landing was but a ruse, and slow to release his reserves. On May 14, Kesselring had dispatched the first of three strategic reserve divisions, the 26th Panzer, but the seventy-mile journey from the outskirts of Rome took so long that the unit's tanks could not fight cohesively until May 19, too late to caulk the Gustav Line. On that day, Kesselring also ordered Fourteenth Army to transfer the 29th Panzer Grenadier Division—defender of San Pietro six months earlier—from the Anzio beachhead to Tenth Army's right wing. Petulant delays by General von Mackensen, the Fourteenth Army commander, further damaged efforts to tighten the Hitler Line, as the Allies continued to call it. Mobile divisions such as the 15th and 90th Panzer Grenadiers were broken into penny packets, with battalions scattered about and eventually defeated in detail. The Führer was even forced to strip the equivalent of three divisions from Hungary, Croatia, and Denmark for defenses in Italy.

As for Kesselring, he was reduced to fulminating against impudent subordinates while urging his troops to resist "the enemy's major offensive against the cultural center of Europe." Few found such exhortations inspiriting. "You have no idea how hard this retreat is, or how terrible," a German reconnaissance commander wrote his wife after Cassino fell. "My heart bleeds when I look at my beautiful battalion…. See you soon, I hope, in better days."

Better days were difficult to see from either side of the firing line. A Canadian described DIADEM as a thousand individual battles erupting "like spontaneous fires exploding in a rag factory," and the rags continued to blaze. General Leese now had three corps with some twenty thousand vehicles crammed along a six-mile front in a narrow valley flanked by high hills and admirably suited to ambush and delay. Bucolic at a distance—one Canadian described an Italian village as "a vaporous fantasy on its beehive hill, topped by a grim, crenellated tower"—the Liri proved neither pastoral nor an easy avenue to Rome. Most trees had already been reduced to flinders by bombs and artillery shells. Retreating Germans fired the ricks and farmhouses, slaughtered the cattle, and murdered more than a few civilians. "German prisoners made to clear their own minefields," a Guards officer recorded. "Half a dozen blown to blazes."

A Kiwi tanker negotiating a hillside vineyard described "the Shermans pitching like destroyers in and out of the ditches that parallel every row, men sitting in front with heavy wire-cutters to hack a passage." Brick culverts under the side roads collapsed beneath the weight of thirty-ton tanks, and traffic jams soon rivaled those that had bedeviled Eighth Army at Alamein: one brigade trying to move toward the sound of the guns took eighteen hours to travel thirteen miles. A Canadian general complained that Highway 6 was "jammed by trucks nose to arse."

If the Hitler Line lacked natural impediments like the Rapido River and Monte Cassino, it boasted a fortification belt half a mile wide that had been under construction by a five-thousand-man labor force since December. The "medley of fieldworks" included mines, antitank ditches, double-apron barbed wire, and nearly three thousand firing positions. Panther tank turrets, sporting a high-velocity 75mm gun that was among the war's cruelest, had been mounted on brick plinths. An initial Eighth Army probe on May 19 ended with thirteen Canadian tanks in flames. Across the Auruncis, heavy fire also demolished five U.S. Shermans, including one named *Bonnie Gay* that burned so furiously that "the only trace of the crew were fillings of the teeth," a tank battalion history recorded.

"Head wounds are many and serious. Most occur in tank crews when tanks take a direct hit," wrote Klaus H. Huebner, a medical officer whose 88th Division battalion aid station occupied a village bakery. "On examination their skulls feel like shattered egg shells…. Our morgue in the backyard is soon full." In his diary Huebner added, "We are always on the bottom, and the Krauts

always on top. The terrain is constantly in the enemy's favor."

There was nothing for it but to soldier on. Sergeants doled out rum rations in enamel cups after breakfast and sent their men off to commit mayhem. Or to have it committed upon them. A Tommy waiting at a field hospital to have both legs amputated murmured, "I couldn't run a race, but I've got plenty of fight left in me, and I'm going to live." He died after surgery. A British captain noted the "melancholy sight of a carpenter fashioning crosses for our dead." When an American tank commander was shot through the heart by a sniper suspected of sheltering among a clutch of surrendering Germans, a company commander ordered, "Do not take any more prisoners."

In fact, hordes were taken, by ferocious Poles and *goumiers* as well as by aroused Yanks. On average a thousand German prisoners marched into Allied cages each day, and the pathetic condition of many heartened their captors. "The older men are a weird and wonderful collection," an interrogation report noted on May 22. "It would appear that the authorities had firmly closed their eyes to such things as a missing toe, lack of an eye, and other slight infirmities, not to mention age." Still, the days of underestimating German obduracy were long gone. "One of my aid men brings in a wounded German," the surgeon Huebner recorded. "He is smoking a cigarette. As he exhales, smoke pours out of the holes in his chest."

As the second week of the Allied offensive slid past, Alexander studied dispatches from the front with the intensity of a seer hunched over entrails. Each day he drove north from Caserta to see for himself, eyebrows and red hat floured with dust as he peered through field glasses into the middle distance. On the far left the U.S. II Corps on May 20 had captured Fondi, where Roman legions had stopped Hannibal during the First Punic War. Keyes's legions now threatened the port of Terracina at the southern lip of the Pontine Marshes. On the far right, Leese continued to batter the valley fortifications, dumping eight hundred artillery shells per minute on German strongpoints. In the center, French gunners caught exposed panzer grenadiers near Esperia, killing so many that bulldozers were needed to shovel away the carcasses; Senger complained that his battalions were "bleeding to death." After cutting Highway 82 the *goumiers* continued their uplands tramp, and Juin's legions on May 21 seized a foothold in the vital crossroads town of Pico, provoking ferocious German counterattacks with Tiger tanks.

From west to east the Hitler Line was crumbling. *We've got them,* Juin had exclaimed, and it seemed he might be right. Much fighting remained: the Germans—or, rather, ten thousand Italian laborers—had begun yet another string of fortifications below Rome, the Caesar Line. But Kesselring had been forced to transfer divisions from Anzio to check Allied momentum on the southern front. "The enemy has denuded the forces investing the beachhead of the bulk of their reserves," AFHQ intelligence reported on May 22. "The risk is so great as to be surprising."

Here was the chance Alexander had long awaited, a chance for redemption, for exculpation, for annihilation. Seven divisions in the Beachhead Army would fall on the enemy's flank, like a dagger in the ribs. The hour was ripe, at last.

A Fifth Army Show

MARK Clark shifted his command post from Caserta to Anzio on Monday, May 22, arriving at noon in a little L-5 single-engine plane with a wingspan hardly bigger than his own. At ten P.M., after a late supper in the Borghese villa, he strode through the cellar command post to a conference room, led by a beefy colonel who barked, "'Ten-*shun*!" Several dozen correspondents, slouching on benches beneath the naked bulbs, came to their feet in various attitudes of resentment. "Sit down, gentlemen," Clark said. He cut the air with the flat of his hand.

For half an hour, unhurried and precise, he explained his attack plan in detail, occasionally pointing to the enormous map tacked like a pelt to the wall behind him. The artillery would open fire in less than eight hours, a thousand guns. General Truscott's VI Corps had grown to an army within Fifth Army: seven divisions plus Brigadier General Robert Frederick's 1st Special Service Force. The host included the U.S. 36th Infantry Division, which had secretly arrived by sea over the last four days as part of General Alex's plan "to dribble them in unseen." Clockwise around the beachhead perimeter, the attacking force included the British 5th and 1st Divisions on the left, then the U.S. 45th Infantry, the 1st Armored—with a regiment from the 34th Infantry—and the 3rd Infantry Divisions. The Forcemen protected the right flank, while the 36th and the bulk of the 34th remained in reserve. Opposing this juggernaut, Mackensen's Fourteenth Army comprised five and a half divisions.

Under Operation BUFFALO, "the main impetus of our attack" would be to seize Cisterna, Clark continued, no easy task since the town had been heavily fortified after the Rangers' disastrous assault in January. The spearhead would then stab northeast through Cori to cut Highway 6 at Valmontone, "with the ultimate objective of destroying as many Germans as possible." He intended to "bottle up the main body of the German army from the Cassino front," Clark said. The attack did not "have as its purpose to capture Rome," but he intended to keep "a flexible mind." After a glance at the map he seemed to correct himself. "We're going to take Rome," he said.

As the correspondents shuffled from the cellar, staff officers confided that the press could assure the public that General Clark was "in personal command." To drive home the point, Clark radioed Gruenther at Caserta. "There is no restriction placed on [disclosing] my whereabouts," he advised his chief of staff. "You tear anybody to pieces who attempts to change this." Moreover, Gruenther was to ensure that any communiqué announcing the attack "is properly worded and that it is a Fifth Army show. I do not want the first announcement of this to come out to the effect that Alexander's troops have attacked from the bridgehead."

If Clark had disclosed much of his plan, he also kept much to himself. Internecine bickering over the timing and direction of the attack had only intensified. Alexander remained adamant that once the Beachhead Army stood athwart Highway 6 at Valmontone, "fast, mobile patrols" could cut other German escape routes to the east. Clark just as vigorously insisted that trapping Tenth Army "couldn't be done"; he also noted that under BUFFALO the enemy would still occupy the Colli Laziali, with the usual high-ground advantages.

A face-to-face meeting at Caserta on May 20 had failed to resolve their differences. Alexander ordered the beachhead attack for the night of May 21, evidently on the misapprehension that the Hitler Line had been breached by Eighth Army at Aquino. When Clark protested, Alexander agreed to hang fire until the morning of the twenty-third; he also would simultaneously renew Leese's attack in the Liri Valley, while hoping to "conserve losses" in the battle-weary Eighth Army.

Clark suspected double-dealing. "I am convinced that Eighth Army will hold their attack and let the French carry the ball for them as they have done so far in this battle," he told his diary. "All their actions are always dictated by their desire to save manpower and let someone else do it."

Precisely what Clark intended may not have been evident even to him. Later he would acknowledge telling himself, "Hell, we shouldn't even be thinking about Rome. All we should be thinking about is killing Germans." Capturing the capital would be glorious to be sure, an honor "we felt that we more than deserved." Still, orders were orders, and Alexander's were explicit. Clark had radioed Truscott before leaving Caserta: "Operation BUFFALO will be launched at 0630 hours on May 23rd."

Yet he had also sent the corps commander a private message. As the attack unspooled, Truscott should be prepared to consider "an alternative plan," Clark wrote. "Regrouping would take place and [a] new attack launched northwest from Cisterna area." Rather than slashing east toward Valmontone,

most of the Beachhead Army could swing west of the Colli Laziali on the shortest route to Rome, the "great prize." As Clark had told the reporters, a good commander should always keep a flexible mind.

Smoke generators fogged the front from the Tyrrhenian Sea to the Mussolini Canal. Third Division soldiers, who would carry the main attack against Cisterna, had marched forward from their wooded bivouacs, battalion by battalion tramping past a brass band that crashed through the division anthem as it had when they embarked for Anzio four months earlier:

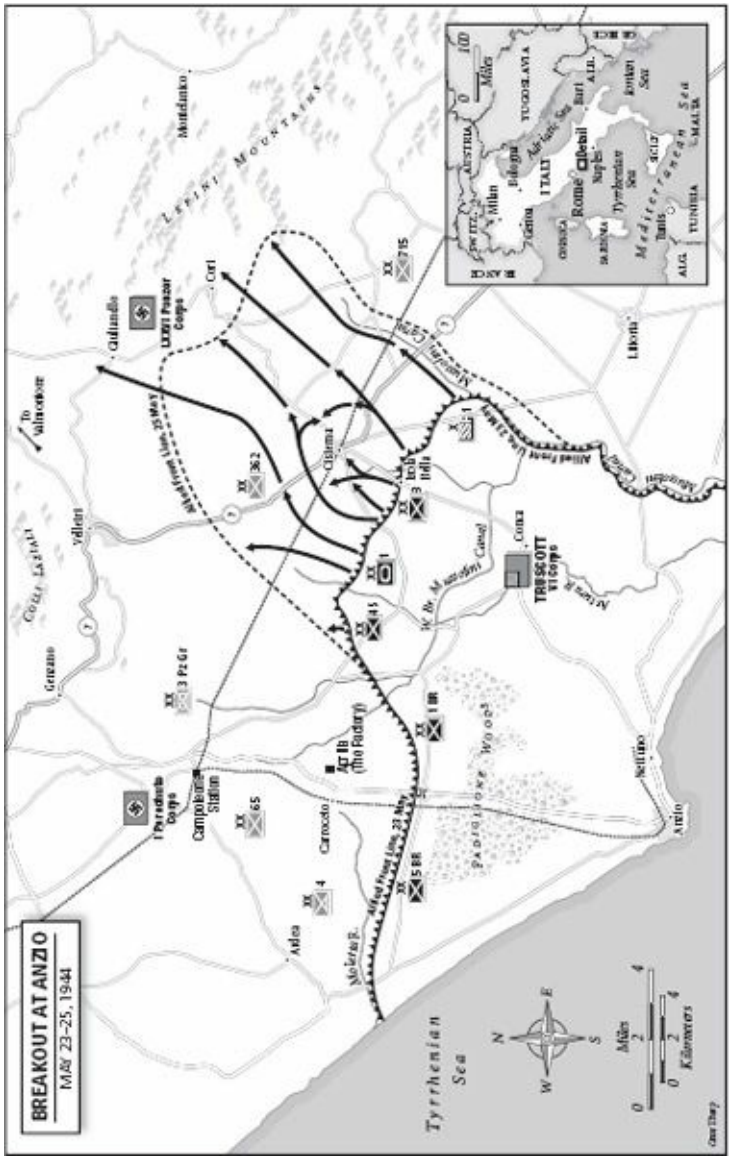
I'm just a dog-face soldier with a rifle on my shoulder
And I eat a Kraut for breakfast every day.

Light rain had fallen earlier in the evening, but the skies cleared in the small hours. Stars twinkled through the artificial haze before a gray overcast louver again slid over the beachhead from the sea. Soldiers fumbled for a final time with their web gear; many carried lengths of parachute cord, said to make superior tourniquets. A nineteen-year-old sergeant in the 15th Infantry, after receiving no mail from home for six weeks, had been handed forty letters by the company clerk late Monday night; he tucked the envelopes into his combat pack, wondering if he would live long enough to open them. From the radio in a 1st Armored Division tank drifted the improbable strains of *Oklahoma!* As dawn's apricot glow brightened the eastern sky, an Old Ironsides lieutenant read aloud from Thucydides' history of the Peloponnesian War, then exclaimed, "There's nothing ever new in war!"

Expectation, anxiety, release—all fluttered across the front like bats looking to roost. Clark had snatched a few hours' rest on a metal cot; to escape the damp air of the Borghese cellar, he slept upstairs in a high-ceilinged salon with gilded chandeliers and enormous oils on the walls. After rising at four A.M. and wolfing down breakfast, he climbed into his jeep for the drive from Nettuno to the front. At 5:30, just as the sun started to peep over the horizon, he joined Truscott in a camouflaged observation post at Conca, where in January they had watched in misery as Darby's Rangers and the 3rd Division were impaled on Cisterna's defenses. Neither man said much, each lost in his thoughts.

With a thunderous roar the barrage opened precisely at 5:45 A.M.: howitzers, mortars, tanks—every tube with a powder charge. "They can hear this in Rome, maybe," one soldier shouted. Shock waves from the cannonade shimmered across the sky like heat rising off blacktop. Clouds of dust blanketed the battlefield, brilliantly lighted from within by bursting shells. Sixty fighter-bombers swept across the front, leaving charred, battered Cisterna more charred and more battered.

Then, at 6:30, the riflemen spilled over the top, no longer singing, fury in their eyes, and fear too, the deep roar of artillery now punctuated with the *pop! pop! pop!* of rifle fire and the keening of a thousand machine guns. On a five-mile front, three regiments abreast, the 3rd Division threw itself against four German battalions entrenched in platoon-sized redoubts around Cisterna, three to five hundred yards apart, each encrusted with mines, barbed wire, and automatic weapons. A half mile east of Isola Bella, hard by the Rangers' last-stand field, Company L from the 15th Infantry quickly lost 140 of 180 men. "The man in front of me was struck by a bullet," a sergeant in I Company wrote. "I rolled him over and saw his eyes were pulled up and set."



Farther east, Company K of the 30th Infantry reported a dozen men left standing; German fire swept the fields like a sickle, leaving both the dead and the cut grass in windrows. On the right, Company E of the 15th fixed bayonets and in a shrieking charge swarmed through a woody grove, killing fifteen Germans and capturing eighty. Still, the line had hardly gained a quarter mile. “It is going too slow,” Major General O’Daniel, the division commander, complained at eight A.M. “Throw everything you have at them.” Jack Toffey and the 7th Infantry had been given the hardest nut to crack, in the center of the assault, but when a staff officer reported that two lead companies were pinned down, O’Daniel replied, “We have no such words in our vocabulary now.”

Just past noon, five more Sherman tanks trundled into the fight, each towing an O’Daniel brainstorm: “battle sleds,” fabricated in great secrecy from torpedo tubes sawed in half lengthwise, with steel runners welded to the bottom. Eight feet long, two feet wide, and just deep enough to carry a prostrate, nervous soldier, the sleds were joined end to end, six to a train, with each tank dragging two trains. Ditches and mines proved their undoing. Hardly had sixty sleds slid onto the stage than they could slide no farther; the riders spilled out, grateful to take their chances dismounted.

Yard by bloody yard, the advance drew nearer Cisterna. By day’s end, beneath spattering rain, 3rd Division soldiers would close within six hundred yards of the town, and a mile nearer Rome than they had been at dawn. But none had severed Highway 7 or the parallel rail embankment, and casualties had been outlandish: one thousand killed, wounded, or missing, the division’s most sanguinary day during World War II thus far, and among the costliest for any U.S. Army division on

any day in the war. Damaged boys outnumbered the litter bearers available to carry them away. Seeing carnage all about, a young private lamented, “Must I be knocked off before I have had a woman?”

Truscott’s flanks found hard fighting as well. On the right, Frederick’s Forcemen scampered across Highway 7 below Cisterna only to retreat pell-mell under lashing fire from Tigers seemingly impervious to antitank rounds. “All hell has broken through up here,” a staff officer radioed Truscott. “The Germans have unleashed everything.” On the far left, British troops held their ground but no more in an attack designed mostly as a diversion. The 45th Division waded through thigh-high wheat, sidestepping skeletons in moldering field gray, until machine-gun cross fire sent the men to ground. German gunners traced the trails carved through the grain by low-crawling GIs, and the dull thud of bullets hitting home carried across the golden fields. A counterattack by more than a dozen Tigers flayed one battalion caught in the open and chewed into another before artillery fire shooed them off.

By nightfall the 45th reported 458 casualties and aid stations were so taxed that wounded soldiers were forced to share cots. “The fellow in the bed next to me had been hit in the back with shrapnel and kept begging the doctors to let him die,” one artilleryman later recalled. A captain who had stepped on a mine studied the stump where his foot had been and reflected, “That’s the one that was always getting cold anyway.”

The day’s last best hope fell to the 1st Armored Division, attacking with 232 tanks on a three-mile front east of Cisterna. “Whether or not we can get our tanks through remains a question. I expect to lose heavily,” Ernie Harmon had written a friend a week earlier. Those losses, he warned, could include one hundred tanks in the first half hour. Harmon’s dark mood hardly brightened when his right wing—Combat Command B—blundered into a poorly marked American minefield sown during the winter’s fighting. Thirty Shermans soon sat immobilized with fractured tracks and broken bogey wheels less than a quarter mile from the start line.

On the left, however, Combat Command A used another battlefield invention to excellent effect. Before dawn, tanks had shoved into no-man’s-land a pair of four-hundred-foot “snakes”—four-inch pipe packed with several tons of explosives. While puzzled German pickets shook tin cans filled with rocks to sound the alarm, a burst of machine-gun fire detonated the pipes with “an appalling violence” that carved a smoldering channel twenty-five feet wide through the minefield. Two more snakes extended the corridor and Harmon’s tanks poured into the gap like floodwaters through a ruptured dike. Riflemen from the 135th Infantry clung to the Sherman hulls then leaped clear to round up prisoners and slaughter the diehards.

By one P.M. U.S. tanks had crossed the cinder brow of the rail embankment, provoking a frantic flapping of white flags, and an infantry battalion held the high ground five hundred yards to the north. Combat Command B—which had eschewed the snakes for fear that a premature detonation would alert enemy defenders—belatedly blew its own gap and sallied within main gun range of Highway 7 before laagering for the night. Infantrymen slept on their arms behind sandbags hauled forward on the tanks.

The day had cost Harmon eighty-six tanks and tank destroyers, most of them crippled by American mines. He quickly made good the wastage from his reserves. Other losses were harder to fix. Fifth Army casualties for this Tuesday totaled almost two thousand, the highest single-day tally in the Italian campaign, with 334 killed in action: a life snuffed out every four minutes. By midnight the olive-drab crescent of men struggling to break free of the beachhead was dyed black with blood.

Yet across the front fifteen hundred enemy prisoners had been taken, and Cisterna was in danger of envelopment from the northeast. The German 362nd Division had lost half its combat strength, two regiments from the 715th Division were hurt almost as grievously, and the 94th Division—shifted to beachhead defense after a drubbing in the Auruncis—reported only two hundred fighters left. In a phone call at eight P.M. on Tuesday, Kesselring told Vietinghoff, “Things do not look good on

Mackensen's front. Keep this to yourself."

In his own late-night dispatch to Clark, who had returned to the Borghese cellars, Truscott pared the news to ten words: "All attacks jumped off on schedule. Attack meeting moderate resistance."

By Wednesday afternoon, May 24, that resistance was crumbling. Harmon's tanks looped behind Cisterna from the east, fighting off the field-gray wraiths who popped from laurel thickets to shoot the passing Shermans in the rear grills. American artillery smashed German counterattacks on the flanks, but shells also fell on friendly infantrymen again and again. By nightfall O'Daniel and Harmon had nearly completed a double envelopment of Cisterna, bagging another 850 prisoners. Germans "scatter like frightened quail," wrote Audie Murphy. "As if we were shooting skeets, we pick them off." A mile-long stretch of Highway 7 had been cut north of town, along with three miles to the south, and a reconnaissance battalion rambled to within four miles of Velletri on the southern lip of the Colli Laziale. The VI Corps main force stood just thirteen miles from Highway 6. "I could get into Valmontone tonight if I was sure of my left," Harmon told Truscott.

Thursday morning was better yet. Charles Ryder's 34th Division widened the purchase on Highway 7 to five miles on the left, flushing more quail into the sights of homicidal fighter planes. "The carnage was extreme," one account noted; the kills included fifteen Tigers. Over one hundred .50-caliber machine guns poured scorching fire into Cisterna, now said to surpass even Cassino as the most devastated town in Italy. A battalion from the 7th Infantry had a foothold in Cisterna's southwest corner by first light, and two sister regiments, the 15th and 30th, closed to within shouting distance of each other northeast of town. The noose had been cinched.

Clark watched with pleasure as the blue grease-pencil lines on his battle map tracked the northeast surge of the Beachhead Army. In less than forty-eight hours, the front had shoved three to four miles in a salient seven miles wide. But it was the southern edge of the battlefield that held him rapt. Keyes's II Corps had covered almost sixty miles in two weeks; combat engineers had nearly finished carving a six-mile detour through the mountains around Terracina when scouts on Wednesday morning found the seaside town abandoned except for the stinking carcasses—mule and human, as usual—lining the curbs. More patrols nosed into the Pontine Marshes and reported heavy German demolitions, although shovel-wielding Italians filled the craters almost as quickly as they were blown.

The coastal road to the beachhead was open. Late Wednesday, in a tone that was peremptory to the point of imperial, Clark wrote Gruenther at Caserta:

> The joining up of my two Fifth Army forces will be one of the highlights of the Fifth Army's career. It is primarily a Fifth Army matter, and I want you to tell Gen. Alexander that I want authority given me immediately to issue a simple communiqué from here as soon as II Corps troops have moved overland.

If Alexander insisted on making the announcement himself, "you make damn sure that their communiqué is properly worded, making it a Fifth Army show." Clark even drafted proposed language that began: "Climaxing a spectacular advance of 60 miles…" Almost as an afterthought, he noted that Truscott's battle casualties approached 2,500. When Eric Sevareid wrote in his broadcast script that soon there would be "only one front in Italy," a press censor in Nettuno instead proposed, "There will be one *Fifth Army* front in Italy."

At 7:30 on Thursday morning, May 25, an engineer task force from the beachhead arrived outside

Borgo Grappa, a coastal village beaten into rubble twenty miles north of Terracina. On a narrow bridge spanning an irrigation canal, Captain Benjamin Harrison Sousa of Honolulu, the engineer commander, spotted Lieutenant Francis X. Buckley of Philadelphia, a II Corps cavalryman.

"Where in hell do you think you're going?" Sousa demanded.

"Anzio," Buckley replied.

"Boy, you've made it."

The two men shook hands and sat down to share a box of candy from Buckley's pack.

Three hours later Clark roared up with a gaggle of two dozen correspondents piled one atop another in open jeeps. As faint battle sounds drifted south from Cisterna, gum-chewing soldiers removed their helmets and with much backslapping and exaggerated swapping of cigarettes reenacted the scene for movie cameras. In another message to Gruenther, Clark reported that the initial junction "took place this morning at 1010 hours on Anzio–Terracina road"—rewriting history by several hours.

After 125 days Anzio's isolation was over. The beachhead had dissolved. Clark wrote Renie:

> It may have sounded dramatic in the papers the way I rushed to witness the joining of the two forces, but it meant more to me than anything since our success at Salerno. The way some of the correspondents expressed it, it may have sounded as though I was looking for publicity. Did you get that impression? At any rate, I had to be there when the two forces joined up. It meant too much to me.

Soon enough the day would come when "I can return home to you and pick up our happy home life where we left it off. I think I will be ready to settle down." But before that day, Clark vowed, "We will capture Rome…. They can't stop us now."

Truscott drove toward his Conca command post at midday on Thursday after a tour of the battlefront. He felt, by his own description, "rather jubilant." His old 3rd Division was slashing through Cisterna, house by gutted house, toward a final German redoubt in the town hall, now known as the Castle. Other troops cantered toward Cori, six miles to the northeast on the western flank of the Lepini Mountains. More than 2,600 enemy prisoners had been caged.

The 1st Armored Division continued to bull north, although steep terrain, antitank guns, and a Panther counterattack near Velletri cost Harmon seventeen more tanks. Fighting was savage and confused. More American artillery fell on American soldiers, and at least ten incidents of fratricidal air attacks would be reported on this day. "Sniper shot off the lieutenant's elbow," Corporal Robert M. Marsh of the 81st Armored Reconnaissance Battalion advised his diary. After the miscreant was captured, Marsh added, "Lieutenant drew his .45 pistol with his left hand and shot the sniper through the heart." Germans who balked at surrendering were buried alive with tank dozers. Tankers found a huge wine barrel "standing on end with the top end bashed in," Marsh noted. "They drank lots of wine until they found a dead German in it."

At the point of the VI Corps spear, a four-battalion force led by Colonel Hamilton H. Howze sidled through olive orchards and deserted crofts into the handsome valley between the Colli Laziali on the west and the stony Lepinis to the east. Soon enough a dozen Sherman tanks would close to within half a mile of Highway 6. "I am in a soft spot," Howze reported. "For Pete's sake, let the whole 1st Amored Division come this way!" Truscott believed that sometime Friday his entire corps "would be astride the German line of withdrawal through Valmontone."

That agreeable vision dissolved the moment Truscott walked into his Conca war room. There, standing with five somber VI Corps colonels, was Clark's operations officer, Brigadier General Donald W. Brann. "The boss wants you to leave the 3rd Infantry Division and the Special Force to block Highway 6, and mount that assault you discussed with him to the northwest as fast as you can," Brann said.

Truscott was dumbfounded. While the Forcemen and O'Daniel's troops plowed ahead to Valmontone, most of the corps was to pivot 90 degrees to the left. That put them on the shortest path to Rome, west of the Colli Laziali, but the route angled into the most formidable segment of the Caesar Line, now manned by I Parachute Corps. Operation BUFFALO was succeeding. Why switch to the old Operation TURTLE?

"I discussed this with General Clark several days ago," Truscott said, "and I told him this was not to be done, in my opinion, unless there's a significant weakening on the left. I've seen no sign of such weakening. I need to talk to General Clark. Where is he?"

"He's not at the beachhead," Brann replied evenly. Clark had flown back to Caserta and could not be reached by phone or even radio. Truscott protested, his raspy voice thickening. This was "no time to change direction," he told Brann. Conditions were "not right." Untangling the current attack and swinging the 45th, 34th, 36th, and 1st Armored Divisions off in a new direction would take time. "A more complicated plan," Truscott warned, "would be difficult to conceive."

Then he fell silent. Later Truscott insisted that he had protested "in the most vigorous possible" terms, but believed that subordinate fealty required acquiescence. His staff now had responsibility for drafting the new attack plan, and any hint that he lacked confidence would evince "poor leadership." He considered Clark an able tactician, who was loyal to his lieutenants and ceded them autonomy even if he declined to offer public credit—no underling commanders were ever named in Fifth Army dispatches. A subordinate's duty demanded reciprocal fidelity; whatever misgivings Truscott had initially voiced about the new scheme, he soon professed full support. At four P.M. Brann radioed Clark—suddenly communicado again—and reported that the VI Corps commander was "entirely in accord." Two hours later Truscott phoned Brann at the Borghese villa. "I feel very strongly that we should do this thing," he said. "We should do it tomorrow."

Privately, however, the corps commander could not shake his qualms. When Clark flew back to Nettuno on Thursday night, a subdued Truscott laid out his doubts in the privacy of Clark's Borghese office. Dividing the corps was "a mistake" with Highway 6 so near; to the northwest, the Germans had "not thinned out their ranks on the line in front of the new main effort." Clark remained adamant, waving away Truscott's protests and insisting that German defenses had begun to thicken at Valmontone, thanks in part to reinforcements now arriving from northern Italy. Sure of his course, Clark seemed buoyant, as if a weight had been lifted from his shoulders. In a message to Gruenther, he depicted an enemy "in what may be a demoralized condition at the present time. You can assure General Alexander that this is an all-out attack. We are shooting the works!"

Glum yet resigned, Truscott drove back to Conca. Shortly before midnight, his division commanders filed into the command post, begrimed with war but convinced that the day was theirs. Cisterna finally had fallen late in the afternoon. In defiance of an order from Kesselring to "defend fanatically," Mackensen authorized the garrison to retreat: too late. After hours of street brawling around the Castle, a Sherman tank had blasted a seam into the inner courtyard. Riflemen stormed the keep, flipping grenades through cellar grates and flushing 250 dazed intransigents, gray with dust. The 3rd Battalion of the 7th Infantry had lost its commander, three company commanders, and 80 percent of its strength. Cisterna lay silent but for the crackle of flames and the crunch of armored tracks on masonry.

Truscott came to the point. "The fact that the enemy is withdrawing from the south and has

brought reserves in from the north has led the army commander to believe that in the Valmontone gap the going will grow increasingly more difficult," he said. "The army commander feels that we have an opportunity to break this line very quickly by a drive through in *this* direction." Standing at a map, Truscott jabbed a tent-peg finger along the western rim of the Colli Laziali. "I might add that it is an idea in which I am heartily in accord."

None of his battle captains shared their leader's enthusiasm; even Truscott's chief of staff, Brigadier General Don E. Carleton, considered the move "a horrible mistake." Harmon and O'Daniel, whose divisions stood so near Highway 6, were especially waspish. "I realize perfectly the enormous problem that confronts us," Truscott said. Shifting artillery to the northwest and pulling Old Ironsides across the rear to the new front would require heroic efforts through the night. "I realize all of these troops are tired," he added. "There never has been a battle that wasn't won by tired troops."

Again he gestured at the map, as if laying hands on the new battlefield. "I propose to begin this with an artillery preparation of all the violence we can put into fifteen minutes, and then we shall strike just as we did three days ago," Truscott said. "I am confident—I am certain—that the Boche in that area is badly disorganized, has a hodge-podge of units, and if we can drive as hard tomorrow as we have done for the last three days, a great victory is in our grasp."

Truscott brought the conference to a close. Operations Instructions No. 24 from Fifth Army now called for "a new attack along the most direct route to Rome." The corps commander studied the skeptical faces of his subordinates, then added, "These are the orders."

Mark Clark would spend the rest of his long life defending an indefensible impertinence that for more than sixty years has remained among the most controversial episodes in World War II. Then and later he had plausible reason to doubt BUFFALO. "It was based on the false premise that if Route #6 were cut at Valmontone a German army would be annihilated," Clark told his diary on May 27. "This is ridiculous, for many roads lead to the north from Arce, Frosinone and in between."

True enough. Senger subsequently confirmed that his XIV Panzer Corps retreated on a road that branched from Highway 6 at Frosinone, well south of Valmontone, to snake through the Simbruini foothills. A parallel road also wound through Palestrina, and other tracks led to Highway 5, the lateral route from Rome to Pescara on the Adriatic.

Clark also feared that German artillery and panzers hidden in the Colli Laziali would "debouch from the mountains" to counterattack Truscott's left flank as he galloped toward Valmontone. From Ultra and field reports, he believed that Kesselring's last mobile reserve in Italy, the Hermann Göring Panzer Division, would soon congeal along Highway 6. These too were legitimate anxieties, although the staggering artillery, air, and armored firepower available to Truscott would surely punish any attack from Mackensen's battered legions. Fourteenth Army tallied 108,000 Allied shells on Thursday, then stopped counting. Allied air attacks on the same day destroyed 655 of Mackensen's vehicles. Moreover, only the Hermann Göring reconnaissance battalion would reach Valmontone by Friday, May 26. The rest of the division, forced to travel by day for 250 miles on exposed roads through a murderous gauntlet of Allied warplanes, would arrive piecemeal and in tatters.

Two final points must be conceded to Clark. No less an authority than George Marshall had urged the capture of Rome before OVERLORD, now less than two weeks away; with a second front opening in Normandy, the Italian theater would surely see a sharp decline in ammunition, supplies, troops, and public attention. Finally, Operations Instructions No. 24 attempted to sugar the pill for Alexander by keeping more than twenty thousand VI Corps troops pounding for Highway 6, and they soon would be reinforced by Keyes's II Corps.

Yet the harsh truth remains: with duplicity and in bad faith, Clark contravened a direct order from a superior officer. His assertion, to Keyes on May 28, that the British "are scheming to get into Rome the easiest way," was predicated on no substantive evidence. His "thirst for glory," as the official British history would later conclude, "spoiled the fulfilment of Alexander's plan in order to obtain for himself and his army the triumph of being the first to enter Rome."

Clark acknowledged as much in his postwar memoir:

> Not only did we intend to become the first army in fifteen centuries to seize Rome from the south, but we intended to see that the people back home knew that it was the Fifth Army that did the job and knew the price that had been paid for it.

This fixation, no doubt compounded by stress and exhaustion, marred his usually astute military judgment. He failed to see that Mackensen at Valmontone on May 26 would face at least three VI Corps divisions with only an eviscerated Wehrmacht division and at most a single Hermann Göring regiment. He failed to sense how badly the enemy had been hurt by Truscott, how strong the I Parachute Corps remained, or how the German high command's recommendation to Hitler of a partial withdrawal by both armies to the Caesar Line—a recommendation quickly known to Allied intelligence—offered a chance to whack Kesselring while he was on his heels. Clark also failed to recognize that with VI Corps forty miles ahead of Leese's plodding Eighth Army, the open terrain and ragged defenses up Highway 6 offered an expeditious path to Rome. And he failed to realize, as a U.S. Army study concluded, that he would have "been admirably situated to outflank the rest of the Fourteenth Army and to cut off the Tenth Army"—a conclusion also reached by General Wilhelm Schmalz, the Hermann Göring commander.

Juin warned Clark of "a terrible congestion of itineraries" as Eighth Army, II Corps, VI Corps, and the FEC converged on the Liri Valley and its northern extensions. Yet even his admirers suspected that one itinerary counted above all others: that of Marcus Aurelius Clarkus. His habitual antipathy toward the British surely was aggravated by the lackluster performance of the two beachhead divisions appended to Truscott's corps. "There is no attack left in them," Clark complained. But his actions went beyond battlefield frustration and petty xenophobia. He "appears never to have accepted Alexander as his real commander," wrote W.G.F. Jackson, an author of the official British history. Later, Clark claimed he had warned Alexander that he would order Fifth Army to "fire on the Eighth Army" should Leese attempt to muscle in on Rome. Shocking, if true; General Alex disputed the story.

Alexander had remained in the dark for almost twenty-four hours after Truscott was told to change direction. Not until 11:15 A.M. on Friday, May 26, did the Allied commander learn of Operations Instructions No. 24—fifteen minutes after the new attack had irrevocably begun, and forty-five minutes after Clark briefed reporters at Nettuno on his revised plan. As Clark had appointed Brann to break the news to Truscott, so he employed Gruenther to inform Alexander at Caserta. Strolling into Gruenther's office with Lemnitzer, Alexander lingered long enough to learn that the left wing of his army group had marched off to its own drummer. In a message to Clark at 12:20 P.M., Gruenther reported:

> Gen. Alexander agreed that the plan is a good one. He stated, "I am for any line of action which the army commander believes will offer a chance to continue his present success." About five minutes later he said, "I am sure that the army commander will

continue to push toward Valmontone, won't he? I know that he appreciates the importance of gaining the high ground…. As soon as he captures that he will be absolutely safe."

Gruenther assured him that Clark would "execute a vigorous plan with all the push in the world." While Gruenther believed that Alexander had "no mental reservations," in fact his sentiments were mixed if well masked. Later he would confess to being "pretty upset"—Lemnitzer described him as "terribly disappointed"—even as he concluded that to impose his will would gain nothing. Although Churchill had recently insisted that "senior commanders should not 'urge' but 'order,'" such was not Alexander's way. His tolerance of impertinence, with Montgomery and then with Clark, simply encouraged more of what General Jackson labeled "prima donna" behavior.

The contretemps remained hidden from the American public until Italy had become a backwater theater of little interest. When Sevareid wrote that "there is a question whether the two aims"—capturing Rome quickly and annihilating Germans—"are compatible or mutually exclusive," Fifth Army censors scotched the line. Clark also remained niggardly in sharing public credit for his army's exploits; Marshall himself noted on May 26 that "this hurts Clark in this country." After Gruenther urged that Truscott's central role be publicly revealed, Clark told his diary, "I do not feel that his exploits have been sufficiently outstanding yet."

"I never violated his orders," Clark said of Alexander a quarter century after the war. "If he had wanted to do it differently he could have issued the order. To censure me for thinking only of the glory of capturing Rome is sheer nonsense." Perhaps so, although Alexander later claimed Clark had assured him that fierce enemy resistance led to the turn away from Valmontone—an exaggeration, at best.

Pride and solipsism had got the best of a good soldier. Perhaps Livy's observation of the Punic Wars still obtained: that the "power to command and readiness to obey are rare associates." But as Churchill wrote Alexander on May 28, "Glory of this battle, already great, will be measured not by the capture of Rome or the juncture with the beachhead, but by the number of German divisions cut off…. It is the cop that counts."

It was no small irony that even Clark's rivals wished him well for the sake of a greater good. "He is terrified that we might get to Rome first, which is the last thing we now want to do," wrote Leese, whose casualties in DIADEM were approaching fourteen thousand. "I only hope he can do it. It will save us a lot of trouble and lives."

The old gods deplored hubris, and they now seemed determined to punish Clark's army for his.

Beneath brilliant vernal sunshine on May 26, the right prong of the VI Corps attack—much reduced in combat heft—clattered on toward Valmontone. Led by three battalions under Hamilton Howze, who carried a red-leather copy of Clausewitz's *Principles of War* as "something to cling to," the column enjoyed a brief triumph. "There's infantry coming in through the wheat in our direction," a tank battalion commander radioed Howze. "Are they friendly infantry?"

"Hell, no!" Howze bellowed. "Shoot them up!" He dashed forward by jeep in time to see Sherman broadsides and machine-gun fire rip apart Hermann Göring grenadiers on a hillside three hundred yards away. Like drowning men the Germans thrashed and flailed in the shot-torn wheat until the field grew still.

The day soon darkened. Behind Howze, five confused P-40 Warhawks heeled over in a bombing and strafing run against the 3rd Division, which they mistook for retreating Germans. More than one hundred men were killed or wounded. Other planes bombed Cori, also in friendly hands. So many fratricidal air attacks occurred, despite copious yellow smoke intended to demarcate U.S. Army

positions, that engineers were ordered to paint huge American flags on occupied rooftops along the front. What the pilots missed, gunners seemed to find. In Howze's armored infantry battalion, 160 green replacements had just plodded forward when U.S. 155mm rounds scourged the ranks for ten minutes with "ruinous effect." Terrified survivors leaked to the rear. When the shelling finally ceased, the battalion commander was dead and his unit had been chopped to half strength.

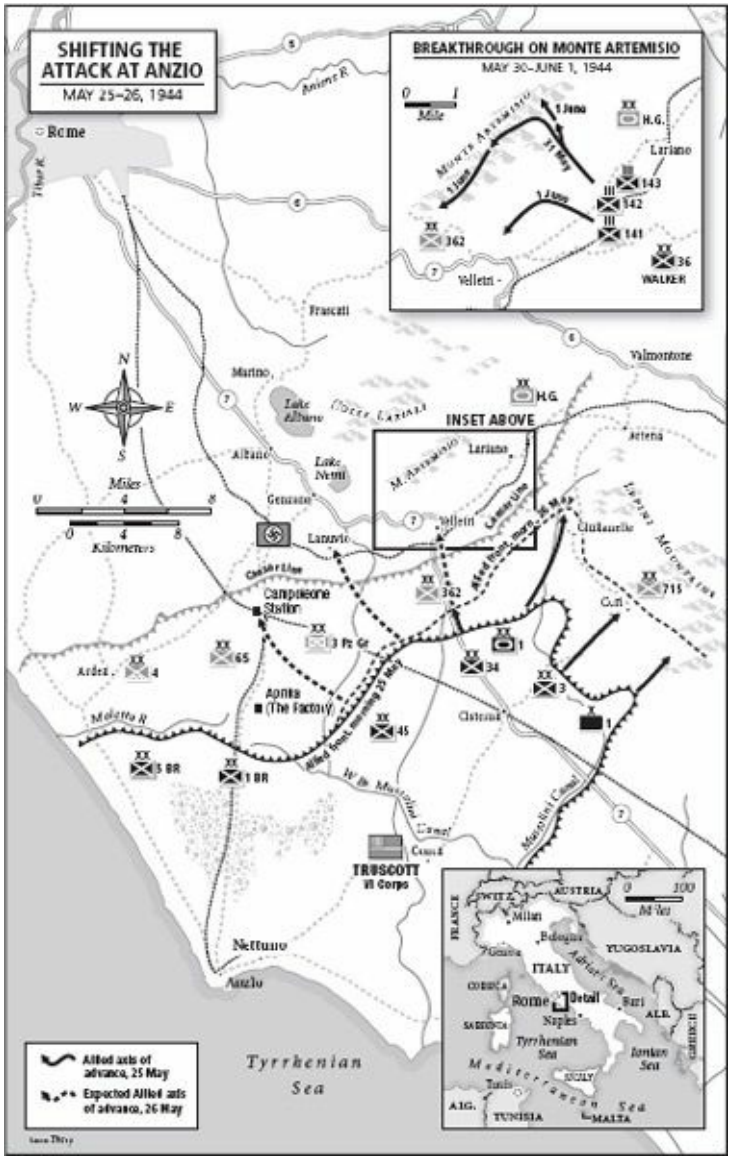
The Germans had their own troubles. "All daytime movement is paralyzed and the use of large repair crews has become impossible," Vietinghoff's Tenth Army war diary complained on May 26. The Hermann Göring Division, straggling south on three roads from Livorno under incessant attack, began arriving at Valmontone with only eleven of eighty Mk IV panzers and half the division artillery intact.

Somehow it was enough. Counterattacks against Howze's left flank, and enemy infiltration on Saturday night, May 27, prevented the 3rd Division from moving beyond Artena, a medieval village on a ridge three miles south of Valmontone. Howze watched trucks heaped with dead American soldiers jounce back toward Cisterna. A battalion in the 15th Infantry also reported two hundred men down with ptomaine poisoning from tainted C rations, further attenuating a force simply too weak to break through the makeshift German defense.

Reluctantly, Clark agreed to halt the drive toward Valmontone until II Corps could reinforce the attack. He would claim that American artillery had severed Highway 6, but that was wishful thinking: enemy traffic swept up and down the road all night, harried but undissuaded. Outside Artena, now thick with GIs licking their wounds, the BBC's Vaughan-Thomas watched a young mother run through a vineyard, clutching an infant. "You mustn't bring the war with you," she cried. "You must take your war away."

It was much too late for that, although the worst of the war had shifted westward where Truscott, as ordered, opened his new attack with a barrage by 228 guns at 10:30 A.M. on May 26. Half an hour later, the 45th, 34th, and 1st Armored Divisions surged forward, elbow to elbow to elbow. Infantry regiments covered a bit more than a mile by dusk, shuffling through the thigh-high grain past German graves with *"Unbek. Soldat"*—"Unknown Soldier"—scratched on the rude crosses. But Harmon lost eighteen tanks before pulling back to refit; by Saturday night, the attack remained two miles short of Campoleone Station, where VI Corps troops had fought and died in January. On Sunday at six P.M., the 34th Division commander, Major General Ryder, reported to Truscott in his Kansas drawl, "This thing is a little sticky up here."

Every yard proved costly. The I Parachute Corps improvised brilliantly, aided by poor tank country that bedeviled Harmon on the flanks of the Colli Laziali. Ravines and creekbeds ran perpendicular to Truscott's axis of advance, providing natural barriers. German gunners fired down the washes into the American flanks, and dense olive groves gave close cover to snipers with the German bazookas called Panzerfausts. The Caesar Line, though rudimentary, boasted six-foot fire trenches, mortars, machine guns, and extravagant snarls of barbed wire. After months of wet feet and little exercise, U.S. riflemen now suffered such severe blisters that "blood could be seen seeping from some men's shoe seams," one soldier reported.



Before dawn on Monday, May 29, Truscott pushed Harmon's division up the Albano road with gunfire support from a French cruiser in the Tyrrhenian shallows. By midafternoon the tanks had bypassed German strongpoints and far outrun the infantry, exposing tanker and foot soldier alike to murderous fire from the rear and both flanks. "An 88-mm round blew up the Sherman in front of us and we could hear the screaming inside," a tank sergeant later recalled. "It was terrible to listen to men being burned to death and not being able to help." For negligible gains Harmon's losses would grow to sixty tanks. The 45th Division took such heavy casualties that a lieutenant commanded a battalion until he, too, was killed.

"The day's attack," a dispatch from Old Ironsides reported, "was costly and fruitless." Charred bodies hung from charred vehicles, "the grisly bric-a-brac of war." Among those killed: Lieutenant Allen T. Brown, a tank platoon leader, shot in the head by a sniper while standing in his turret hatch near Campoleone. As a twelve-year-old in 1930, young Brown had encouraged the marriage of his widowed mother, Katherine, once a prominent Shakespearian actress, to the widower George C. Marshall. Now it would fall to Marshall to tell his wife that her younger son was dead.

British troops on the left flank managed to cross the Moletta River, but on a twenty-five-mile front from Artena to the sea Truscott rued that his offensive had been "halted at every point." VI Corps intelligence now calculated that thirty German battalions held the Alban Hills and the Valmontone gap, a sharp increase from earlier estimates. Kesselring, fighting to save his armies rather than to keep Rome, had in truth been pummeled: in a report to Berlin he put his losses during DIADEM

at 25,000 men or more already, along with 2,500 machine guns, 248 tanks, and nearly 300 guns. Many vehicles not blown apart were immobile for want of tires and spare parts.

Still, he held the high ground and he held the capital. A reproachful Clark phoned Truscott and his division commanders, then told reporters that "this attack does not have Rome as its primary objective." In his war diary, however, he yet again fretted that "the British have their eye on Rome, notwithstanding Alexander's constant assurance to me." To Renie he wrote:

> We are in as desperate a battle as Fifth Army has ever been in. If it were only the battle I had to worry about and not many other matters, it would be easy, but I am harassed at every turn on every conceivable subject—political, personal and many others…. I pray for early results.

Perhaps the most plaintive cry came from Peter Tompkins, the OSS chief still awaiting deliverance in his Roman hideout. "I don't think I've ever been so depressed," Tompkins told his diary. "The offensive has bogged down."

The Cuckoo's Song

IT had bogged in the south, too, despite a final shattering of the Hitler Line that cost the Canadian 1st Infantry Division nearly nine hundred casualties on May 23 alone. So intense was the carnage that a private from Calgary reflected, "I just don't know how I lived." A Canadian major, wounded four times, calmed his men by singing "Alouette" as bullets hummed counterpoint overhead. Survivors buried the dead, after gathering pay books and identity disks, and engineers mass-produced white wooden crosses. "Bodies keep coming in," an exhausted chaplain wrote on May 25. "I go to bed but not to sleep." Staggered by losses in his regiment, the commander of Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry told another officer, "Those were fine boys. They are gone. I haven't anybody left. They are all gone."

Eighth Army had long "lacked the instinct to finish off a maimed foe," as one British historian later observed, beginning with the elusive Rommel at Alamein. Now Leese demonstrated the same incapacity. As Vietinghoff's Tenth Army staggered back up the Liri Valley and abutting hills, Leese insisted on further wedging two corps abreast—the I Canadian on the left, the British XIII on the right—into a narrow funnel that boasted a single decent road, Highway 6. He imprudently chose an armored vanguard to lead his host through poor tank country seamed with hedges, walls, sunken lanes, and creeks in spate. With fields high and untended, and trees and vineyards in full leaf, visibility often dropped to one hundred feet.

"After months of static warfare and monotony, we were thrusting northwards once more," an optimistic British diarist wrote. In truth, the pursuit turned into a ponderous stern chase, harassed at every turn by pernicious German rear guards. In six days after the Hitler Line ruptured, XIII Corps covered but eleven miles. Leese not only seemed determined to cram all 1,300 Eighth Army tanks into the valley but also, in set-piece fashion, he methodically built supply bases and trundled forward his artillery after every incremental gain. Radio failures, farm tracks made fluvial by spring rains, and fields fecund with mines added to the misery. Brute force again revealed its limits: nearly seven hundred Eighth Army guns dumped ninety-two tons of high explosives on Aquino simultaneously, pulverizing the hometown of Thomas Aquinas and the Roman satirist Juvenal. German defenders,

apparently unimpressed, refused to decamp until outflanked.

Worse yet, poor march discipline and shabby staff work led to monumental traffic congestion. "The road was hidden in dust as we edged into the northbound convoy and came to an immediate standstill," one observer reported. A British study cautioned that "the staff must not put more traffic on a road than the road will stand." Yet, by one authoritative tally, "inessential vehicles" accounted for more than half of Eighth Army's total, and roads were clogged with the sort of supernumeraries who in the Crimean War had been styled "Travelling Gentlemen." Units advanced, slowly; units withdrew, slowly; supply lorries lumbered up and back, very slowly. "Traffic criminals of every kind rejoiced," the British official history lamented. Inching Tommies sang, "I don't toil all day / Simply because I'm not made that way."

On May 28, just as Canadian engineers completed a 120-foot bridge across the Liri, the entire span broke apart and sank. The Sacco River valley beyond the Liri also proved inhospitable, with wooded ridges and a thousand ditches. On a sprightly day, touched by the spur, the army covered four miles, liberating another hilltop hamlet or two amid chortling villagers who spilled into the streets. "You are welcome!" they yelled in rehearsed English. "Kill all Germans!" Italian flags flapped from the rooftops and red-and-green Savoy bunting draped the balconies. Flowers were strewn, and local eminences presented the commanding officer with a rose and an egg.

Canadian troops would enter Frosinone on May 31, but the advance remained "muscle-bound"—in the sorrowful phrase of the official history, which concluded that Vietinghoff was "in very little danger from Eighth Army." Valmontone still lay twenty-five miles to the northwest. Without doubt, Clark's failure to provide an anvil on which to flatten Tenth Army was compounded by the feebleness of Leese's hammer.

The lurching convoys lurched on. Every soldier listened for the stutter of machine guns or the whip-crack of sniper bullets. A Canadian soldier described finding a German marksman who had been plinked by tank fire from his perch on an evergreen bough: "When we got to him he was sitting against a tree with a cigarette going. He had one leg off and he'd taken off his belt and made a tourniquet. His sniper's rifle had six notches in it." The dead were buried, the living moved on, again. "It's surprising how deep six feet is," a British rifleman noted. "It didn't take much to make the lot of us cry like children."

On Leese's left, Juin and his FEC made better progress, notwithstanding the French commander's distress at having his long right flank exposed by Eighth Army's dawdling. From Pico the French had swiftly scuttled northwest along the spine of the Lipini Mountains and through contiguous valleys. General Westphal, Kesselring's chief of staff, complained of "those damned French hanging around our necks."

Soon others damned them with equal vehemence. After contributing so much to Allied success in DIADEM, some colonial troops now disgraced themselves, their army, and France. Hundreds of atrocities—allegedly committed mostly by African soldiers—stained the Italian countryside in the last two weeks of May, including murders and gang rapes. "All day long our men observed them scouring the area for women," an American chaplain wrote Clark on May 29. "Our men are sick at heart, and are commenting that they would rather shoot the Moroccan Goums than the Germans…. They say we have lost that for which we fight if this is allowed to continue."

Another chaplain cited specifics: a fifteen-year-old girl raped by eighteen colonial soldiers; a twenty-seven-year-old raped by three soldiers; a twenty-eight-year-old raped by five. An American artillery battalion commander described an Italian woman shot in the right ankle and raped by four Moroccans while her daughter was shot in the left foot and also raped. In Ceccano, he added, "approximately 75 women ranging in age from 13 to 75 years had been raped; one woman claimed to have been raped 17 times on the night of the 29th and 11 times on the morning of the 30th." Another

battalion commander described a three-year-old shot dead by French colonials after his mother resisted their advances. “A delegation of frenzied citizens and priests” begged GIs to post guards in Pisterzo to forestall further butchery, he reported. American soldiers “came in as crusaders to save Europe from such things,” he added. “The occurrences are seriously affecting the morale and willingness to fight in my men.” The U.S. commander of the 13th Field Artillery Brigade, attached to the FEC, advised Clark that all thirteen of his battalion commanders could testify to similar depravities.

Italian authorities tallied seven hundred crimes of “carnal violence” in Frosinone province alone. “All over the mountain,” a woman in Esperia reported, “you could hear the screaming.” Among many affidavits from victims was that of a sixteen-year-old girl in Lenola: “I was taken and violated four times by Moroccans. There was a 12-year-old girl with me…who suffered the same violation.” Norman Lewis, the British intelligence officer and author, investigated various allegations and found “wholesale rape” in many villages. “In Lenola, which fell to the Allies on May 21, fifty women were raped, but—as there were not enough to go round—children and even old men were violated,” Lewis wrote.

“At any hour of the day or night, men and women, old and young, are subject to acts of force of every type, which range from beatings to carnal violence, woundings to murder,” an Italian general wrote Clark on May 25. “I beg your excellency…intervene for the honor of the Allied cause.”

Vengeful Italians occasionally retaliated, Lewis noted. Near Cancello, five colonial soldiers were reportedly poisoned, then castrated, then beheaded. Some French officers responded with what an American officer described as “a ‘so-what’ shrug,” or proposed that Italians were collecting the just deserts of making common cause with Hitler. J. Glenn Gray, a U.S. counterintelligence lieutenant with a doctorate from Columbia University, wrote that “the complaints have been taken to the French general in charge, who merely laughed and said, ‘This is war.’”

General Juin was *not* laughing, although his initial crackdown lacked force. In a memorandum on May 24, Juin condemned “acts of brigandage,” and warned that “however strong our feelings may be against a nation which treacherously betrayed France, we must maintain an attitude of dignity.” As more accusatory reports flooded in, Clark dispatched Gruenther to FEC headquarters on May 27 and penned a sharp letter of rebuke to the French commander. Juin that day told his officers that the rapacious behavior had “excited indignation in Allied circles.” He demanded “punishment without mercy.” Fifteen colonial miscreants reportedly were executed—shot or hanged in village squares—and fifty-four others drew prison terms ranging from five years to life.

In an attempt to cool *goumier* concupiscence, Clark approved the transport of Berber women to Italy aboard Navy LSTs; to make them less conspicuous, some were said to wear men’s uniforms. The Italian government, which kept meticulous records of Allied offenses against Italian civilians, documented more than five thousand alleged crimes by French colonials. “We suffered more during the 24 hours of contact with the Moroccans than in the eight months under the Germans,” one Italian complained. They were “savages,” a GI in the 88th Division concluded, and they “gave war and soldiers a bad name.”

Lucian Truscott was in pain and poor humor at nine A.M. on Tuesday, May 30, when he arrived in the dilapidated dairy that served as the 36th Infantry Division headquarters in Torécchia Nuova, three miles north of Cisterna near the Via Appia. His enflamed throat tormented him again, and chest X-rays earlier that morning had revealed a cracked rib to complement the bruises he had sustained in a minor jeep accident. Every breath hurt.

Worse yet, the attacks by his 34th, 45th, and 1st Armored Divisions had again failed to sunder the Caesar Line along the western face of the Colli Laziali. That hurt too, but Truscott—goaded by Clark—had ordered another "day of slugging," with "hard assaults" by the three divisions, including four tank companies attacking abreast. If VI Corps could just reach the high ground beyond Lanuvio near Lake Albano, "the thing is cinch," Truscott promised. Still, he knew that Old Ironsides was nearly spent—Harmon calculated that the division had but one day's fight left in it—and other units were almost as frayed.

The usual camp smells of canvas and stale coffee mingled with a sharp bovine odor in the command post, where staff officers milled about in the abandoned barn stalls. Truscott hardly knew the 36th Division, which had arrived in Anzio just a week earlier, yet he was wary of his fellow Texans, whose travails at Salerno, San Pietro, and the Rapido had earned the unit a hard-luck reputation. Truscott had hoped to give the three infantry regiments an easy assignment to avoid "a crushing blow to their morale"; but four days of brutal combat quashed such sensibilities, and he had ordered the 36th to prepare today for an imminent attack into the line.

To the stocky officer at Truscott's elbow, squinting at the large map of the Colli Laziali, it all seemed too familiar: another frontal assault, not unlike the one he had been ordered to make at the Rapido. "You can't always trust the higher command," Major General Fred Walker had told his diary a few days earlier. "You have to watch them all the time to keep from being imposed upon." In his bunk late at night, Walker had been reading *Lee's Lieutenants*, the vivid group portrait of Civil War generals by Douglas Southall Freeman. When Walker studied the blue icons on the map showing VI Corps dispositions, he could only wonder: was this how Lee would have fought the battle?

In the five months since leaving hundreds of his soldiers to rot in the Rapido bottoms, Walker had struggled to keep his equilibrium. He had expected Clark to sack him, as so many other staff officers and subordinate commanders in the 36th had been sacked. "I am fed up with the whole damn mess," he told Geoff Keyes, who replied, "The fact that you are commanding a National Guard division means you have two strikes against you from the start." Yet here he was, still the Army's oldest division commander in the field; still concealing the headaches, tachycardia, and arthritis that plagued him; still doing his duty. The division had been pulled from the Cassino line in late February for several months of refitting and mountain training near Avellino. "Walker seems a new man—full of enthusiasm and optimism," Keyes wrote in late spring.

Now the new man was determined to find an alternative to bludgeoning an entrenched enemy who held the high ground. On the far right of the VI Corps line, two miles east of Velletri and Highway 7, patrols on Saturday had reported "an old shrubbery-covered cart path" up a steep ridge called Monte Artemisio. No enemy fieldworks or outposts could be seen. Walker scouted the area from a Piper Grasshopper on Sunday afternoon, then, late in the day, sat in a thicket below the heights, studying the terrain with the eye of the mining engineer he had once been.

"I didn't sleep much last night," Walker told his diary on Monday. "I worked out a plan in my head to take Velletri from the rear." Artemisio formed the southern rim of an ancient volcanic crater; rising three thousand feet behind Velletri, it extended four miles from southwest to northeast as the lower lip of the Colli Laziali. Ancient fingers of lava reached into the flats, now alight with the green fire of grapevines and young wheat. To the left, where Highway 7 swung west around lakes Nemi and Albano, Velletri clung to the lower slope like a lichen to a rock. "It looks to me," Walker wrote, "like this is the place to break through."

Truscott disagreed, brushing aside the notion as impractical when Walker on Sunday night first suggested he had found "a soft spot." But now in the malodorous dairy Walker restated his case with urgent conviction. Maps and his own reconnaissance showed that the faint ditch-and-washline up Artemisio's face was in fact an old logging road through the chestnut brakes. Aerial photos also

revealed a two-mile gap between the left flank of I Parachute Corps and the right flank of LXXVI Panzer Corps. If two regiments crossed the Velletri–Valmontone road in the dead of night and followed the trace uphill, they could seize the heights above Highway 7 to outflank the Caesar Line and occupy the Colli Laziali. The Vatican stood just fifteen miles from Lake Albano.

"You may have something here," Truscott said. But a few thousand riflemen would not suffice, even on the high ground. Tanks and artillery would be needed to repel German counterattacks. Walker summoned his division engineer, Colonel Oran C. Stovall, a self-described "pick-and-shovel boy," who for three days had also been poring over maps and skulking through the woods. Stovall believed the soil across the Colli Laziali was volcanic and readily sculpted: bulldozers could widen the old scar into a military road, allowing armor and heavy weapons to "shoot up over Monte Artemisio and down the other side."

"I'll call you back within the hour," Truscott said, and rattled off to Conca in his jeep, his sore ribs momentarily forgotten. At eleven A.M., he phoned Walker. The VI Corps engineer adamantly opposed the scheme as harebrained, but Truscott was ready to gamble. He would also put an entire engineer regiment under Walker's command. Before ringing off he added in a low growl, "And you had better get through."

Walker summoned his own lieutenants to the dairy at three P.M. and laid out his plan. The 141st Infantry Regiment would attack Velletri to fix the German garrison while the 142nd and 143rd crept up Artemisio, engineers on their heels, after moving by truck to the woods below the Velletri–Valmontone road. The supply line would stretch for eight miles through rugged terrain, but the division's flinty experience in fighting at night in the high country on Monte Sammucro last December should serve it well.

"We are taking chances," Walker told his diary as his commanders pelted back to their units, "but we should succeed in a big way."

Across the Colli Laziali, Albert Kesselring was alive to his peril. In a visit to the front on Monday afternoon, the field marshal recognized that a gap persisted between the parachute and the panzer corps, and he ordered General Mackensen to suture it. Wilhelm Schmalz, the Hermann Göring commander, had also warned of "lively scouting" by American patrols east of Velletri. Schmalz sent his last reserve, an engineer platoon, into the wild uplands on Monte Artemisio. He repeatedly asked Mackensen's headquarters to compel the 362nd Infantry Division—now holding the western rim of the Colli Laziali—to send a detachment to literally shake hands with Schmalz's platoon, sealing the seam.

It never happened. The 362nd had lost half its fighting strength on May 23 alone, just as the Hermann Görings had lost two-thirds of their infantry in the past week; Fourteenth Army's functioning panzer fleet consisted of thirty-three tanks. The army was bleeding to death. Disorder and misapprehension carried the day: Mackensen, inattentive and resentful of Kesselring's meddling, believed that the porous boundary between the corps had been fused. Even if a few rifle companies slipped across Artemisio, surely no tank could scale that volcanic shoulder.

Cuckoos sang in the night woods. Just enough pale light seeped from the new moon for shadows to spread beneath the chestnuts. "Douse that cigarette," a voice snarled, "or I'll blow your head off." The offending glow proved to be the luminous face of a soldier's wristwatch.

For four hours on Tuesday evening, the assault regiments gathered in the forest, stacking bedrolls, filling canteens, fixing bayonets. Congested roads had delayed the truck convoys as one battalion after another slipped from the line along the Via Appia for the sixteen-mile loop back

through Cisterna before swinging northeast past Cori to dismount east of Velletri. “I may not be able to write very often in the near future. Don’t think anything of it, for it’s just routine,” a private in the 142nd Infantry scribbled in a note to his mother. “No news here, just the same old grind.” Blued by starlight, sergeants padded through their platoons, vowing to court-martial any man who fired a shot without orders. Colonel George E. Lynch, the 142nd commander, confessed to feeling “breathless anticipation.”

At eleven P.M., an hour late, the great column surged forward. A dog barked, another howled; a jackass brayed in the night. “We expected to meet the enemy in every shadow,” a soldier later wrote. By 1:30 A.M. on Wednesday, May 31, scouts had scurried across the Valmontone road, darting past the wall tombs of a local cemetery and through grapevines that twined up leaning poles to form leafy cones. Artemisio loomed like a shadow cast against the sky, black and silent but for the cuckoos. Far to the left, distant machine-gun fire—“like corn popping in a deep kettle,” Sevareid wrote—signaled the 141st Infantry’s diversionary attack against Velletri. The soldiers were climbing now, up the thin, steep scratch of the logging trace, each man chuffing so that the column seemed to suspire like a dark, winded serpent.

At three A.M. the drone of a plane drew antiaircraft fire near Velletri. Then chandelier flares blossomed, drenching the mountain in silver light. The men fell flat as one, lying motionless for ten minutes, twenty. The flares winked out and they scrambled to their feet. The climb resumed.

The first gray wash of dawn, at 4:15, soon leached out the stars, but haze swaddled the slope to keep the men concealed. At 6:35, three German artillery observers were captured unawares, including one found bathing in a creek. Through the morning American soldiers spread across the ridgeline, shooing away Schmalz’s engineer platoon with a spatter of rifle fire. The midday sun burned off the haze, revealing a panorama: Valmontone and Highway 6 seven miles to the east; Anzio, Nettuno, and the glittering sea twenty miles to the southwest; and directly below, Velletri and Highway 7. Tiny figures in field gray strolled about in the German rear, unaware that six thousand American soldiers were behind them.

Behind the column came the bulldozers, “roaring and rearing” along a strip of white engineering tape that demarcated the route, three dozers at first, and eventually fifteen, each adding another foot of width to the graded road. Blue sparks sprayed from the blades as they shoved rocks and saplings from the trail, slashing hairpins wide enough for a tank to turn without throwing a track. “Don’t spare the horses,” a captain told the lead dozer operator, Corporal John Bob Parks. Sappers blew over trees too big to bulldoze, or felled them with two-man timber saws. On the steepest grades, small dozers were hauled up with snatch block and cable, then slashed their way down while soldiers with shovels manicured the verges. “Up, up, up all the time,” Parks later recalled, with the captain reminding him “again and again that I was holding up the whole damned Fifth Army…. I lost track of time and everything else except that damn white tracing tape that was always in front of me.”

Through the night and the following day they toiled, scraping and grading, until a one-way boulevard led to Artemisio’s crest. Behind them came the tanks, self-propelled guns, and artillery observers with optics and field phones, chortling at the vista from the high ground that was finally theirs. The 143rd Infantry reported so many observers flocking to the heights that they resembled “crows on a telephone line.”

Kesselring learned that the enemy was in his rear when a German artillery officer on Artemisio reported GIs storming his command post. The field marshal had already lambasted Mackensen for neglecting to seal the corps boundary across the mountain. Yet the fog of war persisted even as the

haze lifted. Mackensen discounted his jeopardy after a dispatch from the front at eleven A.M. on May 31 claimed that only eighty enemy soldiers had infiltrated; a subsequent report asserted they had been "mopped up completely." Reports to the contrary simply thickened the fog. The Fourteenth Army battle log on May 31 recorded that "the enemy managed to infiltrate two battalions," but Mackensen continued to estimate American strength on the mountain at no more than one and a half battalions.

Kesselring at nine P.M. on May 31 ordered Mackensen "at all costs" to extirpate the Allied salient on Artemisio, now five miles deep. Privately he feared the game was up: I Parachute Corps that same evening warned that the front was "ripe for collapse." Desperate for reinforcements, Mackensen summoned a police battalion from Rome to plug the gap; equally desperate and ineffectual, Kesselring ordered a Luftwaffe unit arriving in Livorno to hie for the front. The men were mounted on bicycles.

Ambushes and precise artillery now began to tear apart German convoys lumbering down Highway 7 from Rome. Bazooka teams struck a tank column pushing out of Velletri; the German commander flew from his turret "like a cork out of a champagne bottle." When enemy snipers in mottled camouflage signaled one another with cuckoo calls on Artemisio's flanks, GIs raked the woods with blistering fire, shooting up birds and Germans alike. After a captain with a tommy gun killed a gargantuan enemy soldier, his men lay beside the corpse as if comparing themselves to a sleeping Gulliver. "I only came up to his arm pit and I was six-two," one GI reported. "I measured him and removed his watch." Canteens taken from the dead were found to be filled with cognac.

By dawn on June 1, Velletri was surrounded and American scouts stood on the highest peaks in the Colli Laziali, staring down on Lake Nemi and at Castel Gandolfo, on the far shore of Lake Albano; through the haze on the northern horizon floated the domes and spires of Rome. Only eleven 36th Division soldiers had been killed.

Outside Velletri, Walker paced beneath a rail trestle in a "state of perturbation," urging his men to smarten the pace. When a column of captured enemy soldiers shuffled past, he gave one his boot, then regretted the impulse. "Most unbecoming of a major general to kick a German prisoner," he wrote.

Through Thursday afternoon, tanks and infantrymen bulled through Velletri's rubble, battling diehards house to house and hand to hand. Those who tried to break the cordon by fleeing on foot or in trucks careering up Highway 7 drew sleeting fire that left the roadbed tiled with bodies. At dusk the final mutter of gunfire subsided, and the Allies owned another guttering town. Blood had risen in the gorge, and tankers drove across enemy corpses to hear the bones crack beneath their tracks. "It didn't bother me," a soldier wrote. As 250 dazed German prisoners emerged beneath white flags, Truscott drove up to find Walker again scrutinizing the landscape with his engineer's squint. "You can go in now, General," Walker said. "The town is yours."

General Schmalz reported that all phone communication within the Hermann Göring Division had ceased. He could no longer find his subordinate command posts; the reconnaissance battalion had a fighting strength of eighteen men; and his panzer grenadier regiment no longer existed. The front, he added, was "torn wide open."

A 36th Division artillery lieutenant offered his own assessment. "Getting little sleep these days," he wrote in his diary. "Going fine, victory is a wonderful thing."

Expulsion of the Barbarians

CYPRESS trees stood sentinel along the northbound roads, tapered green flames that seemed to bend beneath the weight of the Allied advance. Near Highway 6, a child kicked the corpse of a Wehrmacht officer until a young woman shoved him aside and yanked off the dead man's boots. German caisson

teams sprawled in the roadbed, butchered by Spitfires. “The horses had fallen in harness, with their heads high in the air, eyes opened and distended in terror,” wrote J. Glenn Gray. “There were many of them, in columns, and the strafing bullet wounds were hardly visible.” GIs scratched their initials on the gun carriages.

Outside Valmontone ranks of dead American soldiers lay within the garden walls of a Franciscan convent transformed into a mortuary. “Over each one of them we placed a blanket under which stuck out the shoes in the sun, giving the impression of being extremely large,” an Italian witness later recalled. German snipers popped away across hill and dale. When a GI abruptly pitched over, a tanker yelled to a crouching rifleman, “Is he hurt bad?” The rifleman shook his head. “No, he ain’t hurt. He’s dead.”

Clark took nothing for granted, even as the breakthrough on Monte Artemisio “caused all of us to turn handsprings.” Ubiquitous and intense, aware of the imminent invasion at Normandy, he lashed the troops with unsparing urgency. Eleven of his divisions pounded north along five trunk roads that converged on Rome from the lower boot. Alexander on Friday, June 2, shifted the interarmy boundary north of Highway 6 to give Fifth Army—now 369,000 strong—a wider attack corridor. General Harding, Alexander’s chief of staff, phoned Gruenther with effusive praise. “He stated it with such a sincere tone that I am certain he meant what he said,” Gruenther told Clark. “For my part I am throwing my hat in the air and yelling, ‘Hip, hip, hooray.’”

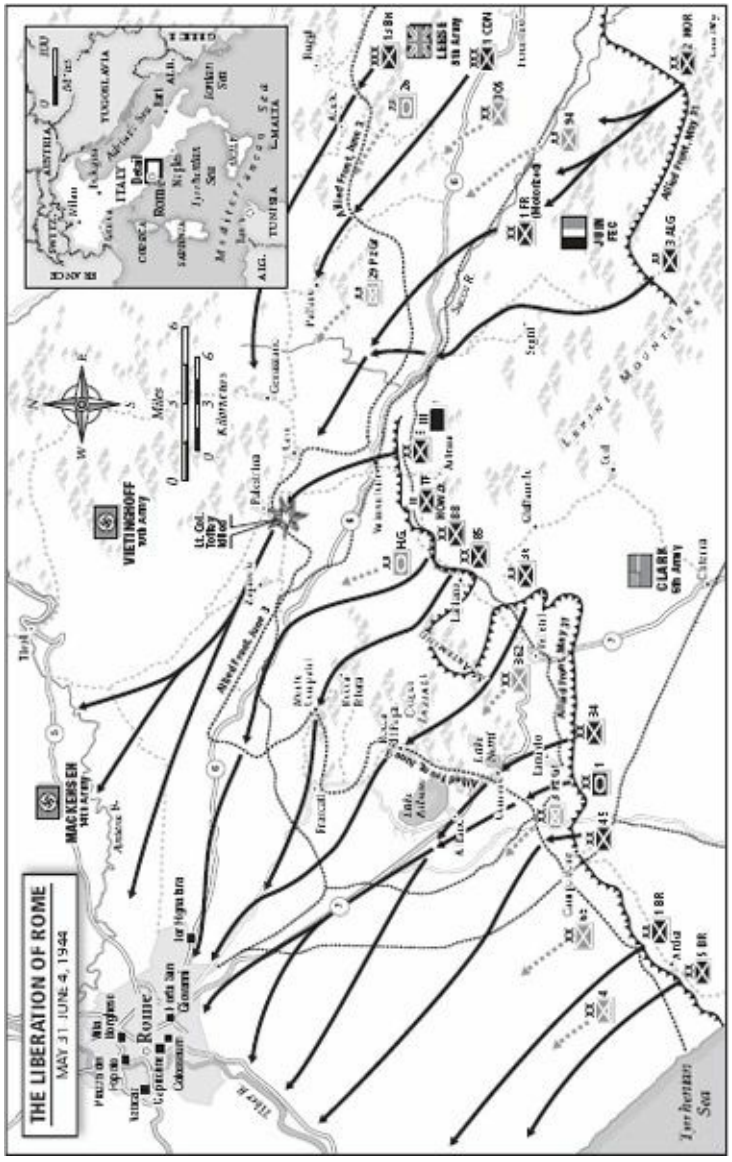
Clark’s peaked cap remained on his head. “I’m disappointed in the 45th and 34th today. They’ve not gotten anyplace,” he told Don Carleton in a call to VI Corps early Friday evening.

“They got a lot of prisoners and killed a lot of Germans,” Carleton replied.

“But they haven’t *gone* any place,” Clark said. “I want to take ground.”

With casualties climbing and Harmon’s 1st Armored Division losing over two hundred tanks in eight days, Clark fretted that another delay likely meant waiting for Eighth Army “to get into the act.” Indeed, Alexander on Friday night privately mused that if Clark failed to finish routing the enemy within forty-eight hours, “we shall have to stage a combined attack by both Fifth and Eighth armies when the latter gets up.” Even Clark’s mother urged alacrity. “Please take Rome soon,” she wrote her son from Washington. “I’m all frazzled out.”

He was trying, driven by dreams of glory undimmed and unshared. When Alexander’s headquarters proposed a communiqué that would read, “Rome is now in Allied hands,” Clark told Gruenther, “They carefully avoid the use of ‘Fifth Army,’ and say ‘Allies.’ You call Harding immediately. Tell him I don’t agree to this paper.” Churchill renewed his plea for shared Anglo-American honors. “I hope that British as well as Americans will enter the city simultaneously,” the prime minister had written Alexander on Tuesday. But few Tommies could be found in the Fifth Army vanguard. When Alexander proposed that a Polish contingent join the spearhead into Rome as a tribute to their valor at Monte Cassino and in acknowledgment of their Roman Catholicism, Clark ignored the suggestion.



"The attack today must be pushed to its limit," he told Truscott on Friday. Only to his diary did Clark confide, "This is a race against time, with my subordinates failing to realize how close the decision will be."

Valmontone was found abandoned on Friday, at last. "No contact with enemy anywhere along the front," the 3rd Division reported. A reconnaissance battalion crept up Highway 6, and by dawn on Saturday, June 3, Truscott's VI Corps and Keyes's II Corps were poised for a bragging-rights race into Rome from the south and southeast, respectively. Roving Italian barbers gave haircuts and shaves to unkempt soldiers keen to look groomed for the liberation.

Like Gruenther's tossed hat, the tonsorial primping was premature. German rearguard panzers lurked in the shadows to ambush the incautious. Fearful of a counterattack from the east that could sever the new Fifth Army supply route on Highway 6, Lieutenant Colonel Jack Toffey led two depleted 7th Infantry battalions into the rolling meadows below Palestrina, an ancient Etruscan town famous for its roses and said to have been founded by Ulysses. Early Saturday morning Toffey informed the regimental command post of a troublesome Tiger tank, "hull down in a road cut." Later in the day, as Palestrina's cyclopean walls hove into view, he reported seeing outriders from Juin's FEC on his flank.

That would be his last dispatch. At 2:14 P.M., a radio message to the regiment reported that

Colonel Toffey had been wounded half a mile below Palestrina. After climbing to the second floor of a tile-roof farmhouse for a better view of German positions, Toffey was sitting on the floor with a radio between his knees when a tank round slammed into the upper story. At least one officer believed the shell came from a disoriented Sherman tank crew a few hundred feet behind the farmhouse; others insisted the round was German. Regardless, dust filled the dismembered room as Toffey lay sprawled against the front wall with a shell fragment in the back of his head. "His eyes were open but seeing nothing," an officer noted. At 2:40 P.M., a radio report to the command post announced his death. A lieutenant and three enlisted men had also been killed, and a tank battalion commander badly wounded.

Veiled with a blanket, Toffey's mortal remains were laid on a stretcher and driven by jeep to the rear. Since landing on the beaches of Morocco nineteen months earlier, he had fought as faithfully as any battle commander in the U.S. Army. Now his war was over, his hour spent. A short time later, Juin's troops relieved the 7th Infantry, which would not fight in Italy again. The 3rd Division history lamented the passing of "a mad, genial Irishman," among "the best-loved and most colorful characters in the division, if not our entire Army." One comrade wrote that "there will never be his like again," but that was incorrect: the country had produced enough of his ilk to finish the war Jack Toffey had helped win.

Upon learning of Toffey's death, Clark ordered Gruenther to draft a list of midlevel officers with long, sterling battle records who would be the generals in America's next war. "I am sending them home because they are too valuable to risk in further combat," Clark wrote.

For Toffey the gesture came too late. In a note to General McNair in Washington, a grieving Truscott called him "one of the finest officers I have ever known." But the most poignant epitaph came from a former comrade in the 15th Infantry: "Perhaps he was kept overseas a little longer than his odds allowed."

Even before the American thrust across Monte Artemisio, Albert Kesselring doubted whether the indefensible terrain below the Tiber River could be held much longer. Of 540 German antitank guns in Italy, 120 remained. On June 2, he advised Berlin that in three weeks his armies had suffered 38,000 casualties; among his divisions still fighting, only two were even 50 percent combat effective. Charred tanks and trucks fouled every road and cart path. The Subiaco Pass, through which much of Vietinghoff's Tenth Army would squeeze, resembled "a huge snake of burning vehicles."

Vietinghoff himself was a casualty: sick and spent, he handed command to his chief of staff and stumbled off to a hospital in northern Italy. A few hours later, Kesselring's own staff chief, Siegfried Westphal, collapsed from nervous exhaustion. Mackensen, too, was finished: Hitler approved Kesselring's demand that he be cashiered as Fourteenth Army commander for incompetence in defending the Colli Laziali, among other alleged failings.

Kesselring had earlier proposed a scorched-earth retreat that included the demolition of all Tiber River bridges, as well as power, rail, and industrial facilities around Rome. Hitler demurred. Roman bridges had "considerable historical and artistic merit"; moreover, the capital held little strategic value, and leaving it in ashes would merely enhance Allied political and propaganda gains. On June 3, less than two hours after Jack Toffey's death, the high command informed Kesselring: "Führer decision. There must not be a battle of Rome."

Rear guards would continue to harass the American horde in the Roman suburbs, buying time for the garrison to flee from what Berlin now declared to be an open city. Fourteenth and Tenth Army troops would hasten north, in small bands if necessary. A radio code word—ELEFANTE—warned that

Allied forces were closing in on the capital.

The sound of gunfire from the Colli Laziali had been audible since May 29, and unease among the German occupiers in Rome now gave way to panic. Papers were burned, granaries fired; an ammunition dump in the Campo Verano cemetery was blown up, along with a barracks, a Fiat plant, a phone center. The white peacocks strutting about the German embassy garden had long been shot and roasted. The Hotel de la Ville in the Via Sistina, a pleasant redoubt known as "Brighter Berlin," emptied out. Near the Piazza Fiume, soldiers methodically looted a hardware shop, packing their booty into a covered truck. Officers living the high life on the Via Veneto pilfered the silverware and water goblets before decamping.

"Germans streaming through the city, pushing carts, trying to swipe cars, marching on foot," Peter Tompkins, the OSS operative, wrote in his diary. "The cafés were still open and doing big business." A six P.M. curfew was imposed, "but it isn't quite clear who is giving the orders." Tompkins filled his bathtub just before the city's water pipes ran dry. As Romans watched from behind shuttered windows, convoys streamed out of the city, vehicles three and four abreast on the Via Cassia, the Via Salaria, and abutting sidewalks. "Wild-eyed, unshaven, unkempt, on foot, in stolen cars, in horsedrawn vehicles, even in carts belonging to the street cleaning department," one witness reported. "Some of them dragged small ambulances with wounded in them." Fascist Blackshirts pleaded for rides or trotted north, furtively looking over their shoulders. Tompkins, the dutiful spy, recorded it all: Germans fleeing on bicycles, Germans hobbling on crutches, Germans on motorcycles with flat tires, Germans near the Piazza Venezia "trying to get away with cars that no longer have *any* tires, driving on the rims."

And in the Gestapo cells beneath Via Tasso 155, prisoners cocked an ear to the distant grumble of Allied guns. In hushed whispers, eyes agleam, they debated with urgent intensity the variables of ballistics and wind direction, trying to gauge just how far away their liberators might be.

Not far. Eleven months after the Allies first waded ashore in Sicily, the titanic battles between army groups that characterized the Italian campaign now subsided into niggling suburban gunfights between small bands of pursuers and pursued. Seventeen major bridges spanned the Tiber along an eight-mile stretch, linking eastern Rome not only to Vatican City and the capital's west bank but also to the highways vital to Fifth Army's pursuit up the peninsula to the northwest. Flying columns of tanks, engineers, and infantrymen began to coalesce with orders to thrust through the city and secure the crossings.

"Looks as if the Boche is pulling out, and [Truscott] wants you to get up there and seize the crossings over the Tiber as fast as you can," Carleton told Ernie Harmon early Saturday afternoon. "Make all the speed you can." A few hundred feet above Highway 6, Keyes from his observation plane dropped a penciled message to the armored task force led by Colonel Howze: "Get those tanks moving!" Howze put the spurs to his men, only to blunder into yet another chain of ambushes. "In a few minutes the lead tank would stop and burst into flames," Howze later wrote, forcing the cavalcade to idle until the enemy blockages could be outflanked and routed.

Such petty inconveniences hardly diminished the swelling euphoria. "The command post has gone to hell," Gruenther radioed Clark from Caserta at 4:15 P.M. on Saturday. "No one is doing any work here this afternoon. All semblance of discipline has broken down." According to II Corps intelligence reports, Germans were withdrawing "in such confusion and speed that their retreat has assumed proportions of a rout." Clark sternly reminded his lieutenants to keep killing. "Your orders are to destroy the enemy facing Fifth Army," he told the corps commanders shortly before five P.M.

“Rome and the advance northward will come later.”

Precisely who first crossed Rome’s city limits early on Sunday, June 4, would be disputed for decades. Various units claimed the honor by filing affidavits and issuing proclamations and protests. An 88th Division reconnaissance troop and Frederick’s 1st Special Service Force, which had been merged with Howze’s task force, had the strongest claims, but Clark subsequently wrote that “it is impossible to determine with certainty the unit of the Fifth Army whose elements first entered the city.” Patrols darted into the city only to be driven out by scalding gunfire. German paratroopers holding a strongpoint at Centocelle, just east of Rome, knocked out five American tanks before slipping away. On Highway 6 near Tor Pignatara, an antitank gun shattered two more Shermans, then vanished into a warren of alleys.

Traffic jams and friendly fire, orders and counterorders, flocking journalists and even a wedding party—the bride, dressed in gray and holding a rose bouquet, tiptoed around German corpses in the roadway—threatened to turn the liberation into opera buffa. Clark left Anzio in brilliant sunshine at 8:30 A.M. with a convoy of two armored cars and six jeeps packed with more journalists. Arriving at Centocelle, he hopped from his jeep in a flurry of salutes. When Clark asked why the drive had stalled, Frederick replied, “I’m holding off the artillery because of the civilians.”

“I wouldn’t hesitate to use it if you need to,” Clark said. “We can’t be held up here too long.”

As he walked with Frederick and Keyes up a low hill for a better view, photographers asked the trio to pose beside a large blue and white road sign that read ROMA. Moments later a sniper’s bullet blew through the metal face with a sharp bang. Clark, Keyes, and Frederick crawled down the hill and retreated two hundred yards to a thick-walled house. There would be no triumphant entry into the Eternal City this afternoon. Clark grumbled over delays in reaching the Tiber, then drove back to Anzio. Keyes in turn told subordinates he did not want “one little gun stopping us.” He gobbled down a cold K ration and ordered another frontal assault up Highway 6 so “C could enter Rome,” as he told his diary.

By late Sunday the rear guards had melted away but for snipers and a few stubborn strongpoints along the river. Some captured Germans proved to be boys dragooned into combat from a school for cooks and bakers; one prisoner was seized pushing a cart laden with looted chocolate bars. From the east and south, American troops streamed through the city’s outer precincts. Howze dispatched platoons with instructions typed in Italian commanding any Roman stopped on the street to lead the patrols to specific Tiber bridges. A Forceman scuttling past the Colosseum muttered, “My God, they bombed that too!” An 88th Division soldier who peeked inside said, “I was not impressed by the interior: too small, too cluttered.” Puzzled by the “S.P.Q.R.”—*“Senatus Populusque Romanus”*—stamped on monuments and manhole covers, a GI speculated that it stood for “Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Romans”; he was crestfallen to learn that “cruelty” was not spelled with a “q.”

Howze at twilight led a tank company toward the central rail station to find boulevards empty and windows shuttered. Then a sash flew open, a voice shrieked *“Americano!,”* and Romans by the thousands swept into the streets despite the occasional *ping* from a sniper round. Delirious citizens flung themselves onto Howze’s jeep and “kissed me until I threatened to shoot some of them,” he reported. “Vino offered in glasses, in pitchers, in bottles, and even in kegs,” the 88th Division noted. “Kisses were freely bestowed by both male and female citizens and suffered or enjoyed by the recipient accordingly.” Signoras offered plates of spaghetti and bowls of hot shaving water. Italian men with ancient rifles and red sashes clapped their liberators on the back, then stalked off in search of Germans and Fascists. Communists and Blackshirts traded potshots, and the *pop* of pistol fire near the Colosseum signaled another summary execution. “It still won’t be hard to be killed here,” an American officer wrote in his diary on June 4.

Frederick set out for the Tiber shortly before ten P.M. with seven men and a radio car. Just west of the Piazza del Popolo he found the triple arches of the Ponte Regina Margherita intact in the moonlight, but a stay-behind German squad sprayed tracers across the dark river. A wild mêlée grew wilder when a confused battalion from the 88th Division blundered into the scrap and also fired on the Forcemen. Bullets struck Frederick in the knee and elbow; his driver was killed. With eight Purple Hearts by the end of the war, Bob Frederick would be described as "the most shot-at-and-hit general in American history."

From the Baths of Caracalla to the Quirinal, jubilation now grew full-throated—"a complete hysteria," as the 1st Armored Division reported. Romans in nightshirts and slippers poured into the streets, braying whatever scraps of English they could recall, including one old man who repeatedly shouted, "Weekend! Weekend!" At 1:30 A.M. on Monday, June 5, both the U.S. flag and a Union Jack were raised on staffs above the Piazza Venezia. A banner draped the Pantheon: WELCOME TO THE LIBERATORS. Shrieking crowds ransacked the flower stalls below the Spanish Steps to garland those liberators or to pelt them with roses and irises. Young men sporting hammer-and-sickle armbands marched up the Corso Umberto singing "Bandiera Rossa" and other socialist anthems. Romans stormed the Regina Coeli prison to fling open the cells. Others searched the yellow house at Via Tasso 155, where the walls and floors were flecked with blood. "Brothers," someone called into the cellar gloom, "come out."

Shortly before dawn, a column of nearly three hundred vehicles rolled through Porta San Giovanni carrying S-Force, a detachment of twelve hundred American and British counterintelligence and engineering specialists. As the convoy snaked down the Via delle Quattro Fontane, squads peeled away to secure telegraph offices, power plants, and pumping stations. Others rounded up Italian utility managers: Rome's power supply had been slashed to about 20 percent of the capital's needs, and repairs to damaged aqueducts were to begin within a day. An S-Force platoon poking through the German embassy found various photos of Hermann Göring, an Artie Shaw record on the phonograph, and a half ton of plastic explosives, which were later stuffed in weighted sacks and tossed into the Tiber. A half dozen safes upon cracking "revealed nothing of an unusual nature."

"Got across thirteen bridges. Occupied them on the far side last night," Harmon radioed Truscott at 6:30 A.M. "None destroyed…. I am the first boy on the Tiber."

"Go up to Genoa if you want to," Truscott replied.

Not yet. At seven A.M., Sergeant John Vita of Port Chester, New York, wandered through the fifteenth-century Palazzo Venezia to find himself in the Sala del Mappamondo. Mussolini's cavernous office, clad in marble, featured a desk the size of a yacht. Stepping onto the Duce's notorious balcony, Vita drew a crowd on the piazza below by tossing out rolls of Life Savers and declaiming, "Victory! Not for Mussolini, but for the Allies."

That Allied victory had cost them 44,000 casualties since DIADEM began on May 11: 18,000 Americans—among them more than 3,000 killed in action—along with 12,000 British, 9,600 French, and nearly 4,000 Poles. German casualties were estimated at 52,000, including 5,800 dead. Americans losses in less than four weeks almost equaled those sustained during seven months of fighting in North Africa. Combat in the Mediterranean had achieved an industrial scale.

Columns of weary GIs shuffled through the city. Some carried small Italian tricolors. Others sported flowers in their helmet nets or rifle barrels. Eric Sevareid watched throngs of Italians sob with joy as they tossed blossoms at the tramping soldiers and cheered them to the echo. "I felt wonderfully good, generous, and important," he wrote. "I was a representative of strength, decency, and success."

A message to the Combined Chiefs in Washington and London formally announced, "The Allies are in Rome." How long it had taken to proclaim those five words; how much heartbreak had been required to make it so.

In classical Rome, a triumphant general returning from his latest conquest made for the Capitoline, the lowest but most sacred of the city's seven hills, where he sacrificed a snow-white bull in gratitude for Jove's beneficence. His face painted with vermilion, his head crowned with laurel, and his body cloaked in a purple toga, the victor rode to the hill in a chariot drawn by four white steeds. At the foot of the slope, the trailing column of prisoners fell out to be strangled or slain with an ax in the Mamertine Prison, where the apostle Peter also would be held in chains. It was here too that Brutus, bloody dagger in hand, harangued his fellow Romans after the murder of Julius Caesar, and here that Juno's geese were said to have gabbled in alarm when stealthy Gauls tried to scale the Capitoline ramparts. And it was amid the ruins atop the hill in October 1764 that the British historian Edward Gibbon—a plump man in "a bag-wig, a snuff-brown coat, knee breeches, and snowy ruffles," as the travel writer H. V. Morton later described him—claimed that "the idea of writing the decline and fall of the city first started to my mind."

Mark Clark had neither vermilion face paint nor a laurel wreath, but he possessed a sense of theater, and it was on the Capitoline that he bade his lieutenants appear for a rendezvous at ten A.M. on Monday, June 5. At 7:30 Clark flew from Nettuno by Piper Cub, landing in a wheat field outside the city where II Corps had been ordered to arrange an escort of clean tanks, trucks, and soldiers. Upon learning that it would take hours to wash the vehicles, Clark said, "Oh, the hell with that," and bolted with his retinue up Highway 6 through the Porta Maggiore.

Within minutes they were lost. Wandering across the blue-gray Tiber to St. Peter's Square, Clark flagged down a priest and asked, "Where is Capitoline Hill? My name is Clark." The cleric dragooned a boy on a bicycle to lead the convoy, bellowing "Clark! Clark!" to clear a path through the teeming streets. Arriving at the Via del Teatro Marcello at the foot of the Capitoline, Clark climbed the Cordonata ramp—designed by Michelangelo in 1536 to receive the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V—and crossed the elegant Campidoglio to find the peach-hued town hall locked. He pounded on the door, but when a caretaker finally peeked out, Clark chose to linger at the porch balustrade until Truscott, Keyes, and Juin arrived to join him. Opening a map and pointing with exaggerated pantomime toward Berlin, Clark turned to the reporters and photographers now gathered on the square.

"Well, gentlemen, I didn't really expect to have a press conference here—I just called a little meeting of my corps commanders to discuss the situation," he said slowly. "However, I'll be glad to answer your questions. This is a great day for the Fifth Army." A hundred flashbulbs popped as Clark delivered a brief victory oration—the equivalent of slaughtering a white bull—without mentioning Eighth Army or other contributors. His lieutenants flushed with discomfort, glancing self-consciously at a Movietone cameraman filming the scene. Truscott later voiced disgust at "this posturing."

Then it was off to a luncheon at the Hotel Excelsior, which engineers had searched for time bombs and booby traps. In starched black-and-white livery the hotel staff lined the lobby to greet the new occupiers, having said *arrivederci* to the Germans only a day before. Clark gave another short address from a second-floor balcony, then slipped into a suite for a private moment. Kneeling on the bedroom floor, he thanked God for victory and prayed for the souls of his men. A hand gently touched his shoulder. Clark turned to find Juin behind him. Beneath his brushy mustache, the Frenchman smiled and said, "I just did the same thing."

Along the Via Veneto, another happy throng gathered to huzzah their liberators. "We waded through crowds of cheering people," Keyes told his diary. "A couple of women nearly strangled Juin much to our amusement and his embarrassment. We had a fine lunch."

"You have made the American people very happy," Franklin Roosevelt cabled Clark. "It is a grand job well done." Similar plaudits hailed what Harold Macmillan called "the expulsion of the barbarians from the most famous of all cities." Even Stalin on June 5 cheered "the great victory of the Allied Anglo-American forces." Churchill cast a blind eye on fraternal frictions, notwithstanding reports that some British officers were turned away from Rome at gunpoint. "Relations are admirable between our armies in every rank there," he wrote Roosevelt in a sweet fib. "Certainly it is an absolute brotherhood."

Across the capital the celebration continued through Monday afternoon. The San Carlo restaurant offered GIs "the very finest cuts of horse meat." An Army doctor wrote home of "beautiful girls wearing lipstick, silk stockings, and, for a change, also shoes. Many people weep." At the Hotel Majestic, a porter greeted a *Life* magazine reporter with the Fascist salute, then apologized. "A habit of twenty years," he explained. One soldier awoke next to an Italian prostitute who wished him good morning *auf deutsch.* "Today I had my hair cut in Rome and drank gin and vermouth in the Excelsior," a British signaler wrote his family. "The Italians all said, 'We are so happy to see you at last. Why did it take you so long?'"

Exhausted soldiers wrapped themselves in blankets and dozed on the hoods of their half-tracks or in stone-dry fountains. "They slept on the street, on the sidewalks, on the Spanish Steps," the curator of the Keats-Shelley house reported. Some felt deflated. "We prowl through Rome like ghosts, finding no satisfaction in anything we see or do," wrote Audie Murphy. "I feel like a man reprieved from death; and there is no joy in me."

Yet others found redemption in the city they had unchained, a gleaming symbol of the civilized values for which they fought. "Every block is interesting, beautiful, enchanting," a 3rd Division officer wrote. "The very city fills the heart with reverence." At five P.M. on Monday, 100,000 Italians jammed St. Peter's Square. Bells pealed. Priests offered tours of the Vatican to GIs in exchange for American cigarettes. Pius XII appeared on his apartment balcony in brilliant white robes, then later met with reporters as flashbulbs exploded and photographers shouted, "Hold it, Pope. Attaboy!" The holy father advised Roman girls to "behave and dress properly and win the respect of the soldiers by your virtue." A papal secretary added with a shrug, "It's just another changing of the guard."

At six A.M. on Tuesday, June 6, an aide woke Mark Clark in his Excelsior suite with the news that German radio had announced the Allied invasion of Normandy. Clark rubbed the sleep from his eyes. "How do you like that?" he said. "They didn't even let us have the newspaper headlines for the fall of Rome for one day."

At the Albergo Città, a BBC correspondent burst into the Allied press headquarters. "Boys, we're on the back page now," he said. "They've landed in Normandy." Eric Sevareid later recalled that "every typewriter stopped. We looked at one another."

> Most of us sat back, pulled out cigarettes and dropped our half-written stories about Rome on the floor. We had in a trice become performers without an audience…a troupe of actors who, at the climax of their play, realize that the spectators have all fled out the door.

* * *

On June 6, Alexander ordered the Fifth and Eighth Armies to make all possible speed for Pisa and Florence, respectively. Some 170 miles separated the Allied front from the next chain of German

redoubts, the formidable Gothic Line, but many rivers and hills lay in between. “If only the country were more open,” Alexander lamented, “we could make hay of the whole lot.”

Howitzers barked wheel to wheel in the Villa Borghese gardens above the Via Veneto. Wreathed in smoke, the guns banged away at the retreating enemy north of the Tiber. Soldiers crowded around platoon radios with heads cocked and mouths agape, listening to the latest news from France and laying bets on when the war would end. “No one put down a date past Thanksgiving,” a soldier in the 36th Division recalled. “I often wondered what happened to that money.”

Weary sergeants ordered them to fall in and move out. “C’mon, man, c’mon,” Ernie Harmon urged a Sherman commander. “There are places to go.” A tanker in Old Ironsides told his diary: “Drove through Rome to the other side of Tiber River. People threw flowers at us. Stopped and had coffee.” The 88th Division vanguard radioed General Keyes a two-word message: “Beyond Rome.”

Olive-drab columns streamed across the river and past the cylindrical Castel Sant’Angelo, tomb of the warrior-emperor Hadrian. On the roof stood the bronze statue of St. Michael the Archangel, patron of soldiers, sheathing his sword. GIs smelling of Chianti and Chesterfields jammed the deuce-and-a-half trucks or straddled the towed artillery tubes, souvenir lithographs and Fascist postage stamps tucked into their packs.

Then up they climbed, along the dark ridge of the Janiculum, where the ancients once kept a shrine to two-faced Janus, the god of beginnings, and where augurs had studied their auspices. From the hillcrest on this cloudless day, Rome unfurled below in a tapestry of reds, browns, and yellows. Beyond the park where Cleopatra once lived in Caesar’s villa stood the bell towers and the spires, the cupolas and the domes. On the southern horizon lay the faint blue smudge of the Colli Laziali.

Why did it take you so long? the Italians asked, and the answer could only be: *Because so many of us died to set you free.*

North they rolled, on the high ground beneath cypresses and umbrella pines, past Roman gardeners working the flower beds of gray marl and yellow sea sand. North they rolled, and the scent of roses lingered in their wake.

Epilogue

MORE than three weeks passed before Jack Toffey's family learned of his death. "We see you captured Rome," his mother-in-law wrote him. George Biddle, also corresponding with a dead man, encouraged Toffey to "write one short word about the run into Rome. It left me restless and envious."

At the house on East Long Street in Columbus, Helen and the two children went about their days without knowing that their lives had changed forever. An early summer heat wave scorched central Ohio. Toffey's beloved Reds slipped to fourth place in the National League, but the minor league Columbus Red Birds climbed to second in the American Association. In an exhibition game featuring the pitching greats Dizzy Dean and Satchel Paige, Model Dairy of Columbus beat the Chicago American Giants, a Negro League club.

The news from Rome and Normandy electrified the city, which on the evening of June 6 observed a long minute of silence "in respect to the boys of the united nations now fighting to free an enslaved continent." Blood donors in Columbus set a new record by giving almost a thousand pints in one day, and absenteeism at local war plants plummeted. Three thousand inmates at the Ohio State Penitentary held a prayer vigil, asking the Almighty to bless OVERLORD, and radio station WCOL broadcast twenty daily news reports to track "the beginning of a new world for all who cherish freedom."

Columbus organized a war bond parade on Sunday, June 11, and sailors in white caps marched down Broad Street past displays of jeeps, half-tracks, and a Navy Helldiver airplane that had been built in the local Curtiss-Wright factory. Rationing stamps were still required to buy sugar, shoes, gasoline, and liquor, but the nation suddenly had three billion surplus eggs and every family was urged to eat an extra dozen. Paley's Pants Shop on West Broad Street offered Father's Day slacks for as little as $4, while Roy's jewelry store advertised diamond rings from $65 to $225, including the 20 percent federal tax. Recalling the giddy rampage that followed the armistice announcement in November 1918, downtown merchants announced a victory plan that included locking their doors and boarding up windows when word arrived that World War II had ended.

The fatal telegram from the adjutant general came to East Long Street on Sunday morning, June 25. "The Secretary of War desires me to express his deep regret that your husband, Lieutenant Colonel John J. Toffey, Jr., was killed in action on 3 June in Italy. Letter follows." Helen received his posthumous Purple Heart, which was Toffey's third of the war, and a posthumous Silver Star, his second. Eventually a footlocker of personal effects arrived, including his pen-and-pencil set and a bloodstained glasses case.

As for Colonel Toffey himself, he would never get home. Instead he was buried among comrades in section J, row 4, grave 25, in the Nettuno cemetery, which had first opened two days after the Anzio landings. The muddy field, redeemed with bougainvillea and white oleander, soon became the Sicily-Rome American Cemetery, a seventy-seven-acre sanctuary where almost eight thousand military dead would be interred.

Here, on Memorial Day in 1945, just three weeks after the end of the war in Europe, a stocky, square-jawed figure would climb the bunting-draped speaker's platform and survey the dignitaries seated before him on folding chairs. Then Lucian Truscott, who had returned to Italy from France a few months earlier to succeed Mark Clark as the Fifth Army commander, turned his back on the living and instead faced the dead. "It was," wrote eyewitness Bill Mauldin, "the most moving gesture I ever saw." In his carbolic voice, Truscott spoke to Jack Toffey, to Henry Waskow, and to the thousands of others who lay beneath the ranks of Latin crosses and stars of David. As Mauldin later recalled:

He apologized to the dead men for their presence here. He said everybody tells leaders it is not their fault that men get killed in war, but that every leader knows in his heart that this is not altogether true. He said he hoped anybody here through any mistake of his would forgive him, but he realized that was asking a hell of a lot under the circumstances…. He promised that if in the future he ran into anybody, especially old men, who thought death in battle was glorious, he would straighten them out.

The fall of Rome proved but a momentary interlude in a campaign that soon swept past the capital. Alexander's optimism was unbounded. "Morale is irresistibly high," he wrote Churchill. "Neither the Apennines nor even the Alps should prove a serious obstacle." The prime minister urged him on, cabling, "Your whole advance is splendid, and I hope the remains of what were once the German armies will be collected."

Late on June 7, a South African reconnaissance squadron found Kesselring's headquarters on Monte Soratte ablaze. The field marshal and his staff had fled, though a storeroom full of fine sherry and French wine was seized intact, along with German maps depicting escape routes to the Gothic Line.

Kesselring had tried to persuade himself that the Allied legions "might succumb to the demoralizing influence of a capital city." Yet for two weeks after Rome's capture the Fifth and Eighth Armies bounded up the peninsula, averaging eight miles a day. Then the retreating Germans stiffened under Kesselring's order to conduct demolitions "with sadistic imaginativeness." By June 17, the familiar pattern of blown bridges and antitank ambushes had slowed the pursuit to two miles a day, and vicious little firefights erupted across central Italy. When an artillery captain in the 36th Division was killed in mid-June, one of his lieutenants wrote, "Damned shame that after living through all the hell of Salerno, Altavilla & Cassino he should be killed in a skirmish that no one will ever hear of."

Alexander's blithe dismissal of the Apennines and the Alps suggested an enduring delusion about the road ahead, where the mountains grew steeper and enemy supply lines grew shorter. Moreover, profound strategic changes would redraw the Mediterranean campaign, leaving Italy a bloody backwater. The American high command in Washington, supported by Eisenhower in London, remained intent on a late-summer invasion of southern France to reinforce the Normandy landings. A British proposal to launch an amphibious landing in the northern Adriatic for an attack through the Balkans toward Austria and southern Germany drew skepticism if not scorn. General Charles de Gaulle also insisted that French forces in Italy participate in the liberation of France; no French soldier, De Gaulle warned, would fight beyond Siena.

On July 5, AFHQ ordered that "an overriding priority" be given in the Mediterranean to assembling ten divisions for the invasion near Marseilles, code-named ANVIL. Just as he had given up seven divisions after the fall of Sicily, Alexander now forfeited seven more, including Truscott's VI Corps and Juin's FEC, as well as substantial air support and many logistical units. By mid-August, Fifth Army would shrink by more than half, to 171,000 troops, even as the total American force in the Mediterranean peaked at 880,000 troops. Alexander deemed the denuding of his force "disastrous," and blamed Eisenhower for "halting the triumphant advance of my armies in Italy at a key moment." Clark, abruptly in harmony with General Alex, considered the move "one of the outstanding political mistakes of the war."

Their disappointment was understandable, yet the strategic judgment of Alexander and Clark remains suspect. Hitler had decided to rebuild Kesselring's army group with eight more divisions and to continue fighting for Italian real estate, while construction battalions turned the Gothic Line into a barrier as formidable as the Gustav Line had been. Although Allied intelligence revealed that four

German divisions had retreated from Rome as “mere shells,” and seven others were “drastically depleted,” the Allied pursuit even before the decimation of Alexander’s host was “neither strong nor quick,” as a U.S. Army assessment concluded. Night continued to give the retreating Germans “a privileged sanctuary” since Allied air fleets had only a few dozen aircraft capable of night attacks. “The cloak of darkness saved the German armies from destruction,” an Air Force study later concluded.

The stress in Fifth Army on capturing Rome led to a palpable deflation once the capital fell. Doctors in the 1st Special Service Force reported that men in the unit were “listless, perilously close to exhaustion, and infested with lice,” a diagnosis valid for many other units as well. On July 4, the 1st Armored Division reported that barely half of Old Ironsides’ tanks remained battleworthy and that the division in six weeks had lost thirty-eight company commanders.

If the past year had been among the most catastrophic in Italian history, with invasion, occupation, civil strife, and total war, the forthcoming year would hardly be less bitter. Partisan ambushes and assassinations increased, as did brutal reprisals: under Kesselring’s orders, ten Italian deaths were exacted for every German killed. By early fall, an estimated 85,000 armed partisans roamed the mountains, with another 60,000 in Italian towns. Atrocities became commonplace.

Alexander in late August would shift Eighth Army back to the Adriatic in an effort to unhinge Kesselring’s defenses. But autumn rains and heavy casualties halted the Allied drive toward the Po River, and even Churchill realized that “the Italian theater could no longer produce decisive results,” in W.G.F. Jackson’s words. As the days grew shorter, an American officer wrote, “I wished that I were dead if I had to stay in Italy another winter.”

Alas, another miserable winter would pass, another wretched deadlock in which the campaign “sank to the level of a vast holding operation,” as the official U.S. Army history put it. Alexander’s armies grew increasingly polyglot, comprising troops from twenty-nine nations speaking a dozen languages, including Brazilians, Belgians, Cypriots, and Palestinian Jews—as well as two American forces, one white and one black. The Germans grew so feeble that eventually oxen would be harnessed to pull trucks, and any soldier on patrol who brought back a can of fuel received a thousand cigarettes. Yet not until April 1945 would the Gothic Line collapse, leading to capitulation twenty months after Allied soldiers had first made land at Reggio di Calabria.

Few who had been there at the beginning would be there to see the end. “Many men will never know if we win or lose,” Lieutenant Will Stevens had written his mother. “But if anything does happen, I’ll try to be good enough so I can meet you somewhere else and maybe we can have a cake together up where things are not rationed.” He was killed on June 25, 1944. Such deaths forever haunted those who outlived the war. “I must pursue the shadows to some middle ground,” wrote the pilot John Muirhead, “for I am strangely bound to all that happened to them.”

The 608-day campaign to liberate Italy would cost 312,000 Allied casualties, equivalent to 40 percent of Allied losses in the decisive campaign for northwest Europe that began at Normandy. Among the three-quarters of a million American troops to serve in Italy, total battle casualties would reach 120,000, including 23,501 killed.

German casualties in Italy remain uncertain, as they were in North Africa. Alexander put German losses at 536,000, while the official U.S. Army history tallied 435,000, including 48,000 enemies killed and 214,000 missing, many of whom were never accounted for. Fifth Army alone reported 212,000 prisoners captured in the campaign. An OSS analysis of obituaries in seventy German daily newspapers found a steady increase in the number of seventeen-and eighteen-year-old war dead;

moreover, by late summer 1944, nearly one in ten Germans killed in action was said to be over thirty-eight years old.

As the war moved north, Italian refugees returned home to find their towns obliterated and their fields sown with land mines. The Pontine Marshes again became malarial, and nine out of every ten acres around Anzio were no longer arable. The ten miles between Ortona and Orsogna held an estimated half million mines; those straggling home carried hepatitis, meningitis, and typhus. Ancient San Pietro was a ghost town, and a ghost town it remained, a shambles of plinths, splintered roof beams, and labyrinthine rubble. Only about forty San Pietrans returned to the old village; other survivors moved away or inhabited a new town that would be built down the slope, a bit closer to Highway 6. Some who outlived the war died violently from mines, or while trying to disarm live shells to sell the copper and brass for scrap.

Sant'Angelo refugees first returned in June 1944 to harvest wheat along the Rapido River. Mines quickly took a toll here too, and continued to take a toll for years: among the lost were Pietro Fargnoli, age six, and Pietro Bove, age twelve, both born after the war, and both killed on February 27, 1959.

Malaria kept Cassino uninhabitable for two years. Eventually the Via Serpentina was rebuilt; so, too, the gleaming white abbey on the hill and the town itself, which within a few decades became prosperous and handsome, with a big Fiat plant nearby and a new *autostrada* that carried travelers from Naples to Rome in two hours.

Some scars were harder to heal. "The men that war does not kill it leaves completely transparent," one colonel observed after a night of heavy shelling. A soldier in the 36th Division later wrote, "I was scared for 23 months. I saw the best troops in the world cut down and replaced three or four times." Simply surviving exacted a price. As J. Glenn Gray told his diary, "My conscience seems to become little by little sooted." Or, as an old paratrooper from the 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment said almost sixty years after the war: "I hate the smell of anything dead…. It reminds me of Salerno."

Was the game worth the candle? Alexander thought so. "Any estimate of the value of the campaign must be expressed not in terms of the ground gained," he later wrote, "but in terms of its effect on the war as a whole." By his tally, when Rome fell six of Kesselring's nine "excellent mobile divisions had been severely mauled," and fifty-five German divisions "were tied down in the Mediterranean by the [Allied] threat, actual or potential." As the Combined Chiefs commanded, Italy had been knocked from the Axis coalition and hundreds of thousands of Hitler's troops had been "sucked into the vortex of defeat," in the glum phrase of a senior German general in Berlin. Churchill later wrote, "The principal task of our armies had been to draw off and contain the greatest possible number of Germans. This had been admirably fulfilled."

Yet the Allied strategy in Italy seemed designed not to win but to endure. "There is little doubt that Alexander fulfilled his strategic mission," General Jackson later observed, "[but] there is less certainty about the correctness of that mission." Two distinguished British military historians would voice similar skepticism. John Keegan saw the campaign as "a strategic diversion on the maritime flank of a continental enemy," while Michael Howard believed the Mediterranean strategy reflected Churchill's desire to divert American combat power from the Pacific. The British, Howard concluded, "never really knew where they were going in the Mediterranean."

Others would be even harsher. The Mediterranean was a "cul-de-sac," wrote the historian Corelli Barnett, "mere byplay in the conclusion of a war that had been won in mass battles on the Eastern and Western fronts." (There were 22 German divisions in Italy on June 6, 1944; by comparison, 157

fought in the east on that day and almost 60 more in western Europe.) Another British eminence, J.F.C. Fuller, in 1948 would call Italy "tactically the most absurd and strategically the most senseless campaign of the whole war." B. H. Liddell Hart concluded that the Italian effort "subtracted very heavily" from Allied war resources, "a much larger subtraction from the total effort than the German had incurred by making a stand in Italy." And the American historian David M. Kennedy decried "a needlessly costly sideshow," a "grinding war of attrition whose costs were justified by no defensible military or political purpose."

Even Kesselring, ever cheeky for a man who had lost both the battle *and* the war, would observe in September 1945 that Anglo-American commanders "appeared bound to their fixed plans. Opportunities to strike at my flanks were overlooked or disregarded." Although "German divisions of the highest fighting quality…were tied down in Italy at a time when they were urgently needed in the French coastal areas," Kesselring later added, the Allies "utterly failed to seize their chances."

True enough, all of it, but perhaps not the whole truth. If "to advance is to conquer," in Frederick the Great's adage, then the Allies continued to conquer in the Mediterranean, albeit slowly. When Rome fell, only eleven German U-boats still operated in the entire Mediterranean, and no Allied merchantman would be sunk there for the rest of the war; controlling the middle sea proved vital in liberating Europe, and in guaranteeing another route for Lend-Lease matériel to Russia via Persia. The bomber offensive continued apace from Italian fields that crept ever closer to the Reich; a sustained and ultimately fatal campaign against German oil production facilities included six thousand Fifteenth Air Force sorties in the summer of 1944 that targeted vital refineries around Ploesti, Romania. As the historian Douglas Porch wrote, "One must not lose from view the Mediterranean's importance in breaking the offensive power of German arms, and forcing the Reich onto the defensive, after which any hope of victory eluded them."

Moreover, all criticism of the Italian strategy butts against an inconvenient riposte: if not Italy, where? "Events generate their own momentum, impose their own force, and exert their own influence on the will of man," wrote Martin Blumenson, who spent a professional lifetime pondering the Mediterranean campaign. "We went into Sicily and Italy because we had been in North Africa." No oceangoing fleet was available to move a half million men from the African littoral to England, or anywhere else; nor could British ports, rails, and other facilities, already overwhelmed by the American hordes staging for OVERLORD, have handled such a force. Moscow would not have tolerated an idling of Allied armies during the ten months between the conquest of Sicily and the Normandy invasion—a ten-month respite the Germans badly needed. "The Italian campaign," wrote the naval historian Samuel Eliot Morison, "was fought because it had to be fought."

Historical tautology may be suspect, and opportunism lacks the panache of grand strategy. From beginning to end, Allied warmaking in the Mediterranean tended to be improvisational. The decision to continue pounding north after the capture of Rome remains especially difficult to justify. Yet the American commander-in-chief had grown comfortable with a campaign that in Italy more than in any other theater resembled the grinding inelegance of World War I. "Our war of attrition is doing its work," Franklin Roosevelt had said a week after the invasion of Sicily, and he never renounced that strategy.

Certainly lessons learned in Sicily and southern Italy paid dividends later in the war, notably the expertise gained in complex amphibious operations and in fighting as a large, multinational coalition. Kesselring went so far as to posit that without the Mediterranean experience, the invasion of France "would have undoubtedly become a failure." Many other lessons were prosaic but sterling, such as the realization that the truck hauling ammunition to the front was no less vital than the gun firing it.

For the U.S. Army, which would shoulder the heaviest burden in western Europe for the balance of the war, there was also the priceless conviction that American soldiers could slug it out with the

best German troops, division by division, and prevail. A Japanese-American soldier in the 100th Battalion wrote from Italy, “I really belong to the great American Army here and feel that I am part and parcel of the forces that are fighting for the kind of America we always dreamed of back home.”

On the day Rome fell, that great American Army numbered eight million soldiers, a fivefold increase since Pearl Harbor. It included twelve hundred generals and nearly 500,000 lieutenants. Half the Army had yet to deploy overseas, but the U.S. military already had demonstrated that it could wage global war in several far-flung theaters simultaneously, a notion that had “seemed outlandish in 1942,” as the historian Eric Larrabee later wrote.

Of those eight million American soldiers in June 1944, about one in ten were in the Mediterranean. Most who were still in Italy, it may be surmised, would have endorsed a ditty circulating through the ranks:

I’m glad that I came, and damned anxious to go,
Give it back to the natives, I’m ready to blow.

* * *

Some *would* blow. Kesselring continued to command German forces in Italy until October 1944, when he was badly injured in a collision between his staff car and a mobile gun. Hospitalized for months, he would eventually take command of the faltering Western Front in an hour when catastrophic defeat loomed ever closer for the Reich.

Some blew to other fronts. Charles Ryder left the 34th Division, which he had led since before the TORCH invasion, and would end the war as a corps commander in the Philippines, staging for an invasion of Japan. Fred Walker, awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for his heroics with the 36th Division on Monte Artemisio, was sent home soon after Rome’s capture to become commandant of the Army’s infantry school in Georgia. “I do not want to leave the division,” he wrote, “but I will not be sorry to leave this theater and this army.”

Others were fated to remain in Italy for the duration. General von Senger would fight to the end before his capture, struggling to preserve his humanity in the midst of relentless carnage. “You can never quite get over it,” he reflected long after the war. The puppet dictator Mussolini lived near Lake Garda, where he read Tolstoy, played tennis—opponents still let him win—and pedaled about on his bicycle, trailed by a truckload of German soldiers. After moving his rump government to Milan in the spring of 1945, Mussolini would be captured by partisans while trying to escape to Switzerland, disguised in a German greatcoat and helmet; with his mistress, Clara Petacci, he was executed on April 28, 1945. The Duce’s body, badly mangled and hoisted upside down in a gas station, would be stolen by neo-Fascists in 1946, recaptured three months later by Italian police, and hidden in a convent for eleven years before final interment in the Mussolini family crypt, where the faithful still sign their names in the guest book.

Alexander received a field marshal’s baton for the capture of Rome, and a few months later succeeded Wilson as supreme commander in the Mediterranean, with responsibility for Italy, Greece, and the Balkans. “The limitations of his ability began to appear when the forces under his command became so huge that their manipulation required weeks and months of forethought, not hours or days,” observed John Harding, his shrewd chief of staff. Elevated to the peerage as a viscount after the war, Alexander would serve for years as the governor-general of Canada.

Geoffrey Keyes continued to command II Corps, receiving his third star in April 1945, and eventually serving as the postwar Allied high commissioner for Austria. Bill Darby's life remained a compelling blend of the felicitous and the star-crossed: after a stint as a staff officer in the War Department, he returned to Italy as assistant commander of the 10th Mountain Division, only to be killed near Lake Garda by a German artillery shell on April 30, 1945. Among the last casualties of the long campaign, Darby was posthumously promoted to brigadier general. He was thirty-four.

In an exchange of letters with Sarah after the fall of Rome, Lucian Truscott was astonished to find her unaware that he had commanded the Anzio beachhead. "I tried to tell you in every way I could," he wrote on June 15. "What in the world did you think I was doing?" He lamented being "far removed from the softening touch of woman and home," adding, "I'm a bit on edge. It is my belief that much hard fighting lies before us." He was right. Truscott would lead his VI Corps through southern France to the Vosges Mountains before succeeding Clark as the Fifth Army commander in December 1944. In postwar Germany he would serve as the military governor of Bavaria.

Clark also felt on edge. In letters to Renie he complained about her failure to send a congratulatory telegram after he captured Rome, then confessed that he was "badly in need of a rest. Never needed one more." An intestinal infection had caused him to lose weight until he was nearly skeletal, despite a bracing regimen of sulfa drugs. Worse yet, on June 10, he was nearly killed when his Piper Grasshopper collided a thousand feet up with a barrage balloon cable. "It wrapped around the wing and we couldn't get loose," Clark wrote. "Finally, in spiraling the third time, losing altitude rapidly, the cable became disengaged, although it tore the wing and ripped open the gas tank…. We miraculously got down into a cornfield…In ever had a worse experience." On July 4 he wrote Renie, "You ask the question, 'What after Italy?' Perhaps you can tell me."

Italy would be with him for the rest of the war and beyond. He succeeded Alexander as commander of the army group and received his fourth star in March 1945 at age forty-eight, becoming by far the youngest of the thirteen U.S. officers to wear that rank during World War II. After the war Clark would precede Keyes as high commissioner in Austria before commanding United Nations forces in Korea and eventually serving as president of the Citadel, in Charleston, South Carolina.

The Rapido calamity continued to torment him, particularly when congressional investigators took up the cause of disaffected Texas veterans. To Renie he would write from Vienna in March 1946, "It is the most cruel and unfair attack ever made on an officer who worked so desperately, under such adverse conditions to make what I believed, and still do [believe] was a fine record." Lamenting Eisenhower's silence on the subject, and suspecting his former 36th Division commander of provoking the Texans, Clark added, "I believe Walker is the 'snake in the grass.'" To help commemorate that "fine record," he commissioned an immense history of Fifth Army, in nine volumes.

He would remain among the war's most controversial commanders, a man whose very name more than a half century later could cause brows to knit and lips to purse. If his admirers considered him "clairvoyant and energetic," in the phrase of General Juin, Mauldin spoke for many in the lower ranks in observing of Clark: "He had his limitations. But I think a lot of the criticism of him occurred because he was associated with a bad time."

Those who fought and suffered in Italy—that "tough old gut," as Ernie Pyle called it—were left to extract from the bad time what redemption they could. "Few of us can ever conjure up any truly fond memories of the Italian campaign," Pyle wrote in *Brave Men* in late 1944. "The enemy had been hard, and so had the elements…. There was little solace for those who had suffered, and none at all for

those who had died, in trying to rationalize about why things had happened as they did."

He continued:

> I looked at it this way—if by having only a small army in Italy we had been able to build up more powerful forces in England, and if by sacrificing a few thousand lives that winter we would save a half million lives in Europe—if those things were true, then it was best as it was.
>
> I wasn't sure they were true. I only knew I had to look at it that way or else I couldn't bear to think of it at all.

Faith and imagination were required to elevate the Italian campaign, to see as the poet Richard Wilbur, a veteran of Cassino and Anzio, saw: "the dreamt land / Toward which all hungers leap, all pleasures pass." Even Pyle, who knew better than most that "war isn't romantic to the people in it," sensed the sublime in moments "of overpowering beauty, of the surge of a marching world, of the relentlessness of our fate."

George Biddle had found that in "misery, destruction, frustration, and death," certain annealed qualities seemed "to give war its justification, meaning, romance, and beauty. The qualities of valor, sacrifice, discipline, a sense of duty." Even Mauldin, that flinty-eyed skeptic, would concede, "I stopped regarding the war as a show to help my career. I felt a seriousness of purpose, and I felt it in my bones." A medic who had landed at Salerno later wrote his wife, "This is something that is born deep inside us, when we come to know *why* we are here, when we have learned how very important it was that we did leave you and all we love."

Somewhere north of Rome, Glenn Gray wrote in his diary: "I watched a full moon sail through a cloudy sky…. I felt again the aching beauty of this incomparable land. I remembered everything that I had ever been and was. It was painful and glorious."

Another day passed, and another night. The circling stars glided on their courses. The poets and the dreamers again struck their tents and shouldered their rifles to begin that long, last march.

Unless otherwise noted, all photographs are from *U.S. Army Signal Corps archives*.



President Franklin D. Roosevelt with Prime Minister Winston S. Churchill at Shangri-La, the presidential retreat in Maryland's Catoctin Mountains, during an interlude in the TRIDENT conference, mid-May 1943 *(Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library)*



The president and prime minister with their Combined Chiefs of Staff in a posed portrait at the White House on May 24, 1943, the last day of the TRIDENT conference. Standing from left to right: Field Marshal Sir John Dill, the senior British officer stationed in Washington; Lieutenant General Sir Hastings L. “Pug” Ismay, chief of staff to Churchill; Air Chief Marshal Sir Charles F. A. Portal, chief of the British air staff; General Sir Alan Brooke, chief of the Imperial General Staff; Admiral Sir Dudley Pound, the British First Sea Lord; Admiral William D. Leahy, Roosevelt’s chief military adviser; General George C. Marshall, the U.S. Army chief of staff; Admiral Ernest J. King, the U.S. chief of naval operations; Lieutenant General Joseph T. McNarney, an Army Air Forces pilot who served as Marshall’s deputy chief of staff. The senior AAF commander, General H. H. “Hap” Arnold, spent the conference in the hospital for treatment of a heart condition. *(Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library)*



Allied troops boarding assault craft in a North African port, apparently Bizerte, Tunisia, en route to Sicily for Operation HUSKY in early July 1943



General Dwight D. Eisenhower (*left*) and General George C. Marshall during a meeting in Algiers in September 1943



Vice Admiral H. Kent Hewitt (*right*), who commanded American naval forces during the invasions of Morocco, Sicily, and Salerno, on the deck of his flagship with the war correspondent Quentin Reynolds *(U.S. Navy, National Archives)*



Major General Terry de la Mesa Allen (*left*) commander of the 1st Infantry Division, studies a map with the man who became his nemesis, Lieutenant General Omar N. Bradley, commander of the U.S. II Corps. Censors have inked out a landmark between the two to avoid pinpointing their location in Sicily.



Brigadier General Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., assistant commander of the 1st Infantry Division during the invasion of Sicily, shown here with his jeep in January 1944. An admirer described him with four adjectives: “Bald, burnt, gnarled, and wrinkled.”



Axis aircraft attack Allied invasion ships in the anchorage off Gela, Sicily, on July 11, 1943. After bombs struck the Liberty ship S.S. *Rowan* in this area on the same day, one witness described “a flat sheet of crimson fire in a frame of black smoke.”



Dead and dying Italian soldiers lie in a road near Palermo in July 1943, after their truck inadvertently hit an Italian mine while being pursued by U.S. troops. Near a jeep in the background, medics dress the wounds of an American lieutenant.



Lieutenant General George S. Patton, Jr. (*right*), commander of the U.S. Seventh Army, at the Royal Palace in Palermo with his rival, General Bernard L. Montgomery (*center*), commander of the British Eighth Army, and Major General Geoffrey Keyes, Patton's deputy



Company A of the 16th Infantry Regiment, 1st Infantry Division, on July 28, 1943, moving toward Troina, the highest and perhaps most fiercely defended town in Sicily. “Troina was the toughest battle Americans have fought since World War I,” one general concluded, “and there were very few in that war which were its equal.”



Major General Matthew B. Ridgway (*left*), commander of the 82nd Airborne Division, with a Signal Corps cameraman in central Sicily, July 25, 1943. “Hard as flint and full of intensity, almost grinding his teeth from intensity,” one subordinate said of Ridgway.



Field Marshal Albert Kesselring, the senior German commander in the Mediterranean, was a former artilleryman who had learned to fly and had transferred to the Luftwaffe. An exceptional tactician who believed that most of Italy could be defended, Kesselring argued for a strategic concept that involved keeping the war as far from the Fatherland as long as possible. *(U.S. Army Military History Institute)*



Riflemen from the 143rd Infantry Regment, 36th Infantry Division, wade toward the beach at Paestum, south of Salerno, at the start of Operation AVALANCHE on September 9, 1943. The milky haze from artificial smoke was intended to blind German gunners on the high ground ringing the landing sites.



U.S. Navy sailors and Coast Guardsmen hug the shingle during a German air raid on the anchorage at Salerno. Debris from an exploding bomb can be seen in the background. The wire mesh laid across the beach was intended to improve traction for military vehicles.



Major General Ernest J. Dawley commanded the U.S. VI Corps during the landings at Salerno in September 1943. A stocky, cautious artilleryman from Wisconsin who had been described in his West Point yearbook as “a quiet lad that one seldom sees or hears of,” Dawley had warned his superiors before Salerno, “Don’t bite off more than you can chew, and chew damn well.”



Lieutenant General Richard L. McCreery commanded the British X Corps at Salerno, anchoring the Allied left flank. A pious, blunt Anglo-Irish cavalryman—“tall, lean, and vague,” as one American described him—McCreery still limped from a World War I wound and tended when aggravated to lower his voice to a near-whisper.



U.S. infantrymen push past the Temple of Neptune at Paestum, center of the American sector during the landings around Salerno Bay. Still among the grandest complex of Doric temples outside Athens, Paestum had been a 6th-century B.C. Greek colony, famed in antiquity for roses and violets.



The Tabacchificio Fioche, known to American troops as the Tobacco Factory, just north of the Sele River at Salerno. A stronghold of five brick buildings with massive walls, red tile roofs, and small windows resembling gun ports, the complex changed hands repeatedly during the battle.



The cruiser U.S.S. *Savannah*, on fire and down in the bow on September 11, 1943, after a German radio-controlled bomb, known as a Fritz-X, punched through No. 3 turret and detonated belowdecks, killing more than two hundred sailors. No U.S. Navy warship in World War II would be struck by a larger bomb. One witness reported, “That hit wasn’t natural.”



Benito Mussolini on September 12, 1943, just before climbing into the cockpit of the Storch airplane that will carry him from the Gran Sasso ski resort where he had been imprisoned by Italian authorities following his arrest. On Hitler’s orders, German paratroopers led by Captain Otto Skorzeny landed by glider on the mountaintop to free the Duce without firing a shot.



Naples and its famous bay, with Vesuvius in the background. Captured on October 1, 1943, the city for Allied soldiers soon became “the nearest symbol of every man’s immediate aspirations,” one British officer wrote, “a fairyland of silver and gold.”



American infantrymen in an assault boat haul themselves across the Volturno River in mid-October 1943 during the first major river crossing in Europe by Allied troops. By moving quickly on a broad front, and by leaving the main roads to infiltrate around enemy strongpoints, Allied forces advanced thirty-five miles past Naples before rain and stiffening German resistance slowed the pace.



A wounded German prisoner awaits medical treatment along the bank of the Volturno on October 17, 1943.



A U.S. soldier north of the Volturno disables a mine, which has been discovered by the engineer holding his metal detector. “All roads lead to Rome,” quipped General Harold Alexander, the commander-in-chief of Allied forces in Italy, “but all the roads are mined.”



Lieutenant Colonel John Toffey, Jr., as a battalion commander in the 3rd Infantry Division after the Volturno crossing. A combat commander since the invasion of North Africa, Toffey possessed “the bones and confirmation of a steeple-chaser rather than a racehorse,” according to the combat artist George Biddle, who made this sketch on October 30, 1943. *(Courtesy of John J. Toffey IV and Michael Biddle)*



A Harvard-educated World War I veteran, George Biddle was a fine writer as well as a talented draftsman. Of the Italian campaign he wrote, “I wish the people at home, instead of thinking of their boys in terms of football stars, would think of them in terms of miners trapped underground or suffocating to death in a tenth-story fire.”



Ships ablaze in Bari harbor after German bombers struck the Adriatic port in a surprise raid on December 2, 1943. Seventeen Allied ships were sunk in what was described as the “costliest sneak attack since Pearl Harbor.” The explosion of a munitions ship secretly carrying mustard gas caused mass casualties among servicemen and Italian civilians.



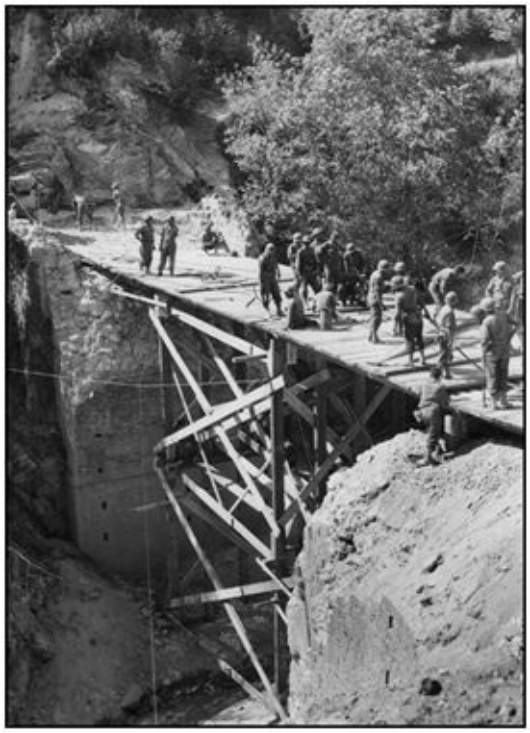
British infantrymen in early December 1943 cling to the face of Monte Camino, described by one Tommy as a “steep solid rock leading God knows where.” Stone breastworks offered little protection against German mortar fragments or the frigid cold. “A small earthquake added to the unpleasantness,” a Scots Guard account noted.



Eisenhower (*left*) and Lieutenant General Mark W. Clark, commander of the U.S. Fifth Army, near the Mignano Gap in central Italy in December 1943. A few days later, Eisenhower would leave the Mediterranean to take command of OVERLORD, the invasion of France.



Italian women washing clothes in a village trough in central Italy as an Allied convoy crawls through mud that seemed to grow thicker and deeper by the day



Fifth Army engineers finish a bridge across a streambed in central Italy to replace the span destroyed by German demolitionists. In twenty months of fighting in Italy, the Allies would erect three thousand spans, with a combined length of fifty-five miles. This one took ten hours to build.



The view of Monte Sammucro from German positions on Monte Lungo. Highway 6 runs across the bottom of the photo, while a secondary road angles around Dead Man’s Curve toward San Pietro, seen clinging to the lower slopes of the massif. The pinnacle of Sammucro, nearly four thousand feet high, was known as Hill 1205.



In covering the fighting at San Pietro, Ernie Pyle wrote about the death on Monte Sammucro of Captain Henry T. Waskow. “Beloved Captain,” his most famous dispatch, was perhaps the finest expository passage of World War II. But Pyle told a friend, “I’ve lost the touch. This stuff stinks.”



“He was never young,” a school classmate once said of Henry Waskow, “not in a crazy high school-kid way.” To his family in Texas, Waskow wrote, “If I failed as a leader, and I pray God I didn’t, it was not because I did not try.” *(Texas Military Forces Museum)*



In the mountains near Venafro, an Italian mule skinner (*right*) helps secure the body of a dead American soldier for removal to a temporary military cemetery. Blood stains can be seen on the stretcher.



U.S. troops from the 504th Airborne Infantry Regiment and 143rd Infantry climb through the rubble of San Pietro on December 17, 1943. A gunner described the village as “one large mound of desolation.”



Christmas dinner 1943, on the hood of a jeep. The striped unit patch on the sleeve and helmet of the soldier on the right shows that he belongs to the 3rd Infantry Division; the other two men served in the 163rd Signal Company.



After a near-fatal bout of pneumonia, Winston Churchill rose from his sickbed in Tunisia for a Christmas lunch with Eisenhower (*left*) and Alexander (*center*). The prime minister, who is wearing his “siren suit” and Chinese dressing gown with blue-and-gold dragons, had begun pressing for a surprise Allied landing behind enemy lines at Anzio.



Mortar crewmen drop another round down the tube near the Rapido River on January 24, 1944. Before the attack, the 36th Division commander, Major General Fred L. Walker, had scribbled in his diary, “We are undertaking the impossible, but I shall keep it to myself.”



Two signalmen use a pig sty as a message center during the battle for the Rapido, January 23, 1944. A censor has marked through the sign indicating that the men belong to the 143rd Infantry Regiment of the 36th Division. Observed one sergeant, “Anybody who had any experience knew this ain’t the place to cross the river.”



Before leaving the Mediterreanean for Britain, Patton (*left*) in mid-January 1944 made a final trip to Italy to see his former deputy, Major General Geoffrey Keyes, now commanding the U.S. II Corps. "The impetuous, vitriolic, histrionic Patton is considerably leavened by the calm, deliberate, circumspect Keyes," a War Department observer had reported to Washington.



Once described as an “amiable mastiff,” Major General Fred L. Walker had been Mark Clark’s instructor at the Army War College in the 1930s. As the Rapido attack turned into a debacle, Walker’s disaffection increased. “The stupidity of some higher commanders seems to be profound,” he wrote. *(Texas Military Forces Museum)*



Anzio was the birthplace of two notorious Roman emperors, Nero and Caligula. Her sister city, Nettuno, can be seen down the coastline (*center right*), just beyond the dark patch of the Borghese estate; the seventeenth-century villa commandeered by Mark Clark as a Fifth Army command post is also visible in the center of the estate. Beyond the coast, the Pontine Marshes stretch to the distant hills.



The Pontine Marshes for centuries had been a malarial dead zone until Mussolini transformed the region into “smiling fields” with enormous pumps. As the Allied armies neared Rome, German demolitionists flooded 100,000 acres of farmland to make the area both impassable and hospitable to malaria-carrying mosquitoes.



Colonel William O. Darby, seen here as a regimental commander in the 45th Division in April 1944, listened on the radio as much of the Ranger force he had built and led was destroyed at Cisterna a week after the Anzio landings.



Major General John P. Lucas in his VI Corps office in Nettuno on February 10, 1944, shortly before the German counterattack that nearly shattered the Allied beachhead. Regarding the Anzio invasion, “Old Luke” told his diary, “This venture was always a desperate one.”



Four pilots from the 99th Fighter Squadron on January 29, 1944, shortly after each had shot down a German plane over Anzio—among a dozen Luftwaffe aircraft bagged by the Tuskegee airmen in a two-day spree above the beachhead. From left: Lieutenant Willie Ashley, Jr., Lieutenant W. V. Eagleson, Captain C. B. Hall, and Captain L. R. Custis.



In Hell’s Half Acre at Anzio, troops in early April 1944 dig in another hospital tent against German artillery and air attacks. In a single episode two months earlier, a Luftwaffe pilot jettisoned his bombs during a dogfight over the beachhead and the blasts killed twenty-eight people—including three nurses, two doctors, and six patients.



Major General Lucian K. Truscott, Jr., (*left*) commander of the U.S. VI Corps, and Lieutenant General Ira Eaker, the senior U.S. air commander in the Mediterranean, inspect sandbag-and–wine barrel fortifications around the Anzio airfield on April 6, 1944.



American soldiers march in step with their shadows toward Cassino along Highway 6, north of the Mignano Gap.



An Army chaplain baptizes a corporal in the ornate fountain at Caserta, the mammoth eighteenth-century palace where both Mark Clark and Harold Alexander kept headquarters among the twelve hundred rooms. A nearby reflecting pool was large enough to accommodate landings by Clark's pontoon airplane.



Actresss Marlene Dietrich, who frequently entertained Allied troops in the war zone, stands in a mess line while visiting the 47th Bombardment Group in this undated photograph. After meeting Patton in Sicily, Dietrich described him as “a tank too big for the village square.” *(Courtesy of Russell H. Raine)*



Fifth Army soldiers lined up outside the San Carlo opera house in Naples to see *This Is the Army*, a musical comedy by Irving Berlin.



U.S. Army military policemen toasting bread over molten lava from Vesuvius. The volcano’s spectacular eruption, which began on March 18, 1944, would be the last of the twentieth century.



Artillery fire rakes Castle Hill above Cassino town on February 6, 1944. The famous Benedictine abbey looming on Monte Cassino would survive another nine days before Allied bombers pulverized the building.



Lieutenant General Oliver W. H. Leese (*left*), who succeeded Montgomery as commander of the British Eighth Army, was described by one American officer as “a big ungainly bruiser.” In this photo, taken near Cassino on February 17, 1944, he stands next to the gallant Polish commander, General Wladyslaw Anders.



A former dentist who had become one of the British empire’s preeminent soldiers, Lieutenant General Bernard C. Freyberg commanded the New Zealand Corps at Cassino. An acquaintance suggested, “His great fearlessness owed something to a lack of imagination.”



A German propaganda leaflet at Cassino, depicting the slow pace of the Allied advance in Italy
(Courtesy of Major R. C. Taylor)



“Sprout after sprout of black smoke leapt from the earth and curled upward like some dark forest,” one journalist wrote after watching the obliteration of Cassino town, by air and artillery bombardment, on March 15, 1944. Castle Hill can be seen through the smoke and dust in the upper right.



Lieutenant General Fridolin von Senger und Etterlin, commander of the XIV Panzer Corps at Cassino, had studied at Oxford University as a Rhodes Scholar before World War I. His high forehead, hooked beak, and sunken cheeks gave Senger the air of a homely ascetic; his long fingers and aesthete's mannerisms suggested a man "more French really than Prussian," as his daughter later claimed. *(U.S. Army Military History Institute)*



The senior U.S. air commander in the Mediterranean, Lieutenant General Ira C. Eaker, flying toward Anzio on April 15, 1944. “In the air in Italy,” Eaker declared of the enemy, “the Hun is absolutely flat on his back.”



Tanks from the 1st Armored Division roll from an L.S.T. in Anzio harbor on April 27, 1944, among the reinforcements preparing to blast out of the beachhead after four months' confinement.



Audie Murphy, a Texas sharecropper's son and fifth-grade dropout who became the most celebrated soldier in the U.S. Army, seen here as a lieutenant in 1945 with the Congressional Medal of Honor around his neck *(Texas Military Forces Museum)*



“Radiate confidence, and enjoy taking risks,” advised General Alphonse Pierre Juin, commander of the French Expeditionary Corps, who believed that the formidable enemy defenses in the Gustav Line could be outflanked only by “invading the mountains.”



One of the twelve thousand *goumiers* in the French corps, irregular Berber tribesmen known for their agility and ruthlessness



Allied soldiers carry a dead comrade from the rubble of Monte Cassino, shortly after the abbey finally fell to Polish troops on May 18, 1944. Dead German defenders, including one stripped of his hobnail boots, lie along the trail.



Beneath the masonry shards atop Castle Hill, South African engineers clear Highway 6 through Cassino town on May 21, 1944.



Major General Keyes (*left*) with Lieutenant General Clark and Brigadier General Robert T. Frederick (*right*), commander of the 1st Special Service Force, outside Rome in early June 1944



An Italian woman and a young girl cover dead GIs with cuttings from a rose bush on June 4, 1944, the day Rome fell.



American infantrymen shelter behind the turret of a Sherman tank on June 5, 1944. Note the sniper's bullet hole beneath the "o" on the sign.



Jubilant Romans throng the streets to greet Clark, the conquering general, on June 5, 1944, as his driver wanders through the city in search of the Capito-line. In the rear seat behind Clark are the Fifth Army chief of staff, Major General Alfred M. Gruenther (*left*), and Keyes, the II Corps commander.



GIs near Rome read of the Normandy invasion in *The Beachhead News*. “How do you like that?” Clark complained. “They didn’t even let us have the newspaper headlines for the fall of Rome for one day.”



An American column snakes through Rome’s Piazza del Popolo before pressing north in pursuit of the retreating German armies.



From a window sill above a Roman street, Mark Clark watches his troops sweep across the capital in early June. “You ask the question, ‘What after Italy?’” he wrote his wife. “Perhaps you can tell me.” Clark would remain among the most controversial commanders of World War II, a man whose very name more than a half century later could cause brows to knit and lips to purse.

NOTES

The following abbreviations appear in the endnotes and bibliography.

45th ID Mus 45th Infantry Division Museum, Oklahoma City
AAF Army Air Forces
AAFinWWII W. F. Craven and J. L. Cate, eds., *The Army Air Forces in World War II,* vol. II unless otherwise noted
AAR after action report
AB *After the Battle*
AD armored division
admin administration
AF air force
AFHQ micro Allied Forces Headquarters microfilm, NARA RG 331
AFHRA Air Force Historical Research Agency
ag adjutant general
AGF Army Ground Forces
ALM Audie Leon Murphy papers, USMA Special Collections, West Point
AR armored regiment
AS Armored School
ASEQ Army Service Experiences Questionnaire, MHI
ASF Army Service Forces
AU Air University
Battle W.G.F. Jackson, *The Battle for Italy*
bde brigade
bn battalion
CA working papers for *Cassino to the Alps*
Calculated Mark W. Clark, *Calculated Risk*
CARL Combined Arms Research Library, Fort Leavenworth, Kans.
CBH Chester B. Hansen diary, MHI
CCS Combined Chiefs of Staff
CEOH U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Office of History
CGSC Command and General Staff School, U.S. Army
Chandler Alfred Chandler, ed., *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower: The War Years*
CINCLANT Commander-in-Chief, Atlantic Fleet
CJB Clay and Joan Blair collection, MHI
CM L. K. Truscott, Jr., *Command Missions*
CMH U.S. Army Center of Military History, Fort McNair, Washington, D.C.
co company
Coakley Robert W. Coakley and Richard M. Leighton, *Global Logistics and Strategy, 1943–1945*
Col U OHRO Columbia University Oral History Research Office
corr correspondence

CSI U.S. Army Combat Studies Institute, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas
ct combat team
CtoA Ernest F. Fisher, Jr., *Cassino to the Alps*
DA Department of the Army
Danchev Alex Danchev and Daniel Todman, eds., *War Diaries, 1939–1945: Field Marshal Lord Alanbrooke*
DDE Dwight David Eisenhower
DDE Lib Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library
Destruction I.S.O. Playfair and C.J.C. Molony, *The Mediterranean and the Middle East*, vol. IV
diss dissertation
div division
DSC Distinguished Service Cross
DTL Donovan Technical Library, now Donovan Research Library
E entry
EJD Ernest J. Dawley, including papers at Hoover Institution Archive
ENH Ernest N. Harmon, including papers at U.S. Army Military History Institute
ETO European Theater of Operations
FA field artillery
FAJ *Field Artillery Journal*
FCP Forrest C. Pogue, including background material for *The Supreme Commander*
FDR Lib Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library
FLW Fred L. Walker
FMS Foreign Military Studies
FOIA Freedom of Information Act
FRUS *Foreign Relations of the United States: The Conferences at Washington and Quebec, 1943*
Ft. K Fort Knox, Ky.
Ft. L Fort Leavenworth, Kans.
Garland Albert N. Garland and Howard McGaw Smyth, *Sicily and the Surrender of Italy*
GCM Lib George C. Marshall Library, Lexington, Va.
GK Geoffrey Keyes, including diary, author's possession
GS **IV** Michael Howard, *Grand Strategy*, vol. IV
GS **V** John Ehrman, *Grand Strategy*, vol. V
GSP George S. Patton, Jr., including papers at the Library of Congress
Hansen draft of Omar Bradley's *A Soldier's Story*, C. B. Hansen, MHI
HCB Harry C. Butcher, including papers
HIA Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University
Hill/O'Neill "Report of Col. William H. Hill and Col. E. J. O'Neill on Conference Held in Marrakech, March 10, 1994, JPL papers, MHI, box 4, 1
HKH Henry Kent Hewitt Papers
Hq headquarters
ID infantry division
IJ *Infantry Journal*
inf infantry
intel intelligence
Iowa GSM Iowa Gold Star Museum, Fort Dodge, Iowa
IS Infantry School, Fort Benning, Ga.
IWM Imperial War Museum, London

JAG U.S. Army judge advocate general
JCS Joint Chiefs of Staff
JJT John J. Toffey, IV, "A Game for the Young," author's possession
JMG James M. Gavin papers
JPL John P. Lucas, including diary, "From Algiers to Anzio," MHI
LH Basil Henry Liddell Hart
LHC Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives, King's College, London
lib library
LKT Jr. Lucian K. Truscott, Jr.
LOC MS Div Library of Congress Manuscript Division
MAAF Mediterranean Allied Air Forces
MBR Matthew B. Ridgway
MCC Mina Curtiss Collection
MEB Magna E. Bauer
Med Mediterranean
MHI U.S. Army Military History Institute, Carlisle, Pa.
micro microfilm
Molony V C.J.C. Molony et al., *The Mediterranean and Middle East*, vol. V
Molony VI C.J.C. Molony, *The Mediterranean and Middle East*, vol. VI, part 1
MP military police
MR *Military Review*
MRC FDM McCormick Research Center, First Division Museum, Cantigny, Ill.
msg message
mss manuscript
MTOUSA Mediterranean Theater of Operations, United States Army
MWC Mark Wayne Clark, including papers at the Citadel, S.C., Archives and Museum
N Af North Africa
n.d. no date
NARA National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Md.
NATOUSA North African Theater of Operations, United States Army
NHC Naval Historical Center, Washington, D.C.
NSA National Security Agency
NWAf George F. Howe, *Northwest Africa: Seizing the Initiative in the West*
NWC Lib National War College Library
NYT *New York Times*
obit obituary
OCMH Office of the Chief of Military History
OCNO Office of the Chief of Naval Operations
OCS Office of the Chief of Staff
OH oral history
OPD Operations Division, War Department
OSS Office of Strategic Services
OW Orlando Ward Papers
Para parachute
pm provost marshal
PMR Paul McD. Robinett papers
PP Martin Blumenson, *The Patton Papers, 1940–1945*

PP-pres Papers, Pre-presidential
Proceedings *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*
Pyle Ernie Pyle, *Brave Men*
qm quartermaster
regt regiment
RG record group
RN Royal Navy
ROHA Rutgers University Oral History Archives of World War II
s.p. self-published
SC Signal Corps
SEM Samuel Eliot Morison Office Files
SM Sidney T. Matthews, including papers at MHI
SMH Society for Military History
SOOHP Senior Officer Oral History Program
SOS Services of Supply
SSA Samuel Eliot Morison, *Sicily-Salerno-Anzio*, vol. IX, *History of United States Naval Operations in World War II*
SSI working papers for *Sicily and the Surrender of Italy*, National Archives
SSt Omar N. Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*
StoC Martin Blumenson, *Salerno to Cassino, USAWWII*
td tank destroyer
TdA Terry de la Mesa Allen, including papers
Texas Fred L. Walker, *From Texas to Rome*
Texas MFM Texas Military Forces Museum, Austin
Three Years Harry C. Butcher, *My Three Years with Eisenhower*
TR Theodore Roosevelt III Papers
ts typescript
UK NA National Archive, Kew, United Kingdom (formerly Public Record Office)
USAF HRC U.S. Air Force Historical Research Center
USAF U.S. Air Force
USAWWII *United States Army in World War II*
USMA Arch U.S. Military Academy Archives, West Point
USMC U.S. Marine Corps
USN U.S. Navy
USNA U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Md.
USNAd "U.S. Naval Administration in World War II"
USNI OHD U.S. Naval Institute, Oral History Department, Annapolis, Md.
UTEP University of Texas at El Paso
UT-K University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Center for the Study of War and Society
VHP Veterans' History Project, National Folklife Center, Library of Congress
WD War Department
WP *Washington Post*
WSC Winston S. Churchill
WTF Western Task Force
WWII World War II
XO executive officer
YU Yale University Library, Manuscripts and Archives

EPIGRAPH

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PROLOGUE

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But it was on the upper decks: Danchev, 402 (*Officers crowded*); "Notes for Mr. Aubrey Morgan," May 13, 1943, UK NA, PREM 4/72/2 (*suite number 105*).

To mislead potential spies: Duncan, 117–18 (*Wilhelmina*); Winston S. Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate,* 783; Alexander S. Cochran, Jr., "Spectre of Defeat: Anglo-American Planning for the Invasion of Italy in 1943," Ph.D. diss, U of Kansas, 296 (*wheelchair ramps*); John Kennedy, *The Business of War,* 293 ("*well and fat and pink*").

Like the Queen Mary: Harold Evans, "Roy Jenkins' 'Churchill: His Finest Hour,'" *NYT Book Review,* Nov. 11, 2001, 1 ("*largest human being*"); Charles Richardson, *From Churchill's Secret Circle to the BBC,* 189 (*trombone*); Churchill Museum and Cabinet War Rooms, Whitehall, London (*one of the eight*); Arthur Bryant, *The Turn of the Tide,* 587 (*scented handkerchief*); admin memo, War Cabinet, May 3, 1943 (*ten-pound tip* and *Mumm's Cordon Rouge*); Paul Fussell, *Wartime,* 183 ("*gangster clergyman*").

"*We are all worms*": Churchill Museum; Martin Gilbert, *Winston Churchill's War Leadership,* 14 (*to be awakened*), 74 ("*pester, nag*"); Danchev, 451 ("*temperamental like a film star*"); Merle Miller, *Ike the Soldier,* 512 ("*He shouts me down*").

"In great things": Kennedy, 315; Winston S. Churchill, *Closing the Ring,* 658, 685, 660, 662 (*small things*); Martin Gilbert, *Winston Churchill's War Leadership,* 19 ("*There is no defeat*").

Sea voyages always reinvigorated: Richardson, 187 ("*Master*"); Gilbert, 10 (*silent Remington*); Churchill Museum (*Johnnie Walker*); W. Averell Harriman and Elie Abel, *Special Envoy to Churchill and Stalin,* 204–5 ("*I won't be captured*"), 207 ("*splitting infinitives*"); Lord Moran, *Churchill: Taken from the Diaries of Lord Moran,* 101 ("*all hunched up*"); W. H. Thompson, *I Was Churchill's Shadow,* 114–15 (*discussing seamanship*); admin memo, War Cabinet, May 3, 1943 (*watching films*); *NYT,* May 12, 1943, 24 (*Radio Berlin*); Churchill, *Closing the Ring,* 91 ("*Who in war*").

Churchill had proposed: Harriman and Abel, 202 ("*One can always*"); "Notes for Mr. Aubrey Morgan" (*entire company stood*).

Packed into the Magellan: Churchill Museum (*colored yarn*); Arthur Bryant, *The Turn of the Tide,* 595, 652 (*six thousand miles*).

Victory in North Africa: Ralph Bennett, "Ultra and Some Command Decisions," in Walter Laqueur,

ed., *The Second World War,* 218 ("*cryptologists had cracked*"); *GS* IV, 450 (*forty-seven U-boats*); David M. Kennedy, *Freedom from Fear,* 590 (*more than 3,500* and *submariner casualty rate*); C.B.A. Behrens, *Merchant Shipping and the Demands of War,* 368 (*every eight hours*).

Elsewhere in this global war: Gerhard L. Weinberg, *A War at Arms,* 590, 632–33, 637.

On the Eastern Front: GS V, 2; Matthew Cooper, *The German Army,* 451–52 (*lost thirty divisions*), 448 ("*absolutely sick*"); Ray S. Cline, *Washington Command Post: The Operations Division,* 220 (*Soviet counteroffensive*).

And yet: the Red Army remained: GS V, 2; Martin Gilbert, *The Second World War,* 421 (*1.3 million forced laborers*).

The next Anglo-American blow: SSA, 10; David Hunt, *A Don at War,* 184 (*a postscript*); Maurice Matloff, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1943–1944,* 25–26.

Beyond Sicily: Anthony Eden, *The Reckoning: The Memoirs of Anthony Eden, Earl of Avon,* 390, 403; Warren F. Kimball, ed., *Churchill and Roosevelt: The Complete Correspondence,* vol. II, 184 ("*Great possibilities*"); Coakley, 63 ("*a chill of loneliness*"); Churchill to H. Hopkins, May 2, 1943, UK NA, PREM 3/443/2 ("*serious divergences*"); Churchill to George VI, Apr. 30, 1943, UK NA, PREM 3/443/2.

"*We did not come here*": UK NA, PREM 3/44/2.

Beneath his brass: Douglas Porch, *The Path to Victory,* 454; G.A. Shepperd, *The Italian Campaign, 1943–45,* 82; John Ellis, *World War II: A Statistical Survey,* 254 (*More than 12 percent*); Gilbert, *The Second World War,* 426 (*British battle deaths*); Martin Gilbert, *Winston S. Churchill,* vol. VII.

Salvation lay here: "Monthly Strength of the Army," May 31, 1943, CMH (*a thousand generals*); Forrest C. Pogue, *George C. Marshall: Organizer of Victory,* 280 (*aircraft carriers*); Alan Gropman, ed., *The Big L: American Logistics in World War II,* 1n, 73 (*just fifty days*), 89–93; Behrens, 366 (*British merchant fleet*); *NYT,* May 12, 1943, 1 ("*production of airplanes*").

"*the greatest American problem*": *NYT,* May 11, 1943, 1.

Yet at home: Gropman, ed., 35, 54–55, 89–93, 367 (*full mobilization); NYT,* May 10, 1943 (*Wurlitzer*); *The Big Change-Over,* film, Office of Emergency Management, NARA, 208.211 (*lipstick*).

So, too, had the war: James Ward Lee et al., eds., *1941: Texas Goes to War,* 76–78 ("*Use it up*"); Fussell, 197–98 (*plastic buttons*); John Morton Blum, *V Was for Victory,* 95; Kennedy, *Freedom from Fear,* 645 (*the bikini*); Smithsonian Institution Museum of American History, exhibit, "The Price of Freedom: Americans at War" (*Regulation L-85*).

German prisoners: Lee et al., eds., 82–83 (*paint-on hosiery*); Fussell, 197 ("*victory speed*"); Dennis B. Worthen, "Pharmacists in World War II," *Journal of the American Pharmaceutical Association,* vol. 41, no. 3 (May–June 2001), 479+ (*toothpaste tubes*); *Salvage,* film, Office of War Information, 1942, NARA, 208.118 (*10 old pails*).

No place in America: Scott Hart, *Washington at War: 1941–1945,* 40 ("*frenzied capital*").

To this panoply: memo, May 11, 1943, Secret Service records, file 103-1: President Roosevelt, 1943, box 5, FDR Lib. (*at 6:45 P.M.*); William D. Leahy, *I Was There,* 158 (*gray pallor*).

But first the visitors: David Brinkley, *Washington Goes to War,* epigraph ("*bust right out*"), 188, 232, 238; William H. Cartwright, Jr., "The Military District of Washington, 1942–1945," 1946, CMH, 8-2.4 AA, 190 (*twelve thousand hotel rooms*); "Notes for Mr. Aubrey Morgan" (*sixteen Royal Marines*); Hart, 108 ("*tropical post pay*").

Churchill could sense: Cartwright, "The Military District of Washington, 1942–1945," 116–18 ("*largest feeding operation*"); Hart, 92, 135 ("*Madhouse*"); *NYT,* May 2, 1943, 3 (*twelve thousand men*); *Washington Evening Star,* May 15, 1943, 1 (*draft dodgers*).

Among other signs: NYT, May 2, 1943 ("*rumor clinics*"); *NYT,* May 9, 1943, 26 ("*White or Colored*"); Brinkley, 185 (*forty-six errors*); *NYT,* May 12, 1943 (*blond hair*).

Amid the mania: Hart, 178.
They got to work: William Seale, *The President's House*, vol. II, 918, 937–76; Danchev, 403 (*massive desk*).
Five months earlier: Matloff, 123; Cline, 219; Garland, 17 ("*grand design*").
The president's brain trust: FRUS, 19 ("*The man from London*"); Coakley, 62 ("*No closed minds*").
"*What should come next?": FRUS*, 25–26.
The prime minister had used the phrase: Cline, 218; *GS* IV, 145 ("*underbelly*"); *FRUS,* 25–26; Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate,* 794 ("*occupation of Italy*"). Churchill, in a conversation with Joseph Stalin in August 1942, also used the phrase "soft belly" while sketching a crocodile intended to represented Axis-occupied Europe. Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, 481.
There it was, the British strategy: FRUS, 30; Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate,* 794; John S. D. Eisenhower, *Allies: Pearl Harbor to D-Day*, 63 ("*cigarette-holder gesture*").
This impasse persisted: Kenneth S. Davis, *Experience of War,* 393; *FRUS,* 223 ("*Global Strategy of the War*").
A tall, austere man: Eric Larrabee, *Commander in Chief,* 102–3 (*a clean-desk man*), 99, 112; OH, Gen. Lord Ismay, Oct. 18, 1960, FCP, transcript, tape 40, GCM Lib ("*a little aloof*"); OH, Andrew J. Goodpaster to author, Washington, D.C., Aug. 17, 2004 ("*Are you confident*"); author visit, Dodona Manor (Marshall home), Leesburg, Va., Apr. 1998. Churchill's "greatest Roman" accolade came in 1945.
Invading Italy: FRUS, 44–45.
Arguments spilled: Stephen E. Ambrose, *Eisenhower*, vol. I, 242; Garland, 17 (*twelve million tons*); Albert C. Wedemeyer, *Wedemeyer Reports!*, 134 (*lacked sufficient ports*); *GS* V, 115 ("*side-shows*"); Maurice Matloff, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1943–1944*, 74 ("*unremunerative scatterization*").
"*Mediterranean operations*": Wedemeyer, 218.
Listening attentively: Danchev, 247 ("*great gentleman*"), 448, xvi, xiv ("*Froggie*"), 400; Moran, 121 ("*a year off my life*"); Bryant, 685 ("*the night work*"); David Fraser, *Alanbrooke,* 341 (*Southeran's shop*); Kennedy, 290 (Birds of the Ocean).
Now he quarreled: FRUS, 225.
Brooke pressed the point: FRUS, 41–45, 269; Coakley, 64–65.
A stack of studies: Cochran, "Spectre of Defeat," 297 ("*If Italy collapses*"); Coakley, 64 ("*breaking the Axis*").
But, Brooke warned: FRUS, 43, 45.
Momentary silence fell: Wedemeyer, 211 ("*no intention*"); Coakley, 65 ("*divert our forces*").
At Marshall's suggestion: Danchev, 403.
Washington lacked: GS IV, 410 (*endless meetings*); "Notes for Mr. Aubrey Morgan" (*black-tie affairs*).
Fans at a Washington Nationals: "Memoirs of Sir John Dill, 1942–1944," Reginald Winn Collection, GCM Lib, 36; *FRUS,* 39 (*Helen with Paris*); corr, Anna Roosevelt Boettiger to John Boettiger, May 15, 1943, Boettiger Papers, box 5, FDR Lib (*Churchill sat transfixed*).
To escape both official Washington: Pogue, 202–3.
If Washington had been atwitter: Gerald Horton Bath, "A Report on the Visit of the British High Command to Colonial Williamsburg, May 15th and 16th, 1943," ts, n.d., Frank McCarthy Collection, box 27, folder 29, GCM Lib.
Sunday morning: ibid.; Danchev, 423 (Gould's Birds).
While the chiefs went south: memo, May 11, 1943, Secret Service records, file 103-1: President Roosevelt, 1943, box 5, FDR Lib; Robert Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins: An Intimate History,* 729

(*Whittier's ballad*); Moran, 101 ("*gabbled the whole poem*").
For three days they unbent: letter, Anna Roosevelt Boettiger to John Boettiger, May 14, 1943, Boettiger Papers, box 5, FDR Lib ("*picks his teeth*"); Jon Meacham, *Franklin and Winston*, 225, 234 ("*Isn't this a beauty*").
They had much in common: Larrabee, 13 ("*loved the military side*"); Maurice Matloff, "Mr. Roosevelt's Three Wars: FDR as War Leader," Harmon Lecture, No. 6, U.S. Air Force Academy, 1964, 6 ("*diversionist tendencies*"); Pogue, 316 (*combat casualty figures*); Meacham, 228 ("*a wonderful old Tory*").
Churchill could draw near: Larrabee, 644; OH, Stephen T. Early, June 9, 1947, MHI, OCMH, WWII, General Miscl ("*wished to have things done*"); Richard Overy, *Why the Allies Won*, 261 ("*Not a tidy mind*"); Larrabee, 644 ("*He* decides").
He reduced his own political philosophy: Overy, 260; Larrabee, 626 (*Four Freedoms*); Kimball, ed., vol. I, 337 ("*same decade*"); Elliott Roosevelt, *As He Saw It*, 130 ("*on the decline*").
America was ascendant: memo, Robert Sherwood to Harry Hopkins, May 13, 1943, H.L. Hopkins Papers, Sherwood Collection, book 7, TRIDENT, box 329, FDR Lib.
But if Britain was on the decline: Harold Macmillan, *War Diaries*, 316 ("*great* torso"); Roosevelt, 126 (*sinus condition*); Matloff, "Mr. Roosevelt's Three Wars," 4–5.
Negotiations resumed: GS IV, 419 ("*spirit of the chase*"); Garland, 21 (*refused to concede*); *FRUS*, 114 ("*extremely difficult*").
It was a curious compromise: msg, WD to DDE, #278, May 26, 1943, CCS cables, OCMH, NARA RG 319, 270/19/6/3, box 243; *GS* IV, 432.
The baby had been cut: Danchev, 407.
TRIDENT had another week: diary, Henry A. Wallace, May 24, 1943, micro, FDR Lib ("*We Anglo-Saxons*"); Danchev (*fourteen stone steps*); Fraser, 346–47 (*two rare bird books*).
Rarely content: FRUS, May 23, 1943; Doris Kearns Goodwin, *No Ordinary Time*, 439 (*exhausted president*); Leahy, 162; Moran, 103–4 ("*a very tired man*").
Harry Hopkins warned: Goodwin, 439 ("*spoiled boy*"); *FRUS*, 198 ("*piece of baggage*"); Moran, 111 ("*too much for us*").
Still, the sweep of his rhetoric: Gerald Pawle, *The War and Colonel Warden*, 234; Gilbert, *Winston S. Churchill*, vol. VII, 409 ("*War is full of mysteries*"); *Times* (London), May 20, 1943, 4 ("*By singleness of purpose*"); Grace Tully, *F.D.R., My Boss*, 329 ("*catch phrases*").
For the first time: Harriman and Abel, 211; Leahy, 165 ("*mellow light*"); *FRUS*, 377 ("*complete meeting of minds*").
"*over-egged the pudding*": Brian Holden Reid, "The Italian Campaign, 1943–1945: A Reappraisal of Allied Generalship," *Journal of Strategic Studies*, vol. 13, no. 1 (March 1990), 128+.
"*the best I could get*": Leahy, 163.
The dispatch of Allied armies: Matloff, 76, 244.
Perhaps the greatest achievement: André Malraux ("Let victory belong to those who made war without liking it"), quoted by Jean-Paul Sartre, *Modern Times*, cited in Danchev, xxvi.
At four P.M. on Tuesday: PREM 4/72/3, UK NA.
Roosevelt sat in the armless wheelchair: Seale, 947, 976–77 (*bulletproof glass*); *FRUS*, 211–20 (*899th press conference*); *Times* (London), May 27, 1943, 1 ("*shaking the life*").

CHAPTER 1: ACROSS THE MIDDLE SEA

Forcing the World Back to Reason

The sun beat down: corr, Heinz Seltmann to author, June 9, 2005 (*neckties*); memo, GSP, No. 57, June

17, 1943, NARA RG 338, II Corps, plans & policy file, box 146 (*$25 fine*).
Algiers seethed: Eric Sevareid, *Not So Wild a Dream,* 362 (*merchant mariners*); Paul W. Brown, *The Whorehouse of the World,* 134–35 ("*El Alamein*"); Benjamin A. Dickson, "G-2 Journal: Algiers to the Elbe," MHI, 76 ("*Sand in your shoes*"); Peter Schrijvers, *The Crash of Ruin,* 120 (*index fingers*).
Electric streetcars: memo, DDE to E. Hughes, July 23, 1943, PP-pres, DDE Lib, box 58 (*amnesty*); Malcolm S. McLean, "Adventures in Occupied Areas," ts, 1975, MHI, 31–32 ("*every conceivable*"); Sevareid, 361 (*young Frenchmen* and *Hotel Aletti*); F. Eugene Liggett, "No, Not Yet: Military Memoirs," ts, n.d., ASEQ, 158th FA, 45th Div., MHI (*pantaloons*); "History, Mediterranean Base Section, Sept. 1942–May 1944," CMH, 9-4 CA, 1944 (*ban on prostitution*).
Above it all: "History of Allied Forces Headquarters," CMH, 8-4 AD, vol. 2, Sept. 1945, sketch.
Hewitt lowered his salute: "U.S. Naval Operations in the Northwestern African-Mediterranean Theater," ts, n.d., HKH papers, box 3, NHC, 18.
With the ceremony at an end: "History of Allied Forces Headquarters," 243–46 (*approached four thousand*); "The Administrative History of the Eighth Fleet," ts, n.d., U.S. Naval History Division, #139, folder 3, 9–10 (*twelve thousand*); "Notes for Meeting with Colonel Warden," Jan. 14, 1944, NARA RG 331, AFHQ micro, R-225-B (*seven undersea cables*); S. W. Roskill, *The War at Sea, 1939–1945,* vol. III, part 1, 127 ("*Carry out*").
He was a fighting admiral: OH, Floride Hewitt Taylor to author, Apr. 12, 2005, Newport, R.I.; L.S.B. Shapiro, *They Left the Back Door Open*, 118 ("*well-upholstered*"); OH, HKH, John T. Mason, 1961, Col U OHRO, 5–6 ("*Softly Now*"); "Keuffel & Esser correspondence," HKH, NHC, box 2; George Sessions Perry, "Why Don't They Write About Hewitt?," *Saturday Evening Post*, Dec. 16, 1944, 22+ ("*does his barking*"); OH, HKH, n.d., Julian Boit and James Riley, NHC, box 6, 1–2, 9 (*soup kitchen*).
He called for his staff car: Walter Karig, *Battle Report: The Atlantic War,* 233; David Williams, *Liners in Battledress,* 151–53 (*false bow wave*); Ivan H. "Cy" Peterman, "U.S.S. *Savannah*," *Philadelphia Inquirer,* Sept. 1943, SEM, box 55, NHC; Pyle, 6–7 (*Precautions against fire*).
Hewitt's flagship: war log, U.S.S. *Monrovia,* NARA RG 38, OCNO, WWII war diaries, box 1233; Karig, 233 (*ten to twenty officers*); A. J. Redway, "Admiral Jerauld Wright: The Life and Recollections of the Supreme Allied Commander," ts, 1995, NHC, 295 (*fourteen hundred men*); action report, U.S.S. *Monrovia*, July 17, 1943, NARA RG 38, OCNO, WWII Action & Operational Reports, box 1231 (*200,000 rounds*).
Twenty typists: Alexander S. Cochran, "Chicken or Eggs? Operations TORCH and HUSKY and U.S. Army Amphibious Doctrine," paper, 14th Naval History Symposium, USNA, Sept. 1999.
Hewitt could remember: Perry, "Why Don't They Write About Hewitt?"; OH, Floride Hewitt Taylor to author, Apr. 12, 2005.
More than three thousand: No two lists agree on the total number of vessels in HUSKY; estimates generally range from 2,500 to 3,200. Roskill, 127; *SSA*, 28; HKH, AAR, "The Sicilian Campaign," n.d., 1; "The Administrative History of the Eighth Fleet," 20 ("*the most gigantic fleet*").
tiny fortified island of Pantelleria: Edith C. Rodgers, "The Reduction of Pantelleria and Adjacent Islands," May 1947, AAF Historical Studies, No. 52, Air Historical Office, 40–45; "Allied Commander-in-Chief's Report, Pantelleria Operations, June 1943," 59–60; MEB, "The Fall of Pantelleria and the Pelagian Islands," Feb. 1959, NARA RG 319, E 145, OCMH, R-Series Manuscripts, 270/19/30-31/6-2, R-115, 24–32a; memo, "Lessons from Operations Against Pantelleria," July 12, 1943, AFHQ, "Survey and Analysis," Pantelleria, CMH, Geog Italy, 384.3; Solly Zuckerman, *From Apes to Warlords,* 185–95.
A map of the Mediterranean: Robert A. Hewitt, SOOHP, Earl D. Bevan, 1982, MHI, 126; Thaddeus V. Tuleja, "H. Kent Hewitt," in Stephen Howarth, ed., *Men of War,* 315 (*two variables*).
nine new variations of landing craft: S.W.C. Pack, *Operation Husky,* 44; Evelyn M. Cherpak, ed., *The*

Memoirs of Admiral H. Kent Hewitt, 181 (*never been to sea*); "Notes on the Planning and Assault Phases of the Sicilian Campaign," Combined Operations HQ Bulletin No. Y/1, Oct. 1943, 4 (*little was known*).

Much had been learned: Harold Larson, "Handling Army Cargo in the Second World War," ts, 1945, CMH, 4-13.1 AA 19, 242, 250 (*Schenectady Plan*); H. H. Dunham, "U.S. Army Transportation and the Conquest of Sicily," Mongraph No. 13, March 1945, NARA RG 336, Chief of Transportation, ASF, Historical Program Files, box 141, 29 (*no plans for loading*); Walter B. Smith, "Mediterranean Operations," Oct. 13, 1943, ANSCOL, L-2-43, SM-67, NARA RG 334, NWC Lib, 4 (*neglected to make room*); HKH, AAR, "The Sicilian Campaign," n.d., 47 (*Every unit pleaded*).

Despite the risk: AAR, Amphibious Force Transport QM, U.S. Atlantic Fleet, Aug. 6, 1943, in Army Observers, Amphibious Forces, MHI, 1–2; William Reginald Wheeler, ed., *The Road to Victory: A History of Hampton Roads Port of Embarkation in World War II*, 99; "The Administrative History of the Eighth Fleet," 35 (*no bread pans*).

gas shells: Eventually the mustard would turn up in several Sicilian ammo dumps, including a stockpile fifty miles inland at Nicosia, three weeks into the campaign. "History of Ordnance Service in the Mediterranean Theater, Nov. 1942–Nov. 1945," CMH, 8-4 JA, 54.

"*I was frequently partisan*": "The Reminiscences of George W. Bauernschmidt," 1969–70, USNI OHD, 160.

A satire of censorship regulations: John Mason Brown, *To All Hands,* 193–94.

One airman tried to comply: Fred Howard, *Whistle While You Wait*, 160; Steve Kluger, *Yank,* 101 ("*headed for trouble*").

More than half a million: "Summary of Activities," analysis and control div., NATOUSA, June 1, 1944, CMH, 3; Brown, *To All Hands,* 7 (*civilian occupations*).

"*fierce world of death*": Pyle, 2.

In the seven weeks: E. N. Harmon to GCM, Aug. 13, 1943, GCM Lib, corr, box 70 ("*question of discipline*"); JPL, 13–14 ("*felt very sorry*"); Bernard Stambler, "Campaign in Sicily," ts, n.d., vol. 2, CMH, 2-3.7 AA.L, 3 ("*self-maiming*"); corr, Joseph T. Dawson to family, May 22, 1943, 16th Inf, MRC-FDM ("*self-commiseration*").

"*sense of the soldiering self*": Samuel Hynes, *The Soldiers' Tale*, 151; *They were young:* "Age of Soldiers in Civil War, World War I and World War II," Legislative and Policy Precedent File, 183/122, NARA RG 407, 270/49/17/7, box 34; John Muirhead, *Those Who Fall,* 9 ("*our youth*").

"*our most democratic war":* Samuel Hynes, introduction, *Reporting World War II*, one-vol. abridgment, xx; *The Princeton Class of 1942 During World War II*; Lynn H. Nicholas, *The Rape of Europa,* 223 ("*men of a new profession*").

And what did they believe: "Extract from Monthly Sanitary Report," Aug. 31, 1943, MWC, corr, Citadel, box 3; Eric Larrabee, *Commander in Chief*, 626 (*Four Freedoms*); Chandler, vol. II, 1276 ("*less than half*"); Margaret Bourke-White, *Purple Heart Valley*, 73 ("*I was drafted*").

Their pervasive "*civilianness*": Brown, *To All Hands*, 224; Donald McB. Curtis, *The Song of the Fighting First*, 132; Lawrence D. Collins, *The 56th Evac Hospital,* 90; Paul Dickson, *War Slang*, 113–23; *Three Years,* 389 (*A single crude acronym*).

Yet they held: Brown, *To All Hands,* 224; George Biddle, *Artist at War,* 123; John Sloan Brown, *Draftee Division,* 103 ("*lick those bastards*").

The same surveys: Larrabee, 626.

"Many of the men": George Sessions Perry, "A Reporter at Large," *New Yorker*, July 24, 1943, 50+; Muirhead, 106–7 ("*could not bear the shame*").

"*a gentle obsolescent breed*": Samuel Hynes, *The Soldiers' Tale,* 143.

"*fighting for their right to be hypocrites*": corr, George Henry Revelle, Jr., to Evelyn, July 7, 1943,

author's possession.
Across the great southern rim: Paul A. Cundiff, *45th Infantry CP,* 6; Hamilton H. Howze, *A Cavalryman's Story,* 78–79; Hamilton H. Howze, "35 Years and Then Some," ts, n.d., Howze papers, box 10, MHI, VII, 1–2 (*locust swarms*); Charles F. Ryan et al., "2nd Armored Division in the Sicilian Campaign," May 1950, AS, Ft. K, 57 (*a hundred flatcars*); Donald E. Houston, *Hell on Wheels,* 148 (*engineer at gunpoint*).
the 45th Infantry Division: "History of Planning Division, Army Service Forces," vol. 1, n.d., CMH, 3-2.2 AA, 90–92; Joseph Bykofsky and Harold Larson, *The Transportation Corps: Operations Overseas,* 195; Cundiff, 19; Wheeler, 86 (*mine detectors*); Alfred M. Beck et al., *The Corps of Engineers: The War Against Germany,* 133 (*all nineteen troop-ships*); Leo J. Meyer, "Strategy and Logistical History: MTO," ts, n.d., CMH, 2-3.7 CC5, XIII-61 (*ordered to the Pacific*); Emajean Jordan Buechner, *Sparks,* 64 (*Company J*); Don Robinson, *News of the 45th,* 52 (*iced tea*); Brown, *To All Hands,* 27, 41, 228 ("*Happy Hour*").
The 45th was a National Guard division: E. J. Kahn, Jr., "Education of an Army," *New Yorker,* vol. 20, no. 35, Oct. 14, 1944, 28+; Flint Whitlock, *The Rock of Anzio,* 18–19 ("*no good*"); Peter R. Mansoor, *The GI Offensive in Europe,* 102 ("*better prepared*"); unit history, Ben C. Garbowski, ASEQ, 157th Inf., MHI; Frank Farner, ed., *Thunderbird: 45th Infantry Division,* 15 (*Wolftown Guards*); Whitlock, 20–21; George A. Fisher, *The Story of the 180th Infantry Regiment* (*war dance*).
Chancre Alley: Loyd J. Biss, "Three Years, Four Months and Twenty-seven Days," ts, n.d., author's possession, 19; Fred Sheehan, *Anzio: Epic of Bravery,* 48 ("*provost marshal's report*"); Frank James Price, *Troy H. Middleton: A Biography,* 146 (*brandy*); Kenneth D. Williamson, "Tales of a Thunderbird," ts, n.d., 45th ID Mus, 73, 84, 87 (*scooping up dimes*).
Along with the money: DDE to CG, NATOUSA SOS, June 3, 1943, NARA RG 165, E 422, OPD Exec Files, box 16; OH, John E. Hull, 1974, SOOHP, James W. Wurman, MHI, 57 (*bayonets too dull*).
Three hundred and forty crow-flying miles: Quentin Reynolds, *The Curtain Rises,* 309–10; Cherpak, ed., 188–89.
"*solid forest of masts*": "Notes on PT History in Mediterranean: Letter from LCDR S. M. Barnes, commander of Motor Torpedo Squadron 15, to CDR Bulkley," n.d., SEM, NHC, box 54, 33; memo, Bert M. Rudd, "Landing Craft and Bases," AGF Observer, July 16, 1943, ANSCOL, NARA RG 334, NWC Lib, box 150, 1 ("*into anchored vessels*"); Edmund F. Ball, *Staff Officer with the Fifth Army,* 344 ("*Poems are made*"); Paul W. Pritchard, "Smoke Generator Operations in the Mediterranean and European Theaters of Operation," Chemical Corps, n.d., CMH, 4-7.1 FA 1; Pyle, 6 (*Luftwaffe raiders*); Anders Kjar Arnbal, *The Barrel-Land Dance Hall Rangers,* 100 (*steel hail*); Nigel Nicolson, *The Grenadier Guards in the War of 1939–1945,* vol. II, 347 ("*Bring up your children*").
"Florida": OH, William Francis Powers, Aug. 1985, CEOH.
None of the namesake camps: Howard, 30, 103 ("*wog wine*"); AAR, 3/26th Inf, July 1–5, 1943, MRC FDM; Jean Gordon Peltier, *World War II Diary of Jean Gordon Peltier,* 91–92 (*peppermint*); AAR, "1st Embarkation Group, Eastern Base Section," Aug. 1943, CARL, N-2763, 39–48 (*German field ranges*); Maxwell D. Taylor, *Swords and Plowshares,* 48; Clifford W. Dorman, "Too Soon for Heroes," ts, n.d., author's possession, 57 (*TNT*); diary, July 7, 1943, JMG, MHI, box 10 (*ten young bulls*).
They were in an ugly mood: T. Michael Booth and Duncan Spencer, *Paratrooper: The Life of Gen. James M. Gavin,* 95; AAR, "1st Embarkation Group," 61 (*twenty-three copies*).
Congestion and confusion: AAR, "1st Embarkation Group," 51; Lida Mayo, *The Ordnance Department: On Beachhead and Battlefront,* 159 (*ammunition dump*); "Personal Diary of Langan W. Swent," July 7, 1943, HIA, box 1 (*novice boat crews*).
Still farther east: H. Essame, *Patton: A Study in Command,* 99 ("*gypsy camp*"); Alex Bowlby, *The*

Recollections of Rifleman Bowlby, 12 (maleesh); P. Royle, ts, 1972, IWM 99/72/1, 82 (*desert sores*); Neil McCallum, *Journey with a Pistol,* 132 ("*bloody fuckers*").
"Daisy, daisy": Christopher Buckley, *Road to Rome,* 11, 21; A. W. Valentine, *We Landed in Sicily and Italy: A Story of the Devons,* 9 ("*bathing parade*"); C. Richard Eke, "A Game of Soldiers," ts, n.d., IWM 92/1/1, 6 ("*desert campfire*"); Malcolm Munthe, *Sweet Is War,* 162 (*kilted pipers*).
On July 5: David Cole, *Rough Road to Rome,* 15; Robert Wallace, *The Italian Campaign,* 8 (*wigwagged*); Peter Roach, *The 8.15 to War,* 108, 110 ("*Like fat cattle*").
The Monrovia *singled up:* war log, U.S.S. *Monrovia,* July 6, 1943, NARA RG 38, OCNO, WWII war diaries, box 1233; Karig, 234; H. Kent Hewitt, "Naval Aspects of the Sicilian Campaign," *Proceedings,* vol. 79, no. 7, July 1943, 705+ ("*Have a good trip*").
Despite elaborate security: AAR, "1st Embarkation Group," 50; Oscar W. Koch, *G-2: Intelligence for Patton,* 35; David Hunt, *A Don at War,* 193 (*gabardine uniform*).
As Hewitt paced: Beck, 124; *The Sicilian Campaign,* 157 (*hospital ships*).
As for the eighty thousand: "The Administrative History of the Eighth Fleet," 27 (*warehouse prices*); corr, HKH to SEM, Sept. 18, 1953, SEM, NHC, box 51 (*headquarters ship*); OH, HKH, 1961, John T. Mason, Col U OHRO, 325; memo, "Command of Landing Arrangement HUSKY," GK to HKH, Apr. 12, 1943, HKH, NHC, box 1 (*Patton's refusal*); John T. Mason, Jr., *The Atlantic War Remembered,* 279 ("*Sit down!*"); Cherpak, ed., 183; OH, HKH, n.d., Julian Boit and James Riley, NHC, box 6, 2 (*To celebrate*).
At five P.M.: Hewitt, "Naval Aspects of the Sicilian Campaign," 705; war log, U.S.S. *Monrovia,* July 6, 1943, NARA RG 38, OCNO, WWII war diaries, box 1233 (*sailing pattern no. 35*).
Behind the bridge: corr, GSP to Bea, July 2, 1943, GSP, LOC MS Div, box 10; JPL, 34; diary, July 25, 1943, GSP, LOC, box 2, folder 15 ("*our weak spot*"); *PP,* 233 ("*mental fog*").
He was ready: PP, 260, 264, 270; memo, GSP, June 5, 1943, in Russell L. Moses, ASEQ, 179th Inf Regt., 45th ID, MHI (*tactical adages*).
"*a timid man*": JPL, 24–25; Martin Blumenson, *Patton: The Man Behind the Legend, 1885–1945,* 12–17; diary, July 1, 1943, GSP, LOC, box 3, folder 1 (*whine of bullets*); D. Clayton James, *A Time for Giants,* 225 ("*a disturbing element*"); Blumenson, *Patton: The Man Behind the Legend,* 77 ("*Someday I will*").
"*Battle is the most*": Harry H. Semmes, *Portrait of Patton,* 155; diary, June 27, 1943, GSP, LOC, box 2, folder 15 ("*a sacred trust*").
"*There is no better death*": Brown, *The Whorehouse of the World,* 131; Robert H. Patton, *The Pattons,* 264 ("*to blood them*"); Charles R. Codman, *Drive,* 99 ("*hate builder*").
"*You son of a bitch*": Albert C. Wedemeyer, SOOHP, Anthony S. Deskis, 1972–73, MHI; Wiley H. O'Mohundro, "From Mules to Missiles," ts, n.d., MHI, 47 ("*I am a chaplain*").
To a dilatory officer: John A. Heintges, SOOHP, Jack A. Pellicci, 1974, 156–59; *SSt,* 119 ("*That temper of his*").
"*What would Jackson*": Susan H. Godson, *Viking of Assault,* 65; Michael Carver, ed., *The War Lords,* 558 (*pilot's license*).
"*Read up on Cromwell*": Stanley P. Hirshson, *General Patton: A Soldier's Life,* 353); Ellen Birkett Morris, "The Woman Behind the Man," *The Patton Saber,* newsletter, Patton Museum Foundation, fall 2002, 1 (*rice powder*); R. H. Patton, *The Pattons,* 251 ("*What a man*").
"*I have no premonitions*": *PP,* 273; diary, May 7, 1943, GSP, LOC MS Div, box 2, folder 15 ("*my fate*").
Patton had designed: corr, Oscar W. Koch to James A. Norell, Dec. 15, 1960, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 250; MWC, "General Patton," ts, n.d., Subject Files, MWC, Citadel, box 70, 4 ("*If you charge*"); Taylor, 49 ("*you bastards*").

From east and west: Perry, "A Reporter at Large," 50; Dickson, *War Slang,* 113–33.
At last the troops learned: Brown, *To All Hands*, 83–86; Peterman, "U.S.S. *Savannah*" (*anxious landlubbers*); Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War,* trans. Rex Warner, 537.
The Monrovia *steamed past Bizerte:* war log, U.S.S. *Monrovia,* July 7–8, 1943, NARA RG 38, OCNO, WWII war diaries, box 1233; Bernard Stambler, "Campaign in Sicily," ts, n.d., vol. 2, CMH, 2-3.7 AA.L, 45; Pyle, 8; "Convoy to Gaeta," combat narrative, #210, 1944, "WWII Histories and Historical Reports," OCNO, NHC ("*must be afloat*").

Calypso's Island

FINANCE: "Geographical Code for Operation HUSKY," May 17, 1943, AFHQ G-2, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 250; Karl Baedeker, *Southern Italy and Sicily,* 402 (*St. Paul*); Homer, *The Odyssey,* trans. Robert Fagles, 34, 78–80, 153–57.
In 1530: John Gunther, *D Day,* 155–57; Douglas Porch, *The Path to Victory,* 15–16 (*illiterate peasants*).
The first of 3,340: "Malta C.G.," *AB,* No. 10, 1975, 1+; Gunther, *D Day,* 85, 157–58; Charles A. Jellison, *Besieged: The World War II Ordeal of Malta, 1940–1942,* 166, 258, 178 ("*Beauty was slain*").
Those not killed: Jellison, 111, 133, 167, 174n, 221, 229; Gunther, *D Day,* 86 (*learned to live without*); Jack Belden, *Still Time to Die,* 197 (*contraceptives*).
v*ictory in North Africa:* Viscount Cunningham of Hyndhope, *A Sailor's Odyssey,* 532; James Leasor, *The Clock with Four Hands,* 255–56 ("*too thin and listless*"); Gunther, *D Day,* 43, 82 (*Indian cigarettes*); code, appendix 2, communication plan, MTOUSA SOS, NARA RG 492, 290/55/1-2/7-1, box 2738 (*BULLDOGS*).
"*Everyone was on tiptoe*": William Ernest Victor Abraham, "Time Off for War," ts, n.d., LHC, 69.
Motorcyclists with numbers: "Malta C.G.," 1+; Charles Cruickshank, *Deception in World War II,* 53–54 (*radio traffic*); F.A.E. Crew, *The Army Medical Services,* vol. III, 14–15 (*hospital port*); HCB, July 10, 1943, DDE Lib, A-559; Michael J. McKeough and Richard Lockridge, *Sgt. Mickey and General Ike,* 85 (*lucky coins*).
"*There are several rooms*": Gunther, *D Day,* 49–50; Kenneth S. Davis, *Soldier of Democracy,* 428 ("*it'll do*").
Nine months earlier: David M. Kennedy, *Freedom from Fear,* 689; OH, Hastings L. Ismay, Dec. 17, 1946, FCP, MHI ("*No one else*").
"*incarnation of sincerity*": Kennedy, *Freedom from Fear,* 690; Stephen E. Ambrose, *Eisenhower,* vol. 1, 273 ("*bits of metal*"); James, 95 ("*utterly fair*"); Merle Miller, *Ike the Soldier,* 514; John Kennedy, *The Business of War,* 289 ("*powers of expression*"); Drew Middleton, *Our Share of Night,* 308.
"*I'm a born optimist*": Richard Tregaskis, *Invasion Diary,* 54; Kennedy, *Freedom from Fear,* 689 ("*studious reflection*"); John Gunther, *Eisenhower: The Man and the Symbol,* 27 ("*one officer in fifty*"); OH, DDE, Aug. 29, 1976, D. Clayton James, DDE Lib, OH-501, 3–6 ("*I would refuse*"); Chandler, vol. 2, 1165 ("*at least $25,000*").
"*You are fighting*": HCB, June 19, 1943, DDE Lib, A-491; Gunther, *Eisenhower,* 19 ("*hate my enemies*"); John S. D. Eisenhower, *Strictly Personal,* 67 ("*the Almighty*").
"*A coordinator*": Brian Horrocks, *A Full Life,* 159; Brian Harpur, *The Impossible Victory,* 115 ("*a compromisor*"); JPL, May 24, 1943 ("*keep in touch*").
"*solve problems through reasoning*": Carlo D'Este, *Eisenhower: A Soldier's Life,* 418; Gunther, *D Day,* 59; David Fraser, *Alanbrooke,* 347 ("*a grave risk*"); Harold Macmillan, *War Diaries,* 260.
The long summer twilight: Three Years, 343; Thomas W. Mattingly and Olive F. G. Marsh, "A

Compilation of the General Health Status of Dwight D. Eisenhower," n.d., Mattingly Collection, DDE Lib, box 1, 19–22, 53 ("*disabling injury*"); Gunther, *Eisenhower,* 29 (*sixty or more Camels*); Chandler, vol. 2, 1344 (*he paid John*); HCB, June 29, 1943, DDE Lib, A-508c (*gas fumes*).

Cigarette in hand: Michael Simpson, *A Life of Admiral of the Fleet Andrew Cunningham,* 161 (*Tars scaled*); John Howson, ts, n.d., LHC, 302 ("*Every Nice Girl*"); Ernle Bradford, *Siege Malta, 1940–1943,* 86–87 (*limestone walls*); Cunningham, 547 ("*extremely smelly*"); McKeough and Lockridge, 87 (*banana cordials*).

Eisenhower strode: Gunther, *D Day,* 53, 61; Alden Hatch, *General Ike,* 173 (*four hundred years*); Gunther, *Eisenhower,* 23–24.

He shrugged off: Harry L. Coles, Jr., "Participation of the 9th and 12th Air Forces in the Sicilian Campaign," AAF Historical Studies, no. 37, n.d., CMH, 56; Gunther, *D Day,* 80.

his red-veined face: John Winton, *Cunningham,* 313; Daniel C. Dancocks, *The D-Day Dodgers: The Canadians in Italy, 1943–1945,* 27; George Kitching, *Mud and Green Fields,* 147, 151 (*three Canadian ships*); *Three Years,* 349 (*heard from Malta*); Martin Stephen, *The Fighting Admirals,* 65, 77, 83 ("*velvet-arsed*"); Simpson, 161; Gunther, *D Day,* 64 ("*like a bulldog's*").

"*The coast is everywhere*": "Tactical Study of the Terrain—Sicily," AFHQ G-2, Feb. 1943, CMH, Geog Sicily 354, 1; Molony V, 13 (*thirty-two beaches*); L. V. Bertarelli, *Southern Italy,* 418; Ernest Samuels, ed., *The Education of Henry Adams* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1973), 367.

An amphibious landing: Geoffrey Perret, *There's a War to Be Won,* 110.

If amphibious warfare: Garland, 54–58; Sidney L. Jackson, "Signal Communication in the Sicilian Campaign," July 1945, SC Historical Project E-3, CARL, N-9425.4, 6–7 (*couriers shuttled*); Arthur S. Nevins, "Looking Back," ts, n.d., A.S. Nevins papers, DDE Lib, box 1, 16 (*frigid officers*).

Eisenhower in March: "Allied Commander-in-Chief's Report on Sicilian Campaign 1943," 75; Meyer, "Strategy and Logistical History: MTO," XIII-14 ("*grossly exaggerating*"); *GS* IV, 368–69 ("*defeatist doctrines*"); Garland, 58.53 "*Let's finish this*": OH, Francis de Guingand, March 31, 1947, G. A. Harrison, OCMH WWII, "Europe Interviews," MHI, 2; Abraham, "Time Off for War," 68 ("*how it would suit us*").

The existing plan: Hunt, 189–90; Molony V, 22; Garland, 61 ("*wooly thinking*"); Stephen Brooks, ed., *Montgomery and the Eighth Army,* 191, 207, 217, 223, 226 ("*military disaster*").

Rather than divide: diary, Lt. Gen. Sir Charles Gairdner, IWM 04/271/1, 39 (*a thousand francs*), 36 (*run by Monty*); Martin Blumenson, *Sicily: Whose Victory?,* 24; Carlo D'Este, *A Genius for War,* 493 (*men's latrine*).

A day later: Cunningham, 532–37; Garland, 62; *SSA,* 20n.

"*I can't understand*": diary, Lt. Gen. Sir Charles Gairdner, IWM 04/271/1, 37.

HUSKY now called: Richard Doherty, *A Noble Crusade,* 140; Garland, 88–91.

"*Stick them in the belly*": *SSt,* 114; George F. Howe, "American Signal Intelligence in Northwest Africa and Western Europe," U.S. Cryptologic History, series IV, vol. 1, NSA, NARA RG 57, SRH-391, 48–49; "Trip Reports Concerning Use of Ultra in the Mediterranean Theater, 1943–1944," NARA RG 457, SRH-031, 36; Ralph Bennett, *Ultra and Mediterranean Strategy,* 401–3; Peter Calvocoressi, *Top Secret Ultra* ("*panoramic knowledge*"); F. H. Hinsley et al., *British Intelligence in the Second World War,* vol. 3, part 1, 75, 483–86 (*Hyena*).

Eisenhower also knew: SSA, 35, 56; Jack Greene and Alessandro Massignani, *The Naval War in the Mediterranean, 1940–1943,* 313 ("*blindfolded*"); "I Reparto Riunione dal Duce del Giorno 3 Aprile 1943," Italian Collection, item 26, OCMH, SSI, NARA RG 319, 270/19/6/3, box 243 (*lightbulbs*).

What Eisenhower did not know: Battle, 35.

The Combined Chiefs had approved: Richard M. Leighton, "Planning for Sicily," *Proceedings,* July 1962, 90+; Garland, 67 ("*Your planners*").

Marshall was right: Battle, 46; Garland, 89; "Outline Plan," Force 343, May 18, 1943, NARA RG 319, OCMH, 270/19/6/3, box 242; Cochran, "Chicken or Eggs?"; Alexander S. Cochran, "Constructing a Military Coalition from Materials at Hand: The Case of Allied Force Headquarters," paper, SMH conference, Apr. 16, 1999, 10–12 (*Amphibious doctrine*).
A "terrible inflexibility": Smith, "Mediterranean Operations," 1; Garland, 92–93.
In mid-June, Eisenhower: *Three Years*, 333; DDE, *Crusade in Europe*, 170; Davis, 425–26 ("*Don't* ever *do that*").
Feints and deceptions: SSA, 167; memo, C. B. Hazeltine to McClure, July 14, 1943, AFHQ Psychological Warfare Branch, Carl A. Spaatz papers, LOC MS Div, box 13; *The Sicilian Campaign*, 8.
Verdala Palace: Three Years, 347–48, 353; DDE, *Letters to Mamie*, 125.
Translators, for example: DDE to GCM, May 7 and 11, June 22 and 28, 1943, NARA RG 165, E 422, OPD Exec Files, box 16.
"*Aged Military Gentlemen*": C.R.S. Harris, *Allied Administration of Italy, 1943–1945*, 82; Paul Dickson, *War Slang*, 118; http://www.sokrates-digital.de/produktkatalog/AQ493328.php; DDE to AGWAR, June 1, 1943, NARA RG 165, E 422, OPD Exec Files, box 16. The abbreviation was shortened in August to AMG.
he worried about his wife: Ambrose, vol. 1, 244.
Kathleen Helen Summersby: Kay Summersby Morgan, *Past Forgetting*, 126, 136; finding aid, Barbara Wyden papers, DDE Lib; Miller, 516 (*Grief and strain*); Piers Brendon, *Ike: His Life & Times*, 125.
Just please remember: DDE, *Letters to Mamie*, 128.

"*The Horses of the Sun*"

The convoys from Algeria: Karig, 235–36; *SSA*, 62–65; Tregaskis, 15 (*abacus*); war log, U.S.S. *Monrovia*, July 8–9, 1943, NARA RG 38, OCNO, WWII war diaries, box 1233 (*thirteen knots*).
Ships wallowed: Total tonnage included follow-on convoys. Memo, "Observations 'HUSKY'—Joss Task Force," July 10, 1943, MTOUSA, NARA RG 492, SOS, 290/55/1-2, 7-1, box 2736; msg, AFHQ to AGWAR, June 25, 1943, NARA RG 165, E 422, OPD Exec Files, box 16; Jackson, "Signal Communication in the Sicilian Campaign," 3; "Orders for Operation HUSKY," n.d., AFHQ, S.S.O. 17/3, CARL, N-14793A; msgs, DDE to AGWAR, May 28, 1943; AGWAR to AFHQ, June 10, 1943; and Office of Fiscal Director, WD, to DDE, June 17, 1943, all in NARA RG 165, E 422, OPD Exec Files, box 16 (*rat traps*); Robert W. Komer, "Civil Affairs and Military Government in the Mediterranean Theater," 1954, CMH, 2-3.7 AX, II-24 (*occupation scrip*); memo, "Medical Planning Instruction," Force 141, March 14, 1943, A. S. Nevins papers, MHI, box 1 (*condoms*); "British Abbreviations and Glossary," A. S. Nevins papers, MHI, box 1 (*glossary*).
Half the tonnage: Mayo, 154; "Logistical History of NATOUSA/MTOUSA," Nov. 1945, NARA RG 407, E 427, 95-AL1-4, box 203, 58.
"*what they thought they needed*": "Reminiscences of Walter C. W. Ansel," John T. Mason, Jr., 1970, USNI OHD, 148; AAR, 6681st Signal Pigeon Co., July 9, 1944, NARA RG 407, SG Co-6681-0.1, box 23228; msg, AGWAR to DDE, June 17, 1943, NARA RG 165, E 422, OPD Exec Files, box 16 (*pigeons*); Max Corvo, *The O.S.S. in Italy*, 61; "Reminiscences of Phil E. Bucklew," 1980, John T. Mason, Jr., USNI OHD, 44; memo, "Final Outline Plan, Force 343," June 8, 1943, NARA RG 338, II Corps historical section, box 148; "Beaches of Sicily," Strategic Engineering Study, No. 31, Nov. 1942, MHI (*rumrunner*); msgs, GCM to DDE, May 2 and 27, 1943, NARA RG 165, E 422, OPD Exec Files, box 16; Blanche D.Coll et al., *The Corps of Engineers: Troops and Equipment*, 455–56 (*wooden crates*); Nicholas, 222, 226, 234 (*motorcycle courier*).

Much had been learned: memo, HQ, I Armored Corps, annex 2, June 14, 1943, MTOUSA, NARA RG 492, SOS, 290/55/1-2, 7-1, box 2736; "Operating Instructions HUSKY," vol. IV, Force 343, FO No. 1, June 20, 1943, NARA RG 407, E 427, 95-AL1-3.17, box 201 (chart distributed to medics); memo, HQ, SOS NATOUSA, June 29, 1943, and "Graves Registration Directive," MTOUSA, NARA RG 492, SOS, 290/55/1-2, 7-1, box 2736; memo, "Disposition of Personal Effects," May 24, 1943, Harlan W. Hendrick, ASEQ, 1st ID, MHI.

welfare of civilians: "British Administrative History of the Italian Campaign," appendix, 1946, NARA RG 94, E 427, 95-USF2-5.0; Komer, "Civil Affairs," II-20 (*vast stocks*); "Post-HUSKY Operations, Military Government," NARA RG 319, OCMH, 270/19/6/3, box 242 (*nineteen million mouths*); "History of Planning Division, Army Service Forces," n.d., CMH, 3-2.2 AA, vol. 1, 92 ("*self-supporting*").

Kent Hewitt spent the passage: OH, HKH, 1961, John T. Mason, Col U OHRO, 314; HKH, AAR, "The Sicilian Campaign," n.d., 107; John H. Clagett, unpublished bio of HKH, ts, n.d., NHC, 392 ("*God couldn't be*").

"*sea-going bedpan*": "History of Amphibious Training Command, U.S. Atlantic Fleet," 1951, *USNAd*, #145 a–c, VIII, 24; Beck et al., 118; Perry, "A Reporter at Large," 50 ("*ensign-eliminators*"); author visit, *LST 325*, Alexandria, Va., May 28, 2005; Perret, 134 (*rumrunners*); Barry W. Fowle, ed., *Builders and Fighters*, 407; Kendall King, "LSTs: Marvelous at Fifty Plus," *Naval History*, 1992 (*river yards*); Pyle, 157 (*even in drydock*).

Hewitt knew: Beck et al., 124; Mason, 273–78 (*Sherman tank*).

"*take his chances*": "Reminiscences of Walter C. W. Ansel," 149; HKH, AAR, "The Sicilian Campaign," 44 ("*illusory*"); Hinsley, 86 (*fourteen had been lost*).

In his own cabin: PP, 275, 271 (*horses of the sun*); diary, GSP, July 8, 1943, LOC MS Div, box 3, folder 1 ("*Attack and then look*"); Mason, 284 ("*on their necks*").

Field Order No. 1: HQ, Force 343 (7th Army), June 20, 1943, NARA RG 319, OCMH, SSI, box 242; "Seventh Army Report Summary," n.d., NARA RG 319, OCMH, 2-3.7 CC2 Sicily, box 250 ("*We shall win*").

"*You are a great leader*": *PP*, 272; John North, ed., *The Alexander Memoirs, 1940–1945*, 45–46; Hirshson, 360 ("*Do you kill?*"); GSP to DDE, Feb. 20, 1942, DDE Lib, PP-pres, box 91 ("*You name them*"); memoir, Kenyon Joyce, ts, n.d., MHI, 345 ("*colorful*").

"*a question of destiny*": GSP to Bea, July 5, 1943, LOC MS Div, Chrono File, box 10.

Ernie Pyle was with them: SSA, 66; Pyle, 12 ("*On fine days*"); Lee G. Miller, *The Story of Ernie Pyle*, 267 (*he rose at three A.M.*).

"*older and a little apart*": David Nichols, ed., *Ernie's War*, 18; Quentin Reynolds, *The Curtain Rises*, 256 ("*a family Bible*"); Miller, 261 ("*fundamentally sad*").

"*lost in the dark*": Richard Collier, *Fighting Words*, 140, 144, 152; Miller ("*athlete's foot*").

thirty cubic feet: Harold Larson, "Troop Transports in WWII," ts, March 1945, CMH, 4-13. AA12, 53; Brown, *The Whorehouse of the World*, 142; IG investigation, fall 1943, MTOUSA AG, NARA RG 492, 333.7, box 1432 (*Army inspectors*); Russell B. Capelle, *Casablanca to the Neckar*, 18 (*its mystery*).

They made do: Valentine, 10; George F. Hall papers, HIA, box 1 (*seven times as high*); AAR, 26th Inf Regt, "The Beginning of the End," n.d., MRC FDM (*hellhole*); Williamson, "Tales of a Thunderbird," 86 ("bona sera").

They packed and unpacked: annex, Admin Order No. 1, June 14, 1943, Seventh Army, Walter J. Muller papers, HIA, box 2; chart, Wayne M. Harris, ASEQ, 157th Inf, MHI (*82.02 pounds*); Harold W. Thatcher, "The Development of Special Rations for the Army," 1944, Historical Section, QM General, MHI, 4-5 ("*D rations*").

"*It's interesting to see*": corr, TR to Eleanor, July 7, 8, 1943, LOC MS Div, box 10.

"*Commander Houdini*": Graeme Zielinski, "Capt. Richard Steere, 92; Meteorologist for Patton," *WP*, March 22, 2001, B-6; "Navy Honors D.C. Officer, Weather Expert," *WP*, Dec. 7, 1943, B-9.
Summer blows: Charles C. Bates and John F. Fuller, *America's Weather Warriors*, 74.
"*flat-bottomed delight*": Collins, 200; Jack Belden, "As I Saw It," in Albert H. Smith, Jr., *The Sicily Campaign: Recollections of an Infantry Company Commander*, 143 ("*Mussolini wind*"); memo, Bert M. Rudd, "Landing Craft and Bases," AGF Observer, July 16, 1943, ANSCOL, NARA RG 334, NWC Lib, box 150, 6; Bill Mauldin, *The Brass Ring*, 143 (*two dozen balloons*); "Personal Diary of Langan W. Swent," July 9, 1943, HIA, box 1 (*helmsmen struggled*); Pyle, 13.
Never had the amphibious vessels: CM, 209; Karig, 255 ("*green water cascaded*"); Donald J. Hunt, "USS *LST 313* and Battery A, 33rd Field Artillery," ts, 1997, MRC FDM, 46 (*heavy shudder*); William A. Carter, "Carter's War," ts, 1983, CEOH, box V-14, VII-3 ("*47 degrees*"); Mason, 279–82 ("*nothing to the right*"); James Phinney Baxter III, *Scientists Against Time*, 77 (*charms on a watch chain*); Karig, 237 (Florence Nightingale).
"*You probably enjoy*": *What to Do Aboard the Transport*, 244.
"*All of us are miserable*": Samuel David Spivey, *A Doughboy's Narrative*, 85; Franklyn A. Johnson, *One More Hill*, 81 ("*First I am afraid*"); John Ellis, *On the Front Lines*, 60 ("*Bags, Vomit*"); Ralph G. Martin, *The G.I. War, 1941–1945*, 67 ("*secret shame*").
"*Land of My Fathers*": Buckley, 24; Farley Mowat, *And No Birds Sang*, 46–50 ("*green and groaning*"); Francis A. Even, "The Tenth Engineers," ts, 1996, author's possession, 7 (*African donkeys*); memo, Bert M. Rudd, "Landing Craft and Bases," AGF Observer, July 16, 1943, ANSCOL, NARA RG 334, NWC Lib, box 150, 6 ("*Ship rolled thirty degrees*"); Martha Harris, ed., "The Harris Family in World War II," 23 (*peritonitis*); Steve Kluger, *Yank*, 105 ("*walk and walk*").
"'*Is God on our side'*": Strome Galloway, *A Regiment at War*, 70.
"*It's goddam foolish*": Jack Belden, "As I Saw It," in Smith, 144; "Reminiscences of Walter C. W. Ansel," 145 ("*first to yelp*").
On Monrovia: *SSA*, 68; Garland, 109 (*at least four hours*); Hewitt, "Naval Aspects of the Sicilian Campaign," 705 ("*get ashore*"); OH, HKH, Jan. 23, 1951, Howard M. Smyth, SM, MHI.
Late on Friday afternoon: lecture, "Narrative by Rear Adm. Alan G. Kirk," Oct. 2, 1943, Pearl Harbor, NHC; Clagett, unpub bio of HKH, 392–98; Bates and Fuller, 74; Bernard Fergusson, *The Watery Maze*, 240–44.
"*Always the vibration*": McCallum, 150; letter, John T. Dawson to family, July 9, 1943, MRC FDM.
"*taking it green*": W. S. Chalmers, *Full Cycle*, 177; John F. Hummer, *An Infantryman's Journal*, 20 (*smoking lamps*); war log, U.S.S. *Monrovia*, NARA RG 38, OCNO, WWII war diaries, box 1233; "Account Written by Brig. Gen. McLain," ts, summer 1943, NARA RG 319, OCMH, 2-3.7 cc2, Sicily, "45th Div Landings," box 247, 1 (*sheer cliffs*).
"*my communications with Washington*": Chandler, vol. 2, 1212; *Crusade in Europe*, 172 ("*I wish I knew*").
"*all the winds of heaven*": Winton, 316; McCallum, 146 ("*Road to the Isles*"); Cunningham, 550–51 ("*solid sheets*"); Francis de Guingand, *Operation Victory*, 289–90 (*gin*).
Eisenhower reviewed: Chandler, vol. II, 1247 ("*the operation will proceed*"), 1247n; F. M. Whitely to J. N. Kennedy, July 14, 1943, UK NA, WO 204/307 (*reconnaissance plane*); Stephen, 84 ("*recklessness*"); Roger Parkinson, *A Day's March Nearer Home*, 137 ("*not favourable*").
"*To be perfectly honest*": *Three Years*, 348–49; Alan Lloyd, *The Gliders*, 39 (*searchlight beams*); Garland, 109; John S. D. Eisenhower, *Allies*, 319 (*lucky coins*); Coles, "Participation of the Ninth and Twelfth Air Forces," 81 (*vital turn*).
"*tell some stories*": *Three Years*, 350; Vincent Orange, *Tedder: Quietly in Command*, 225; Abraham, "Time Off for War," 70 (*razor*).

"*in the lap of the gods*": Miller, 520; DDE, *Letters to Mamie,* 134–35. *Death or Glory Patton woke:* George S. Patton, *War as I Knew It,* 65; combat narrative, Mitchell Jamieson, "Invasion of Sicily," May 2, 1944, NHC, 4–5; diary, July 9, 1943, GSP, LOC MS Div, box 2, folder 15 (*pitched overboard*).
"*We may feel anxious*": *PP,* 275–76.
He found Hewitt: Albert C. Wedemeyer, *Wedemeyer Reports!,* 224; HKH, "The Sicilian Campaign," n.d., NARA RG 319, OCMH, 270/19/6/3, box 242, 83 (*ten knots*); S. W. Roskill, *The War at Sea, 1939–1945,* 116 (Unruffled); N.L.A. Jewell, *Secret Mission Submarine,* 113 ("*I saw hundreds*").
"*a mass of flames*": Patton, 65; diary, Hobart Gay, July 9, 1943, USMA Lib, 98; Bernard Stambler, "Campaign in Sicily," ts, n.d., vol. 2, CMH, 2-3.7 AA.L ("*All the beach*"); Walter Karig, *Battle Report: The Atlantic War,* 238 ("*Apparently the big ships*").
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CHAPTER 2: THE BURNING SHORE

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The Loss of Irrecoverable Hours

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to author, Sept. 10, 2002 ("*Keep it clear*"); A. J. Liebling, "Find 'Em, Fix 'Em, and Fight 'Em," *New Yorker*, part 2, May 1, 1943, 24+; author interview, Richard A. Williams, Jan. 25, 2003 ("*we willingly got up*"); diary, GSP, June 24, 1943, GSP, LOC MS Div, box 2, folder 15.

"*Well, doesn't it?*": Maxwell Hamilton, "Junior in Name Only," *Retired Officer*, June 1981, 28+; Omar N. Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 110–11 ("*beat up every M.P.*"); Samuel David Spivey, *A Doughboy's Narrative*, s.p., 1995, 81–82 ("*Too much vino*").

Toxic rumors: Jean Gordon Peltier, *World War II Diary of Jean Gordon Peltier*, 82; Benjamin A. Dickson, "G-2 Journal: Algiers to the Elbe," ts, n.d., MHI, 69 (*hoarding Camels*); "Terry Allen and the First Division in North Africa and Sicily," ts, n.d., TdA, box 5, MHI, 32 ("*yellow-bellies*"); Stanhope Brasfield Mason, "Reminiscences and Anecdotes of World War II," ts, 1988, MRC FDM, 150–51 ("*killed trying to invade*").

By late May, when the division bivouacked: Willam E. Faust, ASEQ, divarty HHQ, 1st ID, MHI, 60; Donald McB. Curtis, *The Song of the Fighting First*, 103–4 ("*Let us know*"); memo, S. B. Mason, "Weapons," May 17, 1943, Stanhope Mason papers, MRC FDM (*brass knuckles*); memo, "Conference Notes, 24 May 1943," Mason papers, MRC FDM ("*disheveled appearance*"); "History, Mediterranean Base Section, Sept. 1942–May 1944," CMH, 8-4 CA 1944, 35 (*five P.M. curfew*); Dickson, "G-2 Journal," 69 ("*lively brawls*"); Franklyn A. Johnson, *One More Hill*, 76 ("*Truckloads*"); speech, Stanhope B. Mason, Apr. 24, 1976, 57th annual dinner of Officers of the First Division, NYC, in Smith, 194 ("*need not salute*").

"*bitched, buggered and bewildered*": speech, Mason, Apr. 24, 1976; JPL, 24–25; Omar N. Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 110–11 (*Eisenhower was furious*), 118 ("*piratical*"); Benjamin S. Persons, *Relieved of Command*, 69; Robert John Rogers, "A Study of Leadership in the First Infantry Division During World War II," thesis, 1965, Ft. L, 118 ("*freebooters*").

vineyards and orchards of the Geloan plain: author visit, Sept. 1996; Garland, 165.

Through his field glasses: Ladislas Farago, *Patton: Ordeal and Triumph*, 297; Jeffers, 225; "History of the 26th Infantry Regiment," 16–17 ("*trying to flush quail*").

Shortly before seven A.M.: "History of the 26th Infantry Regiment," 18–19; H. R. Knickerbocker et al., *Danger Forward*, 105; Garland, 166–67; Farago, 297 ("*situation not so good*"); Robert W. Baumer, *Before Taps Sounded*, s.p., 2000, 174 ("*We beat their asses*"); corr, TR to Eleanor, July 17, 1943, TR, LOC MS Div, box 10.

In the lemon grove: Romeiser, ed., 162; "Terry Allen and the First Division in North Africa and Sicily," ts, n.d., TdA, box 5, MHI, 50 (*rolling gait*); Pearlman, 249–50.

Before flunking out: Gerald Astor, *Terrible Terry Allen*, 11–12; Thomas W. Dixon, "Terry Allen," *Army*, Apr. 1978, 57+ ("*loved horses*"); Liebling, "Find 'Em, Fix 'Em, and Fight 'Em," 221+.

"*The soldier's greatest nightmare*": obit, *NYT*, Sept. 13, 1969; Astor, 184 ("*win or die*"); "Allen and His Men," *Time*, Aug. 9, 1943, 30+ ("*It's crazy*"); Johnson, 77 ("*Do your job*"); corr, TdA to Mary Fran, June 6, 1943, TdA, MHI, box 2.

"*Couriers dashed*": Romeiser, ed., 166; "Addendum by Major Groves, 27 Oct. 1950," in OH, Bryce F. Denno and Melvin J. Groves, 16th Inf., Oct. 24, 1950, SM, MHI; Garland, 166–67; Smith, 21 ("*let's not wait*").

At 10:10 A.M., the 3rd Battalion: Baumgartner et al., 41; Knickerbocker, 106; Peltier, 99; "Terry Allen and the First Division," ts, n.d., TdA, box 5, MHI, 37.

Allen climbed to the crest: Romeiser, ed., 166–67; Clift Andrus, notes on *A Soldier's Story*, ts, n.d., MRC FDM, 1988.32, box 215 ("*burning tanks and confusion*"); Garland, 160; memo, George A. Taylor, Dec. 26, 1950, SM, MHI; corr, John M. Brooks to author, Oct. 19, 2003; *SSA*, 109–12 (LST 313); Jackson, "Signal Communication in the Sicilian Campaign," 63; combat narrative, Curtis Shears, USNR, Apr. 3, 1944, NHC, 2; William S. Hutchinson, Jr., "Use of the 4.2-inch Chemical

Mortar in the Invasion of Sicily," *MR*, Nov. 1943, 13+ (*fishing dinghies*).
"*I want tanks*": memo, TdA to OCMH, n.d., NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 250; AAR, 3/16th Inf, Aug. 16, 1943, NARA RG 319, OCMH, 2-3.7 CC2, box 247; Charles F. Ryan et al., "2nd Armored Division in the Sicilian Campaign," May 1950, AS, Ft. K, 24 (*large shears*).
"*deficient inner cohesion*": Bergengruen, "Der Kampf der Pz. Div. 'Hermann Goering,'" 14–19; Fridolin von Senger und Etterlin, "Die Abwehr der Achsenmächte auf Sizilien," *Allgemeine schweizerische Militär Zeitschrift*, Dec. 1950, 859–60 (*too mammoth to tow*); MEB, "Axis Tactical Operations in Sicily" ("*returning to their ships*").
"*They are carrying armloads*": Johnson, 89; Romeiser, ed. ("*Hell, no*").
Patton came ashore: Mason, 269; memo, GSP, July 11, 1943, GSP, LOC MS Div, box 11, folder 8; Dennis Showalter, *Patton and Rommel*, 315 (*timing his own pulse*); Jack Belden, "Battle of Sicily," 27+ ("*beautiful and battle-fevered*"); Milton F. Perry and Barbara W. Parke, *Patton and His Pistols*, 62; Patton, 54; Paul W. Brown, 165 ("*Kraut bastards*").
Adolf's Alley: D'Este, *Bitter Victory*, 317; Jackson, "Signal Communication in the Sicilian Campaign," 58–61 (*code rooms*).
Dust and gray smoke: SSA, 112; Carlo D'Este, *Patton: A Genius for War*, 507; corr, GSP to L. J. McNair, Aug. 2, 1943, GSP, LOC MS Div, box 11 ("*dervishes*"); James B. Lyle, "The Operations of Companies A and B, 1st Ranger Battlion, at Gela, Sicily," 1948, IS, 18–19 ("*hanging from trees*"); Blythe Foote Finke, *No Mission Too Difficult*, 130 ("*Kick 'em*").
"*a most foolish manner*": note, GSP, ts, n.d., GSP, LOC MS Div, box 48, folder 20.
If the Italians had been stopped: TdA, "Commanding General's After Action Report," 1950, in Smith, 127; Garland, 170; MEB, "Axis Tactical Operations in Sicily" Martin A. Shadday, "Operations of Company C, 41st Armored Infantry Regiment, 2nd AD, at Gela, Sicily," 1948, IS, 15 (*dried mud*); OH, Samuel A. D. Hunter, March 7, 1944, NHC, 8–9 ("*To arms*"); *The Sicilian Campaign*, 93; William H. Frazier, Jr., "The Operations of XII Air Support Command in the Invasion of Sicily," 1948, IS, 21 ("*Men burned*").
Firepower arrived: DSC citation, Clift Andrus, NARA RG 338, ETO, Seventh Army awards, box 2; Thomas F. Lancer, "Goodbye Mr. Chips," in Albert H. Smith, Jr., ed., "Biographical Sketches, WWII," MRC FDM; bio file, Clift Andrus, n.d., MHI; Malcolm Marshall, ed., *Proud Americans*, 112 (*threatened to shoot any man*).
Then, above the whine: Clift Andrus, "Amphibious Landings—North Africa, Sicily, and Normandy," ts, n.d., MRC FDM, 26; Godson, 74.
German tanks began to burn: Patrick K. O'Donnell, *Beyond Valor*, 51; Franz Kurowski, *The History of the Fallschirmpanzerkorps Hermann Göring*, 159 ("*rivets flew about*"); William T. Dillon, 1/16th Inf, ASEQ, MHI, 6 ("*he was melted*"); Bergengruen, "Kampf der Pz. Div. Hermann Goering," 20–21 ("*counterattack against the hostile landings*"); TdA, "Commanding General's After Action Report," 127 ("*damned Heinies*"); Romeiser, ed., 167 ("*merely embarrassing*").
Patton returned to the beach: PP, 279; D'Este, *Patton*, 507; Mark M. Boatner III, *The Biographical Dictionary of World War II*, 138 (*white-haired brigadier*); Patrick K. O'Donnell, *Operatives, Spies, and Saboteurs*, 45–50 ("*happy as a clam*"); Anthony Cave Brown, *The Last Hero*, 352 ("*fucking and fighting*").
"*I had the bitter experience*": memo, Paul Conrath, July 12, 1943, AFHQ captured documents, NARA RG 407, E 47, 95 AL1-2.9, box 162; Andrus, "Amphibious Landings," 27; Kurowski, 157; MEB, "Axis Tactical Operations in Sicily" (*630 men killed*); Garland, 171n; Charles E. Smith, "The American Campaign in Sicily," ts, n.d., CMH, Geog Sicily 314.7, 17 (*American casualties*); report summary, Seventh Army, n.d., NARA RG 319, OCMH, 2-3.7 CC2 Sicily, box 250 (*nine thousand prisoners*); "Report of Activities," July 31, 1944, staff judge advocate, 1st ID, MRC FDM (*dead civilians*).

"*I am well satisfied*": memo, GSP, July 11, 1943, GSP, LOC MS Div, box 11, folder 8; *PP,* 279–80.

"Tonight Wear White Pajamas"

His own losses were modest: The Sicilian Campaign, 91–93 (*the* Barnett); Carver, 22; Roskill, 131 (Talamba); action reports, S. H. Alexander and Ralph C. Adams, *LST 313,* ts, n.d., in Donald J. Hunt, "USS *LST 313* and Battery A, 33rd Field Artillery," ts, 1997, MRC FDM, 42; *SSA,* 108 (*flaming axles*); Knickerbocker et al., 103–4.
Each successive raid: AAFinWWII, 445; HKH, "The Sicilian Campaign," 17–18 ("*almost complete lack*"); "Notes on the Planning and Assault Phases of the Sicilian Campaign," UK Combined Operations HQ, Bulletin No. Y/1, Oct. 1943, CARL, 2–7.
Air Force commanders: AAFinWWII, 445 ("*parceling out*"); Coles, "Participation of the Ninth and Twelfth Air Forces," 177–78 ("*personal control*"); Garland, 106–7.
Considering that the Navy had been prepared to lose: "The Army Air Forces in Amphibious Landings in World War II," July 1953, CARL, N-16372.34, 32–46; corr, HKH to SEM, Feb. 9, 1953, SEM, NHC, box 51 ("*we can't get the goddamn Air Force*"); Ralph G. Martin, "Invasion of Sicily," Aug. 13, 1943, in Steve Kluger, *Yank,* 101+ ("*Only the good people*").
Back at the Gela roads: action report, John McFadzean, gunnery officer, S.S. *Rowan,* Dec. 22, 1943, NHC, 17–18; Karig, 244–45 ("*a flat sheet of crimson fire*"); OH, Charles William Harwood, U.S.S. *Dickman,* Nov. 19, 1943, NHC; *The Sicilian Campaign,* 94.
"*hard as flint*": George C. Mitchell, *Matthew B. Ridgway: Soldier, Statesman, Scholar, Citizen,* 27, 35 ("*Even with his penis*"); Soffer, 22, 36 ("*cultivate the art*"); Blair, 111.
"*Tonight wear white pajamas*": "Report of Allied Force Airborne Board" Garland, 175n; Warren, 22; Mason, "Reminiscences and Anecdotes," 171–73; AAR, 7th Army, G-3, n.d., NARA RG 319, OCMH, 2-3.7 CC2, box 250 ("*It is essential*"); Joseph M. Whitaker, "Report of Investigation Concerning Shooting Down of Airborne Troops, 11–12 July 1943," Sept. 21, 1943, GSP, LOC MS Div, box 49, folder 11 (Monrovia*'s signal room*); memo, MBR, "Reported Loss of Transport Planes and Personnel," Aug. 2, 1943, CJB, box 48, 4–6 (*asking whether the gunners knew*).
"*There's always some son-of-a-bitch*": McLean, "Adventures in Occupied Areas," 36; Whitaker, "Report of Investigation" Thomas B. Gage, 45th ID, in William O. Perry, "Report of Investigation," Aug. 14, 1943, 45th ID IG, NARA RG 338, AG 1943, 333.5, box 111 (*signal officers struggled*).
Ridgway for six weeks had warned: Garland, 175–77; Charles R. Shrader, "Amicicide: The Problem of Friendly Fire in Modern War," Dec. 1982, CSI, 70 ("*Every plane that came over*"); Warren, 40.
"*Am terribly worried*": *PP,* 280.
The contagion spread: Garland, 177; Willard E. Harrison, Co. A, 504th PIR, in Alvin B. Welsch, "Report of Investigation: Alleged Shooting Down of Friendly Troop Carrying Transport Planes," n.d., NARA RG 338, AG 1943, 333.5, box 111 ("*I looked back*"); Lee D. Carr, in Robert Miley, "But Never a Soldier," ts, 1987 (*Pilots dove*); Breuer, 143 (*rosary beads*); corr, John P. O'Malley to W. P. Yarborough, Jan. 20, 1980, CJB, "Chrono. File: Sicily," MHI, box 48 ("*read a newspaper*").
Formations disintegrated: Whitaker, "Report of Investigation," 11; Welsch, "Report of Investigation" (*belly lights*); Garland, 178n; Ross S. Carter, *Those Devils in Baggy Pants,* 23 ("*bird shot in flight*"); Coles, "Participation of the Ninth and Twelfth Air Forces," 88 (*tantamount to murder*); OH, William P. Yarborough, 1975, J. R. Meese and H. P. Houser, SOOHP, MHI, 31–32; corr, W. P. Yarborough to Adam A. Komosa, Sept. 25, 1962, CMH, Geog Files, Sicily, 370.2; Adam Bernstein, "Lt. Gen. William Yarborough Dies," *WP,* Dec. 8, 2005, B5; "Report on Operation Husky," Army Observers, Amphibious Forces, U.S. Atlantic Fleet, 1943, MHI ("*at least four were shot*"); "Synopsis of Operations in Sicilian Campaign," n.d., 82nd Abn Div, NARA RG 319, OCMH, 2-3.7 CC2 Sicily, box

246; Adam A. Komosa, "Airborne Operation, 504th Parachute Infantry, Sicily," 1946, IS; "A Study of Operation Husky," June 28, 1947, Ground General School, DTL, Ft. B, 25 (*passwords*); Soffer, 48.
"*Stop, you bastards*": Romeiser, ed., 168; Samuel Hynes, *The Soldiers' Tale*, 153 ("*large pumpkins*"); Martin, 68–70 (*candlesticked*); Garland, 179; Breuer, 145.
Colonel Reuben H. Tucker: Welsch, "Report of Investigation" Garland, 179, 181n; AAR, 52nd Troop Carrier Wing, July 12, 1943, JPL, MHI, box 11 (*half shot down*); John Mason Brown, 164 (*escape in a rubber raft*).
At last the shooting ebbed: "Tactical Employment in the U.S. Army of Transport Aircraft and Gliders," 39; "Airborne Operations Conference," St. Georges Hotel, Algiers, July 24, 1943, "Material on Operation HUSKY, 1943, Allied Forces," MHI, D763.S5 A5; memo, MBR, "Casualties, Sicilian Campaign, CT 504," May 19, 1944, NARA RG 319, OCMH, 2-3.7 CC2 Sicily, box 246; Garland, 182; Blair, 102 (*only 3,900*).
"*I was glad to see*": Maxwell D. Taylor, *Swords and Plowshares*, 50.
"*By golly*": John Gunther, *D Day*, 61; *Three Years*, 357; John Gunther, *Eisenhower: The Man and the Symbol*, 154 ("*gilded cage*").
"*More like a huge regatta*": corr, J.F.M. Whiteley to J. N. Kennedy, July 14, 1943, UK NA, WO 204/307; Gunther, *D Day*, 67 ("*when they pipe me on*").
Patton led the way: "Allied Commander-in-Chief's Report on Sicilian Campaign 1943," 92; Aris, 119 (*little extra food*); Richard Doherty, *A Noble Crusade*, 142 (*anticipated ten thousand*); Neillands, 223 (*Montgomery confidently predicted*).
As for his own Seventh Army: Garland, 189; ONB, "Operation of II Corps, U.S. Army in Sicily," n.d., CMH, Geog Files, Sicily, 370.2, 7; Howe, "American Signal Intelligence," 52 ("*Send more pigeons*"); Philip Vian, *Action This Day*, 105 ("*pigeon English*").
"*Ike had stepped on him hard*": *Three Years*, 360; JPL, 58.
"*Patton stood at the edge*": Gunther, *D Day*, 70–71; HKH, "The Sicilian Campaign," timeline, 2–15 (Monrovia *radio room*); Gunther, *Eisenhower*, 156–57 ("*welcome Canada*").
"*Provided everything goes*": *Three Years*, 361, 363; diary, HCB, July 13, 1943, DDE Lib, A-578 ("*calm and matter-of-fact*").
"*You particularly requested me*": Chandler, vol. 2, 1255; DDE to GSP, July 12, 1943, GSP, LOC MS Div, box 49, folder 11 ("*inexcusable carelessness*").
Investigations would go forth: memo, J. E. Hull to GCM, Aug. 2, 1943, "Report of Allied Force Airborne Board (Invasion of Sicily)," NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 250; OH, HKH, 1961, John T. Mason, Col U OHRO, 356; memo, Paul L. Williams to DDE, July 13, with notes by A. Tedder, Carl Spaatz papers, diary, LOC MS Div, box 13 ("*not operationally sound*"); F.A.M. Browning, NATOUSA conference, July 24, 1943, 82nd Airborne Div, "Synopsis of Operations in Sicilian Campaign," NARA RG 319, OCMH, 2-3.7 CC2 Sicily, box 246 ("*well-pleased*").
"*unavoidable incident of combat*": diary, July 13, 1943, GSP, LOC MS Div, box 2, folder 15; JPL, 58 (*bedbugs*).

"The Dark World Is Not Far from Us"

They pressed inland: Smith, 28; Robert Capa, *Slightly Out of Focus*, 71 (*too many stripes*); Dancocks, 47 (*scuffing through flour*); Walter J. Eldredge, "First Shot in Anger," www.4point2.org ("*After the first mile*"); Farley Mowat, *The Regiment*, 64 ("*brain furnaces*"); Anders Kjar Arnbal, *The Barrel-Land Dance Hall Rangers*, 119 (*Benzedrine)*; Gunther, *D Day*, 142; Alan Moorehead, *Eclipse*, 3; Charles R. Codman, *Drive*, 113; Walter Bernstein, *Keep Your Head Down*, 105 ("*face in the dirt*").
"*Right of way!*": Robert E. Coffin and Joan N. Coffin, "The Robert Edmonston Coffin–Joan Nelson

Coffin Family Book," 84; John Steinbeck, *Once There Was a War,* 196–98.

the dust of St. Rita's bones: Norman Lewis, *In Sicily,* 157; Fred Howard, *Whistle While You Wait,* 71, 86 ("*life and death of a saint*").

"*few words, many deeds*": David Hunt, *A Don at War,* 201; Moorehead, 4; McCallum, 155; Howard, 86 ("*frayed trousers*"); Lewis, 33, 67 ("*bee-eaters*"); corr, anonymous U.S. Army civil affairs officer, Aug. 1, 1943, Malcolm S. McLean papers, MHI ("*carton of cigarettes*").

Dead enemy soldiers: Mowat, *And No Birds Sang,* 66; annex, Administrative Order No. 1, June 14, 1943, Seventh Army, Walter J. Muller papers, HIA, box 2 ("*E.D.*"); C.R.S. Harris, *Allied Administration of Italy, 1943–1945,* 37 (*grave-diggers' strike*); Harry L. Coles and Albert K. Weinberg, *Civil Affairs: Soldiers Become Governors,* 188, 483; "Report on the First Phase of AMGOT Occupation, Sicily and Region II," 8 ("*the mob lay down*"); Jackson, "Signal Communication in the Sicilian Campaign," 82 ("*seven alleged saboteurs*").

"*La donna è mobile*": John M. Mecklin, "Former Actor Sings Aria," United Press, *New York World-Telegram,* Aug. 9, 1943; "statement made by Francis Carpenter," July 14, 1943, SEM, NHC, box 50, folder 22.

No one was more eager: Allan R. Milett, "Overrated and Underrated," *American Heritage,* vol. 51, no. 3 (May–June 2000); Omar N. Bradley and Clay Blair, *A General's Life,* 179 ("*Feeling worse*"); Paul L. Skogsberg, "A Slice of World War II," ts, n.d., 1st Recon Troop, 1st ID, ASEQ, MHI, 48 ("*cavalry tonsils*"); Hansen diary, July 10–11, 1943, Hansen, MHI (*seasick*); Bradley Commentaries, Hansen, MHI, box 1, 13-A, S-24 (*life preserver*); "Operations of II Corps in Sicily," Sept. 1, 1943, 6–7.

"*elderly rifleman*": Robert H. Adelman and George Walton, *Rome Fell Today,* 55; Martin Blumenson, *The Battle of the Generals,* 31; Charles Christian Wertenbaker, "Omar Nelson Bradley," *Life,* June 5, 1944, 101+ ("*Ozark lake*"); OH, ONB, Aug. 14, 1969, George S. Pappas, ONB, MHI ("*big, green frogs*"); OH, ONB, n.d., Kitty Buhler, ONB, MHI, 170 ("*number 8 post*"); Bradley and Blair, 690n ("*so damn normal*").

"*Underneath the mask*": Blumenson, *The Battle of the Generals,* 31; OH, ONB, Buhler, 159–60; Bradley Commentaries, Hansen, 16-A, S-27 and S-29 ("*He's impetuous*").

Among the most pressing problems: Just under fifty thousand enemy POWs were captured in World War I. Figure provided by MG William A. Stofft, USA (ret.), Meuse-Argonne staff ride, USAREUR, Sept. 2004; Steinhof, 74 ("*asbestos*"); Mowat, *And No Birds Sang,* 124; OH, Samuel A. D. Hunter, March 7, 1944, NHC, 22 ("*No prisoners taken here*"); Bill Mauldin, *Up Front,* 64.

"*When are you going to start?*": P/W Interrogation Report, Aug. 15, 1943, in daily report, Psychological Warfare Branch, 7th Army HQ, Sept. 9, 1943, NARA RG 226, OSS History, E 99, 190/6/7/6, box 40; Peter Schrijvers, *The Crash of Ruin,* 120 ("*queer race*").

Operation HUSKY had exacted: Martin Blumenson, *Patton: The Man Behind the Legend, 1885–1945,* 195 ("*kill devastatingly*"); Homer W. Jones, 7th Army JAG, Feb. 17, 1944, testimony, board of review, NATOUSA JAG, NARA RG 159, IG, 333.9, box 67; Albert C. Wedemeyer, *Wedemeyer Reports!,* 226; Paul A. Cundiff, *45th Infantry CP,* 91; George E. Martin, *Blow, Bugle, Blow,* 96; testimony, John T. Compton, Oct. 22, 1943, court-martial records, J. T. Compton, obtained under FOIA, JAG, Arlington, Va. ("*killers are immortal*").

Despite these admonitions: "Report on Operation Husky," Army Observers, Amphibious Forces, MHI; Raymond S. McLain, "Account Written by Brig. Gen. McLain," ts, 1943, NARA RG 319, OCMH, "45th Div Landings," 2-3.7 cc2 Sicily, box 247, 7, 11 ("*Not good*"); Garland, 189–90; Troy H. Middleton, testimony, Feb. 19, 1944, board of review, NA TOUSA JAG; Whitlock, 44 ("*ugliest looking man*"); Frank James Price, *Troy H. Middleton: A Biography,* 148; Martin, 93 ("*captive can't fight*"); AAR, 180th Inf Regt, July 10–Aug. 16, 1943, 45th ID Mus; Fisher, "The Story of the 180th Infantry Regiment," 70–71; D'Este, *Bitter Victory,* 286 ("*Dear General*").

By early Wednesday morning: "History of the Aviation Engineers in the Mediterranean Theater of Operations," June 1946, AAF Engineer Command, MTO, CEOH, X-39 (*two hundred bomb craters*); "Operations of II Corps in Sicily," Sept. 1, 1943 ("*hidden in the cockpit*"); George A. Fisher, "The Story of the 180th Infantry Regiment," ts, 1945, 98–101 (*Flames crackled in the grain*).
Sniper fire still winked: Wallace Wing, Co. A, 1/180th Inf, July 16, 1943, statement, court-martial record, Horace T. West, obtained under FOIA, JAG, Arlington, Va. ("*killing spirit*"); corr, Richard Pisciotta to father, May 18, 1944, 3/157th Inf, ASEQ, MHI ("*soldiers get old*").
West proved a poor choice: "Chronology of Case," Horace T. West, 7th Army JAG, NA TOUSA JAG, NARA RG 159, IG, 333.9, box 67 ("*most thorough non-com*"); testimony, H. T. West, Oct. 1943, court-martial records, obtained under FOIA; H. T. West, cited in board of review, NATOUSA JAG, NARA RG 159, IG, 333.9, box 67 ("*watch them bleed*").
In two shuffling columns: testimony, Haskell Brown, Oct. 1943, court-martial records, H. T. West; memo, 45th Div IG to CG, "Report of Investigation of Shooting of Prisoners of War by Sgt. Horace T. West," Aug. 5, 1943 ("*Turn around*").
They fell: board of review, NATOUSA JAG.
Five hours later, it happened again: "Operations of II Corps in Sicily," Sept. 1, 1943, 8.
In command of Company C: testimony, John Gazetti, Jim Hair, Raymond C. Marlow, Richard P. Blanks, court-martial records, J. T. Compton; James J. Weingartner, "Massacre at Biscari," *Historian,* vol. 52, no. 1, Nov. 1989, 24+.
brevity of his sermons: Cundiff, 49–50.
"*Most were lying face down*": William King, testimony, n.d., board of review, West court-martial, NATOUSA JAG, NARA RG 159, IG, 333.9, box 67; William King, statement to investigators, July 16, 1943, West court-martial ("*They felt ashamed*"); Martin, 96.
"*I told Bradley*": *PP*, 288.
Two war correspondents: "Talk with Alexander Clifford," Apr. 4, 1944, LH, 11/1944/29; letters, LH to Alexander Clifford, Nov. 8, 1948, and A. Clifford to LH, Nov. 17, 1948, LH, 1/175/28-29; corr, GSP to GCM, July 18, 1943, NARA RG 319, OCMH, 2-3.7 CC2 Sicily, box 250.
"*we should try the two men*": *PP*, 316; IG report, Aug. 5, 1943, cited in West court-martial records; D'Este, *Patton,* 509 ("*Try the bastards*").
"*an order to annihilate*": Compton, testimony, court-martial records; Weingartner, "Massacre at Biscari," 24 ("*took him at his word*").
"*Good riddance*": Martin, 97.
"*The whole tendency in the thing*": Forrest E. Cookson, testimony, Feb. 16, 1944, NA TOUSA JAG, NARA RG 159, IG, 333.9, box 67; diary, HCB, July 13, 1943, DDE Lib, A-863 ("*feared reprisal*").
"*the savagery that is war*": "Memorandum for Gen. Brannon, 'Records of Trial,'" from "Lt. Col. W. H. Johnson, Jr., JAGC," May 26, 1950, and "Memorandum for Judge Patterson," from "Col. Stanley Grogan, GSC, acting director," Feb. 1, 1944, West court-martial records.
"*evil spirits seemed to come out*": Roy P. Stewart, "Raymond S. McLain, America's Greatest Citizen Soldier," *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, vol. 59, no. 1 (spring 1981), 4+; Robert H. Patton, *The Pattons*, 265 ("*fair-haired boys*"); Cundiff, 92 ("*thoughtless killers*").

CHAPTER 3: AN ISLAND REDOUBT

"Into Battle with Stout Hearts"

The command car purred: John Gunther, *D Day,* 111; Carlo D'Este, *Bitter Victory,* 93; L.S.B. Shapiro, *They Left the Back Door Open*, 42 (*dry-goods shopkeeper*), 68; Dick Malone, *Missing from the Record*, 45 ("*which one is me*"); Alan Moorehead, *Montgomery,* 36 ("*mousetrap*"); Farley Mowat, *And No Birds Sang*, 74 ("*Deadly stuff*"); Daniel G. Dancocks, *The D-Day Dodgers: The Canadians in Italy, 1943–1945,* 48 ("*good plans*"); J. K. Windeatt, "Very Ordinary Soldier," ts, 1989, IWM 90/20/1, 64 (*handing lighters*).
If the campaign: Garland, 206–7; Molony V, 93, 106.
Montgomery presented this: Stanley P. Hirshson, *General Patton: A Soldier's Life*, 372; Omar N. Bradley and Clay Blair, *A General's Story*, 188; AAR, Seventh Army G-3, n.d., NARA RG 319, OCMH, 2-3.7 CC2 Sicily, box 250 ("*on two axes*"); Alexander S. Cochran, "Constructing a Military Coalition from Materials at Hand," paper, SMH, Apr. 16, 1999, 12 (*Eisenhower declined*); JPL, 78.
Baleful consequences followed: Garland, 207; Molony V, 110–11; Benjamin A. Dickson, "G-2 Journal: Algiers to the Elbe," MHI, 84 (*Bradley scrambled*); Nigel Hamilton, *Master of the Battlefield*, 317 (*divergent axes*).
"*you can't allow him*": Bradley and Blair, 188–89; *PP,* 285 ("*What fools*"); Robert E. Coffin and Joan N. Coffin, "The Robert Edmonston Coffin–Joan Nelson Coffin Family Book," 80–81 ("*right up his ass*"); GK, July 13, 1943.
"*The feeling of discord*": *Three Years*, 321; *PP,* 243 ("*straw man*"); diary, Apr. 28, 1943, GSP, LOC MS Div, 166; JPL, 107; diary, Everett Hughes, June 22, 1943, David Irving Collection, micro 97276/5, MHI ("*our only defeat*").
"*What a headache*": Hamilton, 481; OH, Alan Moorehead, Jan. 21, 1947, FCP, MHI; Molony V, 512; OH, W. B. Smith, May 8, 1947, FCP, MHI; Brian Horrocks, *A Full Life*, 159; W.G.F. Jackson, *Alexander of Tunis as Military Commander,* 211 ("*dance to the tune*"); Brian Holden Reid, "The Italian Campaign, 1943–1945: A Reappraisal of Allied Generalship," *Journal of Strategic Studies*, vol. 13, no. 1 (March 1990), 128+ (*the general's name*); *PP,* 239 ("*not quite a gentleman*").
Son of a meek Anglican: T. A. Heatchcote, *The British Field Marshals, 1763–1997,* 213; John Keegan, ed., *Churchill's Generals,* 150 ("*bad boy*"); Moorhead, *Montgomery,* 29, 34 ("*I do not want to portray him*"); Michael Howard, "Leadership in the British Army in the Second World War," in G. D. Sheffield, *Leadership and Command,* 106 ("*not as warriors itching*"); Peter Roach, *The 8.15 to War,* 59 (*cricket metaphors*); Hamilton, 300 (*antipathy to cats*); T.E.B. Howarth, ed., *Monty at Close Quarters,* 36, 42 ("*always being right*"); Fred Majdalany, *Cassino: Portrait of a Battle,* 42 ("*no coughing*"); Richard S. Malone, *A Portrait of War, 1939–1943,* 175.
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"*I do not think Alex*": Nigel Nicolson, *Alex: The Life of Field Marshal Earl Alexander of Tunis,* 197; Danchev, 417–18; Lt. Gen. Sir Frederick E. Morgan, "OVERLORD by the Under-Dog-in-Chief," ts, n.d., FCP, MHI; OH, Arthur Coningham, Feb. 14, 1947, FCP, MHI (*ever more cautious*); Gunther, 97; Michael Carver, ed., *The War Lords: Military Commanders of the Twentieth Century,* 501 ("*to believe in their task*"); Malone, *Missing from the Record,* 17–18 ("*Do you know why*").
"*Into battle with stout hearts*": "Personal Message from the Army Commander," July 1943, George F. Hall Papers, HIA, box 1; Brooks, ed., 255 ("*We have won*").

Thousands of Axis troops in western Sicily: Walter Fries, "Der Kampf Um Sizilien," FMS, #T-2, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 245, 23; Fridolin von Senger und Etterlin, "Die Abwehr der Achsenmächte auf Sizilien," *Allgemeine schweizerische Militär Zeitschrift*, 116 Jahrang, Nr. 12, Dec. 1950, 861; Wilhelm Schmalz, "Der Kampf um Sizilien im Abschnitt der Brigade Schmalz," n.d., NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 245 ("*to win time*"); Martin Pöppel, *Heaven and Hell*, 126; Senger, "Liaison Activities with Italian 6th Army," 1951, FMS, #C-095, 56 (*internecine gunplay*); war diary, Comando Supremo, "Operazioni in Sicilia dal 9 al 19 luglo," NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 246 (*three-hour firefight*); Franz Kurowski, *The History of the Fallschirmpanzerkorps Hermann Göring*, 201 ("*Holy Virgin medals*").
"*a hole-and-corner area*": D'Este, 349; Christopher Buckley, *Road to Rome*, 71–72 ("not *tank country*"); Frank Gervasi, *The Violent Decade*, 469 ("*the fuckin' desert*").
Eighth Army's attempt: "Airborne Operations Conference," July 24, 1943, Algiers, "Material on Operation HUSKY, 1943, Allied Forces," MHI Lib; Garland, 218–19; John C. Warren, *Airborne Missions in the Mediterranean, 1942–1945*, 51; "Proceeding of Board of Officers Considering Airborne Operations," Aug. 1943, AFHQ, JPL, MHI, box 11; *AAFinWWII*, 454; B. H. Liddell Hart, *The Other Side of the Hill*, 355 (*German paratroopers also jumped*); R. Priestly, "Volunteers," ts, n.d., IWM, 83/24/1, 6 ("*One shouted for comrades*"); T.B.H. Otway, *Airborne Forces*, 126–30; Michael Hickey, *Out of the Sky: A History of Airborne Warfare*, 104–5; John Frost, *A Drop Too Many*, 185.
"*seemed to mislay his genius*": Carver, ed., 501; Gunther, 118, 141 ("*struck on the head*"); S.W.C. Pack, *Operation Husky*, 143; Neil McCallum, *Journey with a Pistol*, 153 ("*break the farmer's walls*"); Malone, *A Portrait of War*, 162 (*robbed of their boots*); Dancocks, 3 (*dead dogs*).
"*The enemy is tough*": Gunther, 121–25.
"*paved with bodies*": Field Marshal Lord Carver, *The Imperial War Museum Book of the War in Italy, 1943–1945*, 37, 46 ("*flies walked*"); "History of the 50th (Northumberland) Division During the Campaign in Sicily," ts, n.d., UK NA, CAB 106/473, 43–44 (*welts of dust*); Peter Stainforth, *Wings of Wind*, 167, 171 ("*moving men*").
By Sunday morning, July 18: SSA, 179; Francis De Guingand, *Operation Victory*, 310 (*fire-resistant*); "History of the 50th (Northumberland) Division," 62; Hamilton, 317; Douglas N. Wimberly, "Scottish Soldier: The Memoirs of Major General Douglas Wimberly," vol. 2, 1979, IWM, PP/MCR/182, 178 (*50,000 cigarettes*); *Three Years*, 363, 372–73; Kay Summersby, *Eisenhower Was My Boss*, 113 ("*What's the matter*"); Gunther, 121 ("*Both sides are tired*").

"How I Love Wars"

Patton had been sulking: Charles R. Codman, *Drive*, 107–8; *SSt*, 140 ("*on our prats*").
He found General Alexander: Harold Macmillan, *The Blast of War, 1939–1945*, 302; Harold Macmillan, *War Diaries*, 146–47, 154.
"*Have I got to stay here?*": OH, Harold R.L.G. Alexander, Jan. 10–15, 1949, SM, NARA RG 319, OCMH, SSI, box 242; A. C. Wedemeyer, "Observer's Report," Aug. 24 1943, AGF File No. 19.1, NARA RG 319, OCMH, 2-3.7 CC2, box 247, 18; Garland, 236–38; F. H. Hinsley et al., *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, 90–91 (*Ultra two days earlier*); OH, LKT and William W. Eagles, Apr. 19, 1951, SM, MHI ("*glamour of capturing Palermo*").
Alexander studied: F. W. Winterbotham, *The Ultra Secret*, 105; Carlo D'Este, *Eisenhower*, 414 ("*bone from the neck up*"); Carver, 107 ("*no ideas*"); Gregory Blaxland, *Alexander's Generals*, 16 ("*Czarist Russia*"); Gervasi, 517 ("*just had a steam bath*").
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Motto," *NYT Magazine,* Aug. 8, 1943, 20+ (*could not write his name*); Lord Moran, *Churchill: Taken from the Diaries of Lord Moran,* 187; Macmillan, *War Diaries,* 188 ("*seeing the point*"); *PP,* 267.
Oblivious to the anguish: Jackson, 221; OH, Alexander, SM ("*The hell with this*"); Alexander to Brooke, April 3, 1943, Alanbrooke Papers, LHC, 6/2/17 ("*not professional soldiers*").
Off Patton's forces went at a gallop: letter, Oscar W. Koch to James A. Norell, Dec. 15, 1960, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 250; Pietro Arancio, *Agrigento,* 14 ("*loveliest of mortal cities*"); *SSA,* 175; Robert D. Kaplan, *Mediterranean Winter,* 123; L.V. Bertarelli, *Southern Italy,* 459; Edward B. Kitchens, Jr., "The Operations of the 3rd Ranger Infantry Battalion in the Landings at Licata," 1949, IS, 18–24; Michael J. King, "Rangers: Selected Combat Operations in World War II," June 1985, CSI, 26–27; James J. Altieri, *Darby's Rangers: An Illustrated Portrayal of the Original Rangers,* 53; *CM,* 220–21 (*Darby's Rangers assembled*).
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three safes found in an Italian naval headquarters: Some evidence suggests assistance from local mafiosi who had been contacted by U.S. Navy intelligence agents as part of a covert arrangement with Charles "Lucky" Luciano, the Sicilian-born New York crime boss then serving time in a New York prison. Rodney Campbell, *The Luciano Project,* 117, 126, 176–78; Patrick K. O'Donnell, *Operatives, Spies, and Saboteurs,* 50; Max Corvo, *The O.S.S. in Italy, 1942–1945,* 23.
soldiers cracked them: OH, Samuel A. D. Hunter, March 7, 1944, NHC, 15–18; *The Sicilian Campaign,* 131.
"*During the night of 17/18 July*": G-2 periodic report No. 9, July 19, 1943, Seventh Army, NARA RG 319, OCMH, 2-3.7 CC2 Sicily, box 247; *CM,* 224.
Corporal *Audie Leon Murphy:* Audie Murphy, *To Hell and Back,* 7–8; Harold B. Simpson, *Audie Murphy, American Soldier,* 18–20, 47.
He had a slow, stooped gait: corr, Albert Lewis Pyle to Carl Swickerath, Feb. 23, 1973, ALM, box 1, 2; Don Graham, *No Name on the Bullet,* 57, 60 (*tobacco smoke*), 39; Audie Murphy, "You Do the Prayin'," *Modern Screen,* Jan. 1956, 56+ ("*You do the prayin'*"); Murphy, *To Hell and Back,* 10; Simpson, 70; "Lieutenant Audie Murphy," *AB,* no. 3, 1973, 28+.
"*some Dago name*": William E. Faust, memoir, ts, n.d., ASEQ, 1st ID, MHI, 71; Franklyn A. Johnson, *One More Hill,* 105 (*Fascist salute*); John Hersey, "AMGOT at Work," *Life,* vol. 15, no. 8, Aug. 23, 1943, 25 ("*Kiss your hand!*"); aide's diaries, July 21, 1943, LKT Jr. papers, GCM Lib, box 18, folder 3 (*Italian saddle*); George Sessions Perry, "A Reporter at Large," *New Yorker,* Aug. 14, 1943, 46+ ("*One never seemed*").
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From a roadcut in the ridge: corr, LKT Jr. to James A. Norell, Jan. 10, 1961, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 250; Kaplan, 122; diary, July 23, 1943, GSP, LOC MS Div., box 3, folder 1; George Biddle, *Artist at War,* 66, 69 ("*no cat*").
Belisarius in A.D. 535: Charles Lee Lewis, "The Byzantine Invasion of North Africa, Sicily, and Italy," *Proceedings,* Nov. 1943, 1435+; msg, 1000 hrs, July 22, 1943, "Operazioni in Sicilia dal 9 al 19 luglio" corr, LKT Jr. to Sarah, Aug. 25, 1943, LKT Jr., GCM, box 1, folder 6.
Hours passed: notes, William W. Eagles to OCMH, n.d., NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 250; *CM,* 227; Codman, 110 ("*Street after street*").
"*stacks full of rare books*": Lynn H. Nicholas, *The Rape of Europa,* 225–26; Biddle, 67 (*Goethe*);

Garland, 256; *SSA*, 188; lecture, W. A. Sullivan, Society of Military Engineers, Cincinnati, 1947, "Ship Salvage and Harbor Clearance," #445, WWII Histories and Historical Reports in the U.S. Naval History Division, NHC, 13 (*Salvage teams*); John T. Mason, Jr., *The Atlantic War Remembered*, 297–99, 307; Edward D. Churchill, *Surgeon to Soldiers*, 222 (*offered to sing Verdi*); OH, John A. Heintges, SOOHP, Jack A. Pellicci, 1974, MHI, 150–55 (*seized two large trucks*); Melvin F. Talbot, "The Logistics of the Eighth Fleet and U.S. Naval Forces, Northwest African Waters," ts, n.d., "The Administrative History of the Eighth Fleet," #139, U.S. Naval History Division, 37; memo, "Data for Logistical Planning," Seventh Army to CG, NATOUSA, Dec. 4, 1943, Walter J. Muller Papers, HIA, box 2.

Major General Geoff Keyes: AAR, HQ, Provisional Corps, July 15–Aug. 20, 1943, CMH, Geog Sicily, 370.2; Robert Capa, *Slightly Out of Focus*, 78; John B. Romeiser, ed., *Combat Reporter*, 179 (*bedsheet lashed to a fishing pole*); GK, July 22, 1943.

"*It is a great thrill*": *PP*, 297, 303, 305.

"*The occupation of western Sicily*": situation report, OB Süd, July 24, 1943, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 246; Garland, 255; AAR, HQ, Provisional Corps, July 15–Aug. 20, 1943, CMH, Geog Sicily, 370.2; *CM*, 228 ("*certainly like to beat Montgomery*").

"*You will have guessed*": *CM*, 227; *PP*, 300.

Snaring the Head Devil

"*No objective can compete*": *GS* IV, 498, 500, 505; John S. D. Eisenhower, *Allies*, 306 (*Churchill would strip British forces*); Winston S. Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, 826 ("*cut their rations again*").

"*Why should we crawl*": *GS* IV, 503; Kennedy, 295 ("*a beautiful path*"); Emajean Jordan Buechner, *Sparks*, 95 ("*gonorrhea*").

Eisenhower in May: StoC, 15, 19; AFHQ G-2, "J.I.C. Algiers Estimates on Italian Morale," June 20, 1943, NARA RG 319, OCMH, from AFHQ micro, Job 10-A, reel 17C, box 242; Field Marshal the Viscount Alexander of Tunis, dispatch, "The Allied Armies in Italy," n.d., CMH, I-52 ("*might well cause a collapse*"); meeting notes, HQ Force 141, June 25, 1943, NARA RG 319, OCMH, from AFHQ micro, Job 26-A, reel 225B, box 242 ("*Germany intends to reinforce Italy*"); memo, AFHQ G-3, L. W. Rooks to W. B. Smith, June 28, 1943, NARA RG 319, OCMH, from AFHQ micro, Job 10-C, reel 138E, box 242 ("*very mountainous*").

Success in Sicily tipped: Ed Cray, *General of the Army*, 406; *Three Years*, 460 (*Charlie-Charlies*); "Record of Meeting Held at La Marsa at 1430 Hrs, 17 July 1943," NARA RG 331, AFHQ micro, R-225-B ("*onto the mainland*"); Chandler, vol. 2, 1261; Garland, 260–61.

Vital issues remained: "Invasion of Italian Mainland: Summary of Operations Carried out by British Troops Under Command 5 U.S. Army," n.d., CMH, Geog Ital, 370.2, 30; *StoC*, 17–18; minutes, item 7, "post-HUSKY Operations," CCS, 103rd meeting, July 23, 1943; "Memorandum of the Representative of the British Chiefs of Staff," July 24, 1943, CCS 268/8; "Memorandum by the United States Chiefs of Staff," July 25, 1943, CCS 268/9; minutes, CCS, July 26, 1943: all in NARA RG 319, OCMH, SSI, box 243.

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"*I am with you*": *GS* IV, 501, 503.

"*the head devil*": Garland, 273; Peter Neville, *Mussolini,* 99 (*special typewriter*); Rudolf Böhmler, *Monte Cassino,* 3 ("of syphilitic origin"); Melton S. Davis, *Who Defends Rome?,* 64; Paul Deichmann, "Feldzug in Italien," ts, n.d., NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 250, 6 ("*grab his stomach*"); George Kent, "The Last Days of the Dictator Benito Mussolini," *Reader's Digest*, Oct. 1944, 13+; Peter Tompkins, *Italy Betrayed,* 19, 48 (*Zodiac symbols*); Gervasi, 91 ("*green-eyed daughter*").

He had risen far: Denis Mack Smith, *Mussolini,* 5; Mark M. Boatner III, *Biographical Dictionary of World War II,* 384–85; Neville, 134 (*wedding rings*); Enno von Rintelen, "Psychological Warfare," n.d., FMS, #B-399, MHI, 4; Douglas Porch, *The Path to Victory*, 429.

Lately the country was getting: "Military Campaigns and Political Events in Italy, 1942–1943," Jan. 1946, Strategic Services Unit, WD, A-63366, CMH, Geog Files, Italy, 370.22, 16–17; Dharm Pal, *The Campaign in Italy, 1943–1945,* 3–4; Boatner, 385; Neville, 163 (*thirty-two Italian divisions*); R.J.B. Bosworth, *Mussolini's Italy,* 474 (*lacked boots*); Pietro Badoglio, *Italy in the Second World War,* 48; Porch, 7; Rintelen, "The Italian Command," 3 (*Raw materials*); Garland, 32; "Vortragsnotiz: Die Lage in Italien," June 30, 1943, OKH, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 243 ("*The kernel of the Italian army*"); Rintelen, "The Italian Command," 9.

Since December 1942: Vittorio Ambrosio, the Comando Supremo chief, claimed after the war that Mussolini never overtly favored a separate peace. "Ambrosio Project #46, Events in Italy, 1 Feb.–8 Sept. 1943," n.d., FMS, #P-058, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 244; Howard McGaw Smyth, "The Command of the Italian Armed Forces in World War II," *Military Affairs*, vol. 15, no. 1 (spring 1951), 38+; casualty figures, *Il Momento,* Aug. 2, 1952, CMH, Geog Files, Italy, 704; Garland, 51 ("*ridiculous position*"), 242 ("*sacrifice of my country*"); "Memorandum of Conversation," Feltre, July 1943, *Department of State Bulletin*, vol. 15, no. 379, Oct. 6, 1946, NARA RG 319, OCMH, 2-3.7 CC2, Sicily, box 249, 607+; "Military Campaigns and Political Events in Italy, 1942–1943," 21 ("*white with emotion*").

Months in the planning: Lewis H. Brereton, *The Brereton Diaries,* 194–95; minutes, item 9, "Bombing of Rome," CCS, 99th meeting, supplementary, June 25, 1943, NARA RG 319, OCMH, SSI, box 243 ("*It would be a tragedy*"); Quentin Reynolds, *The Curtain Rises,* 188 ("*Give them hell*").

"*Perfect formation*": Robert Katz, *The Battle for Rome*, 17; Tompkins, 38–39; Alessandro Portelli, *The Order Has Been Carried Out,* 77–78 (*sons of bitches*); Vincent Orange, *Tedder*, 223 (*exclusively American*).

Estimates of the dead: casualty estimates in ascending order: Richard G. Davis, *Carl A. Spaatz and the Air War in Europe,* 261; Robert Katz, *The Battle for Rome,* 12; *SSA*, 186; Portelli, 77–78.

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on Sunday, July 25: F. W. Deakin, *The Brutal Friendship*, 458; Denis Mack Smith, *Mussolini,* 297 (*telephone intercepts*); Davis, 137, 141; "Military Campaigns and Political Events," 28–29; Tompkins, 61. One account contends that Mussolini when meeting the king still wore his marshal's uniform: Katz, 19, 21.

Rarely had the Duce faced: corr, Dino Grandi to Alexander Kirk, May 15, 1944; corr, Harold H. Tittman to A. Hull, Aug. 28, 1943; memo, Leonardo Vitetti, "Notes on the Fall of the Fascist Regime," n.d., all in NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 249.

black Saharan bush shirts: Tompkins, 60; Bosworth, 495; account, Dino Grandi, June 23, 1944; memo, Edward S. Crocker to C. Hull, "Overthrow of Mussolini," Feb. 7, 1944, both in NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 249.

Shortly before five P.M.: Deakin, 470; Katz, 21; Paul Deichmann, "Italian Campaign," 1948, FMS, #T-

1a, chapter 1, 35.
A millennium of royal inbreeding: Boatner, 588; Tompkins, 22, 32 ("*taciturn and diffident*"); Neville, 175 ("*little sardine*"); Kenyon Joyce, "Italy," ts, n.d., Kenyon Joyce papers, MHI, 322 (*twenty-eight woodcock*); Katz, 21.
After a few rambling sentences: Deakin, 470; "Military Campaigns and Political Events," 28–29; Benito Mussolini, *My Rise and Fall*, 70–72.
Even at five feet, seven inches: Mussolini, 70–72; Tompkins, 62 ("*not at all nice*").
"*Duce, I have been ordered*": Davis, 141–42; "Military Campaigns and Political Events," 28–29; Mussolini, 70–72, 77; Davis, 147 (*fists on his hips*).
A radio bulletin at eleven P.M.*:* Demaree Bess, "Power Politics Succeded in Italy," *Saturday Evening Post*, Oct. 30, 1943, 20+; Davis, 156 ("*Citizens, wake up!*")
"*One did not see a single person*": Badoglio, 46; Deakin, 475; Smith, 298 (*Mussolini's own newspaper*).
"*The Duce will enter history*": Alan Bullock, *Hitler: A Study in Tyranny*, 710; Louis P. Lochner, ed., *The Goebbels Diaries, 1942–1943*, 437.
"*Italy has had enough*": Iris Origo, *War in Val D'Orcia*, 47.

Fevers of an Unknown Origin

Patton had settled comfortably: John P. Marquand, "Introduction," in Codman, xiv–xvi; *PP*, 303; JPL, 85 (*heroic oils*); Kaplan, 116 (*entering a jewel*); GSP to Beatrice, Aug. 2, 1943, GSP, LOC, MS Div, box 11 (*Christ Pantocrator*).
"*I know I have been marked*": Fred Ayer, Jr., *Before the Colors Fade*, 139; Garland, 304; FDR to GSP, Aug. 4, 1943, GSP, LOC, MS Div, box 11 (*Marquis of Mount Etna*); Milton F. Perry and Barbara W. Parke, *Patton and His Pistols*, 66.
The fame Patton so ardently craved: Carlo D'Este, "The Slaps Heard Round the World," *MHQ*, vol. 8, no. 2 (winter 1996), 64+; Beatrice to GSP, July 30, 1943, GSP, LOC, MS Div., box 11 ("*Monty hardly figures*"); "Narrative of Operation HUSKY," n.d., Arthur S. Nevins papers, MHI, box 2 (*200,000*); GSP to Beatrice, Aug. 11, 1943, GSP, LOC, MS Div, box 11 ("*sixth sense*"); Hirshson, 392 ("*lose them*"); *PP*, 306 ("*horse race*"); "Reminiscences of Charles Wellborn, Jr.," 1971–72, John T. Mason, Jr., USNI OHD, 187 (*Volkswagen staff cars*).
Each morning his armored cavalcade: Dickson, "G-2 Journal," 90–91; Coffin, 91; Perry and Parke, 66; *PP*, 315–17 (*timed his pulse*); Jean Gordon Peltier, *World War II Diary of Jean Gordon Peltier*, 119 ("*killer eyes*"); Jack Pearl, *Blood-and-Guts Patton*, 102 (*sobbing in the latrine*); GSP to Beatrice, July 20, 1943, GSP, LOC, MS Div, box 11.
broke his swagger stick: Seymour Korman, Mutual Broadcasting reporter, quoted in IG report, NATOUSA, Sept 18, 1943, DDE Lib, PP-pres, box 91; *PP*, 296; Pearl, 100–101 ("*Get back on that gun*"); Clift Andrus, notes on *A Soldier's Story*, ts, n.d., MRC FDM, 1988.32, box 215 (*leg boils*); OH, Heintges, 1974, Pellicci, 159 ("*You son of a bitch*"); Charles C. Bates and John F. Fuller, *America's Weather Warriors*, 282n; Donald McB. Curtis, *The Song of the Fighting First*, 121 ("*let my killers through*").
"*Let's talk about tomorrow*": Coffin, 91; Ladislas Farago, *Patton: Ordeal and Triumph*, 311; Codman, xiv–xvi; Norman Lewis, *In Sicily*, 1, 3, 39, 159 (*cruel city*).
"*Wars are not won*": Robert H. Patton, *The Pattons*, 266.
Meticulous and even finicky: "Ordnance Operations in the MTO," Feb. 14, 1945, AGF, CMH, Geog Files, Med 353, 5-6; Lida Mayo, *The Ordnance Department: On Beachhead and Battlefront*, 167; Alfred M. Beck et al., *The Corps of Engineers: The War Against Germany*, 138; "Report of Visit to

Sicily," Aug. 16–20, 1943, NARA RG 407, E427, 95-AL1-40-0.2, box 201; memo, "P.A.D. and civil defense in Sicily," Aug. 23, 1943, AFHQ, NARA RG 492, MTO, 290/54/25/6, 2191 ("*exodus of dock workers*"); JPL, 116.

"*It resembles a maniac*": Churchill, *Surgeon to Soldiers,* 238; Charles M. Wiltse, *The Medical Department: Medical Service in the Mediterranean and Minor Theaters,* 165, 169 (*breakage*); "Field Operations of the Medical Department in the MTOUSA," Nov. 10, 1945, NARA RG 94, E427, 95-USF2-26-0, 196–97, 202 (*only half the necessary number*).

Sicily proved unforgiving: Albert H. Smith, Jr., *The Sicily Campaign: Recollections of an Infantry Company Commander,* 35; Russell B. Capelle, *Casablanca to the Neckar,* 22 ("*Sicilian disease*"); AFHQ circular #55, July 7, 1943, MTOUSA AG 444.1, box 1424 ("*RNS*"); Tregaskis, 239 ("*Z.I.'ed*"); *Reporting World War II,* vol. 1, 607 ("*she missed out*"); JPL, 64 (*ink their names*); Norris H. Perkins, *North African Odyssey,* 81 ("*one complete piece*").

Surgeons operated by flashlight: Theresa Archald, *G.I. Nightingale,* 165; Gervasi, 473; June Wandrey, *Bedpan Commando,* 55 ("*just checking up*"); J. A. Ross, *Memoirs of an Army Surgeon,* 148 ("*cindery masses*"); Dancocks, 90 (*morphine*).

"*horrid thing called* mal'aria": admin monologues, "Operations of British, Indian and Dominion Forces in Italy," part 5, UK NA, CAB 106/453, 4–5; Blanche D. Coll et al., *The Corps of Engineers: Troops and Equipment,* 456–57; James Phinney Baxter, *Scientists Against Time,* 301, 306–8, 316–17 (*Atabrine*); Paul Dickson, *War Slang,* 113+ ("*Ann*"); "Characteristics of Theater, Annex A," HKH, LOC MS Div, box 8, folder 8 (*highest malaria rates*).

"*yellow gall"*: Albert E. Cowdrey, *Fighting for Life,* 63; John Ellis, *On the Front Lines,* 183–84; Wiltse, 173, 214; "Operations of British, Indian and Dominion Forces in Italy," part 5, UK NA, CAB 106/453, 4–5; "Report on Malaria in the Sicilian Campaign, 9 July to 10 Sept 1943," AFHQ surgeon, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 250 (*some malaria control experts*); James Stevens Simmons, "The Prevention of Malaria in the U.S. Army," May 1944, Medical Historical Unit Collection, MHI, 2–4; A.A.C.W. Brown, "364 Days Service," ts, 1981, IWM 81/33/1, 10 ("*enjoyed it very much*").

More than a thousand soldiers: "Report on Malaria in the Sicilian Campaign" "Operations of British, Indian and Dominion Forces in Italy," 4–6 (*first case contracted in Sicily*); Wiltse, 173 (*ten thousand cases*); Ronald Lewin, *Montgomery as Military Commander,* 202 (*more malaria casualties*); Cowdrey, 132 ("*disease record of Seventh Army*"); "Characteristics of Theater," Annex A, HKH, LOC MS Div, box 8, folder 8 ("*fever of unknown origin*"); Hugh A. Scott, *The Blue and White Devils,* 57

"*a frail little fellow*": James Tobin, *Ernie Pyle's War,* 107–8; Pyle, 35–37.

Under such circumstances Patton arrived: memo, F.Y. Leaver, commander of 15th Evacuation Hospital, to Richard T. Arnest, II Corps surgeon, Aug. 4, 1943, DDE Lib, PP-pres, box 91; D'Este, "The Slaps Heard Round the World," 64 (*message from Eisenhower*); diary, Aug. 3, 1943, GSP, LOC MS Div, box 3, folder 2 ("*smell of the dead*").

Green light filtered: James Wellard, *The Man in a Helmet,* 113; JPL, 100.

On a stool midway through the ward: report, Perrin H. Long to NATOUSA surgeon, Aug. 16, 1943, "Mistreatment of Patients in Receiving Tents of the 15th and 93rd Evacuation Hospitals," GSP, LOC MS Div, box 3, folder 2, appendix 125.

Patton asked Kuhl: ibid.; *PP,* 330–31; JPL, 103; Farago, 326–27 ("*gutless bastard*").

His rage spent: Garland, 427; memoir, "Theodore L. Dobol, Command Sergeant Major," ts, 1976, MRC FDM, 1991.24, box 469, 18; OH, Linwood W. Billing, former commander, Co. L., 26th Inf, Jan. 2006, Andrew Woods, MRC FDM; Arthur L. Chaitt, ed., "Taps," *Bridgehead Sentinel,* vol. 30, no. 2 (summer 1971), MRC FDM, 25 (*dying of a heart attack*); JPL, 102.

A week later, on August 10: 93rd Evacuation Hospital movements, Donald E. Currier papers, MHI; report, Perrin H. Long to NATOUSA surgeon, Aug. 16, 1943, "Mistreatment of Patients," 331.

"*What's this man talking about?*": Bess, "Report of an Investigation," to DDE, Aug. 19, 1943, DDE Lib, PP-pres, box 91; memo, Donald E. Currier to Richard T. Arnest, II Corps surgeon, Aug. 12, 1943, Donald E. Currier Papers, MHI; Garland, 427–28; Henry J. Taylor, "The Patton Story: He Slapped, He Raged, He Sobbed in Anger," *Cincinnati Post*, Feb. 28, 1947, 26, from MRC FDM ("*makes my blood boil*").
As he returned to his car: Bess to DDE, Aug. 19, 1943; Richard Collier, *Fighting Words*, 146 ("*no such thing as shellshock*"); *SSt*, 160 ("*couple of malingerers*"); Bradley Commentaries, CBH papers, MHI, box 1 ("*put a little guts*").
"*inexcusable and asinine*": corr, Donald E. Currier to Fred Ayer, Jr., Aug. 14, 1964, Donald E. Currier papers, MHI.
"*Don't tell my wife*": Kennedy, in *Reporting World War II*, vol. 1, 667–68; Bess to DDE, Aug. 19, 1943; *SSt*, 160 ("*Lock it up in my safe*"); corr, Paul Harkins to Garrison H. Davidson, n.d., in Garrison H. Davidson, "Grandpa Gar," ts, 1974, USMA Arch, 85; *PP*, 333 ("*saved his soul*").

A Great Grief

"*What a steep hill*": Molony V, 154; letter, Joseph T. Dawson to family, July 30, 1943, MRC FDM ("*fight downhill*"); Brooks E. Kleber and Dale Birdsell, *The Chemical Warfare Service: Chemicals in Combat*, 593 (*flamethrowers*); Peltier, 105; William A. Carter, "Carter's War," ts, 1983, CEOH, box V-14, VII-28 (*cork oaks*).
"*the whole damned bridge*": Pyle, 40–41; Beck, 141 (*metal detectors*); msg, 0030 hours, July 31, 1943, "Operazioni in Sicilia dal 9 al 19 luglio" ("*Troops are tired*"); Johannes Steinhof, *Messerschmitts over Sicily*, 237 (*pneumatic drills*).
Allied air and naval superiority: "Lessons from the Sicilian Campaign," AFHQ, training memo no. 50, Nov. 20, 1943, NARA RG 407, E 427, 95-AL1-0.4, 7; George H. Revelle, Jr., "Under Fifth Army a Division G-4 Operates," *MR*, vol. 25, no. 3 (June 1945), 49+; B. Smith, "Waltonia," ts, 1981, IWM, 76/254/1 ("*without even a sex life*"), Michael Francis Parrino, "Introduction to Pack Transport and Pack Artillery," ts, n.d., CMH, 84–85 ("*what he is to die for*"); Elmer W. Norton, 1/157th Inf, ASEQ, MHI (*Trouble*); Darby and Daumer, 107 (*Rosebud*); C. W. Eineichner, "Assault on Messina," in "2004 Reunion Program Book," Fort Wayne, Ind., Aug. 25–30, 2004, author's possession, 69 (*War Admiral*); Ralph G. Martin, *The G.I. War, 1941–1945*, 114 ("*bite the ears*"); Guy Nelson, *Thunderbird*, 51 ("*outstanding performance*"); "Training Notes from the Sicilian Campaign," AFHQ G-3, Oct. 25, 1943, CMH, Geog Sicily 353, 18; letter, John M. Brooks [former 16th Inf officer] to author, Oct. 19, 2003, 7 ("*mule interpreters*").
"*Hills and then more hills*": corr, TR to Eleanor, July 23, 1943, TR, LOC MS Div, box 10.
With the British right flank still blocked: Garland, 320; Stanhope Brasfield Mason, "Reminiscences and Anecdotes of World War II," ts, 1988, MRC FDM, 1994.126, 181 (*ax-wielding enemy troops*); Kimball Richmond, 3/16th Inf, ASEQ, MHI (*wine and cheese*); corr, TR to Eleanor, Oct. 11, 1943, TR, LOC MS Div, box 10; Biddle, 82 ("*mumbled and rumbled*").
Each town took a toll: "Battle Casualties," HQ, 1st ID, Aug. 1, 1943, MRC FDM; Jarvis Burns Moore, 2/16th Inf, ASEQ, MHI ("*started swearing*"); *Time*, Aug. 9, 1943, 30.
Wagging his cane: Biddle, 75; corr, Joseph T. Dawson to family, July 30, 1943, MRC FDM (*white-flag ruse*); William E. Faust, 1st ID artillery, ts, n.d., ASEQ, MHI, 73 (*bomb Etna's crater*); *Time*, Aug. 9, 1943, 30 ("*shaking lice*"); Martin, 76 ("*paying taxes*").
Bread trucks: "Report of the Division Quartermaster—Sicilian Campaign," n.d., 1st ID, 11, and "Official Diary, 1st U.S. Infantry Div, Office of the Quartermaster," July 24, 1943 entry, both in Harlan W. Hendrick, 1st ID, ASEQ, MHI ("*jumping at any excuse*"); Tregaskis, 37, 47; corr, Joseph T.

Dawson to family, July 31, 1943, MRC FDM.
"*loss of riflemen and fatigue*": "Comments of General Patton," Aug. 27, 1943, Palermo, NARA RG 319, OCMH, 2-3.7 CC2 Sicily, box 250; V-mail, TR to Eleanor, July 22, 1943, TR, LOC MS Div, box 10.
"*like ragged caps*": Romeiser, ed., *Combat Reporter* [mss], 212; MEB, "Axis Tactical Operations in Sicily," ts, n.d., OCMH, #R-144, MHI; author visit, Sept. 1996; Eberhardt Rodt, "Studie über den Feldzug in Sizilien bei der 15. Pz Gren. Div, Mai–August 1943," n.d., FMS, #C-077, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 245, 20–21; Garland, 325–29.
Five miles to the west: Biddle, 76; *SSt,* 150 (*classroom walls*); Tregaskis, 51–52; Kenneth T. Downs, "Nothing Stopped the Timberwolves," *Saturday Evening Post*, Aug. 17, 1946, 20+ ("*stubborn as any resistance*").
the enemy would counterattack: Andrus, notes on *A Soldier's Story*; Garland, 325 ("*lightly held*"); Steven E. Clay, *Blood and Sacrifice,* 176–77 (*pare back the attack*); OH, R. W. Porter, Feb. 8, 1961, Albert N. Garland, and Oscar W. Koch, Dec. 15, 1960, James A. Norell, both in NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 250 (*printed photos had not yet returned*); Biddle, 83 ("*You give your orders*").
"*a very disagreeable job*": corr, TdA to Mary Fran, July 29, 1943, TdA papers, MHI, box 2; "Commanding General's After Action Report," in Smith, 125–35 ("*our moral obligation*").
He sank to his knees: radio broadcast, Quentin Reynolds, June 8, 1944, TdA papers, box 7; Reynolds, *The Curtain Rises,* 216 ("*stop worrying*").
"*Every time I have watched*": Romeiser, ed., 184.
Coordinating the attack: ibid., 182.
He was a big man: JJT, II-4, 9, 14–21.
"*It is very nice to read of a battle*": Another Medal of Honor was awarded for the same action near Chattanooga to Arthur MacArthur, Jr., father of Douglas MacArthur. "Medal of Honor citations," www.army.mil/cmh/; JJT, III-14-16.
Young Jack Toffey: JJT, VII-1, VIII-12; Will Lang, "Doughboy's Beachhead," *Time,* Feb. 7, 1944, 22; Robert W. Black, *Rangers in World War II,* 101 (*seven thousand prisoners*).
Nine months at war: JJT, V-17-20, 24–26; VI-2, 6; VIII-19.
The next six days: Garland, 336–37; "Commanding General's After Action Report," in Smith, 125–35; "Terry Allen and the First Division in North Africa and Sicily," n.d., TdA, MHI, 45 ("*hell of a lot of stuff*").
"*bravest goddam soldier*": Codman, xviii; "'Anything, Anytime, Anywhere Bar Nothing': Remembering 'Paddy' Flint," *Periodical: Journal of America's Military Past,* spring 1967, 52+; "Keeping Faith," ts, n.d., USMA Arch, 3–4 (*apparent stroke*); "Comments of General Patton," ts, Aug. 27, 1943, NARA RG 319, OCMH, 2-3.7 CC2 Sicily, box 250; *SSt,* 153; Henry Gerard Phillips, *The Making of a Professional,* 122; Harry A. Flint, DSC citation, NARA RG 338, ETO, 7th Army awards, box 2; OH, William C. Westmoreland, 1978, Duane G. Cameron and Raymond E. Funderburk, SOOHP, MHI, 104–5; "History of the 26th Infantry," 100 ("*spend another million*").
"*Troina's going to be tougher*": *SSt,* 149; H.R. Knickerbocker, *Danger Forward,* 135.
Hills were won and lost: "History of the 26th Infantry," 95; Clay, 177 (*16th Infantry was pinned down*); Garland, 339; John W. Baumgartner et al., *The 16th Infantry, 1798–1946,* 58–59; Knickerbocker, 132–35 (chocolate).
Progress was no better in the north: "K Company History," 3/26th Inf, MRC FDM; "Company History," Co. I, 26th Inf, ts, n.d., MRC FDM (*Not until full dark*); Knickerbocker, 136–38 ("*Something is burning*"), 142–43; "History of the 26th Infantry," 99, 106, 109 (*wheat straw*); Romeiser, ed. ("*laundry mark*"), 189; Blythe Foote Finke, *No Mission Too Difficult!,* 150.
At dusk on Thursday: Garland, 344; James E. Kelly, ed., *The Wartime Letters of John and Vicki Kelly,*

54–56, 59, 70–71 (“*my luck won’t hold up*”); Pyle, 55; Lee G. Miller, *The Story of Ernie Pyle*, 201, 273 (“*collapsible style*”); “History of the 26th Infantry,” 106 (“*damned sick of it all*”).
Terry Allen was damned sick: SSt, 151; Rodt, “Studie über den Feldzug in Sizilien,” 22, 27; MEB, Troina, “Axis Tactical Operations in Sicily,” ts, n.d., OCMH, #R-144, MHI; Biddle, 86 (*hobnailed bootprints*); Martin Blumenson, *Sicily: Whose Victory?*, 124.
“*Town clear of enemy*”: Baumgartner, 64; Clift Andrus, “Troina Addenda,” *FAJ*, March 1944, 163+ (“*greatly destroyed*”); Collier, 147 (“*a town of horror*”); Finke, 163 (“*a carpet of maggots*”); corr, Donald V. Helgeson to author, Oct. 8, 2003; Peter Schrijvers, *The Crash of Ruin*, 85 (“Gott mit Uns”).
“*naked on shutters or stretchers*”: Biddle, 89–90; Romeiser, ed., 190 (“*We’ve been miserable*”).
“*Troina was the toughest*”: “Lessons from the Sicilian Campaign,” Nov. 20, 1943, AFHQ, NARA RG 407, E 427, 95-AL1-0.4, 18; G-1 report, “Total Reported Battle Casualties for Period 1 August–20 August 1943, Inclusive, 1st Infantry Division,” MRC FDM; JJT, VIII-22.
Two more casualties: Bryce F. Denno, “Allen and Huebner: Contrast in Command,” *Army*, June 1984, 62+; Clift Andrus, notes on *A Soldier’s Story*. For other accounts, see OH, Robert W. Porter, Feb. 8, 1961, Albert N. Garland, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 250; OH, Robert W. Porter, 1981, John N. Sloan, SOOHP, MHI, 301–2.
Ever the ardent hunter: OH, James D. Ford, former USMA chief chaplain, March 21, 2000, to author, Washington, D.C. (“*hardest thing in war*”); *SSt*, 154–55 (“*temperamental*”); corr, ONB to DDE, July 25, 1943, DDE Lib, PP-pres, box 3; JPL, 90; diary, E. Hughes, July 28, 1943, micro 97276/5, David Irving collection, MHI; diary, GSP, July 29, 1943, GSP, LOC MS Div, box 2, folder 15.
Neither Bradley nor Patton ever offered: corr, TdA to E. C. Heid, Dec. 13, 1943, S.L.A. Marshall Military History Collection, UTEP; corr, TR to Eleanor, Aug. 17, 1943, TR, LOC MS Div, box 10; Bradley and Blair, 195 (“*flubbed badly*”); Albert H. Smith, Jr., “Allen and Huebner,” ts, 1999, MRC FDM, 1999.124, box 392 (“*well-planned, executed*”); Bradley Commentaries, CBH, MHI, 14-B, S-27; Astor, 221, 228.
As the orders became public: memoir, William E. Faust, ts, n.d., 1st ID artillery, ASEQ, MHI, 76; OH, Porter, 1981, Sloan, 301–2; Johnson, 112 (“*sergeants weep*”); “Allen and His Men,” *Time*, Aug. 9, 1943, 30+ (*By cruel coincidence*); corr, TdA to GCM, Aug. 13, 1943, and Sept. 15, 1943, GCM Lib, box 56; corr, TdA to DDE, Oct. 17, 1943, DDE Lib, PP-pres, box 4; corr, TdA to Mary Fran, Aug. 10, 1943, and TdA to Sonny, Aug. 7, 1943, both in TdA, MHI, box 2; corr, TdA to E. C. Heid, Dec. 13, 1943, Marshall Collection, UTEP; Astor, 226; e-mail, Consuelo Allen (granddaughter of Terry de la Mesa Allen) to author, Dec. 5, 2002 (*welcome-home party*); Biddle, 92.
“*mentally in a black cloud*”: speech, Stanhope B. Mason, Apr. 24, 1976, 57th annual dinner, Officers of the First Division, New York City, in Smith, 196; TR, msg to 1st Div, Aug. 6, 1943, TR, LOC MS Div, box 10 (“*a great grief*”); “History of the 26th Infantry,” 97 (“*broke down and wept*”); *SSt*, 156; corr, TR to Eleanor, Aug. 17 and 24, 1943, TR, LOC MS Div, box 10; corr, Eleanor to GCM, Feb. 7, 1944, and GCM to Eleanor, Feb. 10, 1944, GCM Lib, corr, TR, box 83.
Sharing a ride to Palermo: Capa, 84; John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, in Molony V, 855; Eleanor Butler Roosevelt, *Day Before Yesterday*, 449 (“*the quality of fortitude*”).

“In a Place Like This”

Ridge by ridge, road by road: Tregaskis, 75–76; “Allied Commander-in-Chief’s Report on Sicilian Campaign, 1943,” 97 (*retreated past Mount Etna*); Carver, *Harding of Petherton*, 119 (“*I am enjoying*”); Lord Tedder, *With Prejudice*, 458.
But although they were moving: “History of the 50th (Northumberland) Division During the Campaign in Sicily,” ts, n.d., UK NA, CAB 106/473, 67–69; Cyril Ray, *Algiers to Austria*, 67 (*snipers with*

telescopic sights); Tregaskis, 65 (*mayor of Catania*); "Report on the First Phase of AMGOT Occupation, Sicily and Region II," July–Aug. 1943, Frank J. McSherry Papers, MHI, 24 (*only one in five*); Buckley, 111 ("*all life was evil*") 123 (*Bank of Sicily*).

Often enough, the Allied air force: Geoffrey Perret, *Winged Victory,* 211; "Report on the First Phase of AMGOT Occupation," 24 ("*rubble at Adrano*"); Harry L. Coles, Jr., "Participation of the Ninth and Twelfth Air Forces in the Sicilian Campaign," 1945, AAF Historical Studies, No. 37, 148 ("*needed thirty-six hours*"); Shapiro, 51 ("*Troops will refrain from shooting*"), 101, 105 ("*God Save the King*"); Ray, 68–69; R. C. Taylor, "A Pocketfull [*sic*] of Time," ts, n.d., 52, and corr, to author, Aug. 11, 2003 ("*Lord Nelson!*"); Nicolson, 205; Buckley, 79; Tregaskis, 81–82 (*dead men's helmets*).

Above them all loomed Etna: Biddle, 110; Bertarell, 481 (*tinted with sulfates*); Kenneth S. Davis, *Soldier of Democracy,* 435–36 ("*bloody Patton*").

"*decided to burn the bodies in gasoline*": "Report on the First Phase of AMGOT Occupation," 13, 27; "Report of William Russell Criss," corr to family, July 29, 1943, 45th ID Mus ("*I feel like crying*").

To exploit the flanking opportunities: James L. Packman, "The Operations of the 2nd Battalion, 30th Infantry, in the Amphibious Attack on Brolo," 1949, IS, 2–7; Garland, 390–91.

Truscott, who was to provide a battalion: Hansen, "Research Draft," *SSt,* CBH, MHI, 10/24–25.

"*that's ridiculous and insulting*": *CM,* 234–35; *PP,* 319 ("L'audace").

It went badly: Garland, 393–97; Jack Belden, *Still Time to Die,* 274 (*orange quarter moon*); Romeiser, ed., 196–200 ("*Night and Day*"); Betsy Wade, ed., *Forward Positions: The War Correspondence of Homer Bigart,* 24–25 (*captured in their sleep*); Max Ulrich, "29th Panzer Grenadier Division, Sicily," FMS, #D-112, MHI, 5.

Daybreak brought death: The Sicilian Campaign, 145.

"*Situation still critical*": Romeiser, ed., 200–206; Garland, 403; diary, Hobart Gay, Aug. 10–11, 1943, USMA Arch; Charles R. Schrader, "Amicicide: The Problem of Friendly Fire in Modern War," Dec. 1982, CSI, 34 (*errant bombs*); DSC citation, Martin Moritz, medical attachment, 2/30th Inf, Oct. 19, 1943, NARA RG 338, 7th Army awards (*tried to amputate*); Carlo D'Este, *World War II in the Mediterranean,* 73 ("*Do something*").

At five P.M. Philadelphia *again: The Sicilian Campaign,* 146; Romeiser, ed., 205 ("*last stand circle*"); Donald V. Bennett, *Honor Untarnished* [galley], 145 (*swimming westward*); Belden, 284, 288.

At dawn on Thursday, August 12: Pyle, 45; Belden, 288; Romeiser, ed., 205 ("*troops moving on the road*"); Scott, 60 (*cordite and sweat*).

An open command car: Romeiser, ed., 206.

Field Marshal Kesselring had long realized: Garland, 368; Bogislaw von Bonin, "Considerations of the Italian Campaign, 1943–1944," Feb. 1947, SEM, NHC, box 57, file 108, 8 ("*valuable human material*"); MEB, "Axis Tactical Operations in Sicily," #R-145–46, MHI (*message was hand carried*); Walter Warlimont, *Inside Hitler's Headquarters, 1939–1945,* 374 (*Hitler feared*).

A devotee of Aristotle: Frido von Senger und Etterlin, *Neither Fear nor Hope,* 208–9; Corelli Barnett, ed., *Hitler's Generals,* 381; Alex Bowlby, *Countdown to Cassino,* 4n; Errnst-Günther Baade, "War Diary of Fortress Commandant, Messina Strait," July–Aug. 1943, SEM, NHC, box 52; Garland, 375–76 (*five hundred guns*); "The Choice of Sites for Ferry Points," appendix, "War Diary of Naval Officer-in-Charge, Sea Transport, Messina Strait," SEM, NHC, box 52; Friedrich von Ruge, "The Evacuation of Sicily," March 1948, SEM, NHC, box 50, 15 (*Siebel ferries*); Molony V, 166 (*cached food*).

Twelve thousand German supernumeraries: Molony, V, 166; Fries, "Der Kampf um Sizilien," 29–31 (*five successive defensive lines*); "Directions for the Systematic Destruction of Motor Vehicles," Feb. 1942, Supply Section, Reichminister of Aviation, Berlin, NARA RG 407, E, 47, AFHQ, 95-AL1-2.9, box 162; Steinhof, 242–43 ("*yelling as they hurled*"); Helmut Bergengruen, "Der Kamp der

Panzerdivision 'Herman Goering' auf Sizilien," Nov. 25, 1947, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 245.
Italian commanders quickly got wind: S. W. Roskill, *The War at Sea, 1939–1945,* 144; Kurowski, 178, 192, 201 ("*shivering malaria patients*"); Rodt, "Studie über den Feldzug in Sizilien," 31; "War Diary of Naval Officer-in-Charge" (*screens shielded the glare*); *SSA,* 210.
The B-17s never came: Garland, 379.
"*no adequate indications*": Hinsley et al., 96–98; George F. Howe, "American Signal Intelligence in Northwest Africa and Western Europe," U.S. Cryptologic History, Series IV, vol. 1, NSA, NARA RG 57, SRH-391, 53; Ralph Bennett, *Ultra and the Mediterranean Strategy,* 234–35 ("*there is* no *plan*"); T. Milne, "The Sicilian Campaign," 1955, Air Ministry Historical Branch, UK NA, CAB 106/849, 80 ("*You have no doubt*"), 91 ("*no evidence*").
Allied pilots had reason to fear: Garland, 376; Eduard Mark, *Aerial Interdiction in Three Wars,* 60, 72–73, 77; Edward B. Westermann, *Flak,* 293; Roskill, 147–49; *Battle,* 75; *AAFinWWII,* 472–73 (*swarms of smaller Wellingtons*); Vincent Orange, *Coningham,* 167 (*only a quarter hit targets*); Davis, *Carl A. Spaatz and the Air War in Europe,* 252 (*bombing Rome's rail yards*).
"*octopus-like arms*": Dudley Pope, *Flag 4,* 126; Cunningham, 556 ("*no effective way of stopping them*"); Garland, 379; *SSA,* 214; Roskill, 149–50; J.F.C. Fuller, *The Second World War, 1939–45,* 265.
Not once did the senior Allied commanders: Pack, 166.
doctors ordered him to bed: Eisenhower's blood pressure of 142 over 90 on Aug. 15, 1943, indicated mild hypertension; his resting pulse of 80, weight of 172 pounds, and 33-inch waist indicated a reasonably fit 52-year-old man. Chandler, vol. 2, 1329n; Thomas W. Mattingly and Olive F. G. Marsh, "A Compilation of the General Health Status of Dwight D. Eisenhower," Mattingly collection, DDE Lib, box 1; *Three Years,* 386–87 ("*nervous temperament*").
"*It is astonishing*": "War Diary of Naval Officer-in-Charge" *SSA,* 214–15 ("*Anglo-Saxon habits*"); MEB, "Axis Tactical Operations in Sicily," #R-145-146 (*time bombs*); Blumenson, *Sicily: Whose Victory?,* 146 (*Two hundred grenadiers*); Molony V, 182 (*cooled a wine bottle*).
"*The Boche have carried out*": J. K. Windeatt, "Very Ordinary Soldier," ts, 1989, IWM, 90/20/1, 68.
"*completely fit for battle*": "War Diary of Naval Officer-in-Charge" ("*employ our strength elsewhere*").
At ten A.M. on August 17: CM, 243; Garland, 416–17; Nathan William White, *From Fedala to Berchtesgaden,* 40 (*swapping shots*); memo, William W. Eagles to OCMH, n.d., NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 250 ("*did not capture the city from us*"); Tregaskis, 86–88 (*bagpipes and a Scottish broadsword*); Hansen, "Research Draft," *SSt,* CBH papers, MHI, box 1, 16-A, S-27 ("*I'll be damned*").
Patton had a fever of 103: corr, GSP to Arvin H. Brown, Sept. 12, 1943, GSP, LOC MS Div, box 27; John H. Rousch, ed., *World War II Reminiscences,* 64–65 ("*'DUCE' was painted*"); Tregaskis, 89 (*towering white spouts*); *CM,* 243 ("*What in hell*").
"*They were tired and incredibly dirty*": JPL, 122; corr, GSP to Beatrice, Aug. 18, 1943, GSP, LOC MS Div, box 11, folder 5 (*wounding a colonel*).
Sixty percent of the city: "Reports of the First Phase of AMGOT Occupation, Sicily and Region II," July–Aug. 1943, and "Reports of AMGOT Divisions," part 3, document B, both in Frank J. McSherry papers, MHI; "Attain by Surprise," ts, n.d., 30th Assault Unit history, LHC, 21 (*booby-trapped door handles*); Darby and Daumer, 109 (*scattered skeletons*); Don Whitehead, *"Beachhead Don,"* John B. Romeiser, ed., 24 (*Draftee*); Mayo, 169.
three-quarters of Messina's 200,000: "Reports of the First Phase of AMGOT Occupation" notes, William W. Eagles to OCMH, n.d., NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 250 (*mayor formally tendered*).
"*By 10 A.M. this morning*": Jackson, 226; *PP,* 324–25 ("*I feel let down*").
He soon would feel worse: Three Years, 390, 393; Quentin Reynolds, *By Quentin Reynolds,* 296–97 ("*We're Americans first*"); Garland, 429 ("*sake of the American effort*").

"*he can gain greater fame*": DDE diary, Aug. 1943, HCB papers, DDE Lib, A-678, 682.
"*I must so seriously question*": corr, DDE to GSP, Aug. 17, 1943, Chandler, vol. 2, 1340.
"*intemperate language*": JPL, 126–27; IG report, Sept. 18, 1943, NATOUSA, DDE Lib, PP-pres, box 91 ("*embarrassment to the War Department*"); Chandler, vol. 2, 1353.171 "*my chagrin and grief*": corr, GSP to DDE, Aug. 29, 1943, Donald E. Currier papers, MHI; *PP*, 333 ("*my method was wrong*"); letter, GSP to Walter P. Dillingham, Aug. 18, 1943, GSP, LOC MS Div, box 27 ("*would not make a single change*"); corr, GSP to Beatrice, Aug. 22, 1943, GSP, LOC MS Div, box 11.
"*suffering a little battle fatigue himself*": *PP*, 334, 336; Bob Hope, *The Last Christmas Show*, 17 ("*I love my men*"); Codman, 114–15; "Frances Langford Dies," July 12, 2005, *WP*, B-6.
"*I am sorry for this*": memo, "Gen. Patton's Address," n.d., GSP, LOC MS Div, box 48, folder 20; Edwin H. Randle, *Ernie Pyle Comes Ashore and Other Stories*, 134 ("*No, General, no!*"); OH, Theodore J. Conway, 1977, Robert F. Ensslin, SOOHP, MHI, III-2-4 ("*Georg-ie!*").
"*hotter than the hinges of Hades*": corr, John M. Brooks to author, Oct. 19, 2003, 7; memorandum, "Address by Lt. Gen. George S. Patton," Aug. 25, 1943, HQ, 1st ID, in "History of the 26th Infantry," 97 ("*Arms will not be carried*"); Gerald Astor, *Terrible Terry Allen*, 235 ("*no booing*").
"*the weirdest speech ever made*": corr, Donald V. Helgeson to author, July 25, 2003; Finke, 172 ("*fucking*"); memoir, William E. Faust, ts, n.d., 1st ID Division Artillery, ASEQ, MHI, 79–80 ("*our rejection of his presence*").
"*I shall be very glad*": corr, GSP to Walter F. Dillingham, Aug. 18, 1943, GSP, LOC MS Div, box 27; corr, GSP to Beatrice, Aug. 23, 1943, GSP, LOC MS Div, box 11.
"*damn near perfect example*": *PP*, 328; *Battle*, 77–78; Gerhard L. Weinberg, *A World at Arms*, 595, 603 (*offensive at Kursk*); Porch, 445.
American confidence: Harry H. Semmes, *Portrait of Patton*, 174; "Training Notes from the Sicilian Campaign," n.d., AFHQ, NARA RG 331, micro box 21, R-320-A (*many lessons were learned*); Betty McLain Belvin, *Ray McLain and the National Guard*, 72.
The butcher's bill: Andrew J. Birtle, "Sicily," in *The U.S. Army Campaigns of World War II*, 1993, CMH 72-16, 25. As usual with World War II casualty statistics, no two estimates agree. See also: Garland, 417; Hanson Baldwin, *Battles Lost and Won*, 225; "Summary of Activities, MTO, 31 March 1945," NARA RG 94, 95-USF2-0.3, box 246; "British Battle Casualties in Sicily," Oct. 11, 1943, U.S. military attaché report, London, CMH, Geog Files, Sicily, 704.
Axis dead and wounded: Birtle, "Sicily," 25. See also: MEB, "Axis Tactical Operations in Sicily," #R-145-146; Blumenson, *Sicily: Whose Victory?*, 156; memo, HQ, SOS to CG, NA TOUSA, June 25, 1944, NARA RG 492, MTOUSA, pm, records relating to prisoners, box 2246; "Allied Commander-in-Chief's Report on Sicilian Campaign 1943," 98; Volkmar Kühn, *German Paratroops in World War II*, 193.
"*a great success, but it was not complete*": Ruge, "The Evacuation of Sicily," 53; *Battle*, 47; Baldwin, 235; Kesselring, "The Campaign for Sicily: Concluding Considerations of the Commander-in-Chief, South," n.d., FMS, MS #T-3 P1, 28–29; Kesselring, "Stellungnahme des verantwortlichen Oberbefehlshabers Süd zu den Betractungen des Oberst von Bonin," n.d., FMS, MS #T-3 P1, 3–4, both in NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 245.
HUSKY also exposed: Buckley, 147; "Proceedings of Board of Officers Considering Airborne Operations," Aug. 1943, AFHQ, JPL, MHI, box 11 (*Allies lost 42 planes*); Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, 179 ("*interservice spirit*"); Porch, 449 ("*Sicily demonstrated*").
"*You lack clear, calm judgment*": memo, LKT Jr. to Charles R. Johnson, Aug. 23, 1943, LKT Jr., GCM Lib, box 11.
"*a superb leader but a mediocre manager*": Geoffrey Perret, *There's a War to Be Won*, 185; Hamilton, 380 ("*feeble from beginning to end*").

Half a million German soldiers: GS V, 2; Steinhof, 256 ("*a turning point had come*").
"*Have been in the dumps*": corr, LKT Jr. to Sarah, Aug. 25, 1943, LKT, GCM Lib, box 1, folder 6.
"*a fugitive from the law of averages*": Roger J. Spiller, "The Price of Valor," *Military History Quarterly*, spring 1993, 100+; Graham, *No Name on the Bullet*, 45; diary, Aug. 10, 1943, JMG, MHI, box 10 ("*many more battles*"); Breuer, 195 ("*wickedness*").
"*Yesterday is tomorrow*": Pyle, 58; Miller, 275–77 ("*couldn't find the Four Freedoms*"); Tobin, 113 (*four hundred days overseas*).
"*gotten fat and lazy*": JJT, VIII-27, IX-12 and 14.
"*Dago red*": John P. Downing, "No Promotion," ts, n.d., MRC FDM, 1994.41.1, 238; Donald E. Houston, *Hell on Wheels*, 181 ("*Migrant women*"); Clay Blair, *Ridgway's Paratroopers*, 114 (*brothel in Trapani*); T. Michael Booth and Duncan Spencer, *Paratrooper: The Life of Gen. James M. Gavin*, 123; Johnson, 121–22 (*overpriced hankies*); Francis A. Even, "The Tenth Engineers," ts, 1996, author's possession, 15 (*bedsheet screens*); Jerry Countess, "Letters from the Battlefield," ts, n.d., author's possession ("*haven't seen a spigot*"); Robert H. Welker, "G.I. Jargon: Its Perils and Pitfalls," *Saturday Review of Literature*, Oct. 1944, 7+ ("prego, *Dago*").
On Sunday morning, August 29: Three Years, 401; Hamilton, 375; film, United News No. 68, 1943, NARA RG 208, UN68 (*littered the beach*); De Guingand, 315.
"*We in our hearts know*": Bradley Biggs, *Gavin;* Moorehead, *Eclipse*, 6, 12.

CHAPTER 4: SALERNO

"Risks Must Be Calculated"

A gentle breeze: Richard Lamb, *Montgomery in Europe, 1943–1945*, 36; Albert F. Simpson, "Air Phase of the Italian Campaign to 1 January 1944," June 1946, AAFRH-115, CMH, 92; Moorehead, *Montgomery*, 170 ("*gnats on a pond*"); Andrew Browne Cunningham, *A Sailor's Odyssey*, 559 (*Regatta*); George Aris, *The Fifth British Division, 1939–1945*, 138 (*five hundred guns*); Moorehead, *Eclipse*, 20.
Just eight thousand Germans: A. G. Steiger, "The Campaign in Southern Italy," Nov. 1947, Historical Section, Canadian Army HQ, report No. 18, 9n; De Guingand, 323; G.A. Shepperd, *The Italian Campaign, 1943–45*, 111; Ralph Bennett, *Ultra and the Mediterranean Strategy*, 241 (*detected ample signs*); Molony V, 239 (*29,000 rounds*).
"*I think that's all right*": Frank Gervasi, *The Violent Decade*, 491–93; Moorehead, *Montgomery*, 170 ("*set out for a picnic*").
lovebirds: Quentin Reynolds, *By Quentin Reynolds*, 303; Dick Malone, *Missing from the Record*, 53; Richard McMillan, *Twenty Angels over Rome*, 139; Gervasi, 491 (*roasted and garnished*); Moorehead, *Eclipse*, 22 ("*Never his plan*").
sulking in his trailer: Vincent Orange, *Coningham*, 171; Nigel Hamilton, *Master of the Battlefield*, 406; Lamb, 32–33 (*Montgomery's protests*); Nigel Nicolson, *Alex: The Life of Field Marshal Earl Alexander of Tunis*, 216 (*coordinate Eighth Army with Fifth Army*); Charles Richardson, *Send for Freddie*, 135 ("*daft*"); OH, Francis De Guingand, March 31, 1947, G. A. Harrison, OCMH WWII Europe interviews, MHI (*do what he could*); De Guingand, 305; Vincent Orange, *Tedder*, 236 (*mostly inexperienced units*); OH, DDE, Feb. 16, 1949, Howard M. Smyth, SM, MHI ("*wanted everything*"); "Allied Commander-in-Chief's Report, Italian Campaign," MHI, 113.
Strategic guidance: Garland, 439–40; *GS* IV, 561–67, 570–71.
Clambering back into the DUKW: Moorehead, *Eclipse*, 23; Gervasi, 491 ("*shouting, laughing*"); *StoC*, 53; Lamb, 36–37; Stephen Brooks, ed., *Montgomery and the Eighth Army*, 278 ("*The only person*").
The next days passed: Brooks, ed., 277; Moorehead, *Eclipse*, 31 (*passenger carriages*); H.V. Morton,

A Traveller in Southern Italy, 314, 327, 337, 342, 360, 370 (*scarlet petticoats*); *From Pachino to Ortona: The Canadian Army at War*, 92.
"*no German troops have been met*": Roger Parkinson, *A Day's March Nearer Home*, 179; David Scott Daniell, *The Royal Hampshire Regiment*, vol. 3, 130; *Three Assault Landings*, 1st Bn, Dorsetshire Regiment, DTL, Ft. B, 36–39 ("*bag of mail*"); war diary, Sept. 10, 1943, "Salerno Invasion," German naval command, Italy, NARA RG 334, NWC Lib, ANSCOL, ONI Z-28, box 649 ("*not crowding after us*").
Monty berets: Reynolds, 304–5.
On Sunday, September 5: Three Years, 407; John S. D. Eisenhower, *Allies*, 363; diary, MWC, Aug. 28–29, 1943, MWC, Citadel, box 64 (*thirty Fifth Army staff officers*); corr, Don E. Carleton to Hal C. Pattison, Feb. 10, 1965, NARA RG 319, OCMH, 2-3.7 CC3 Salerno to Cassino, box 256 ("*a pursuit*").
"*With Thee I am unafraid*": *Calculated*, 182; MWC to Renie Clark, June 7, 1943, MWC, personal corr, Citadel (*clovers*).
"*The best organizer*": Chandler, vol. 2, 1354, 1358; Des Hickey and Gus Smith, *Operation Avalanche*, 152 ("*a film star*"); George Biddle, *Artist at War*, 225.
"*college of your choice*": OH, MWC, 1972, Forest S. Rittgers, Jr., SOOHP, MHI, 2; Martin Blumenson, *Mark Clark*, 11–16, 19–21, 28; obit, *Charleston Evening Post*, Oct. 5, 1966, in MWC, Citadel, Maureen Clark folder, box 70 (*petite, lighthearted*).
"*destined to do something unusual*": OH, Robert J. Wood, 1973, William E. Narus, SOOHP, MHI, 3–30, 42–43; OH, MWC, Rittgers ("*Don't be an ally*").
"*my headquarters to be a happy one*": Charles S. D'Orsa, "The Trials and Tribulations of an Army G-4," *MR*, vol. 25, no. 4 (July 1945), 23+; Robert H. Adelman and George Walton, *Rome Fell Today*, ii ("*study in arrogance*"); William L. Allen, *Anzio: Edge of Disaster*, 48 ("*like a halo*").
"*facially best*": Charles F. Marshall, *A Ramble Through My War*, 94; Adelman and Walton, iii; Eric Sevareid, *Not So Wild a Dream*, 383; MWC to Renie Clark, May 15 and 16, 1943, MWC, personal corr, Citadel; Carlo D'Este, *Fatal Decision*, 58; OH, James M. Wilson, Jr., Apr. 23, 2004, with author, Washington, D.C.; Gervasi, 496.
"*if feasible, further north*": *GS* IV, 580–81; *Battle*, 109; Bernard Fergusson, *The Watery Maze*, 252; Robert J. Wood, "The Landing at Salerno," lecture, Army-Navy Staff College, Dec. 1944–Jan. 1946, Robert J. Wood papers, MHI, 3; memo, EJD to L. J. McNair, "Notes on Operation AVALANCHE," Oct. 4, 1943, observer report #60, AGF G-2, NARA RG 337, box 52 (*forty-five days*); diary, MWC, Aug. 28–29, 1943, MWC, Citadel, box 64; Molony V, 264; *SSA*, 248 (*discover of minefields*); A. B. Cunningham, "Operations in Connection with the Landings in the Gulf of Salerno," Apr. 28, 1950, CMH, UH 0-1 CUN.2, 2175; S.W. Roskill, *The War at Sea, 1939–1945*, 159 (*advanced H-hour*); *StoC*, 40–41 ("*quite irritable*"); "History of the Peninsular Base Sction," 1944, CMH, 8-4 HA 1, 4; AAR, [U.K.] commander-in-chief, Mediterranean Station, March 8, 1945, CARL, N-11361 (*aviation fuel*).
Only three assault divisions: Battle, 107; H. H. Dunham, "U.S. Army Transportation and the Italian Campaign," Sept. 1945, monograph #17, NARA RG 336, ASF, chief of transportation, historical program files, box 142, 21; Wood, "The Landing at Salerno," 7; Charles S. D'Orsa, "The Trials and Tribulations of an Army G-4," *MR*, vol. 25, no. 4 (July 1945), 23+; Robert W. Coakley and Richard M. Leighton, *Global Logistics and Strategy, 1943–1945*, 192; *StoC*, 38–39; OH, MWC, Rittgers, 54–55; *Calculated*, 181 ("*my left arm*").
Three times he asked Washington: msg, DDE to CCS, July 28 and Aug. 19, 1943, NARA RG 319, OCMH, 2-3.7 CC2 Sicily, box 247 ("*risks must be calculated*"); *AAFinWWII*, 495; Lord Tedder, *With Prejudice*, 457–58, 460; Cunningham, "Operations in Connection with the Landings in the Gulf of Salerno" ("*Woolworths*"); *StoC*, 52; Simpson, "Air Phase," 48, 90; "Allied Commander-in-Chief's Report, Italian Campaign," MHI, 112 ("*rather disquieting*"); E. McCabe, "The Plan for the Landing at

Salerno," n.d., Cabinet Historical Section, UK NA, CAB 44/131, 30 (*could not prevent the enemy*).
Ultra provided a detailed portrait: F. H. Hinsley et al., *British Intelligence in the Second World War,* 106, 108; Walter Warlimont, *Inside Hitler's Headquarters, 1939–1945,* 349 ("*Treachery alters*"); minutes, AFHQ briefing to QUADRANT, Aug. 24, 1943, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 244 ("*to the sound of the guns*"); Simpson, "Air Phase," 77; George F. Howe, "American Signal Intelligence in Northwest Africa and Western Europe," NSA, U.S. Cryptologic History, series IV, vol. 1, NARA RG 57, SRH-391, 63; "Operations Plan," HQ, Fifth Army, Aug. 26, 1943, NARA RG 492, MTOUSA, SOS, annex No. 1, G-2 plan, box 2735; OH, Viscount Mountbatten of Burma, Feb. 18, 1947, FCP, MHI (*whether invaders could build up*).
Salerno would be a poor place: "Observations in the European Theater Including Landing Operation at Salerno," Oct. 25, 1943, HQ, USMC, NARA RG 334, NWC Lib, ANSCOL, GB COB X-22, box 461, 3; "I.S.T.D.: 'C' Report on the West Coast," June 30, 1943, NARA RG 407, E47, 95-AL1-2.10, AFHQ, box 163; David Hunt, *A Don at War,* 211 ("*finest strip of coast*"); E. McCabe, "The Plan for the Landing at Salerno," 38; "Tactical Study of the Terrain: Naples and Vicinity," engineer appendix, AVALANCHE operational plan, NARA RG 331, AFHQ micro, box 118, R-123-D; "Engineer History, Fifth Army, Mediterranean Theater," vol. 3, appendix G, CMH, 9-2.5 AB, 19 ("*exposes this bridgehead*"); OH, "Reminiscences of George C. Dyer," 1969–1971, John T. Mason, Jr., USNI OHD, 330 ("*inside of a cup*").
Risks had been calculated: L.S.B. Shapiro, *They Left the Back Door Open,* 117 (Strange Cargo); "Masonic Information," diaries, MWC, Citadel, box 61; John Clagett, "Admiral H. Kent Hewitt, U.S. Navy," *Naval War College Review,* summer 1975, 60+;. Simpson, "Air Phase," 107 (*sixteen convoys*); Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, "Amalfi."
"*high hopes of being in Naples*": diary, MWC, Aug. 16, 1943, MWC, Citadel, box 64; "Allied Commander-in-Chief's Report, Italian Campaign," MHI, 112 ("*Boldness*"); minutes, AFHQ weekly executive planning section, Aug. 3, 1943, NARA RG 319, OCMH, 2-3.7 CC2 Sicily, box 247 (*planning to move*); Kenneth S. Davis, *Soldier of Democracy,* 448 ("*smash them*").
"*might as well be on a raft*": OH, MWC, Rittgers, MHI, 55.

Plots, Counterplots, and Cross-plots

Even as the invaders bore down: Moorehead, *Eclipse,* 77 ("*hot rake*"); Axis notes, Tarvis conference, ten A.M., Aug. 6, 1943, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 244; msgs, "Former Naval Person to the President," No. 405, Aug. 5, 1943, and J. Hull to T. T. Handy, Aug. 15, 1943, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 249; Harold Macmillan, *The Blast of War, 1939–1945,* 317 "*plots, counter-plots*."
Wary but intrigued: Macmillan, 313 ("*an appalling Norfolk jacket*"); Kenneth Strong, *Intelligence at the Top,* 145 ("*desperate gunfight*"); OH, George F. Kennan, Jan. 2, 1947, SM, MHI ("*rattletrap Buick*").
Their Italian counterpart: Peter Tompkins, *Italy Betrayed,* 26; "Minutes of a conference held at the residence of H.M. Ambassador at Lisbon on August 18, 1943 [*sic*], at 10 p.m.," NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 244 ("*join the united nations*"); Garland, 459; minutes, Lisbon meeting, in msg, Aug. 21, 1943, AFHQ to WD, NARA RG 165, E 422, OPD exec files, 390/38/2/4-5, box 10.
"*We are not in a position*": "Allied Commander-in-Chief's Report, Italian Campaign," 116; msg, W. B. Smith to Hastings Ismay, Sept. 12, 1943, W. B. Smith papers, DDE Lib, box 7 ("*my pet Wop*"); memo, W. B. Smith to Whitely, Rooks, Aug. 22, 1943, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 244 ("*expect bitter reprisals*").
If Rome was in no position: msg, DDE to CCS, Aug. 28, 1943, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 244 ("*very anxious*"); corr, Robert Murphy to FDR, Sept. 8, 1943, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 244.

More amateur theatricals followed: OH, Harold Alexander, Jan. 10–15, 1949, SM, CMH, Geog files, II-2; Harold Macmillan, *War Diaries,* 187; Macmillan, *The Blast of War,* 322.
A dreadful fate would befall Italy: Robert Murphy, *Diplomat Among Warriors,* 192–93; Strong, 157 ("*booted, spurred, and bemedaled*").
The telegram was sent: "Story of the Signing of the Italian Armistice," Kenneth Strong to correspondents, in "Eisenhower Diary," HCB, DDE Lib, A-769-770; Garland, 482–84; Macmillan, *The Blast of War,* 323; Strong, 158 (*olive sprig*).
"*Today's event must be kept secret*": msg, DDE to CCS, Sept 3, 1943, NARA RG 165, E 422, OPD exec. files, 390/38/2/4-5, box 10.
Those plans grew more convoluted: Howard McGaw Smyth, "The Armistice at Cassible," *MR,* vol. 28, nos. 6 and 7 (Sept. and Oct. 1948), 13+; Pietro Badoglio, *Italy in the Second World War,* 70; msgs, DDE to Alexander, Sept. 1, 1943, FDR, Churchill to DDE, Sept. 2, 1943, both in NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 244 ("*stiffen Italian formations*").
"*perfectly asinine*": OH, MWC, Rittgers, 54–57, 77; memo, AFHQ G-3 to W. B. Smith, Aug. 13, 1943, NARA RG 331, AFHQ micro, job 10A, R-13-C, in NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 244 ("*tactically unsound*"); R. P. Eaton, 82nd Airborne chief of staff, "Contact Imminent," ts, Dec. 26, 1943, Ralph P. Eaton Papers, MHI, 4; James M. Gavin, "Airborne Plans and Operations in the Mediterranean Theater," *IJ,* Aug. 1946, 22+ ("*not one individual*"); Clay Blair, *Ridgway's Paratroopers,* 126 ("*missions and remissions*").
GIANT II: Blair, 132–33; Smyth, "The Armistice at Cassible," 13; Garland, 488–89.
The more Ridgway heard: corr, MBR to W. B. Smith, Dec. 5, 1955, and MBR to G. Castellano, Dec. 20, 1955, CJB, MHI, box 48, chrono file Italy; corr, MBR to Hal C. Pattison, Nov. 10, 1964, NARA RG 319, OCMH, 2-3.7 CC2 Sicily, box 251 ("*deceiving us*"); OH, W.B. Smith, May 13, 1947, Howard M. Smyth, SM, MHI ("*kettles, bricks*"); memo, MBR, "Development of Operation Giant," Sept. 9, 1943, CJB, MHI, box 48, chrono file Italy ("*full faith*"); Matthew B. Ridgway, *Soldier,* 81 ("*Contact will be made*").
As the sun sank: AAR, Maxwell D. Taylor and W. T. Gardiner, "Mission to Rome," Sept 9, 1943, in Simpson, "Air Phase," 381–86; Richard Thruelsen and Elliott Arnold, "Secret Mission to Rome," *Harper's,* Oct. 1944, 462+; Maxwell D. Taylor, *Swords and Plowshares,* 55–57; Richard Tregaskis, *Invasion Diary,* 103–8; Melton S. Davis, *Who Defends Rome?,* 346–48.
In truth they were Italians' guests: Mark W. Boatner III, *The Biographical Dictionary of World War II,* 555 (*graceful Missourian*); John M. Taylor, *General Maxwell Taylor,* 65; Robert Capa, *Slightly Out of Focus,* 89 (*money belt*); Thruelsen and Arnold, 462 ("*If you get captured*").
By 8:30 P.M.: AAR, Taylor and Gardiner, "Mission," 381–86; Thruelsen and Arnold, "Secret Mission to Rome," 462+; Taylor, 55–57; Tregaskis, 103–8; Davis, 346–48.
The excellent crêpes: Smyth, "The Armistice at Cassibile" Taylor, 56–57 ("*professional dandy*"); Garland, 500; Volkmar Kühn, *German Paratroops in World War II,* 195.
Italian garrisons had been virtually immobilized: Garland, 495; Davis 353.
He passed his days playing cards: Douglas Porch, *The Path to Victory,* 465; Boatner, 23; Tompkins, 58–60 (*five thousand bottles*); Macmillan, *The Blast of War,* 330 ("*I was a Fascist*").
"*Castellano did not know*": Davis, 353–55; Thruelsen and Arnold, "Secret Mission," 462 ("*Your bombers have blown up*").
"*GIANT TWO is impossible*": AAR, Taylor and Gardiner, "Mission to Rome," in Simpson, "Air Phase," 381–86; Tregaskis, 107 ("*endeavoring to click our heels*").
"*You will return to Allied headquarters*": Thruelsen and Arnold, "Secret Mission," 462; Taylor, 55–57.
Eisenhower left Algiers: Michael J. McKeough and Richard Lockridge, *Sgt. Mickey and General Ike,*

83–84; Kay Summersby, *Eisenhower Was My Boss,* 108 ("*illusion of being on the march*"); OH, DDE, Feb. 16, 1949, Smyth ("*rather stretched out*"); Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Letters to Mamie,* 141, 147 ("*creature of war*").
Smith forwarded the doleful message: Chandler, vol. 3, 1403n; msg, GCM to DDE or W. B. Smith, Sept. 8, 1943, NARA RG 165, E 422, OPD exec files, 390/38/2/4-5, box 10; "Unpublished Autobiography of General John E. Hull, USA (ret.)," ts, n.d., MHI ("*what you would expect*").
In the small schoolhouse: OH, Lyman L. Lemnitzer, March 4, 1947, Howard M. Smyth, NARA RG 319, OCMH, CA, box 6; Peter Lyon, *Eisenhower: Portrait of the Hero,* 241 (*mouth tightened*); Stephen E. Ambrose, *Eisenhower,* vol. 1, 259–60 (*snapped it in half*); David Hunt, *A Don at War,* 224 ("*with great violence*"); OH, DDE, Feb. 16, 1949, Smyth ("*revolver against his kidneys*"); Chandler, vol. 3, 1402, 1403n ("*I do not accept*").
"*I always knew*": OH, Arthur Coningham, Feb. 14, 1947, FCP, MHI; Chandler, vol. 3, 1404.
Clearly a deviation was needed: memo, MBR, "Development of Operation Giant," Sept. 9, 1943, CJB, MHI, box 48, chrono file Italy; L. James Binder, *Lemnitzer: A Soldier for His Time,* 113–14.
Sixty-two transports: OH, Lemnitzer, March 4, 1947, Smyth; Garland, 508–9;. Ridgway, 95 ("*trying to reconcile myself*"); Binder, 113–14 ("*What message?*").
Jeeps raced about: Patrick K. O'Donnell, *Beyond Valor,* 66; Blair, 141 (*stumbled into a tent*).
"*The Italian government has surrendered*": msg, DDE, Sept. 8, 1943, NARA RG 165, E 422, OPD exec files, 390/38/2/4-5, box 10; Garland, 509–13.
For 1,184 days: Hugh Pond, *Salerno,* 10; David Irving, *The Trail of the Fox,* 305 ("*Italy's treachery is official*").
In the hours following Badoglio's announcement: Garland, 513; "Memorandum Concerning the Events of September 8–9–10 in Rome," n.d., NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 249, 3 (*Telephone queries*); Robert Katz, *The Battle for Rome,* 32 (*fourteen of sixteen government ministers*); Howard McGaw Smyth, "The Command of the Italian Armed Forces in World War II," *Military Affairs,* spring 1951, 38+ (*summoned a notary*).
No effort was made to stop six battalions: Kühn, 196, 198; Badoglio, 81 (*only escape route*); Davis, 403, 407 (*green Fiat*); msg, F. N. Mason Macfarlane to DDE, Sept. 14, 1943, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 244 ("*rather gaga*"); memoir, Kenyon Joyce, ts, n.d., Kenyon Joyce papers, MHI, 322; Katz, 32; "Military Campaigns and Political Events in Italy, 1942–1943," Jan. 1946, Strategic Services Unit, WD, A-63366, CMH, Geog Files, Italy, 370.22, 45 (*ingesting drops*); Tompkins, 271 ("*change sides twice*").
German troops snared thirty generals: B. H. Liddell Hart, *The Other Side of the Hill,* 360; "Memorandum Concerning the Events of September 8–9–10 in Rome," n.d., NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 249, 3 (*firefights erupted*); John Patrick Carroll-Abbing, *But for the Grace of God,* 35 (*Italian snipers*); Jane Scrivener, *Inside Rome with the Germans,* 15–16 ("*The Jews are in a panic*").
Field Marshal Kesselring was disinclined to parley: Simpson, "Air Phase," 102; Andrew Brookes, *Air War over Italy, 1943–1945,* 28; Albrecht Kesselring, *The Memoirs of Field-Marshal Kesselring,* 176; Hunt, 264; Count von Klinckowstroen, "Fighting Around Rome in September 1943," 1947, FMS, #T-1a, MHI, 5; Pond, *Salerno,* 7; Kesselring, "Commentary on MS #D-301," n.d., FMS, #D-313, MHI, 3; Garland, 526–27 (*threatened to blow up Rome's aqueducts*); "Translations, Campaign in Italy," NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 245 ("*It is finished*").
Kesselring, now viceroy: Klinckowstroen, "Fighting Around Rome," 10–11; Albert Kesselring, "Special Report on the Events in Italy Between 25 July and 8 September 1943," n.d., FMS, #C-013, MHI, 5 ("*sheet lightning*"); Kesselring, *Memoirs,* 177 ("*card missing from the pack*"); Franz Kurowski, *Battleground Italy, 1943–1945,* 12 ("*I loved these people*").
The Stillest Shoes the World Could Boast

Unmolested and apparently undetected: StoC, 57; E. McCabe, "The Plan for the Landing at Salerno," 10–11 (HARPSICHORD); Warren P. Munsell, Jr., *The Story of a Regiment,* 21; Angelo Pesce, *Salerno 1943,* 99 ("*converted Polish liner*"); Howard H. Peckham and Shirley A. Snyder, eds., *Letters from Fighting Hoosiers,* vol. 2, 62 ("*Whenever I tore a bun*"); J. M. Huddleston, VI Corps surgeon, "Report for Colonel Carter," n.d., in Norman Lee Baldwin papers, HIA (*knotted condoms*).

The usual muddles: Mayo, *The Ordnance Department: On Beachhead and Battlefront,* 182 (*sailed without weapons*); *Texas,* 223 (*white-star insignia*); AAR, "Signal Reflections on the Planning and Execution of Avalanche," Oct. 13, 1943, 10th Corps, UK NA, CAB 106/395, 7 (*carrier pigeons*); "Observations in the European Theater," 2 ("*military impedimenta*"); Dunham, "United States Army Transportation and the Italian Campaign," 26–27; "The Administrative History of the Eighth Fleet," ts, n.d., U.S. Naval History Division, #139, NHC, folder 3, 34; John H. Clagett, unpublished biography, n.d., HKH, box 16, 436 *(Hewitt was so incensed*).

endless games of housey-housey: Hickey and Smith, 78; Eric Morris, *Salerno: A Military Fiasco,* 83 (*boiling coffee*); Norman Lewis, *Naples '44,* 11 ("*We know nothing*"); *Italian Phrase Book,* U.S. War Department, 1943.

Aboard Hewitt's flagship: http://www.nightscribe.com/Military/ww2/ancon_history_front.htm; Donald Downes, *The Scarlet Thread,* 140; Reynolds, 281 ("*in the lion's mouth*"), 300 ("*the Yale Club*"); diary, MWC, Sept. 7, 1943, MWC, Citadel, box 64 ("*feeling the strain*").

Some 55,000 assault troops: Calculated, 185; Hickey and Smith, 52–53 ("*the most daring plan*").

The 36th, entering combat for the first time: Lee Carraway Smith, *A River Swift and Deadly,* 5; Steven E. Clay, mss, 16th Infantry history [*Blood and Sacrifice*], MRC-FDM, 14 ("*Deep in the Heart of Texas*"); Hickey and Smith, 56 (*Lone Star flag*).

"*We can't expect to achieve*": Shapiro, 122; HKH, "Action Report of the Salerno Landings, Sept.–Oct. 1943," 1945, CMH, 130 (*fifteen-minute cannonade*), 142; FLW to MWC, "Conclusions Based on the Avalanche Operation," Oct. 11, 1943, CARL, N-6818, 1; *Texas,* 230–31 ("*may not be discovered*"); OH, FLW, May 15, 1953, John G. Westover, SM, MHI; *StoC,* 57; target list, operation plan 7-43, annex B, appendix 1, HKH, LOC MS Div, box 8, folder 8; Samuel Eliot Morison, *The Two-Ocean War,* 351 ("*fantastic to assume*"); Merrill L. Bartlett, ed., *Assault from the Sea,* 268; OH, MWC, 1972–73, Forest S. Rittgers, Jr., SOOHP, MHI, 53; lecture, Don Brann, ts, n.d., in Robert J. Wood papers, MHI, 4 (*Clark had sided with Walker*).

Eisenhower's armistice announcement: diary, MWC, Sept. 8, 1943, MWC, Citadel, box 64; *The Grenadier Guards, 1939–1945,* 27 (*officers with megaphones*).

Jubilation erupted: Downes, 3; Robert Wallace, *The Italian Campaign,* 53 ("*The Eyeties*"); Hickey and Smith, 42; Travis Beard, "Turning the Tide at Salerno," *Naval History,* Oct. 2003 ("*The war is over*"); John T. Mason, Jr., *The Atlantic War Remembered,* 328n ("*Yap, yap, yap*"); Pond, 16; *The Grenadier Guards, 1939–1945,* 27; Philip Vian, *Action This Day,* 117 ("*Seldom in history*").

Soldiers jettisoned bandoliers: Wood, "The Landing at Salerno," 13; "Reminiscences of Phil H. Bucklew," 1980, John T. Mason, Jr., USNI OHD, 64; Pond, 18 (*dinner jacket*); *StoC,* 55 ("*sheer joy*"); corr, Armand G. Jones to father, n.d., 155th FA, Texas MFM, 3; Robert L. Wagner, *The Texas Army,* 4.

"*keen fighting edge*": HKH, "Action Report," 91; Downes, 3 ("*bloody fools*"); Pond, 68 ("*Take your ammunition*"); Newton H. Fulbright, "Altavilla: A Personal Record," ts, n.d., Texas MFM, 12 ("*horned Comanches*"); Clifford H. Peek, Jr., *Five Years, Five Countries, Five Campaigns,* 15 ("*Expect a hostile shore*").

"*Gunners, man your guns*": Shapiro, 122; Quentin Reynolds, *The Curtain Rises,* 287 ("*ship will be hove to*"); *SSA,* 252; Fulbright, "Altavilla," 2 ("*Imagination makes cowards*"); John Steinbeck, *New York Herald Tribune,* Oct. 3, 1943, in *Reporting World War II,* vol. 1, 636–37.

Just before ten P.M.: chronology, HKH, "Action Report," NHC; Shapiro, 18 ("*they're blind*"); AAR,

H.M.S. *Brecon*, Sept. 22, 1943, in "Operation AVALANCHE—Report on Northern Assault," Oct. 16, 1943, CARL, N-6837 (*ruby glow*); *SSA*, 253 ("*silver sea*").
Twelve miles offshore: Pond, 39; *Salerno: The American Operation from the Beaches to the Volturno*, 14; Anthony Kimmins, *Half-Time*, 204 ("*honeymoon couples*"); Fulbright, "Altavilla," 2.
Clark stood beside Hewitt: Reynolds, *The Curtain Rises*, 288; Hickey and Smith, 82 ("*You'll be in total command*"); Jack Maher, memoir, n.d., http://home.wi.rr.com//johnmaher ("*down a ten-story building*").
"*tall, smiling, appearing unconcerned*": Reynolds, *The Curtain Rises*, 292–93; chronology, HKH, "Action Report," NHC ("*Arrived at transport area*"); diary, MWC, Sept. 9, 1943, MWC, Citadel, box 64.
"*What's the weather like*": *SSA*, 271; Karl Baedeker, *Southern Italy and Sicily*, 167; Robert M. Coates, *South of Rome*, 52; L. V. Bertarelli, *Southern Italy*, 316–17 (*Salerno's medical school*).
The latter-day town had grown: Pond, 40–41; Morton, 303, 396 (*predatory Saracens*); *Salerno*, 6.
Neither Kesselring nor his lieutenants believed: "Special Investigation and Interrogation Report: Operation Lightening" [*sic*], March 15, 1947, Military Intelligence Service, Austria, CMH, Geog Files 370.2, 7 and 13; intelligence summary, Sunset No. 91, Aug. 30, 1943, NARA RG 457, E 9026, NSA records, box 1; *SSA*, 261; war diary, Sept. 6, 1943, "Salerno Invasion," German naval command, box 649 ("*a strike in the direction*"); *StoC*, 67; Molony V, 274; Kurowski, 107 ("*large naval force*").
Following the capitulation announcement: diary, Wehrmachtführungstab, OKW, Aug. 29, 1943, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 245 (*invoked ACHSE*); *SSA*, 261 ("*completely annihilated*").
That German might took the form of Tenth Army: StoC, 67, 69 ("*No mercy*"); A. Kesselring, testimony, war crimes trial, March 3, 1947, NARA RG 492, MTO, AG HQ, 000.5, box 816 ("*a spiritual burden*"); Hickey and Smith, 50; Pond, 9 ("*died as a great soldier*").
first German unit on the Volga: Pond, 41; Rudolf Böhmler, *Monte Cassino*, 51 (*four thousand survivors*); MEB, "16th Panzer Division at Salerno," 1953, OCMH, R-series, NARA RG 319, E 145, R-36, 2–3 (*best-equipped division in Italy*).
Sieckenius had split his forces: "The German Defense at the Gulf of Salerno," Feb. 23, 1944, W.O.W.IR. #28, NHC, folder 33, 18–19, 23.
On the far right of the Allied line: StoC, 74; Harold G. Horning, "The Army Years," ts, n.d., part 2, 155th FA, Texas MFM, 36 ("*stood up to see*").
Bullets plumped the sea: Belden, 292; Leo V. Bishop et al., eds., *The Fighting Forty-fifth*, 41 ("*You can't dig foxholes*"); corr, James E. Taylor, 131st FA Bn, to Walter H. Beck, March 2, 1944, Texas MFM, 2 ("*spring rain*"); AAR, "Historical Record, Headquarters, VI Corps, September 1943," JPL, MHI, box 12, 3; AAR, "Record of Events," 142nd Inf, Sept. 3–20, 1943, CARL, N-6818; Chester G. Starr, ed., *From Salerno to the Alps*, 17; "Field Operations of the Medical Department in the MTOUSA," Nov. 10, 1945, NARA RG 94, E 427, 95-USF2-26-0, 224 ("*Shells were* wopping"); Peek, 21 ("*seemed to rise completely*"); Glenn G. Clift, *A Letter from Salerno*, 6–7 ("*boys were on fire*").
On the beach, soldiers wriggled: Salerno, 21; Peek, 22 ("*a baby girl*"); Wood, "The Landing at Salerno," 14; author visits, Oct. 1995, May 2004; Mayo, 178; diary, J. M. Huddleston, VI Corps surgeon, Sept. 9, 1943, Norman Lee Baldwin papers, HIA ("*great deal of confusion*").
The first Luftwaffe planes: H. Kent Hewitt, "The Allied Navies at Salerno," *Proceedings*, Sept. 1953, 958+; *SSA*, 261; Bill Harr, *Combat Boots*, 40–41 ("*Steady, now, steady*"); Wood, "The Landing at Salerno," 13 ("*someone had let them down*"); Don Whitehead, "*Beachhead Don*," 37.
By six A.M. two infantry regiments: "Amphibious Operations," Aug.–Dec. 1943, CINC, U.S. Fleet, CMH; Brooks E. Kleber and Dale Birdsell, *The Chemical Warfare Service: Chemicals in Combat*, 335 (*smoke pots*); Paul W. Pritchard, "Smoke Generator Operations in the Mediterranean and European Theaters of Operation," n.d., Office of the Chief of the Chemical Corps, CMH, 4-7.1 FA 1, 53;

Norman Hussa, "Action at Salerno," *IJ,* vol. 53, no. 6 (Dec. 1943), 25+; John Steinbeck, *Once There Was a War,* 162; "COHQ Bulletin No. Y/25," Apr. 1944, CARL, N-6530.10; AAR, *LST 324* and *LST 363,* in "Operation AVALANCHE—Report on Northern Assault," Royal Navy, Oct. 16, 1943, CARL, N-6837 ("*Ventilation fans sucked smoke*"); "Amphibious Operations," Aug.–Dec. 1943, CINC, U.S. Fleet, CMH (*compass headings*).

Still, German observers: StoC, 80; Roskill, 175; AAR, 191st Tank Bn, n.d., AGF Board Reports, NARA RG 407, E 427, NATOUSA, 95-USF1-2.0; Bishop et al., eds., 41; memoir, Aidan Mark Sprot, ts, 1947, LHC, 72 (*LST officers scampered*); Walter Karig, *Battle Report: The Atlantic War,* 265, 268 ("*jolly well shot up*").

AVALANCHE *planners had hoped:* R. L. Connolly, "Operations of Landing Craft in the Mediterranean," Oct. 14, 1943, NARA RG 334, E 315, NWC Lib, ANSCOL, L-2-43, C-75, box 170; Downes, 14; *SSA,* 265 (*pinned to the dunes*); Mark W. Clark, "Salerno," *AB,* No. 95, 1997, 1+; Peek, ed., 20; Wagner, 11 ("*I saw riflemen swarm*").

"*in a row, side by side*": Norman Lewis, *Naples '44,* 12; Paul A. Cundiff, *45th Infantry CP,* 62 ("*the stillest shoes*"); Peckham and Snyder, eds., vol. 2, 63 ("*wouldn't look so bad*"); Reynolds, *The Curtain Rises,* 300 ("*On what beach*").

Salvation arrived shortly after nine A.M.: Richard J. Werner, 141st Inf Regt, in FLW to MWC, Oct. 11, 1943, CARL, N-6818, 1-2; *StoC,* 82; "Historical Tactical Study of Naval Gunfire at Salerno," 1948–49, Amphibious Warfare School, USMC, Quantico, Va., SEM, NHC, box 51, 25; "Amphibious Operations," Aug.–Dec. 1943, CINC, U.S. Fleet, CMH; Shapiro, 132 (*steamed within a hundred yards*); action report, U.S.S. *Philadelphia,* Sept. 25, 1943, NARA RG 38, OCNO, WWII Action and Operational Reports, box 1318; *SSA,* 280 (*Eleven thousand tons of naval shells*).

"*the cover of a Latin book*": Fred Howard, *Whistle While You Wait,* 167; memo, "Shore Party Organization for Amphibious Operations," AFHQ to WD, Dec. 17, 1943, NARA RG 407, E 427, 270/50/28/36; "Lessons from the Italian Campaign," March 10, 1944, NARA RG 407, E 427, NATOUSA, 95-USF1-04, box 250, 12.

Near a tobacco barn at Casa Vannula: journal, 36th ID chief of staff, Sept. 9, 1943, SM, MHI; *StoC,* 84; corr, James E. Taylor, 131st FA Bn, to Walter H. Beck, March 2, 1944, Texas MFM, 2 ("*hip-shooting*"); corr, Miles A. Cowles, 36th Div artillery CO, in *Texas,* 409 (*two hundred yards' range*); "Lessons from the Italian Campaign," March 10, 1944, HQ, NATOUSA, CMH, Italy 353, 12; FLW to MWC, Oct. 11, 1943, CARL, N-6818, chronology; *Texas,* 237 ("*It was thrilling*").

Dive-bombers caught the U.S.S. Nauset: http://www.ussorleck.org/Namesake.asp; *SSA,* 274.

But the preliminary naval bombardment: action report, *LCA 403,* Sept. 22, 1943, in "Operation AVALANCHE—Report on North Assault," RN, Oct. 16, 1943, CARL, N-6837; Phil H. Bucklew, "Skipping Salvos off Salerno," in Mason, 318; Pond, 59–61, 88 ("*This way to Naples")*, 91; Wallace, 58 (*a piano*).

By day's end, X Corps would land: Molony V, 286; Pond, 61 ("*unutterable confusion*"); E. McCabe, "The Plan for the Landing at Salerno," 190a (LST 357); AAR, HM *LST 430,* Sept. 12, 1943, in "Operation AVALANCHE—Report on Northern Assault," Oct. 16, 1943, CARL, N-6837.

Beyond the beaches, the invasion unfolded: Molony V, 284; Simpson, "Air Phase," 339n; AAR, "Operation Avalanche," Apr. 21, 1945, Mediterranean Allied Tactical AF, CARL, N-11606, 17 (*88mm shells riddled the fuselage*).

The 5th Battalion of the Royal Hampshire Regiment: Daniell, 142; Morris, 108; Pond, 71; Molony V, 285.

Past Montecorvino, Tommies in khaki: Gervasi, 495; Molony V, 284, 290; *The Grenadier Guards, 1939–1945,* 28 ("*feeling of looseness*").

"*bloody great battleships*": Hickey and Smith, 178; Pond, 111–12 ("*retiring pell-mell*"), 114; David

Erskin, *The Scots Guards, 1919–1955*, 170n (*tomato canning plant*); Clark, "Salerno," 1.
They were not coming: "Invasion of Italian Mainland, Summary of Operations Carried Out by British Troops Under Command 5 U.S. Army," n.d., CMH, 370.2, 7–8; Wilfred Owen, "Anthem for Doomed Youth," *Oxford Book of War Poetry*, 188; Daniell, 141; Pond, 77 ("*We've got them*").
Only on the extreme left: AAR, 1st Ranger Bn, Nov. 15, 1943, USMA micro, MP63-8, R-1; morning report, 1st Ranger Bn, HQ Co, Sept. 9, 1943, Robert W. Black papers, MHI, box 2, folder 8; *Salerno*, 19; William O. Darby and William H. Daumer, *Darby's Rangers: We Led the Way*, 113–16; James J. Altieri, *Darby's Rangers: An Illustrated Portrayal of the Original Rangers*, 57–58.
"*an artilleryman's dream*": Michael J. King, *William Orlando Darby: A Military Biography*, 115; author visit, Apr. 29, 2004; Tregaskis, 133–35 ("*reminds me of Spain*"); Anders Kjar Arnbal, *The Barrel-Land Dance Hall Rangers*, 155 ("*chestnut branches*"); Richard M. Burrage, "See Naples and Die!," ts, 1988, Texas MFM, 6 ("*until hell freezes*").
Soon a battleship: Darby and Daumer, 117; Capa, 98 (*firing mortar barrages through holes*); Tregaskis, 135; Downes, 145 ("*men and boys in rags*"); memo, Donald Downes to W. Donovan, "OSS Activities in the Neapolitan Campaign, D-day to D-day plus 21," Oct. 19, 1943, NARA RG 226, E 99, OSS History Office, box 48; Virgil, *The Aeneid*, trans. Robert Fagles, 181 ("*white with the bones*").
Others forever remembered deep-chested Darby: Wood, "The Landing at Salerno," 16–19; Downes, 142–49 ("*Snow White*"); Burrage, "See Naples and Die!," 15 (*San Francisco Hotel*); Tregaskis, 133 ("*hell of a pasting*").
"*We are sitting pretty*": Shapiro, 133; Molony V, 286; Malcolm Munthe, *Sweet Is War*, 167 ("*Corpses lay on the sand*").
"*In the land of theory*": Molony V, 325.
The first hitch: Edward J. O'Neill, "Memorandum to Commanding General, VI Corps," June 29, 1944, JPL, MHI, box 11; OH, MWC, May 10–21, 1948, SM, MHI; D. Clayton James, *A Time for Giants*, 140–41; *Howitzer*, USMA yearbook, 1910; Robert H. Berlin, *U.S. Army World War II Corps Commanders*, 17; Edmund F. Ball, *Staff Officer with the Fifth Army*, 186; 201 file, EJD, HIA, box 1; OH, GCM, July 25, 1949, SM, MHI (*decorated protégé*); corr, EJD to Hal C. Pattison, Dec. 15, 1964, NARA RG 319, OCMH, 2-3.7 CC3, Salerno to Cassino, box 255 ("*Don't bite off*").
Clark's plan to leave Dawley: O'Neill, "Memorandum," June 29, 1944; "Historical Record, Headquarters, VI Corps," JPL, MHI, box 12; aide's diary, EJD, HIA, box 1; diary, EJD, Sept. 9, 1943, HIA, box 1 ("*Coxswain got lost*").
With his dispersed staff in disarray: StoC, 87; *CM*, 253 (*required radios*); O'Neill, "Memorandum," June 29, 1944 ("*Confusion and disorganization*"); Ball, 197 ("*tennis match*").
"*Just as sure as God lives*": *PP*, 344.
a seven-mile gap: Clark and others estimated the gap to be ten miles wide, but map positions show it was narrower. Wood, "The Landing at Salerno," 16; *StoC*, 90; Hickey and Smith, 139; *Calculated*, 192.
"*well in hand*": diary, MWC, Sept. 10, 1943, MWC, Citadel, box 64 ("*Have just returned*"); speech, Robert B. Hutchins, "Personal Experiences of a Regimental Commander in Italy, 1944," in Russell L. Moses, ASEQ, 179th Inf, MHI, 4–7.
To help unite his two corps: Under pressure from AFHQ to return the transport ships to pick up more troops, Hewitt had in fact landed the 157th Infantry on the south bank of the Sele rather than the north, as Clark would have preferred. The admiral's presumption was more annoying to Clark than tactically significant. *Calculated*, 195; W.H.H. Morris, Jr., "Report on Observation Trip," n.d., DRL, IS, 9; *StoC*, 100–101.
The third hitch derived: Molony V, 273; Simpson, "Air Phase," 122; Roskill, 173; "History of the Aviation Engineers in the Mediterranean Theater of Operations," June 1946, AAF Engineer

Command, MTO, CEOH, X-39; "Long Range Fighter Cover over Salerno Beaches," Oct. 1943, HW, NAAF, Monthly Operations Bulletin #6, NARA RG 334, E 315, NWC Lib, ANSCOL, box 132; "The Army Air Forces in Amphibious Landings in World War II," July 1953, USAF Historical Div, AU, CARL, N-16372.34, 62–64; Vian, 119 (*sawed nine inches*); Reynolds, *The Curtain Rises,* 305 ("*Bloody nonsense*").

Using flashlights for illumination: D. E. Williams, "Air Operations—'AVALANCHE,'" Jan. 7, 1944, NARA RG 334, E 315, NWC Lib, ANSCOL, L-3-43, W-67, box 179, 4; Simpson, "Air Phase," 124–25, 135; Molony V, 299; *StoC,* 103 ("*Air situation here critical*").

"*Our greatest asset now*": Chandler, vol. 2, 1406.

"*as soon as admin situation*": Brooks, ed., 284, 379n; Lamb, 39, 44, 47 ("*holiday picnic*").

On the other side of the hill: Ralph S. Mavrogordato, "The Battle of Salerno," Dec. 1957, NARA RG 319, E 145, OCMH, R-series mss, R-88, 13; Moorehead, *Eclipse,* 43 (*boots in rags*); *StoC,* 86; Matthew Cooper, *The German Army,* 405; Liddell Hart, 363.

Hitches plagued Vietinghoff: Eduard Mark, *Aerial Interdiction in Three Wars,* 98; Mavrogordato, "The Battle of Salerno," 14–15, 36; Douglas Graf Bernstorff, "Operations of the 26th Panzer Division in Italy," 1948, FMS, #D-316, MHI, 1-7; *StoC,* 98.

"Viva English!": Moorehead, *Eclipse,* 43; Molony V, 293 (*five divisions ringing*).

Within the Anglo-American beachhead: "Personal Diary of Langan W. Swent," Sept. 12, 1943, HIA, box 1; "World War II Diaries of Norman Maffei," 158th FA, 45th Div, ASEQ, MHI ("*surrender of Italy hasn't hindered*").

Fresh dead joined the older dead: chronology, Sept. 10, 1943, 1500 hrs, HKH, "Action Report," CMH; James C. Ruddell et al., "Observers Notes on the Italian Campaign," Dec. 5, 1943, NARA RG 337, AGF, observer reports, 190/48/30-21/00,#59, box 52; LeRoy R. Houtson, "Dead Men by Mass Production," ts, n.d., Texas MFM, 2–4 ("*didn't have a mark*"); Clark, "Salerno," 1 (*Triangular wooden wedges*); Ball, 218; Hickey and Smith, 307 ("*They've placed the graveyard*").

Stretcher bearers hurrying to the rear: Steinbeck, 158; medical forms from T. Nennniger, NARA, Modern Military Records; Tregaskis, 140; Charles M. Wiltse, *The Medical Department: Medical Service in the Mediterranean and Minor Theaters,* 228 ("*unusual agility*"), 231, 236; Edward D. Churchill, *Surgeon to Soldiers,* 257; J. M. Huddleston, VI Corps surgeon, "Report for Colonel Carter," 1943, Norman Lee Baldwin papers, HIA.

"*that's the way it is*": Tregaskis, 139; Moorehead, *Eclipse,* 36; Burrage, "See Naples and Die!," 28 ("*I don't think God*").

"*Our forces have captured*": Pond, 129; report, Fifth Army, Sept. 11, 1943, 0045 hrs., Robert J. Wood papers, MHI ("*Combat efficiency*"); chronology, Sept. 11, 1943, 0208 hrs, HKH, "Action Report," CMH ("*Am satisfied*"); AAR, "Record of Events," 142nd Inf, July 10, 1943, 1200 hrs, CARL, N-6818; *StoC,* 97 ("*The worst is over*"), 101 (*ready to march north*); AAR, "Historical Record, Headquarters, VI Corps," 5–6 (*odd lull*).

The Moan of Lost Souls

Four German bombs had landed: action report, *Ancon* commanding officer to CINC, U.S. Fleet, Oct. 15, 1943, MWC papers, Citadel, box 3, folder 1; OH, HKH, 1961, John T. Mason, Col U OHRO, 347 ("*sore thumb*"); Howe, "American Signal Intelligence," 61; H. Kent Hewitt, "The Allied Navies at Salerno," *Proceedings,* Sept. 1953, 958+; OH, HKH, n.d., Julian Boit and James Riley, HKH papers, NHC, box 6, 5 ("*get into the action*").

Thirty "*red alerts*": Shapiro, 137 (*human chains*); Karig, 266; *Three Years,* 412 (*helmsmen tried to minimize*); OH, HKH, 1961, John T. Mason, Col U OHRO, 347 (*slow enough to shrink her wake*).

Three days into AVALANCHE: Dunham, "United States Army Transportation and Italian Campaign," 37; "The Administrative History of the Eighth Fleet," 36; George J. Horney, "Comments and Suggestions on the AVALANCHE Operation," n.d., NARA RG 407, E, 427, NATOUSA, 95-USF1-0.4, box 250.
Drivers could not find their vehicles: A chemical mortar battalion arriving at Paestum on Sept. 9 did not receive its mortars until Sept. 12. Kleber and Birdsell, 433; Reynolds, *The Curtain Rises,* 317 (*cowboys and Indians*); "Amphibious Operations, Aug.–Dec. 1943," CINC, U.S. Fleet, CMH; "COHQ Bulletin No. Y/25," Apr. 1944, CARL, N-6530.10.
Hewitt this morning had sent Admiral Cunningham: OH, HKH, 1961, John T. Mason, Col U OHRO, 373; *AAFinWWII,* 525–26; "Personal Diary of Langan W. Swent," Sept. 12, 1943, HIA, box 1 ("*All are jumpy*"); newsletter, U.S.S. *Philadelphia,* Sept. 23, 1943, WWII Ship Files, NHC ("*nerve pills*").
The demand for pills spiked: Hewitt, "The Allied Navies at Salerno," 958+; chronology, HKH, "Action Report," NHC ("*hogging, sagging*").
as Hewitt soon surmised: msg, HKH to A. B. Cunningham, Sept. 12, 1943, 1547 hrs., chronology, HKH, "Action Report," CMH; http://www.vectorsite.net/twbomb3.html#m3; James P. Melanephy and John G. Robinson, *Surface Warfare,* vol. 6, no. 3 (March 1981), 2+; corr, D. H. Leathem to author, Jan. 20, 2003; James Phinney Baxter, *Scientists Against Time,* 194; William W. Downey, "Report on Simmons Project," n.d., OSS, NARA RG 226, E 99, OSS, 190/6/7/7, box 25, folder 6; memo, "Radio-Controlled Bombs Can be Jammed," March 10, 1945, SEM, NHC, box 47.
"*terrific screeching noise*": diary, MWC, Sept. 11, 1943, MWC, Citadel, box 64; *Calculated,* 196; Clark, "Salerno," 1; action report, R. W. Cary, U.S.S. *Savannah,* Oct. 1, 1943, NARA RG 38, OCNO, Action and Operational Reports, box 1413 (*hard left rudder*).
"*It didn't fall like bombs do*": Reynolds, *The Curtain Rises,* 328, 333 ("*wasn't natural*"); "U.S.S. *Savannah* (CL 42) Bomb Damage," War Damage Report No. 44, June 15, 1944, Bureau of Ships, Navy Dept., NARA RG 38, OCNO, WWII Action and Operational Reports, box 1413 (*twenty-two-inch hole*).
"*flared like a sulphur match*": Michael Stern, *Into the Jaws of Death,* 211; Reynolds, *The Curtain Rises,* 328; Hewitt, "The Allied Navies at Salerno," 958+; Evelyn M. Cherpak, ed., *The Memoirs of Admiral H. Kent Hewitt,* 121 (*his flagship*).

The blast vaporized bulkheads: Melanephy and Robinson, "*Savannah* at Salerno," 2; action report, George J. Pinto to CINC, U.S. Fleet, July 19, 1943; action report, R.W. Cary, U.S.S. *Savannah*, Oct. 1, 1943; war damage report, U.S.S. *Savannah*, Oct. 14, 1943; "U.S.S. *Savannah* (CL 42) Bomb Damage," War Damage Report No. 44, June 15, 1944, Bureau of Ships, Navy Dept., all in NARA RG 38, OCNO, WWII Action and Operational Reports, box 1413.
At Pearl Harbor: Jack Greene and Alessandro Massignani, *The Naval War in the Mediterranean, 1940–1943,* 305.
Her rugged hull saved her: Reynolds, *The Curtain Rises,* 328; war log, U.S.S. *Savannah*, Sept. 14, 1943, NARA RG 38, OCNO, WWII War Diaries, box 1425 (*Among the unluckiest*).
A deft shifting of fuel: SSA, 283–84; Beard, "Turning the Tide at Salerno," 34+ (*sailors braced the rails*); war damage report, U.S.S. *Savannah,* Oct. 14, 1943. Other accounts put the death tally at just under two hundred.
Hewitt desperately sought remedies: lecture, Richard L. Conolly, "The Landing at Salerno in World War II," May 14, 1957, Naval Historical Foundation, 8; Hewitt, "The Allied Navies at Salerno," 958; Aileen Clayton, *The Enemy Is Listening,* 281; Pond, 127 (*electric razors*); memo, "Radio-Controlled Bombs Can be Jammed" ("*improve morale*"); *StoC,* 106–7 (*Fritz-X attacks in coming days*).
To the relief of Ancon*'s crew:* Shapiro, 140; Lewis, 14 ("*streaming like ants*"), 19; diary, EJD, Sept. 12, 1943, HIA, box 1; *StoC,* 112; Morris, 240; Alfred M. Beck et al., *The Corps of Engineers: The War Against Germany,* 163; Downes, 16; Pond, 174.
Clark immediately drove south: Calculated, 197; aide's diary, EJD, HIA, box 1.
Twenty-eight thousand Americans: AAR, "Historical Record," 7–8; *Salerno,* 50; Molony V, 304; DDE, "Allied Commander-in-Chief's Report, Italian Campaign," 112.
The American right flank seemed secure: AAR, "Record of Events," 142nd Inf, Sept. 3–20, 1943, CARL, N-6818; *StoC,* 108–9; Wagner, 19 ("*a height of some sort*"); J. Tuck Brown, "Love, War, Etc.," ts, Jan. 1995, 132nd FA, 36th ID, ASEQ, MHI, 22–24 ("*I'm a little hungry*"); http://www.smu.edu/culmemorial/fellen.htm. Brown's eyewitness account contradicts the version of Sprague's death in Morris, 233.
"*a tribulation*": Thruelsen and Arnold, 179; *Salerno,* 43–47; Munsell, 26 ("*fired point blank*"); John Embry, "My Most Interesting Experience," ts, n.d., 160th FA Bn, 45th ID Mus, 117, 125 (*plans to spike their tubes*); AAR, 191st Tank Bn, n.d., AGF board reports, NARA RG 407, E 427, 95-USF1-2.0 (*tobacco factory would change hands*).
If German forces followed the Sele: Mark W. Clark, "Salerno," 1; Molony V, 302–3; diary, MWC, Sept. 12, 1943, MWC, Citadel, box 64 (*drove to Red Beach*).
"*Very heavy fighting*": chronology, Sept. 11, 1943, 2025 hrs, HKH, "Action Report," CMH; *StoC,* 107 (*fifteen hundred Allied soldiers*); Porch, 492 (*Anglo-Irish cavalryman*); OH, JPL, May 24, 1948, SM, MHI ("*tall, lean, and vague*"); Charles Richardson, *Flashback,* 160 (*near-whisper*); Pond, 156–59, 172 ("*another Dunkirk*"); Nigel Nicolson, *The Grenadier Guards in the War of 1939–1945,* vol. 2, 362–64; Michael Howard and John Sparrow, *The Coldstream Guards, 1920–1946,* 153–54; Michael Howard, *Captain Professor,* 73 ("*lost souls*").
Shaken by the sight of the British war dead: Hamilton, 416; Hickey and Smith, 183; diary, EJD, Sept. 12, 1943, HIA, box 1; "Historical Record, Headquarters, VI Corps, September 1943—The Operation AVALANCHE," n.d., JPL, MHI, box 12, 7 (*Field Orde0r No. 2*); *StoC,* 109.
Grimy and dust-caked: diary, MWC, Sept. 12, 1943, MWC, Citadel, box 64 ("*I must await further buildup*"); corr, H. Alexander to DDE, Sept. 13, 1943, DDE Lib, PP-pres, box 3 ("*everything must be done*").
"*the crowing of a cock cut the ears*": Shapiro, 145.
All tranquillity vanished at six A.M.: AAR, "Historical Record," 8; journal, Sept. 13, 1943, 36th ID,

chief of staff, SM, MHI; *Salerno,* 61; AAR, "Record of Events," 142nd Inf, Sept. 3–20, 1943, CARL, N-6818. The U.S. Army official history states that the shelling came from German artillery. *StoC,* 113, 125.

The 3rd Battalion of the 143rd Infantry: StoC, 113–14; AAR, "Operation AVALANCHE," 143rd Inf, Oct. 2, 1943, CARL, N-6818; memo, Fifth Army IG to MWC, Sept. 19, 1943, MWC, Citadel, box 2, folder 3 (*repulsed with heavy losses*); Steven E. Clay, *Blood and Sacrifice,* 179 ("*getting the Germans to stand up*").

now faced mortal danger: Mavrogordato, "The Battle of Salerno," 23 ("*split themselves into two sections*"); "Special Investigation and Interrogation Report: Operation Lightening," 29 ("*unconnected leadership*"); *SSA,* 285–87; Pond, 171 ("*dust rose in clouds*"), 177 ("*Lili Marlene*").

the five stout warehouses: Rosella Baretta, *Tabacco, tabaccari, e tabacchine nel Salento: Vicende, storiche, economiche, e sociali,* 6; *Guide d'Italia,* 126; Ascanio Marchini, *Il Tabacco,* 10, 21.

Here the full fury of the German attack: Morris, "Report on Observation Trip," 7–8; *Salerno,* 63; W.H.H. Morris, Jr., "Salerno," *MR,* vol. 13, no. 12 (March 1944), 5+ ("*Fireworks created an appearance*"); "Operation of the 45th Infantry Division in Italy," Sept. 10–30, 1943, 45th ID Mus; memo, I. C. Avery to MWC, investigation, actions of Co. B, 2nd Chemical Bn, Sept. 20, 1943, MWC, Citadel, corr, box 2 (*abandoned tubes unspiked*); *Salerno,* 65.

"*Tracers were going through my pack*": corr, Richard Pisciotta to father, May 18, 1944, 157th Inf, 45th Div, ASEQ, MHI; OH, FLW, May 15, 1953, John G. Westover, SM, MHI; journal, Sept. 13, 1943, 36th ID, chief of staff, SM, MHI; AAR, "Operation AVALANCHE," 143rd Inf, Oct. 2, 1943, CARL, N-6818; Eddie Douglas Adkins, "A P.O.W. Diary," ts, 1960, Texas MFM ("*I will reserve a space*"); Grady G. Tice, "POWs Never Forget War," *Commerce Journal,* March 4, 2001, Texas MFM (*Germans were atheists*); Shapiro, 152 ("*like furrows from a plow*"); FLW to MWC, Oct. 11, 1943, CARL, N-6818; Bruce L. Barger, *The Texas 36th Division,* 137; Morris, "Salerno," 5+ (*fired into the backs*); Wagner, 27 ("*It was hell up there*"), 34.

"*Situation worse*": diary, 1st and 3rd Bn aid station, 179th Inf, Sept. 12–13, 1943, 45th ID Mus; AAR, 191st Tank Bn, n.d., AGF board reports, NARA RG 407, E 427, NATOUSA, 95-USF1-2.0 (*tank crew took turns*); AAR, Van W. Pyland, 636th Tank Destroyer Bn, n.d., in *Texas,* 413 (*Dead men lay on a gravel bar*); Flint Whitlock, *The Rock of Anzio,* 87 ("*fighting for your ass*").

"*Enemy on the run*": F. Jones, "The Campaign in Italy: The Landing at Salerno," n.d., Cabinet Historical Section, UK NA, CAB 44 132, 133; *SSA,* 287.

Then on the southwest bank: Calculated, 201; *Salerno,* 65–66 (*Drivers, bandsmen*); "Operational History of Chemical Battalions and the 4.2-inch Mortar in World War II," part 1, 1947, CMH, 4-7.1 FB2, 56; Kleber and Birdsell, 433; Bishop et al., eds., 47; "World War II Diaries of Norman Maffei," Sept. 14, 1943, 158th FA, 45th Div, ASEQ, MHI; Betty McLain Belvin, *Ray McLain and the National Guard,* 74 (*nineteen rounds a minute*). The two artillery battalions fired 3,600 rounds in four hours.

Three miles down Highway 18: AAR, "Historical Record," 8–9 (*terrified Italian workers*); "Invasion of Italian Mainland, Summary Operations Carried Out by British Troops," 18 (*forty thousand gallons*); Simpson, "Air Phase," 135 (*landed by instrument*); Ball, 205 ("*The work went on*").

"*Things not too hot*": aide's diary, Sept. 13, 1943, EJD, HIA, box 1; corr, John W. O'Daniel to Hal C. Pattison, Sept. 3, 1964, NARA RG 319, OCMH, 2-3.7 CC3, Salerno to Cassino, box 256; diary, EJD, Sept. 13, 1943, HIA, box 1 ("*Disaster*"); *Calculated,* 200. Clark told an interviewer in 1972 that this exchange took place face-to-face. OH, MWC, Rittgers, MHI.

"*extremely critical*": diary, MWC, Sept. 13, 1943, MWC, Citadel, box 64; "Invasion of Italian Mainland, Summary Operations Carried Out by British Troops," 9; Nigel Nicolson, *Alex: The Life of Field Marshal Earl Alexander of Tunis,* 217; msg, MWC to MBR, Sept. 13, 1943, MWC, Citadel, corr, box 2.

radios crackled in the corner: CM, 255; Adleman and Walton, 71 (“*How the hell would you*”); FM 31-5, “Landing Operations on Hostile Shores,” WD, June 1941, MHI, 99 (“*deliberate sacrifice*”).
Clark would subsequently deny: corr, MWC to Hal C. Pattison, Sept. 17, 1964, NARA RG 319, OCMH, 2-3.7 CC3, Salerno to Cassino, box 255; MWC to mother, Oct. 6, 1943, MWC, Citadel, corr, box 3; msg, U.S.S. *Biscayne,* Sept. 14, 1943, 1609 hrs, MWC, Citadel, subject files, msgs, box 63 (*SEALION*); *StoC,* 117 (“*headquarters afloat*”); Shelby Foote, *The Civil War,* vol. 2, 494 (*George Meade*).
Roused from his torpor: corr, E. J. Dawley to Hal C. Pattison, Dec. 15, 1964, and Troy H. Middleton to Hal C. Pattison, Sept. 8, 1964 (*questioned Clark’s fortitude*), both in NARA RG 319, OCMH, 2-3.7 CC3, Salerno to Cassino, box 255; *StoC,* 117; OH, Francis Reichmann, 45th Div G-2, Apr. 21, 1950, SM, box IIA1, 2 (“*give me support*”); Frank James Price, *Troy H. Middleton: A Biography,* 165 (“*some hard fighting*”).
“*German tanks have broken through*”: Shapiro, 148–49, 152; OH, William P. Yarborough, 1975, J. R. Meese and H. P. Houser, SOOHP, MHI, 39–40 (“*crawling around on their hands*”); Ball, 214 (“*up to our necks*”); “Personal Diary of Langan W. Swent,” Sept. 20, 1943, Hoover Institution Archives, box 1 (*summons to Green Beach*).
“I’m a Yankee Doodle”: Shapiro, 150.
“*After a defensive battle lasting four days*”: Mavrogordato, “The Battle of Salerno,” 25–26.

A Portal Won

Hewitt bitterly opposed: Mason, 327; chronology, Sept. 14, 1943, HKH, “Action Report,” CMH (“*Depth of beachhead narrowing*”); F. Jones, “The Campaign in Italy: The Landing at Salerno,” n.d., Cabinet Historical Studies, UK NA, CAB 44 132, 136–37; A.B. Cunningham, “Operations in Connection with the Landings in the Gulf of Salerno,” Apr. 28, 1950, *London Gazette,* CMH, UH 0-1, CUN.2, 2173 (“*I will try to help*”).
“*If we withdraw*”: Mason, 318, 327; OH, “Reminiscences of George C. Dyer” (“*settle lower in the water*”).
“*intense gloom*”: *StoC,* 124; Roskill, 179; Pond, 192–93 (“*prove suicidal*”).
“*It just cannot be done*”: Pond, 192–93 (“*go and do it*”); Hickey and Smith, 249 (“*simply not on*”); Cunningham, 569 (“*stay and fight it out*”).
an enormous letter “T”: MBR, “Description of Operation from Planning Phase to Execution,” n.d., CJB, MHI, Chrono File Italy, box 48; John C. Warren, *Airborne Missions in the Mediterranean, 1942–1945,* 62; AAR, H.M.S. *Delhi*, Oct. 5, 1943, in “Operation AVALANCH—Report on Northern Assault,” Royal Navy, Oct. 16, 1943, CARL, N-6837 (“*monster snowflakes*”); Patrick D. Mulcahy, “Airborne Activities in the Avalanche Operation,” n.d., AFHQ, Arthur Nevins papers, MHI, box 2; James M. Gavin, *Airborne Warfare,* 28–29; *StoC,* 127; Pond, 190; Ross S. Carter, *Those Devils in Baggy Pants,* 36 (“*open season*”).
Perhaps to compensate: Clark was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for his heroics on this day.
two dozen German tanks had been destroyed: StoC, 129; Lewis, 21 (“*puddle of fat*”).
South of the Sele: FLW to MWC, Oct. 11, 1943, CARL, N-6818; *StoC,* 129 (“*Nothing of interest*”); Mavrogordato, “The Battle of Salerno,” 27; “Translation of Taped Conversation with General Hermann Balck, 12 January 1979,” Battelle Columbus Laboratories, Ohio, USAWC Lib, 14 (*Frictions had accumulated*); Kurowski, 59–60 (*heat exhaustion*); *Salerno,* 73 (*ten thousand shells*); Pond, 224 (*howitzers sniped*).
Berlin’s refusal to release the two tank divisions: Kesselring believed the two extra divisions could

have been decisive; some historians argue they would not have arrived in time to significantly influence the battle. Kesselring, *Memoirs,* 183n; *Battle,* 119; AAR, 36th ID, "Conclusions on Avalanche," n.d., NARA RG 334, NWC Lib, ANSCOL, box 35; Friedrich Wentzell, "The Italian Campaign from August 1943 to February 1945," Dec. 1945, CMH, Ital 370.2, 5 (*penny packets*); Hamilton, "Italy, Sept.–Dec. 1943," n.d., Cabinet Historical Section, UK NA, CAB 101/124, 18 (*exposed the attackers*).

"*The heavy naval artillery*": Kurowski, 125; Clagett, unpublished HKH bio, 478–79 (*Hewitt ordered*); Molony V, 327 ("*murderous queens*"); "Historical Tactical Study of Naval Gunfire at Salerno," 43 (*U.S.S.* Boise); Beard, "Turning the Tide at Salerno," 34+ (*fire axes*); Peek, 24 ("*count your children*").

What naval shells missed: Salerno, 74; AAR, "Historical Record," 10 (*B-17s battered*); "The Employment of Strategic Bombers in a Tactical Role, 1941–1951," 1953, USAF Historical Div., no. 88, 53–54 (*more than a thousand "heavy" sorties*); *AAFinWWII,* 530–31, 535 (*760 tons*); Pond, 224; Hardy D. Cannon, *Box Seat over Hell,* 65–66 (*took occasional potshots*).

"*almost impossible*": "Special Investigation and Interrogation Report: Operation Lightening," 28; Mavrogordato, "The Battle of Salerno," 27 (*a final effort*).

The somber if sketchy reports from Salerno: Lord Ismay, *The Memoirs of General Lord Ismay,* 320; D'Este, *Eisenhower,* 319 (*sand castles*); Molony V, 319.

"Quelle race!": W.G.F. Jackson, *Alexander of Tunis as Military Commander,* 215, 282 ("*Nothing every went right*"); Nicolson, *Alex,* 37, 199 ("*so serene*"), 238 ("*transformed it into a crusade*"); Gunther, 99 (*Irish flag*); Michael Howard, "Leadership in the British Army in the Second World War," in G. D. Sheffield, *Leadership and Command,* 109; OH, Michael Howard, May 2003, with author, Washington, D.C.; Binder, 107 ("*Good chaps get killed*"); Moran, 186 ("*redeemed what was brutal*").

No sooner had Hewitt laid out: Binder, 116; corr, HKH to SEM, Jan. 8, 1954, SEM, NHC, box 51; OH, HKH, 1961, John T. Mason, Col U OHRO, 344–45 ("*Never do*"); Nicolson, *Alex,* 222 ("*cease immediately*"); Mason, 327 ("*no evacuation*").

He and Hewitt found Clark: Hewitt, "The Allied Navies at Salerno," 958+; Hickey and Smith, 257 (*unlimbered at targets*); corr, HKH to SEM, Jan. 8, 1954 (*vanished for a private conversation*).

My dear Clarke: B. L. Montgomery to MWC, Sept. 15, 1943, MWC, Citadel, corr, box 2.

Montgomery's 64,000 troops: Molony V, 252; *StoC,* 138.

holding medals ceremonies: Such a ceremony was held on September 13; a day later, an inspection ceremony was held of the entire 1st Canadian Division, which had no contact with the enemy from September 8 to 16. *From Pachino to Ortona:* The Canadian Army at War, CARL, N-14352, 96; Steiger, "The Campaign in Southern Italy," 15.

In nearly two weeks only eighty-five: Patrick Howarth, *My God, Soldiers,* 137; Mavrogordato, "The Battle of Salerno," 46 (*ten combat casualties a day*); "Narrative: Operations Against Italy," Sept. 15, 1943, Arthur S. Nevins papers, MHI (*sixty-two British dead*); John Lardner, "The Mayor of Futani," in *The New Yorker Book of War Pieces,* 268; Christopher Buckley, *Road to Rome,* 174–85; *StoC,* 142 (*British patrol make contact*); diary, MWC, Sept. 15, 1943, MWC, Citadel, box 64 (*swelled to nearly seven thousand*); MWC to B. L. Montgomery, Sept. 16, 1943, MWC, Citadel, corr, box 2.

"*I would like you to go now*": Morris, 283; Alan Williamson, "Dawley Was Shafted," ts, n.d., Texas MFM, 8–10 (*no sleep at all*); Binder, 117 (*voice cracked*); OH, Lyman Lemnitzer, Jan. 16, 1948, SM, MHI (*gestured vaguely with a trembling hand*).

"*I do not want to interfere*": diary, MWC, Sept. 20, 1943, MWC, Citadel, box 64.

"*I know it, Alex*": OH, MWC, Rittgers, 60–63; Morris, photo, 175 (*checkered tablecloth*).

"*Although I am not entirely happy*": Nicolson, *Alex,* 220.

"*No doubt you people are worried*": MWC to Renie, Sept. 15–16, 1943, MWC, Citadel, personal corr;

diary, MWC, Sept. 16, 1943, MWC, Citadel, box 64.
Hardly had the shrieking hordes: Douglas Graf Bernstorff, "Operations of the 26th Panzer Division in Italy," 1948, FMS, #D-316, MHI, 7–8; J. Hamilton, "Italy, Sept.–Dec. 1943," n.d., Cabinet Historical Section, UK NA, CAB 101/124, 18–19 (*never penetrated the curtain*); Franz Kurowski, *The History of the Fallschirmpanzerkorps Hermann Göring*, 210 ("*put out of action*").
This welcome news greeted Eisenhower: memo, "Major Lee," aide-de-camp, Eisenhower Diary, HCB, DDE Lib, A-783-786; msg, DDE to GCM, Sept. 13, 1943, NARA RG 165, E 422, OPD exec files, 390/38/2/4-5, box 13; Chandler, vol. 3, 1418 ("*If things go wrong*").
"*would probably be out*": *Three Years*, 420; Butcher entries, Sept. 15–16, 1943, Eisenhower Diary, HCB, DDE Lib, A-756, A-773-74, A-779 ("*prefer to die fighting*"); Chandler, vol. 3, 1428 ("*unimpressed by Dawley*"); msg, MWC to DDE, Sept. 16, 1943, DDE Lib, PP-pres, box 23 ("*appears to go to pieces*"); OH, Lemnitzer, Jan. 16, 1948 ("*why in the hell*").
If Salerno plagued him: Harold Macmillan, *War Diaries*, 195; Eisenhower, *Letters to Mamie*, 148; Chandler, vol. 3, 1442–43, 1473 ("*deepest hole*"); D'Este, *Eisenhower*, 443 ("*handsomest bald man*").
"*For God's sake, Mike*": Williamson, "Dawley Was Shafted," 8–10. A sanitized version quotes Eisenhower as saying, "How'd you ever get the troops into such a mess?" *Texas*, 257.
"*I really think you better take him out*": OH, MWC, Rittgers, 64; OH, FLW, May 15, 1953, John G. Westover, SM, MHI; *Texas*, 258 (*Dawley and Clark quarreled*).
"*I want you to go down*": OH, R. J. Wood, 1973, Narus, 22–28; Williamson, "Dawley Was Shafted," 8–10 ("*I couldn't work with Clark*"), 12 ("*for keeping his mouth shut*"); diary, EJD, Sept. 20, 1943, HIA, box 1 ("*Releived*"); aide's diary; corr, DDE to E. J. Dawley, Sept. 23, 1943, EJD papers, HIA, box 1 (*$7 per diem*).
Of four American corps commanders: Lloyd R. Fredendall and Dawley had been fired; Patton and Bradley were the other two. Geoffrey Keyes in Sicily had briefly commanded a temporary "provisional corps."
"*It makes a commander supercautious*": diary, Oct. 29 and 30, 1943, JMG, MHI, box 10; corr, ENH to MWC, Sept. 29, 1943, ENH, MHI, box 3.
"*complete success at Salerno*": war diary, Sept. 16, 1943, "Salerno Invasion," German naval command, box 649; Kesselring, *Memoirs*, 186–87 (*authorized a retreat*).
plunder piled on trucks: Pond, 259; Steiger, "The Campaign in Southern Italy," 17 ("*destroyed most thoroughly*"); "Exploitation of Italy for the Further Conduct of the War," Tenth Army, Sept. 22, 1943, in Steiger, appendix G ("*evacuation list*").
The scorching and salting: "Fifth Army Medical History," ts, n.d., NARA RG 112, MTO surgeon general, 390/17/8/2-3, box 6, 138; AAR, "Historical Record," 13; Macmillan, *War Diaries*, 354 (*92 percent of all sheep*); Clifford W. Dorman, "Too Soon for Heroes," ts, n.d., 19th Combat Engineers, author's possession, 67 ("Rail rooters").
"*The Tommies will have to chew*": Farley Mowat, *And No Birds Sang*, 155.
"*incapable of attacking*": war diary, Sept. 18, 1943, "Salerno Invasion," German naval command, box 649, 71; Mavrogordato, "The Battle of Salerno," 36a ("*offensive spirit*"); Ronald Lewin, *Ultra Goes to War*, 340 ("*No more invasions*").
Allied casualties totaled: StoC, 144; Molony V, 325. As always, precise casualty figures are difficult to tease from the record; some accounts tally higher numbers, but usually draw from a greater time period. The U.S. Navy official history, for example, reports 13,614 Allied casualites, but includes Navy figures through the end of 1943. *SSA*, 313.
Total German losses: StoC, 144; Molony V, 325, 382 (*126,000 casualties in Russia*); D'Este, *World War II in the Mediterranean*, 110 (*630 were killed*).
"*a road upon which you may retire*": lecture, R.W.D. Woods, USN, Sept. 14, 1943, NARA RG 334, E

315, NWC Lib, ANSCOL; corr, J.F.M. Whiteley to J. N. Kennedy, Sept. 22, 1943, NARA RG 319, OCMH, 2-3.7 CC2 Sicily, box 247 ("*turn the scales*"); OH, Andrew J. Goodpaster, Aug. 17, 2004, with author, Washington, D.C. (*absolute authority*); Nicolson, *Alex*, 163; DDE, "Memorandum for Personal File," June 11, 1943, Eisenhower diary, HCB, DDE Lib, A-472 ("*certain of his subordinates*").
"*leadership, force, and vigor*": Berlin, 15; Blumenson, *Mark Clark*, 282 (*Marcus Aurelius Clarkus*); msg, DDE to GCM, Sept. 20, 1943, NARA RG 165, E 422, OPD exec files, 390/38/2/4-5, box 13.
"*Mark Clark really didn't have*": Blair, 157.
from two divisions on September 3: chart, growth of Allied force in Italy, n.d., SM, box 2.
"*made our acquaintance with vino*": Wagner, 58; Paschal E. Kerwin, *Big Men of the Little Navy*, 58 (*Fascist party headquarters*); Harr, 47, 55 ("*Americans will pay*"); Biddle, 145.
"*I covered my mouth*": O'Donnell, 168; Howard, *Captain Professor*, 73.
So many civilian bodies: Peckham and Snyder, eds., 66; Earl Mansee, 36th MP Co., n.d., Texas MFM website, 36th ID Assoc., www.kwanah.com/36Division/pstoc.htm ("*stinch was terrible*"); Whitlock, 90 ("*like an eggplant*").
A visiting general complained: Herbert E. MacCombie, "Chaplains of the Thirty-sixth Division," ts, n.d., Texas MFM, 25.

CHAPTER 5: CORPSE OF THE SIREN

"I Give You Naples"

British military policemen in red caps: George Biddle, *Artist at War*, 142; Malcolm Munthe, *Sweet Is War*, 175 (*crooked their fingers*); Frank Gervasi, *The Violent Decade*, 499 ("*didn't look human*"); J. A. Ross, *Memoirs of an Army Surgeon*, 171; *Texas*, 267; John Lardner, "The Mayor of Futani," in *The New Yorker Book of War Pieces*, 266 (*recited the brands*), 269; John Steinbeck, *Once There Was a War*, 164 ("*stinks of the classics*"); Richard Tregaskis, *Invasion Diary*, 148 ("*make 'em to last*").
A squadron from the King's Dragoon Guards: Molony V, 343; Matthew B. Ridgway, *Soldier*, 88; Leon Weckstein, *Through My Eyes*; *Calculated*, 214 ("*city of ghosts*"); AAR, Donald Downes to W. Donovan, OSS activities in Neapolitan campaign, Oct. 19, 1943, NARA RG 226, E 99, OSS history office, box 48; AAR, secret intelligence in Italy, n.d., NARA RG 226, E 99, OSS history office, box 39; Malcolm S. McLean, "Adventures in Occupied Areas," ts, 1975, MHI, 92 (*Italian bodies*); Donald Downes, *The Scarlet Thread*, 158 ("*sweet heliotrope odor*"); MWC, "Salerno," *AB*, no. 95, 1997, 1+ ("*less happy mood*").
He was in the wrong place: James M. Gavin, *On to Berlin*, 73; Tregaskis, 149–52.
"*Naples has been taken*": msgs, MWC to H. Alexander, Oct. 1, 1943, and MWC to Renie, Oct. 5, 1943, diary, MWC, Citadel, box 64.
It proved an odd gift: George F. Botjer, *Sideshow War*, 61 (*conscripting young men*); Peter Tompkins, *Italy Betrayed*, 260 (*reign of German terror*); memo, John T. Whitaker, Psychological Warfare Branch, to MWC, "Attitude of People of Naples," Oct. 3, 1943, MWC, Citadel, corr, box 3; Robert Wallace, *The Italian Campaign*, 78 (*as young as nine*).
An estimated three hundred locals: Botjer, 61. Allied counterintelligence put the number at 227. "Counter Intelligence Corps, Information Bulletin No. 4," n.d., "Theater Com-Z Activities, ASF, 1944–1945," CARL, N-5990; AAR, Downes to Donovan, Oct. 19, 1943 (*two days sooner*).
"*There were still Germans*": diary, Oct. 19, 1943, JMG, MHI, box 10; Downes, 158 (*red Italian grenades*); Robert Capa, *Slightly Out of Focus*, 102–3; Biddle, 152–57; George Biddle, *George Biddle's War Drawings*, 49.
"*the most beautiful city*": *Naples with Pompeii and the Amalfi Coast*, 35; C.R.S. Harris, *Allied Administration of Italy, 1943–1945*, 85 (*blew up the main aqueduct*); msg, Fifth Army to AFHQ,

Naples damage estimate, Oct. 13, 1943, MWC, Citadel, box 63 (*forty sewer lines*); *Building the Navy's Bases in World War II,* vol. 2, 88; "German Demolition Policy in Occupied Russia and Italy," June 15, 1944, Ministry of Economic Warfare Intelligence Weekly, NARA RG 334, NWC Lib, ANSCOL, box 467; Alfred M. Beck et al., *The Corps of Engineers: The War Against Germany*, 168; Leo J. Meyer, "Strategy and Logistical History: MTO," ts, n.d., CMH, 2-3.7 CC5, XIX-11 (*crashing two trains*); "Engineer History, Fifth Army, Mediterranean Theater," n.d., MHI, 69 (*Coal stockpiles*); "History of the First Special Service Force," n.d., Robert T. Frederick papers, HIA, box 1, 52–53 (*Even the stairwells*).

The opportunities for cultural atrocity: Tompkins, 276; *SSA,* 311 (*city archives*); memo, Mason Hammond and F.H.J. Maxse to F. J. McSherry, Nov. 5, 1943, "Report of AMGOT Divisions, up to Nov. 1, 1943," part 3, Frank J. McSherry papers, MHI; Downes, 159n; Lynn H. Nicholas, *The Rape of Europa,* 232 (*stored in Nola*).

Worse yet was the sabotage around the great port: U.S. Army engineers estimated that half the damage was from Allied bombs, half from German demolitionists. Beck, 167.

Half a mile inland: Tregaskis, 158; H.V. Morton, *A Traveller in Southern Italy,* 230; Homer, *The Odyssey,* trans. Robert Fagles, book 12, line 199 ("*high, thrilling song*"); memo, Paul Gardner, damage to cultural facilities, Naples, Oct. 27, 1943, and draft report, MTOUSA IG, Dec. 20, 1943, both in NARA RG 492, MTOUSA, IG, 333.5, box 2014; Gervasi, 499 (*Grand hotels*); Paul W. Brown, *The Whorehouse of the World,* 216.

Not a single vessel: Meyer, "Strategy and Logistical History," xix–10; Joseph S. Gorlinski, "Naples: Case History in Invasion," *Military Engineer,* vol. 36, no. 222 (Apr. 1944), 109+; *Battle,* 124; Beck, 168 (*fifty-eight of sixty-one berths*); "Rehabilitation of the Port of Naples," May 1944, NARA RG 336, ASF, Historical Program Files, chief of transportation, 190/33/30/00, box 559, 4–6 (*Pier F*); "Logistical History of NATOUSA/MTOUSA, Nov. 1945, NARA RG 407, E 427, AFHQ, 95-AL1-4, box 203, 104 (*pair of ninety-ton cranes*); HKH, "Action Report of the Salerno Landings, Sept.–Oct. 1943," 1945, CMH, 156–57 (*seeded the harbor*).

"*small, aged animals*": Brown, 219; *SSA,* 311; lecture, W. A. Sullivan, "Ship Salvage and Harbor Clearance," 1947, Society of Military Engineers, Cincinnati, in "World War II Histories and Historical Reports," #445, NHC, 16 ("*demolitions for revenge*"); Meyer, "Strategy and Logistical History," XIX–13 (*Marseilles and Cherbourg*).

equivalent of sixty-eight Liberty ships: HKH, "Action Report of the Salerno Landings, Sept.–Oct. 1943," 1945, CMH, 156–57; Gorlinski, "Naples," 109+.

Twenty-nine Italian divisions: StoC, 7; F. W. Deakin, *The Brutal Friendship,* 530; Tompkins, 229 (*forged orders*); David Hunt, *A Don at War,* 221 ("*Each bomb is chipping*").

island of Cephalonia: E. F. Fisher, "Memo for the Record," March 28, 1973, from *Kriegstagebuch des Oberkommandos der Wehrmacht,* Band III, zweiter Halbband, 1118–133, NARA RG 319, OCMH, CA, box 006; Richard Lamb, *War in Italy, 1943–1945,* 132–33; R.J.B. Bosworth, *Mussolini's Italy,* 504; Alex Bowlby, *Countdown to Cassino,* 7n; Lamb, 132–33 (*sunk at sea*); Melton S. Davis, *Who Defends Rome?,* 466 ("*Italians are burning*").

"*The only Italian army*": Lamb, 87, 88–89, 104; Michael Burleigh, *The Third Reich,* 741–42 ("*military internees*"); Karl Theodor Koerner, "Rail Transportation Problems in Italy," Apr. 1947, FMS, #D-010, MHI, 8.

A German radio intercept: Albert Praun, "German Radio Intelligence," March 1950, FMS, #P-038, CMH, 68; John Winton, *Cunningham,* 329; Hunt, 230–31 ("*size of a tennis court*"); Jack Greene and Alessandro Massignani, *The Naval War in the Mediterranean,* 307; *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression,* vol. 7, NARA RG 319, OCMH, box 248, 931 (*catalogue of booty*); "Under the German Yoke," ts, n.d., U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Historical Division, X-39, 1 (*60,000 motor vehicles*).

The second escape: S. W. Roskill, *The War at Sea, 1939–1945,* 188; *SSA,* 304–8 (“*even more astonishing*”).
The third escape: “Military Campaigns and Political Events in Italy, 1942–1943,” Jan. 1946, WD, Strategic Services Unit, A-63366, CMH, Geog Files, Italy, 370.22, 34–35; Elizabeth Wiskemann, *The Rome-Berlin Axis,* 311; Otto Skorzeny, *Skorzeny’s Secret Missions,* 57–58; Gerald Pawle, *The War and Colonel Warden,* 249–60; “The Rescue of Mussolini,” *AB,* no. 22, 1978, 12+ (*vacated ski resort*); Bruton F. Hood, “The Gran Sasso Raid,” *MR,* Feb. 1959, 55+; Denis Mack Smith, *Mussolini,* 300 (*endless carping*); Benito Mussolini, *My Rise and Fall,* 137 (*removed all sharp objects*); Peter Neville, *Mussolini,* 177 (“*one must suffer*”).
Soon enough his whereabouts leaked: O. Skorzeny and K. Radl, “The Rescue of Mussolini,” n.d., intelligence translation no. H-7563, DA, 72–93; John Toland, *Adolf Hitler,* 754 (*badly scarred visage*); “Military Campaigns,” 47 (*gliders began skittering*); Skorzeny, 98–99 (“*the Führer has sent me*”); “How Strong Is the Enemy Today?” 1944, OSS film, NARA RG 111, M2997 (*Storch airplane*); *StoC,* 539; Louis P. Lochner, ed., *The Goebbels Diaries,* 468–69.
two dozen Jews: Martin Gilbert, *The Second World War,* 462.
The first German time bomb: Clark, “Salerno,” 1; “History of the Peninsular Base Section,” 1944, CMH, 8-4 HA 1, vol. 2 (“*The first two floors*”); Robert H. Welker, *A Different Drummer,* 208–9.
The blast killed and wounded: Clay Blair, *Ridgway’s Paratroopers,* 164; Welker, 212–14.
Three days later, on Sunday morning: “Engineer History, Fifth Army,” 35; Blair, 164; *Calculated,* 218; OH, Louis Bednar, 82nd Airborne Div, Sept. 17, 2002, VHP (“*sacks of burlap*”); Ross S. Carter, *Those Devils in Baggy Pants,* 55 (“*Nice work, boys*”); MWC to Renie, Oct. 10, 1943, MWC, Citadel; memo, “Security of Material Bombs Explosion in Naples,” n.d., 158th Bomb Disposal, NARA RG 331, AFHQ micro, R 367-F, box 216 (*Prince of Piedmont barracks*).
“*bodies overcome by the ash*”: Norman Lewis, *Naples ’44,* 40; “History of the Peninsular Base Section,” vol. 2; “Engineers in the Italian Campaign, 1943–1945,” n.d., UK, MHI Lib, 21; Harry L. Coles, “The Army Air Forces in Amphibious Landings in World War II,” 1953, USAF Historical Division, no. 96, 34 (“*suspicious noises*”).
Fears that more hidden bombs: memo, J. G. Barney to PWB, Fifth Army, Nov. 3, 1943, C. D. Jackson papers, DDE Lib, box 1; Margaret Bourke-White, *Purple Heart Valley,* 29; Lewis, 43; Malcolm Muggeridge, *The Infernal Grove,* 229.
“*There are 57 varieties of grief*”: Harry L. Coles and Albert K. Weinberg, *Civil Affairs: Soldiers Become Governors,* 316; Lewis, 31, 61; “History of the Peninsular Base Section,” vol. 2; Biddle, 160; Robert L. Wagner, *The Texas Army,* 58; William J. Diamond, “Water Is Life,” *Military Engineer,* Aug. 1947, 330+; Sullivan, “Ship Salvage and Harbor Clearance,” 19.
Twenty-six thousand tons: Harris, 88; George C. S. Benson and Maurice Neufeld, “American Military Government in Italy,” in Carl J. Friedrich, ed., *American Experiences in Military Government in World War II,* 137–40; Gervasi, 501; Lewis, 84 (*bitter jest*).
Reconstruction had begun: “History of the Peninsular Base Section,” vol. 2; Gorlinski, “Naples: Case History in Invasion,” 109; Viscount Cunningham of Hyndhope, *A Sailor’s Odyssey,* 572 (“*army of ants*”); Lida Mayo, *The Ordnance Department: On Beachhead and Battlefront,* 187; H. H. Dunham, “U.S. Army Transportation and the Italian Campaign,” ts, Sept. 1945, mono #17, NARA RG 336, ASF, historical program files, chief of transportation, box 142, 60 (*only three berths*); booklet, 6th Port Bn, Walter J. Muller papers, HIA, box 2 (*more tonnage handled*); McLean, “Adventures in Occupied Areas,” 92.
Garbagemen sang: OH, Frank Schultz, Apr. 2002, March 2006, with author, Washington, D.C.; Lewis, 51–52 (*hunchbacks*); Carter, 53 (“*wasn’t safe to go to town*”); Warren P. Munsell, Jr., *The Story of a Regiment,* 40n (*dropped your voice*); Mina Curtiss, ed., *Letters Home,* 93; Anders Kjar Arnbal, *The*

Barrel-Land Dance Hall Rangers, 164 (*Monopoly money*); "Second Orientation Conference at Fifth Army Headquarters," Nov. 15, 1943, AGF observer report, #77, NARA RG 337, E 15A, box 53 (*resistant to sulfa*); John F. Hummer, *An Infantryman's Journal,* 37, 44; diary, William Russell Hinckley, Oct. 6, 1943, author's possession ("'*Fik' can be had*").
Some soldiers behaved badly: memo, Paul Gardner to W. W. Pence, Nov. 19, 1943, NARA RG 492, MTOUSA IG, box 2014; Nicholas, 233 ("*stuffed toucans*"); memos, Palazzo Reale custodian, Nov. 26, Dec. 5, 1943, in draft report, IG investigation, Dec. 20, 1943, NARA RG 492, MTOUSA IG, box 2014; T. Moffatt Burriss, *Strike and Hold,* 57, 61 ("*He drained his glass*").
Airdromes at Foggia: Mary H. Williams, ed., *Chronology, 1941–1945, USAWWII*, 138.
Everywhere, Allied forces: Gerhard L. Weinberg, *A World at Arms*, 616–17, 636, 643; Gilbert, 455, 462–64 ("*We are still retreating*").
"*He always wants speed*": JPL, 165, 167.
"*Rome by Christmas*": Strome Galloway, *A Regiment at War,* 103; Chandler, vol. 3, 1485; Russell B. Capelle, *Casablanca to the Neckar,* 21 (*studying German*); Ralph Bennett, *Ultra and the Mediterranean Strategy,* 252 ("*strength to make a front*"); Gilbert, 455 ("*as soon as the Russians*"); Robert Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, 764 ("*should be in Rome*").

"Watch Where You Step and Have No Curiosity at All"

inaugural crossing in Europe: From the Volturno to the Winter Line, 53.
"*Sleep, swine*": Audie Murphy, *To Hell and Back,* 31; John A. Elterich, "Patrol Actions Prior to and During the Operation of the 2nd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment," 1948, IS, 11; Tregaskis, 169–72.
rafts borrowed from the Navy: OH, Robert Petherick, n.d., CMH, Geog, Italy, 370.24; Orrin A. Tracy, "The Operations of the 7th Infantry, Volturno River Crossing," 1946, IS, 14, 19; Barry W. Fowle, ed., *Builders and Fighters,* 425–27; *CM,* 268–69.
"*Unfortunately I'm beginning to realize*": LKT Jr. to Sarah, Sept. 1, 30, 1943, LKT Jr., GCM Lib, box 1, folder 6; *StoC,* 197–98 (*1:55 A.M.*); "Lessons from the Italian Campaign," March 10, 1944, HQ, NATOUSA, CMH, Geog Italy, 353, 41 (*three miles wide*).
British infantrymen struggled: Chester G. Starr, ed. *From Salerno to the Alps*, 45–46; memoir, Aidan Mark Sprot, ts, 1947, LHC, 93; "Invasion of Italian Mainland, Summary of Operations Carried Out by British Troops Under Command 5 U.S. Army," n.d., CMH, 370.2, 15–16 (*six hundred yards deep*); *CM,* 271; Moorehead, *Eclipse,* 62.
With his left flank exposed: aide's diaries, Oct. 13, 1943, LKT Jr., GCM Lib, box 18, folder 3; AAR, "Report on Crossing of the River Volturno," 36th Engineer Regt, Nov. 5, 1943, JPL, MHI, box 11; Will Lang, "Lucian King Truscott, Jr.," *Life,* Oct. 2, 1944, 96+ ("*Have you tried it?*").
At eleven A.M. the first Sherman: From the Volturno to the Winter Line, 31; Beck et al., 176; AAR, H. K. Koberstein, 10th Engineer Bn, "Engineer Phase on the Crossing of the Volturno River," Nov. 3, 1943 (*eighty jeeps*); "Invasion of Italian Mainland, Summary of Operations Carried Out by British Troops," 36 (*only 3,500 engineers* [as of early November]); Leslie W. Bailey, *Through Hell and High Water,* 131; Edmund F. Ball, *Staff Officer with the Fifth Army,* 232.
"*Like the earthworm*": LKT Jr. to Sarah, Oct. 14 and 22, 1943, LKT Jr., GCM Lib, box 1, folder 6.
Anglo-Americans had advanced thirty-five miles: Albert Kesselring et al., "German Version of the History of the Italian Campaign," CARL, N-16671.1-3, 36; Kenneth S. Davis, *Soldier of Democracy,* 450 ("*masterminding*").
Italy would break their backs: "Narrative: Operations Against Italy," Oct. 20, 1943, Arthur S. Nevins papers, MHI.
German demolitions had begun: "Engineer History, Fifth Army," 7, 10 ("*only five prefabricated*"), 77

(“*whole trees to bulls*”); “Second Orientation Conference at Fifth Army Headquarters”(“*no bridge or culvert*”); diary, MWC, Nov. 1, 1943, Citadel, box 64 (*one thousand bridges*); Fowle, ed., 191 (*three thousand spans*); Beck, 178 (*eighteen feet in ten hours*).

“*new tracks across the rubble*”: *CM,* 263; Ralph G. Martin, *The G.I. War, 1941–1945,* 105 (“*broken bathtubs*”); “Engineers in the Italian Campaign, 1943–1945,” 23 (*rolling mills*); Beck et al., 175 (*They used timber*).

“*It got darker*”: Don Robinson, *News of the 45th,* 149; Frank Henius, *Italian Sentence Book for the Soldier,* 1943 (*raining torrents*); Ronald Blythe, ed., *Private Words,* 4 (“*one may write of mist*”); Lawrence D. Collins, *The 56th Evac Hospital,* 94 (“*spots on the dice*”), 121; memoir, Henry E. Gardiner, ts, n.d., USMA Arch, 181 (*pooled in their messkits*).

“*The desert war*”: *Battle,* 122; Peter Schrijvers, *The Crash of Ruin,* 247 (“*honest color*”); Martin, 105 (“*too thick to drink*”); Albert F. Simpson, “Air Phase of the Italian Campaign to 1 January 1944,” June 1946, AAFRH, #115, CMH, 351n (*undermined air superiority*); John North, ed., *The Alexander Memoirs, 1940–1945,* 117 (“*savage versatility*”); Don Woerpel, *A Hostile Sky,* 140 (“*German weather*”).

Mines made it much worse: OH, Andrew J. Goodpaster, Aug. 17, 2004, with author, Washington, D.C.; *From Pachino to Ortona,* Canadian Army at War, CARL, N-14352, 104 (“*All roads*”); “German Tactics in Italy, No. 1, Salerno to Anzio,” May 28, 1944, AFHQ, G-2, CMH, Geog files, 11–12; John H. Roush, ed., *World War II Reminiscences,* 60–61 (“*I never had a moment*”); “Second Orientation Conference at Fifth Army Headquarters” (“*Watch where you step*”).

“*you could follow our battalions*”: report, AGF Board, Dec. 5, 1943, NARA RG 407, E 427, NATOUSA, 95-USF1-2.0; Frank Gervasi, “Battle at Cassino,” *Collier’s,* March 18, 1944, 20+; Gerald Linderman, *The World Within War,* 117 (“*nutcracker*”); Charles F. Marshall, *A Ramble Through My War,* 19; Beck et al., 181; G-2 Periodic No. 28, II Corps, Aug. 9, 1943, Benjamin A. Dickson papers, MHI, box 4; report, AGF Board, Dec. 5, 1943, NARA RG 407, E 427, NATOUSA, 95-USF1-2.0 (*two chaplains lost legs*).

“*A man’s foot*”: Klaus H. Huebner, *A Combat Doctor’s Diary,* 73; OH, Richard A. Williams, Jan. 25, 2003, with author (“*they would still scream*”); Bill Mauldin, *The Brass Ring,* 200; James Phinney Baxter III, *Scientists Against Time,* 101–2; Fowle, ed., 164–68; Beck et al., 183; Erna Risch and Chester L. Kieffer, *The Quartermaster Corps: Organization, Supply, and Services,* vol. 2, 331 (“*M dogs*”).

expedient fighting withdrawal: Kent Roberts Greenfield, ed., *Command Decisions,* 235.

an intense debate raged: Walter Warlimont, *Inside Hitler’s Headquarters, 1939–1945,* 385–86; David Irving, *The Trail of the Fox,* 309–10 (“*Domineering, obstinate*”).

Italy remained a comparatively minor theater: Molony V, 381–82; Rudolf Böhmler, *Monte Cassino,* 67–68 (*more vulnerable to enemy bombers*).

The Italian peninsula was narrowest: H. Alexander, “The Allied Armies in Italy,” CMH, II-7; brochure, “Ciociaria: A Land to Experience,” n.d., Regione Lazio, 33 (*wolves and bears*); memo, A. Kesselring, Nov. 1, 1943, A. G. Steiger, “The Campaign in Southern Italy,” Nov. 1947, Canadian Army hq, Ottawa, appendix L (“*impregnable system*”); Wallace, 101 (“*break their teeth*”).

changed his mind in favor of Kesselring: Böhmler, 71; Basil Liddell Hart, ed., *The Rommel Papers,* 445–47; Kenneth Macksey, *Kesselring: The Making of the Luftwaffe,* 186 (“*leadership without optimism*”); Thomas R. Brooks, *The War North of Rome,* 28 (“*extraordinarily brave*”).

“*I’ll take it as it comes*”: Liddell Hart, ed., 447; Greenfield, ed., 242 (“*end of withdrawals*”); Irving, 311–14 (“*hard times lie ahead*”).

Thanks to Ultra: Ralph Bennett, *Ultra and the Mediterranean Strategy,* 251–53; F.H. Hinsley et al., *British Intelligence in the Second World War,* 173–74.

"*We are committed*": "Review of Battle Situation in Italy, 21 October 1943," in H. Alexander, "The Allied Armies in Italy," CMH, II-50, II-13 ("*cul-de-sac*"); *GS* V, 69 (*only eleven facing a German force*); Molony V, 474n (*Twenty inches of rain*); *StoC,* 219–20 (*less than a mile a day*). The German force in Italy soon reached twenty-five divisions.
"*essential for us to retain the initiative*": Chandler, vol. 3, 1529.
Nor did the high command: StoC, 185–87; Winston S. Churchill, *Closing the Ring,* 247 ("*vindicates our strategy*").
The prospect of waging: Molony V, 473; *StoC,* 187 (*line on a map*).
Alexander's despondency: W.G.F. Jackson, *Alexander of Tunis as Military Commander,* 248; Gervasi, 518 ("*punch, punch, punch*"); Lord Tedder, *With Prejudice,* 488 ("*ever get to Rome*").
"*ancient truths*": Jackson, 253; corr, B. L. Montgomery to A. F. Harding, Oct. 31, 1943, Bernard L. Montgomery collections, IWM, ancillary collections 14, file 3.

The Mountainous Hinterland

"*The road to Rome is a long one*": JJT, XIII, 12.
among two thousand veterans transferred: memo, LKT Jr. to MWC and CG, NATOUSA, Dec. 17, 1943, NARA RG 407, E 427, NATOUSA, 95-USF1-2.0.
"*Life is good*": JJT, X-1, 5; Biddle, 169, 172.
Victory Road: Gervasi, 513; "Lessons from the Italian Campaign," March 10, 1944, NARA RG 407, E 427, 95-USF1-04, box 250, 10 ("*mountainous hinterland*"); Alice Leccese Powers, *Italy in Mind,* 64 (*chimneys poking like snorkels*); McLean, "Adventures in Occupied Areas," 65 (*Peasants keened*); Biddle, 187, 204 ("*Nothing I can do*").
Across the cobblestones: StoC, 210, 218; Lewis, 161; Marshall, 20 (*diapered in newspapers*); *George Biddle's War Drawings,* 2 ("*The stretchers are coming*").
Biddle sketched the tableau: Biddle, *Artist at War,* 166–67, 204, 219; Brown, 337 (*powdered water*); Lloyd M. Wells, *From Anzio to the Alps,* 35 ("*Easy, boys*").
For a few weeks, Biddle: George Biddle, "Report from the Italian Front," *Life,* vol. 16, no. 1 (Jan. 3, 1944), 13+; *George Biddle's War Drawings,* 2 ("*a swivel chair*"); Biddle, *Artist at War,* 176 ("*killing instincts*").
"*Bragg would look good*": JJT, X-6, 17; Biddle, *Artist at War,* 194–95; *George Biddle's War Drawings,* 3; corr, LKT Jr. to DDE, Nov. 24, 1943, LKT Jr., GCM Lib, box 11, folder 11 (*two other battalion commanders*).
"*climbing a ladder*": Richard Doherty, *A Noble Crusade,* 169; "Lessons from the Italian Campaign," March 1944, HQ, NATOUSA, DTL, Ft. B, 113 (*dull the glint*), 48 (*mewing cats*); Arnball, 161 (*Barbasol*); *CM,* 276 (*lack of overcoats*); Bourke-White, 142 (*debated with theological intensity*).
"*I'm goddam sick and tired*": Biddle, *Artist at War,* 197, 207, 212–13.
"*Be alert and live*": ibid., 228–30 ("*lips parted in that rictus*"), 216–20 ("*all the way into Germany*"); Biddle, "Report from the Italian Front," 13+; *CM,* 283 ("*haggard, dirty*").
"*Just so many dead*": Biddle, *Artist at War,* 233 ("*wrestling with the dead*"), 177 ("*I wish the people at home*"); JJT, X-22 ("*my continued existence*").
The panorama from Monte Cesima: Fifth Army at the Winter Line, 8.
"*Every step forward*": *StoC,* 231–32.
"*a steep, solid rock*": Bowlby, 58; *The Grenadier Guards, 1939–1945,* 31 (*only German pickets*).
Three panzer grenadier counterattacks: Michael Howard and John Sparrow, *The Coldstream Guards, 1920–1946,* 167, 170 (*stripping rations*); David Erskin, *The Scots Guards, 1919–1955,* 186; Molony V, 453.

Too great as well for Truscott's 3rd Division: CM, 284.
"*faces of the dead*": Murphy, 50; memo, LKT Jr. to MWC and CG, NATOUSA, Dec. 17, 1943, NARA RG 407, E 427, NATOUSA, 95-USF1-2.0 (*8,600 casualties*); "Statistical Survey for the Italian Campaign, Sept. 17–Nov. 19, 1943," 3rd ID, CARL, N-12185, (*four hundred officers*); Peter R. Mansoor, *The GI Offensive in Europe,* 116 (*70 percent of their strength*); corr, LKT Jr., to W. B. Smith, Dec. 1, 1943, LKT Jr., GCM Lib, box 11, folder 11.
"*You are in my thoughts*": LKT Jr., to Sarah, Nov. 10 and 25, Dec. 5, 1943, LKT Jr., GCM Lib, box 1, folder 6; aide's diaries, Nov. 10, 1943, LKT Jr., GCM Lib, box 18, folder 3 (*thirty-five bottles of cognac*).
"*The land and the weather*": Pyle, 68, 73, 78, 97; Collins, 127–28 ("*No shelves*").
"*protections against crackup*": McLean, "Adventures in Occupied Areas," 68; Spike Milligan, *Mussolini: His Part in My Downfall,* 37, 105, 185 ("*Stretcher bearer!*").
the Ghouls: Munsell, 37; Milligan, 186 ("*loss of dirt*"); Lee G. Miller, *The Story of Ernie Pyle,* 294 ("*pig shed*"); McLean, "Adventures in Occupied Areas," 67 (*Villa des Chilblains*); Farley Mowat, *The Regiment,* 179 ("*Latrines*"); Wells, 61 ("*Big Six*").
"*She's been yelling like that*": Tregaskis, 181; George Kerrigan, "A Night at the Opera," ts, n.d., Co. A, 142nd Inf, Texas MFM ("*You can pray forever*").
"*You can't believe*": *The Princeton Class of 1942 During World War II,* 278.
At 9:30 A.M. on Thursday, November 11: diary, MWC, Nov. 11, 1943, Citadel, box 64; Tregaskis, 193.
"*war could be won in this theater*": diary, MWC, Nov. 4, 1943, Citadel, box 64.
ten thousand casualties since mid-October: Starr, ed., 77; "Second Orientation Conference at Fifth Army Headquarters" ("*equivalent of two divisions*"); diary, MWC, Nov. 23, 1943, Citadel, box 64 (*more than three thousand dead*); *StoC,* 226; Christopher Buckley, *Road to Rome,* 119 ("*Nothing But Jerry*").
The British had disappointed Clark: diary, MWC, Nov. 5, 1943, Citadel, box 64; OH, Robert J. Wood, March 4 and 15, 1948, SM, MHI ("*Why in the hell*"); corr, MWC to John Meade, Sept. 22, 1955, SM, MHI ("*only ones*"); Starr, ed., 53, 60.
Few of the troops butting at the Bernhardt Line: Just as the only U.S. armor division to fight in the desert was the only one to receive no desert training, so the 34th and 36th Divisions had little mountain training. "Lessons Learned in the Battle from the Garigliano to North of Rome," July 15, 1944, Fifth Army, training memo #12, DTL, Ft. B, 8.
"*head-on battering*": Molony V, 389; Will Lang, notebook, n.d., USMA Arch.
Wool clothing scheduled to arrive: OH, Ralph Tate, Fifth Army G-4, Jan. 19, 1949, NARA RG 319, OCMH, CA, box 005; "History of Planning Division, Army Service Forces," n.d., CMH, 3-2.2 AA, vol. 1, 93 ("*Shortages of tires*"); Charles S. D'Orsa, "The Trials and Tribulations of an Army G-4," *MR,* vol. 25, no. 4 (July 1945), 23+; "The ASF in World War II," ts, n.d., CMH, 3-1.1A AA, vol. 4, 27 (*cold-weather gear under development*); memo, N.P. Morrow to L. J. McNair, Jan. 28, 1944, AGF Board, NARA RG 407, E 427, 270/50/29 (*heavy combat boots*); Diana Butler, "The British Soldier in Italy, Sept. 1943–June 1944," ts, n.d., Cabinet Office, Historical Section, UK NA, CAB 101/224, 1, 5 (*daily sugar ration*).
"*Cold ground trauma*": Bowlby, 174; diary, MWC, Nov. 16, 1943, Citadel, box 64 (*Clark was aghast*); JPL, 237–39.
Kesselring had stabilized the front: Böhmler, 89; Bowlby, 73 (*two thousand casualties*); *StoC,* 214 ("*My morale*"); G. R. Stevens, *Fourth Indian Division,* 272 ("*The lice are at me*"); memo, 3rd ID G-2 to VI Corps, Oct. 7, 1943, captured documents, NARA RG 407, 206-2.9 ("*beyond the borders*").
Clark concluded that the time had come: StoC, 251; diary, MWC, Nov. 13, 1943, Citadel, box 64 ("*hold to its present positions*"); Tregaskis, 195 ("*mustn't kid ourselves*"); JPL, 195 ("*in better*

country").

"The Entire World Was Burning"

U.S.S. Iowa *swung on her chains:* "Log of the President's Trip to Africa and the Middle East," Stephen T. Early papers, FDR Lib, box 37; Elliott Roosevelt, *As He Saw It*, 133; Chandler, vol. 3, 1590 (*CARGO*).
Autumn at AFHQ: OH, Lyman Lemnitzer, Jan. 16, 1948, SM, MHI; msg, UK chiefs of staff to Joint Staff Mission, Nov. 4, 1943, NARA RG 165, E 422, OPD executive files, 390/38/2/4-5, box 18 ("*We are very much disturbed*"); Coakley, 231 (*might require postponement*); *Three Years,* 424; Eisenhower Diary, HCB, DDE Lib, A-884 (*eclipsed 100,000*), A-869; Chandler, vol. 3, 1529 ("*little difference what happens to us*"), 1555 ("*a mere slugging match*").
"*The God of Justice*": Chandler, vol. 3, 1553.
Politics and folderol: Ibid., 1504, 1535, 1611; *Three Years,* 423–24 ("*keep the home front frightened*"), 438.
"*He usually blew his top*": Merle Miller, *Ike the Soldier,* 565; Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Letters to Mamie,* 151 ("*acutely uncomfortable*"); Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe,* 209 ("*malicious gossip*").
"*Roosevelt weather!*": Roosevelt, 133.
"*heavy maleness of the war*": Kay Summersby, *Eisenhower Was My Boss,* 86; Doris Kearns Goodwin, *No Ordinary Time,* 473 ("*president's sons*").
near sinking of the Iowa: Charles F. Pick, Jr., "Torpedo on the Starboard Beam," *Proceedings,* Aug. 1970, 90+; war diary, U.S.S. *Iowa,* Nov. 1943, NARA RG 38; war diary, U.S.S. *William D. Porter,* Nov. 1943, NARA RG 38; deck log, U.S.S. *Iowa,* Nov. 1943, NARA RG 24; deck log, U.S.S. *William D. Porter,* Nov. 1943, NARA RG 24.
"*Tell me, Ernest*": Ernest J. King and Walter Muir Whitehill, *Fleet Admiral King,* 500–501; Sherwood, 768; William D. Leahy, *I Was There,* 196; Forrest C. Pogue, *George C. Marshall: Organizer of Victory,* 301.
"*damned Republican*": H. H. Arnold, *Global Mission,* 455. *Porter* would be sunk in a kamikaze attack in June 1945.
"*The war, and the peace*": Roosevelt, 133.
The president had planned: Eisenhower, *Crusade,* 196; Summersby, 93–94.
They stopped for lunch: "Log of the President's Trip to Africa and the Middle East" Piers Brendon, *Ike: His Life and Times,* 124; Robert D. Kaplan, *Mediterranean Winter,* 81; (http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Cato_Minor*.html (*Cato the Younger*); Eisenhower, *Crusade,* 209 ("*you had offered to bet*").
"*Eisenhower showed no signs*": Leahy, 198; Eisenhower Diary, HCB, DDE Lib, A-907; *Three Years,* 446; Roosevelt, 137 (*a more formidable figure*); Eisenhower, *Crusade,* 197 ("*dangerous to monkey*").
"*The eternal pound, pound, pound*": Eisenhower, *Letters to Mamie,* 157–58.
The Adriatic seaport of Bari: L. V. Bertarelli, *Southern Italy,* 385; Karl Baedeker, *Southern Italy and Sicily,* 209 (*St. Nicholas*); Morton, 99–100 (*smacked dead octopuses*), 110–12 (*comely temptress*); Evelyn Waugh, *The End of the Battle,* 219; Karel Margry, "Mustard Disaster at Bari," *AB,* no. 79 (1993), 34+ (*Bambino Sports Stadium*).
"*the novelty had worn off*": I. G. Greenlees, "Memoirs of an Anglo-Italian," ts, n.d., IWM, 89/1/1, 174, 179; Buckley, 216 (*silk stockings*); John Muirhead, *Those Who Fall,* 31–32 (*Palmolive soap*); "Engineers in the Italian Campaign, 1943–1945," 20, 79 (*350 tons each*); George Southern, *Poisonous Inferno,* 26 (*a thousand stevedores*).

They had much to unload: Simpson, "Air Phase," 251; *StoC,* 239; Andrew Brookes, *Air War over Italy, 1943–1945,* 38 (*five thousand tons*); *AAFinWWII,* 564–67; James H. Doolittle, *I Could Never Be So Lucky Again,* 367–68; Mark M. Boatner III, *The Biographical Dictionary of World War II,* 139.
Doolittle's job: Simpson, "Air Phase," 226, 365n; Brookes, 21, 38, 46; Vincent Orange, *Coningham,* 175.
"*I would regard it as a personal affront*": Orange, 175.
As Coningham issued this challenge: "Manifest of *John Harvey*," in "Report on the Circumstances in Which Gas Casualties Were Incurred at Bari," March 14, 1944, NARA RG 492, MTO, chemical warfare section, 350.01, box 1747; minutes, board of officers, June 28, 1944, "adequacy of protective measures at Bari," NARA RG 331, AFHQ micro, 290/24/28/3, box 187, R-87 ("*as safe a place*").
No Axis chemical stockpiles: Brooks E. Kleber and Dale Birdsell, *The Chemical Warfare Service: Chemicals in Combat,* 108, 122; "Planning Instruction No. 9," March 23, 1943, "Operating Instructions Husky," NARA RG 407, E 427, 95-AL1-3.17, box 201; memo, DDE, "Chemical Warfare Policy," Apr. 21, 1943, NARA RG 492, MTO, 321.011, box 1744; memo, eyes only, DDE to GCM, Aug. 21, 1943, NARA RG 319, OCMH, 270/19/6/3, box 244; memo, J. Devers to DDE, n.d., NARA RG 319, OCMH, 2-3.7 CC2 Sicily, box 247; memo, "Former Naval Person to the President," No. 405, Aug. 5, 1943, NARA RG 319, OCMH 2-3.7 CC2 Sicily, box 249; POW reports, NARA RG 492, MTO, chemical warfare section, 350.09 (*interrogations of prisoners*); C. Reining, "IPW Report No. 9," Nov. 8, 1943, Fifth Army HQ, NARA RG 492, MTO, chemical warfare section, 350.09 (*new, egregiously potent gas*); G-2 report No. 35, Oct. 11, 1943, Fifth Army HQ, NARA RG 492, MTO, chemical warfare section, 350.052, "CW Intel Miscl" ("*Adolf will turn to gas*"); "Enemy Capabilities for Chemical Warfare," Military Intelligence Service, WD, NARA RG 334, NWC Lib, box 602 (*Nineteen plants in Germany*).
Twenty-eight different gases: Kleber and Birdsell, 3–5, 122; James W. Hammond, Jr., *Poison Gas: The Myth Versus Reality,* 16–17 (*Hitler himself*), 36; Glenn B. Infield, *Disaster at Bari,* 14–16 ("*swift retaliation*"); "Observations in the European Theater Including Landing Operation at Salerno," Oct. 25, 1943, HQ, USMC, NARA RG 334, NWC Lib, MC OR, box 556 (*depots near Oran*); Owen C. Bolstad, *Dear Folks,* 177 ("*report any poison gas leaks*"). Later investigations found little German appetite for another chemical war against Allied forces.
more than 200,000 gas bombs: "Implementation of Theater Plans for Gas Warfare," Aug. 18, 1043, WD; also, memos and draft memos dated Aug. 30, Sept. 7, 1943, Jan. 12, Feb. 14, March 11, July 15, 1944; memo, "Report by Assistant Chief of U.S. Chemical Warfare Service," Oct. 27, 1943, all in NARA RG 492, MTO, chemical warfare section, 381, box 1706; Margry, "Mustard Disaster at Bari," 34.
How the Germans would be deterred: Kenyon Joyce, "Italy," ts, n.d., Kenyon Joyce papers, MHI, 332; "Report on the Circumstances," etc.; Infield, 14–16 (*forward dumps at Foggia*).
Several thousand Allied servicemen: Margry, "Mustard Disaster at Bari," 34; Infield, 93, 118; Southern, 61 (Sergeant York), 130; H.V. Morton, *A Traveller in Southern Italy,* 99 (*Italian women drew water*); Gerald Reminick, *Nightmare in Bari,* 95 (*cribbage board*).
The first two Luftwaffe raiders: C. L. Grant, "AAF Air Defense Activities in the Mediterranean," n.d., USAF Historical Study, No. 66, 107–8; Edward B. Westermann, *Flak,* 21; "Report on the Operation of Radar in Operation AVALANCHE," Dec. 31, 1943, AFHRA, 626.430-1; http://www.rafmuseum.org.uk/milestones-of-flight/british_military/1943_4.html; Southern, 130–34 (*confused Allied searchlight radar*); Arnold, 475; Infield, 31; Hinsley et al., 184 (*German reconnaissance interest*); Eric Niderost, "Bari: The Second Pearl Harbor," *World War II Magazine,* http://historynet.com/wwii/blluftwaffeadriatic/index1.html; memo, air commander-in-chief to AFHQ, Dec. 23, 1943, "Report on Adequacy of Protective Measures at Bari," NARA RG 331, AFHQ micro,

R-87, box 197 ("*Risks such as were accepted*"); Justin F. Gleichauf, *Unsung Sailors: The Naval Armed Guard in World War II*, 295–96 (*insisted that naval gunners not fire*).
That moment soon arrived: action report, Murdoch Walker, *Lyman Abbott*, to CNO, March 10, 1944, NARA RG 38, OCNO, Naval Transportation Service, Armed Guard files, 370/12/31/4, box 437 (*firing by earshot*); Infield, 93 ("*We're taking a pasting*"), 117, 122.
Bombs severed an oil pipeline: "Report on the Circumstances," etc.; "History of the Naval Armed Guard Afloat," n.d., *U.S. Naval Administration in World War II*, NHC, Command File, World War II, 166–68 (Joseph Wheeler); Infield, 55–56, 66, 141–42; msg, Alfred Bergman to supervisor, U.S. Merchant Marine Cadet Corps, "SS *John Bascom*, loss of," Feb. 23, 1944, SEM, NHC, box 58; Southern, 7; diary, L. Stevenson, IWM, P100.
The Liberty ship Samuel J. Tilden: msg, Robert Donnelly to supervisor, U.S. Merchant Marine Cadet Corps, "SS *Samuel J. Tilden*—loss of," Feb. 2, 1944, SEM, NHC, box 58; "History of the Naval Armed Guard Afloat," 166–68; Southern, 36 ("*harbor was aflame*").
Among those burning vessels was the John Harvey: Southern, 49, 53, 62–66; minutes, investigative board, Bari raid, June 28, 1944, NARA RG 331, AFHQ micro, R-87, box 197 (*Windows shattered seven miles away*); Gregory Blaxland, *Alexander's Generals*, 13; Walter Karig, *Battle Report: The Atlantic War*, 277 ("*the entire world was burning*").
Civilians were crushed: Margry, "Mustard Disaster at Bari," 34; Southern, 124 ("*young girl pinned*"), 44–45 ("*If this be it*"); Infield, 62–63; Will Lang, notebook #9, "Bari raid," USMA Arch.
Seventeen ships had been sunk: "Report on Adequacy of Protective Measures at Bari" Karig, 277.
"*Since when do American ships":* Infield, 86; "Report on the Circumstances," etc. (*H.M.S.* Brindisi); D. M. Saunders, "The Bari Incident," *Proceedings*, vol. 93, no. 9, Sept. 1967, 35+ (Bistra *picked up thirty survivors*).
"*Ambulances screamed into hospital*": Southern, 52, 91; Stewart F. Alexander, "Final Report of Bari Mustard Casualties," June 20, 1944, AFHQ, office of the surgeon, NARA RG 492, 704, box 1757 ("*considerably puzzled*").
"*all in pain*": memo, H. Gluck, "ophthalmic casualties resulting from air raid on Bari," 98th General Hospital, Dec. 14, 1943, NARA RG 331, AFHQ micro, 290/24/27/2–4, R 235-D; corr, Stewart F. Alexander to William D. Fleming, Dec. 26, 1943, NARA RG 112, MTO surgeon general, 390/17/8/2-3, 319.1, box 6 ("*No treatment*"); Reminick, 115 ("*big as balloons*"); "Report on the Circumstances," etc. ("*dermatitis N.Y.D.*").
A Royal Navy surgeon: "Notes on Meeting Held at HQ 2 District, at 1415 Hours," in "Report on the Circumstances," etc.
The first mustard death: appendix G, "Medical Report," in "Report on the Circumstances," etc.; Southern, 89 ("*that bloody bang*"); Alexander, "Final Report" (*Seaman Phillip H. Stone*).
By noon on Friday: memo, "Casualties, Air Raid, Bari," Dec. 8, 1943, NARA RG 331, AFHQ micro, 290/24/27/2-4, R 235-D; Gluck, "ophthalmic casualties" (*lids forcibly pried open*); Saunders, "The Bari Incident," 35 (*hundreds had inhaled*).
More than a thousand Allied servicemen: memo, "Toxic Gas Burns Sustained in the Bari Harbor Catastrophe," Dec. 27, 1943, NATOUSA, office of the surgeon, NARA RG 112, MTO surgeon general, 390/17/8/2-3, 319.1, box 6.
A comparable number of Italian civilians: No precise casualty figures were ever compiled. Margry, "Mustard Disaster at Bari," 34; Infield, 177; Alexander, "Final Report" (*at least 617 confirmed mustard casualties*); Southern, 48, 125–26, 145 ("*head to toe in trench graves*").
"*For purposes of secrecy*": memo, "Casualties, Air Raid, Bari" George S. Bergh and Reuben F. Erickson, eds., "A History of the Twenty-sixth General Hospital," 132 ("*Damage was done*"); Infield, 208 ("*I will not comment*"); corr, J.F.M. Whitely to J. N. Kennedy, Dec. 21, 1943, UK NA, WO

204/307.
"*the wind was offshore*": Eisenhower, *Crusade*, 204; Infield, 207 ("*enemy action*").
Declassified in 1959: Saunders, "The Bari Incident" Orange, 176; Reminick, 169; L.S. Goodman et al., "Nitrogen Mustard Therapy," *Journal of the American Medical Association*, Sept. 21, 1946, 126+; John H. Lienhard, "Engines of Our Ingenuity," no. 1190, "Mustard Gas," University of Houston, http://www.uh.edu/engines/epi1190.htm; Rebecca Holland, "Mustard Gas," Bristol University, htttp://www.chm.bris.ac.uk/motm/mustard/mustard.htm; http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of-_cancer_chemotherapy#The_first_efforts_.281940.E2.80.931950.29.
Thousands of refugees trudged: Bergh and Erickson, eds., "A History of the Twenty-sixth General Hospital," 132; Infield, 235; *AAFinWWII*, 587 (*38,000 tons of cargo*).
"*I see you boys are getting gassed*": Infield, 207; Franz Kurowski, *The History of the Fallschirmpanzerkorps Hermann Göring*, 213–17.

CHAPTER 6: WINTER

The Archangel Michael, Here and Everywhere

Since its founding: Maurizio Zambardi, *San Pietro Infine,* 7, 11, 15, 17; author visits, Sept. 1995, May 2004; OH, Maurizio Zambardi, May 5, 2004, with author.
a German patrol arrived: Maurizio Zambardi, *Memorie di Guerra,* 22–30, 33, 42; Alex Bowlby, *Countdown to Cassino,* 83.
San Pietro's fate was sealed: A. G. Steiger, "The Campaign in Southern Italy," Nov. 1947, Canadian Army headquarters, historical section, No. 18, 41.
While Mark Clark paused: Bowlby, 51–52, 78, 84–85; Franz Kurowski, *Battleground Italy, 1943–1945*, 68–69 (*sodden clumps*).
For the San Pietrans: Zambardi, *Memorie di Guerra,* 34–39, 54–55; OH, Zambardi, May 5, 2004; Bowlby, 83–84.
"*a worse plan*": *CM,* 286.
"*critical terrain in the operation*": diary, MWC, Nov. 6, 11, 1943, Citadel, box 64; *Fifth Army at the Winter Line,* 17 (*RAINCOAT called for an attack*).
Clark's intelligence estimated: German figures indicated that Tenth Army had 142,000 troops in twelve divisions on Dec. 1, 1943. *StoC,* 246–47, 269 (*barely three hundred yards*).
"*Oh, don't worry*": OH, H. Alexander, Jan. 10–15, 1949, SM, CMH, II-3; *StoC,* 265, 270.
More than nine hundred guns: "Lessons from the Italian Campaign," March 1944, HQ, NATOUSA, DTL, Ft. B, 100; Robert H. Adleman and George Walton, *The Devil's Brigade,* 123–24; *Fifth Army at the Winter Line,* 23; Molony V, 517 (*eleven tons of steel*).
"*only an Italian winter*": Vincent M. Lockhart, ts, n.d., 36th ID Assoc, Texas MFM, www.kwanah.com/36Division/pstoc.htm; Geoffrey Perret, *There's a War to Be Won,* 179 (*American lumberjacks*); Charles F. Marshall, *A Ramble Through My War,* 88 ("*potential gangster*"); "Special List of Clothing and Equipment," Sept. 24, 1943, Robert D. Burhans papers, HIA, box 3 (*codeine sulfate*).
Leading the gangsters: OH, Paul D. Adams, 1975, Irving Monclova and Marlin Lang, SOOHP, MHI (*French Quebec*); mss notes, n.d., Robert T. Frederick papers, HIA, box 8 (*Son of a San Francisco doctor*); obit, Robert T. Frederick, *Assembly,* spring 1972, 106 (*sailed to Australia*); Perret, 179 (*bedroom slippers*); corr, Oct. 20, 1943, Robert T. Frederick papers, HIA, box 1 ("*worthy of trust*"); OH, Robert T. Frederick, Jan. 7, 1949, SM, MHI ("*lacked guts*"); OH, D. M. "Pat" O'Neill, n.d., Robert H. Adleman papers, HIA, box 10 ("*casual indifference*").
Their barked fingers blue: Adleman and Walton, 129; Bowlby, 113 (*thrown rocks*); Joseph A. Springer, *Black Devil Brigade,* 86 (*rock splinters*); Robert D. Burhans, *The First Special Service Force,* 107 (*shallow saucer*).
A maddening wait: Burhans, 107, 112; Springer, 100–102 ("*German was with me*"), 95 ("*red mist*"); Adleman and Walton, 138–44.
Panzer grenadiers counterattacked: Fifth Army at the Winter Line, 24; Springer 88–90, 109–10 ("*huge shotgun*"); Adleman and Walton, 138; Robert Wallace, *The Italian Campaign,* 108–9 (*white flag ruse*); affidavits, 2nd Regt investigation, Robert D. Burhans papers, box 19 ("*Foxhole Willie*").
"*We have passed the crest*": msgs, R.T. Frederick, Dec. 5–6, 1943, Robert D. Burhans papers, HIA, box 21.
Early on Tuesday morning: Burhans, 120; *StoC,* 263; Molony V, 517–18 (*hilltop monastery*); Bowlby, 120–21 (*mossy rocks*); Moorehead, *Eclipse,* 64; Burhans, 120; msg, Frederick, Dec. 7, 1943, 1630 hrs, Robert D. Burhans papers, HIA, box 21.

Survivors hobbled: Burhans, 120; surgeon's report, Dec. 2–9, 1943, Robert D. Burhans papers, HIA, box 19.
"*feet of a dead man*": Springer, 118.
With his left flank secured: James J. Altieri, *Darby's Rangers: An Illustrated Portrayal of the Original Rangers,* 65; *StoC,* 274; Frederick L. Young, "The First Casualty on Monte Sammucro," ts, 1991, Texas MFM, 62 ("*Krauts up there*").
He soon learned otherwise: Robert L. Wagner, *The Texas Army,* 74, 77 ("*couple of lizards*"); Homer Bigart, "San Pietro a Village of the Dead," *New York Herald Tribune,* Dec. 20, 1943, in *Reporting World War II,* vol. 1, 738–45; Don Whitehead, "*Beachhead Don,"* 83 ("*Rufus the Loudmouth*"); Young, "The First Casualty on Monte Sammucro," 67, 72, 81 ("*Die kommen*"); Richard Tregaskis, *Invasion Diary,* 235 ("*This is fun*").
Two miles west: Bowlby, 141; Jack Clover, ts, n.d., HQ Co., 2/143rd Inf, 36th ID Assoc, Texas MFM, www.kwanah.com/36Division/pstoc.htm ("*skirmish lines*").
pillboxes emplaced every twenty-five yards: "The Battle for San Pietro," *AB,* no. 18, 1977, 1+; Bowlby, 142–45 (*fingers shot off*).
Roma o morte: author visit, Monte Lungo, May 5, 2004; photos, Italian memorial and museum, Monte Lungo; Wagner, 72 (*Alpine uniforms*); R. K. Doughty, "The Pink House," ts, n.d., 141st Inf, Texas MFM; *StoC,* 276; Wallace, 109; *Calculated,* 240–44 (*vowing to punish*); Bowlby, 146 ("*corn cut by a scythe*"); corr, Don E. Carleton to Hal C. Pattison, Feb. 10, 1965, NARA RG 319, OCMH, 2-3.7 CC3, Salerno to Cassino, box 256 (*fastest runners*); *CM,* 291; Thomas E. Hannum, "The 30 Years of Army Experience," ts, n.d., 91st Armored FA Bn, ASEQ, MHI, 58; corr, Vincenzo Dapino to GK, Dec. 23, 1943, MWC, corr, Citadel, box 3 ("*not in a condition*").
trails marked with white tape: Reporting World War II, vol. 2, 8–9; John F. O'Malley, "The Operations of Company I, 143rd Infantry, South of Rome," 1946, IS; Ernie Pyle, "One Demolished Town After Another," Dec. 28, 1943, *Reporting World War II,* vol. 1, 733–34; Pyle, 100 ("Brrrr"); Betsy Wade, ed., *Forward Positions: The War Correspondence of Homer Bigart,* 34 (*wearing packboards*); Wagner, 77 (*necktie*); Lance Bertelsen, "Texans at San Pietro," *Discovery Magazine,* University of Texas, vol. 14, no. 2 (1997), http://ftp.cc.utexas.edu/opa/pubs/discovery/disc1997v14n2/disc-sanpietro. html ("*husky young men*").
"*feel the presence of the enemy*": Margaret Bourke-White, *Purple Heart Valley,* 42, 147–48 ("*lives the longest*"); Pyle, 166; Paul Dickson, *War Slang,* 113+; T. Moffatt Burriss, *Strike and Hold,* 65 (*bunt a baseball*); *Fifth Army at the Winter Line,* 51–52 (*white phosphorus*); memo, "Phosphorus Burns," consulting surgeon, AAI, Nov. 8, 1944, NARA RG 331, AFHQ micro, R-235-D; memoir, Edward R. Feagins, ts, n.d., 143rd Inf, Texas MFM, 31; Ross S. Carter, *Those Devils in Baggy Pants,* 74, 81 ("*don't like this place*").
Raised in the cotton country: Michael S. Sweeney, "Appointment at Hill 1205: Ernie Pyle and Capt. Henry T. Waskow," 1995, http://www.kwanah.com/txmilmus/36division/archives/waskow/sect1.htm; Michael L. Lanning, "Goodbye to Captain Waskow," *VFW Magazine,* May 1981, 19+; Berneta Peeples, "Requiem," *Belton* (Tex.) *Journal,* Dec. 16, 1993, reprint of 1953 article; Bob Tutt, "Young Officer Was Father Figure," *Houston Chronicle,* Feb. 6, 1994, 28A.
"*I guess I have always appeared*": Henry T. Waskow, "Last Will and Testament," *Temple* (Tex.) *Daily Telegram,* reprinted, Texas MFM.
after almost a week on Sammucro: StoC, 280; Young, "The First Casualty on Monte Sammucro," 102; *Fifth Army at the Winter Line,* 51–52; Peeples, "Requiem" ("*an awful spot*").
Wearing his trademark knit cap: James Tobin, *Ernie Pyle's War,* 133; Lee G. Miller, *An Ernie Pyle Album,* 90 ("*Mr. God*"); memoir, James R. Pritchard, 68th Armored FA bn, ts, n.d, ASEQ, MHI, 10 (*filling ruts with logs*).

"*some inert liquid*": Douglas Allanbrook, *See Naples,* 123; Pyle, 107 ("*They slid him*").
after returning to Fifth Army headquarters: Sweeney, "Appointment at Hill 1205."
Riley Tidwell appeared: ibid.; OH, Riley Tidwell, March 28, 1994, Jane Purtle, Cherokee County Historical Commission, Texas MFM.
"*Finally he put the hand down*": Pyle, 107; Lee G. Miller, *The Story of Ernie Pyle,* 297 ("*I've lost the touch*").
Mark Clark had proposed using tanks: StoC, 277–79.
This time the attack would be filmed: Marco Pellegrinelli, *La Battaglia di S. Pietro di John Huston,* 7–10; Bertelsen, "Texans at San Pietro" ("*triumphant entry*"); Ray Wells, "Battalion Commander," *Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly,* spring 1992 ("*a large mower*").
loaders with asbestos gloves: John E. Krebs, *To Rome and Beyond,* 37; "Lessons from the Italian Campaign," March 10, 1944, NARA RG 407, E 427, 95-USF1-04, box 250, 116; "The Battle for San Pietro," 1.
The 141st Infantry's 2nd Battalion: Fifth Army at the Winter Line, 62; Clifford H. Peek, Jr., *Five Years, Five Countries, Five Campaigns,* 31–32 ("*Dead and wounded*"); Wagner, 84; Bowlby, 166, 171 ("*stupidest assignment*"); AAR, 141st Inf, Jan. 11, 1944, Aaron W. Wyatt, Jr., ASEQ, MHI (*second attack at six* A.M.); corr, Thomas A. Higbie, July 15, 2003, to author ("*put that damn rag away*").
Wisps of steam rose: Richard Manton, n.d., 2/141st Inf, 36th ID Assoc, Texas MFM, www.kwanah.com/36Division/pstoc.htm; *Calculated,* 248; diary, MWC, Dec. 16, 1943, Citadel, box 64, 287 ("*What troops*"); *Texas,* 287 ("*The losses before the town*").
And then it ended: StoC, 285; *Fifth Army at the Winter Line,* 67; "The Battle for San Pietro," 1.
"*mound of desolation*": Tom Roe, *Anzio Beachhead,* 37; Homer Bigart, "San Pietro a Village of the Dead," *New York Herald Tribune,* Dec. 20, 1943, in *Reporting World War II,* vol. 1, 738–45 ("*gray hand hanging limply*").
"*journey in Dante's* Inferno": J. Glenn Gray, *The Warriors,* 59–60; Zambardi, *Memorie di Guerra,* 13 (*140 San Pietrans*). The U.S. Army official history estimated that three hundred San Pietrans died. *StoC,* 285.
A baby's corpse: Daniel J. Petruzzi, *My War Against the Land of My Ancestors,* 147; "The Battle of San Pietro," Combat Report No. 2, 1945, NARA RG 111, film, CR 002 (*folding the hands of dead GIs*); Samuel Hynes, *The Soldiers' Tale,* 3 ("*impenetrable silence*").
"*where their bedding fell*": Wagner, 89–90; *StoC,* 285n.
"*Ah! Sweet Mystery*": Bourke-White, 118, 126–29, 131.
"*We find the country thick*": JPL, 271; *StoC,* 286 ("*a long way off*"); Bruce L. Barger, *The Texas 36th Division,* 144 ("*heartbreaking business*").
For John Huston: Peter Maslowski, *Armed with Cameras,* 75, 88–93; Bertelsen, "Texans at San Pietro" *A Pictorial History of the 36th "Texas" Infantry Division,* no pagination ("*as good a war film*").
"*I was right, wasn't I?*": Lanning, "Goodbye to Captain Waskow," 19; Sweeney, "Appointment at Hill 1205" Miller, *An Ernie Pyle Album,* 92 (*Pyle's column*).

"A Tank Too Big for the Village Square"

Life in exile: Piers Brendon, *Ike: His Life and Times,* 115 (*three mattresses*); memoir, "Italy," ts, n.d., Kenyon Joyce papers, MHI, 347 ("*social purposes*"); corr, GSP to Arvin Harrington Brown, Oct. 22, 1943, GSP, LOC MS Div, box 27; *PP,* 362; diary, Sept. 9, 1943, GSP, LOC MS Div, box 3, folder 3.
On mild afternoons: JPL, 147–48; *The Princeton Class of 1942 During World War II,* 123 (*quail hunting*); *PP,* 367, 391 (*language lessons*); Ladislas Farago, *Patton: Ordeal and Triumph,* 364;

Charles R. Codman, *Drive,* 135 (*Wellington*); George S. Patton, *War As I Knew It,* 74 ("*a disgusting place*"); Robert H. Patton, *The Pattons,* 232 ("*too big for the village square*"), 262; Robert E. Coffin and Joan N. Coffin, "The Robert Edmonstron Coffin–Joan Nelson Coffin Family Book," 96 (La Bohème).

Seventh Army was reduced to a shell: PP, 371; msg, W. B. Smith to GSP, Nov. 25, 1943, Walter Bedell Smith papers, DDE Lib, box 27 (*signal battalion*); diary, Dec. 2, 1943, GSP, LOC MS Div, box 3, folder 4 ("*strip the body*"); JPL, 147–48; Stanley P. Hirshson, *General Patton: A Soldier's Life,* 416 ("*dessicated*"); OH, Garrison H. Davidson, Nov. 1980, John T. Greenwood, CEOH, 231 ("*paper dolls*"); corr, GSP to Beatrice, Nov. 7, 1943, Beatrice to GSP, Nov. 1943, GSP, LOC MS Div, box 17, folder 20.

issued wicker baskets: Ivan Dmitri, *Flight to Everywhere,* 191; "Italy," Kenyon Joyce papers, 355 ("*middle of my forehead*"); James H. Doolittle, *I Could Never Be So Lucky Again,* 363; Clift Andrus, notes on *A Soldier's Story,* ts, n.d., MRC-FDM, 1988.32, box 215.

"*You need have no fear*": Martin Blumenson, *Patton: The Man Behind the Legend, 1885–1945,* 213, 215 ("*pink medecin*"); Kenneth S. Davis, *Soldier of Democracy,* 439 ("*at least sixty reporters*"); *PP,* 359, 361.

He took little interest: Carl J. Friedrich, ed., *American Experiences in Military Government in World War II,* 120; Robert W. Komer, "Civil Affairs and Military Government in the Mediterranean Theater," 1954, CMH, 2-3.7 AX, VI, 3–6 ("*subsistence level*"); *PP,* 371; Dmitri, 192 (*feigned pregnancy*); Malcolm S. McLean, "Adventures in Occupied Areas," ts, 1975, MHI, 56 (*Black marketeering*).

Shortages plagued the island: "History of the Island Base Section, Sicily," n.d., CMH, 8-4 FA, 14, 18 ("*every possible ruse*"); "Monthly Report for August 1943 on the Administration of Sicily," n.d., AMGOT, 15th Army Group, to H. Alexander, Frank J. McSherry papers, MHI ("*Mafia activities*"); "Reports of AMGOT Divisions, up to Nov. 1, 1943," part 3, n.d., Frank J. McSherry papers, MHI (*jailed sixteen hundred*); Norman Lewis, *In Sicily,* 56 (*revenge killings*); diary, Carleton Washburne, Oct. 22, 1943, Mina Curtiss collection, YU (*scissored Fascist cant*); John Hersey in *Reporting World War II,* vol. 1, 621; report, W. A. Eddy to W. L. Langer, Aug. 29, 1943, NARA RG 226, E 99, OSS history office, box 39.

The Quaker muckraker: Dennis Showalter, *Patton and Rommel,* 321; Donald Coe, "Army Releases Patton Story After Denial," Nov. 23, 1943, *Boston Traveler,* 1; Richard Collier, *Fighting Words,* 147; msg, DDE to AGWAR, NARA RG 165, E 422, OPD executive files, Nov. 27, 1943, box 14; Chandler, vol. 3, 1606 (*Smith in Algiers made matters worse*).

Army regulations: reprinted, *Army and Navy Journal,* Dec. 4, 1973, 394, Orlando Ward papers, MHI; *PP,* 377 (*fifteen hundred letters*); Hirshson, 427 (*Gallup poll*).

"*I am not so sure*": corr, GSP to Beatrice, Dec. 4 & 9, 1943, GSP, LOC MS Div, box 17; *Calculated,* 257; Hirshson, 433 ("*family of the deceased*"); diary, Dec. 25, 1943, GSP, LOC MS Div, box 3, folder 4 ("*live to see him die*"); Kay Summersby, *Eisenhower Was My Boss,* 81 ("*always get in trouble*"); corr, L. J. McNair to GSP, Nov. 27, 1943, and GSP to L. J. McNair, Dec. 29, 1943, NARA RG 165, E 418, director of plans and operations, box 1229; corr, GSP to D. S. Miller, Sr., Dec. 27, 1943, GSP, LOC MS Div, box 44, folder 1 ("*Very few of us*").

"*I doubt that I would ever*": msg, DDE to GCM, Sept. 20, 1943, NARA RG 165, E 422, OPD exec files, box 13; *PP,* 393; D. Clayton James and Anne Sharp Wells, *A Time for Giants,* 230 ("*should always serve*").

Deliverance came: "Log of the President's Trip to Africa and the Middle East," Stephen T. Early Papers, FDR Lib, box 37.

"*General Patton, you will have an army*": Mark W. Clark, "General Patton," ts, n.d., subject file,

MWC, Citadel, biography folder, box 70, 3; Michael F. Reilly, *Reilly of the White House*, 188.
burst into sobs: Reilly, 188; William D. Leahy, *I Was There*, 215–16.
"*My destiny is sure*": *PP*, 391.

A Gangster's Battle

Eighth Army since invading Calabria: Molony V, 481, 482n, 483n; *Battle*, 146; Richard Doherty, *A Noble Crusade*, 173; msg, DDE to CCS, Nov. 4, 1943, SM, MHI, box 2; *Fifth Army at the Winter Line*, 7; Field Marshal the Viscount Alexander of Tunis, "The Allied Armies in Italy," n.d., CMH, II-21 ("*sufficiently stretched*").
That strategy still seemed plausible: Molony V, 493, 496; *StoC*, 258–59; B. H. Liddell Hart, *The Other Side of the Hill*, 343 ("*We will now hit them*"); Richard Lamb, *Montgomery in Europe 1943–45*, 56 ("*The road to Rome*").
The Bernhardt Line defenses: Doherty, 171; Thomas R. Brooks, *The War North of Rome, June 1944–May 1945*, 4 ("*ridge and furrow country*"); "Current Reports from Overseas," March 11, 1944, War Office, CARL, N-148495 ("*average range of vision*"); Field Marshal Lord Carver, *The Imperial War Museum Book of the War in Italy, 1943–1945*, 98–99 (*avenue of poplars*).
Drenching winter rains: Doherty, 174; *Battle*, 148; Molony V, 488; Dharm Pal, *The Campaign in Italy, 1943–1945*, 35 ("*malignant river*"); Richard S. Malone, *A Portrait of War 1939–1943*, 201 ("*could hear the wounded men*"); *StoC*, 259 (*losses in the 78th Division*).
"*an unprofitable sector*": OH, Howard Kippenberger, Feb. 4 and 12, 1947, SM, MHI; weekly intelligence summary, no. 67, Dec. 4, 1943, AFHQ, G-2, NARA RG 407, E 427, 95-AL1-2.6 ("*lost the initiative*"); Michael Pearson Cessford, "Hard in the Attack: The Canadian Army in Sicily and Italy, July 1943–June 1944," Sept. 1996, Ph.D. diss, Carleton University, Ottawa, 215 (*strategy of attrition*); Molony V, 495–97.
"*almost lunar in its desolation*": Farley Mowat, *The Regiment*, 137, 146; Doherty, 191 ("*lay rigid*").
"*To preserve sanity*": diary, O. Carpenter, Nov. 11, 1943, IWM, 79/38/1; John Gunther, *D Day*, 134 ("*murder*"); Gilbert Allnutt, "A Fusilier Remembers Italy," ts, 1979, IWM, 80/46/1, 18, 23 ("*Move forward*").
Montgomery kept his swank: Gunther, 129; Malone, 193–95.
"*The army commander wants to see you*": L.S.B. Shapiro, *They Left the Back Door Open*, 44; OH, Francis de Guingand, March 31, 1947, G. A. Harrison, "OCMH WWII Europe Interviews," MHI ("*Sit down*"); Stephen Brooks, ed., *Montgomery and the Eighth Army*, 313 ("*go-as-you-please*"); J. B. Tomlinson, "Under the Banner of the Battleaxe," ts, n.d., IWM, 90/29/1, 108 ("*And after the war*").
"*I* must *have fine weather*": Nigel Hamilton, *Master of the Battlefield*, 449; Dick Malone, *Missing from the Record*, 53 ("*You are useless*"); Andrew Brookes, *Air War over Italy, 1943–1945*, 38 ("'*Stop frigging'*"); Molony V, 511 ("*the unusual gift*").
"*a very good First World War general*": Richard H. Kohn, ed., "The Scholarship on World War II," *Journal of Military History*, vol. 55, no. 3 (July 1991), 365+.
"*untidy and ad hoc*": B. L. Montgomery, "Reflections on the Campaign in Italy, 1943," Nov. 24, 1943, ts, IWM, micro, reel 4, BLM 48, 1–4.
Canada's hour had finally come round: Mark Zuehlke, *Ortona*, 3; Martin Gilbert, *The Second World War*, 353–54; *From Pachino to Ortona*, CARL, N-14352; Arthur Bryant, *The Turn of the Tide*, 596 (*feared that the war would end*).
a decrepit sandstone castle: Combat Report No. 1, "Liberation of Rome," 1944, Signal Corps film, NARA RG 111, CR001; Zuehlke, *Ortona*, 31–32, 37–39; Karl Baedeker, *Southern Italy and Sicily*, 190 (*local landmarks*); Daniel G. Dancocks, *The D-Day Dodgers: The Canadians in Italy, 1943–1945*,

173–76 (*ten thousand souls*); Steiger, "The Campaign in Southern Italy," 30 (*holes in the harbor mole*); "Canadian Street Fighting in Ortona," June 15, 1944, Military Reports from the United Nations, No. 19, NARA RG 334, NWC Lib, box 184 (*easily severed*).
The Canadian division commander: http://www.junobeach.org/e/3/can-pep-can-vokesep.htm; Zuehlke, *Ortona,* 14 ("*pompous bully*"), 18; Dancocks, 69 ("*roughneck*"), 191 (*the Butcher*); Mark Zuehlke, *The Liri Valley,* 166 ("*a man's fate is written*"); Molony V, 504.
A lunge on the left flank: Dancocks, 156, 159 ("*raving madhouse*"); Mowat, 151 ("*stupid bastard*"); Zuehlke, *Ortona,* 124 ("*translucent red*"), 156, 160; *From Pachino to Ortona*, 133–34 ("*confusing to the enemy*"); war diary, Loyal Edmonton Regiment, Dec. 9, 1943, http://www.lermuseum.org/ler/cof/sacrifice/wwii/textwindow/wardiary1.html; "Victoria Cross Is Awarded Major Paul Triquet, Montreal, for Heroic Action in Italy," March 6, 1944, Hamilton (Canada) *Spectator*, www.warmuseum.ca.
Beyond the Moro lay a ravine: Cessford, "Hard in the Attack," 264; Zuehlke, *Ortona,* 48; Molony V, 504 ("*Of eight assaults*"); Dancocks, 171 ("*You tell Monty*").
"*filthy limbo*": Mowat, 161–65.
replaced by the 1st Parachute Division: From Pachino to Ortona, 139; Alexander, "The Allied Armies in Italy," II-29 ("*best German troops*"); Zuehlke, *Ortona,* 161, 201.
Heavy losses and exhaustion: Christopher Buckley, *Road to Rome,* 256; Cessford, "Hard in the Attack," 233 ("*You feel nothing*"); G.W.L. Nicholson, *The Canadians in Italy, 1943–1945*, vol. 2, 317 (*Errant maps*); Dancocks, 171 ("*He frittered away everything*"), 173; Zuehlke, *Ortona,* 212–14, 219 ("*porridge pot*"); Molony V, 503–5.
MORNING GLORY: Cessford, "Hard in the Attack," 233, 241; Dancocks, 240; Buckley, 256.
"*I wish I could see you*": Cessford, "Hard in the Attack," 233.
first large, pitched urban battle: Molony V, 507.
Ortona had been spared razing: ibid., 509; "Canadian Street Fighting in Ortona" Nicholson, 323; Zuehlke, *Ortona,* 247; Dancocks, 186 ("*butchered deer*"); Steiger, "The Campaign in Southern Italy," 63 ("*Everybody was very sad*").
Side streets proved too narrow: Battle, 151–53; "Canadian Street Fighting in Ortona" (*shot the tanks in the belly*); Molony V, 507; Doherty, 184–85; *The Tiger Triumphs,* 28–29 ("*gangster's battle*"); Zuehlke, *Ortona,* 278, 289; Nicholson, 328 ("*miniature Stalingrad*"); Dancocks, 181 ("*three more shooting days*").
Rather than clear buildings conventionally: "Street Fighting," intelligence report, 5778-44, May 29, 1944, British GHQ, Cairo, CMH, Geog Files, Italy, 370.2, 6–7; "Beehives," appendix B, "Ortona," HQ, 1st Canadian Div, Feb. 16, 1944, C. W. Allfrey papers, LHC, 4/8; Mowat, 163.
"*The stench here*": Dancocks, 1, 179 ("*We could beat you*"); Buckley, 260.
Two dozen Edmontons were buried: war diary, Loyal Edmonton Regiment, Dec. 27, 1943, http://www.lermuseum.org/ler/cof/sacrifice/wwii/textwindow/wardiary1.html.
"*We do not want to defend*": Steiger, "The Campaign in Southern Italy," 65.
"*There is no town left*": Zuehlke, *Ortona,* 348.
"*This is Ortona*": Dancocks, 186, 189; *From Pachino to Ortona* ("*a fairy tale*").
Alexander's plan had miscarried: Molony V, 509; Dancocks, 186 ("*The familiar world*").

Too Many Gone West

Removing his hat: Lord Moran, *Churchill: Taken from the Diaries of Lord Moran,* 159; W. H. Thompson, *I Was Churchill's Shadow,* 124, 126 (*for his sixty-ninth birthday*).
"*I want to sleep*": Roy Jenkins, *Churchill,* 719; WSC, *Closing the Ring,* 420 (*flopped sopping*);

Richard Overy, *Why the Allies Won,* 268 ("*specks of dust*").
At length the mystery: Jerrard Tickell, *Ascalon,* 14–15, 62–64; *Three Years,* 457 ("*had been pacing*"); Churchill, 457 ("*end of my tether*").
Ringed by sentries: Gerald Pawle, *The War and Colonel Warden,* 277–80; Harold Macmillan, *War Diaries,* 326–27; Moran, 159; Roger Parkinson, *A Day's March Nearer Home,* 234 ("*much disturbed*"); Martin Gilbert, *Winston S. Churchill,* vol. 7, 604 ("*It's pretty bad*"); Danchev, 497 ("*Hullo, hullo*").
"*My master is unwell*": Gilbert, 606, 608 ("*bumping all over*"); Danchev, 497 (*pathologist arrived*); Moran, 161.
"*He's very glad I've come*": Moran, 161–62; Gilbert, 606 ("*war is won*"); Thompson, 129–30 ("*In what better place*"); Macmillan, 326–27 ("*very breathless*").
The preceding fortnight: Richard M. Leighton, "OVERLORD Versus the Mediterranean at the Cairo-Tehran Conferences (1943)," Kent Roberts Greenfield, ed., *Command Decisions,* 189–91; James Leasor, *The Clock with Four Hands,* 263 (*22,000 pounds of meat*); Macmillan, 320 (*curried prawns*); Molony V, 584 (*80 bottles*).
That Britain's senior role: Keith Eubank, *Summit at Teheran,* 486–88.
"*Brooke got nasty*": Forrest C. Pogue, *George C. Marshall: Organizer of Victory,* 305, 307; Maurice Matloff, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1943–1944,* 352, 353n; Greenfield, ed., 183–85.
"*peripheral and indecisive*": Greenfield, ed., 182, 188–89; Leahy, 201; Ray S. Cline, *Washington Command Post,* 227 ("*fish or cut bait*"); Arthur Bryant, *Triumph in the West,* 35 ("*swing the strategy*"); Mark A. Stoler, *George C. Marshall: Soldier-Statesman of the American Century,* 103 (*prayed every night*); Pogue, 294 ("*stick a knife*"); Douglas Porch, *The Path to Victory,* 474; S. W. Roskill, *The White Ensign,* 330; S. W. Roskill, *The War at Sea, 1939–1945,* 203–5; Michael Howard, *The Mediterranean Strategy in the Second World War,* 46, 70–71; John Kennedy, *The Business of War,* 301–5.
Stalin gruffly threw his support: Kent Roberts Greenfield, *American Strategy in World War II: A Reconsideration,* 34; David M. Kennedy, *Freedom from Fear,* 575 (*four words of English*); Greenfield, ed., 197; Robert Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins,* 799 ("*getatable*"); Maurice Matloff, "Mr. Roosevelt's Three Wars: FDR as War Leader," 1964, Harmon Memorial Lectures in Military History, no. 6, USAF Academy, 14 ("*perfectly friendly*").
"*first claim on the resources*": Greenfield, 40; Richard M. Leighton, "Overlord Revisited," *American Historical Review,* July 1963, 919+; Stoler, 107; Sherwood, 803 ("*could not sleep*"); Carlo D'Este, *Eisenhower: A Soldier's Life,* 467 ("*best politician*").
As for Italy: Greenfield, ed., 191.
"*Large families*": Doris Kearns Goodwin, *No Ordinary Time,* 475; OH, Ian Jacob, Verne Newton collection, "transcripts," FDR Lib ("*at arm's length*").
The prime minister did not die: Danchev, 502; Jenkins, 727 (*whisky with soda*); Moran, 164 (*white blood cell count*); Vincent Orange, *Tedder,* 244 ("*fire had gone out*"); Pawle, 275 (*Royal Navy cook*); Churchill, 425 ("*What calm lives*").
"*The Bible says*": Gilbert, 609; Leasor, 271; WSC, *Closing the Ring,* 429 ("*becoming scandalous*"); Pawle, 277–80 ("*don't seem to know much*").
"*Looking in his strange costume*": Macmillan, 338; Pawle, 277–80; Gilbert, 620 ("*must be carried out*"); Warren F. Kimball, ed., *Churchill & Roosevelt: The Complete Correspondence,* vol. 2, 633 ("*should decide the battle*").
Christmas had *come:* Pyle, 86; Tom Roe, *Anzio Beachhead,* 23; Glendower O. Haedge, "Memoirs of World War II," ts, n.d., Texas MFM; John F. Hummer, *An Infantryman's Journal,* 42; John Guest, *Broken Images,* 158.

Had he been home: JJT, XI-10; "History of the Peninsular Base Section," 1944, 5 vols., CMH, 8-4 HA 1 ("*morale crates*").
"*Merry Typhus!*": Spike Milligan, *Mussolini: His Part in My Downfall,* 212; Alton D. Brashear, *From Lee to Bari,* 168, 171 (*$10 per stripe*); Buckley, 252–53.
Mark Clark on Christmas eve: diary, MWC, Dec. 24, 1943, Citadel, box 64; MWC to Ann Clark, Dec. 23, 1943, Citadel, personal corr.
In a Bari hospital: George S. Bergh and Reuben F. Erickson, eds., "A History of the Twenty-sixth General Hospital," 133; S. W. Thomson, *Canadian Military History,* fall 1993, 24+; John Ellis, *On the Front Lines,* 279; Zuehlke, *Ortona,* 320–22; Strome Galloway, *A Regiment at War,* 118 (*strumming a mandolin*); Dancocks, 191 (*Vokes dined alone*).
"*The stars have crept low*": Hans Juergensen, *Beachheads and Mountains,* 2; G.R. Stevens, *Fourth Indian Division,* 270; Edmund F. Ball, *Staff Officer with the Fifth Army,* 263; Ralph G. Martin, *The G.I. War,* 115 ("*no more wars*").
"*I had not seen men so exhausted*": Howard Kippenberger, *Infantry Brigadier,* 344–47; Donna Martha Budani, "Women, War, and Text: Orsognese Women's Experience in a Sector of the Italian Front in World War II," 1997, Ph.D. diss, American University, 119 ("*poor sad Christmas*"); order of the day, Dec. 25, 1943, 71st Panzer Grenadier Regt, "Intelligence Notes, No. 47," AFHQ, Feb. 22, 1944, NARA RG 407, E 47, 95-AL1-2.18.
"*Usual targets of opportunity*": James R. Pritchard, ts, n.d., 68th Armored FA Bn, ASEQ, MHI, 12; censorship morale reports, Nov. 1943–June 1944, NARA RG 492, MTO adjutant general, 311.7 (*operated by flashlight*); Julian "Duney" Philips, "War Is Not All Bad," ts, n.d., 143rd Inf, Texas MFM, 2 ("*Now is the time*"); Leslie W. Bailey, *Through Hell and High Water,* 157.
The bottom of the year: "1944," *Life,* Jan. 3, 1944, 20; Greenfield, ed., 183; Kennedy, *Freedom from Fear,* 610; http://www.history.navy.mil/photos/sh-fornv/germany/gersh-s/scharn2.htm (Scharnhorst); John Ellis, *Brute Force,* table 35 (*175 German divisions*).
"*The campaign is heartbreakingly slow*": JPL, 278; "Fifth Army Medical History," n.d., NARA RG 112, MTO surgeon general, 319.1, box 6, 183 (*strength of 200,000*); *Fifth Army at the Winter Line,* 87–88; Brashear, 168; "Summary of Activities," June 1, 1944, NA TOUSA, CMH, 20 (*Battle casualties had whittled away*); MEB, "Shifting of German Units Before and During Nettuno Landing," Jan. 1956, NARA RG 319, E 145, OCMH, R-75, 36 (*six miles per month*); Coakley, 181 ("*no shipping available*"); Richard M. Leighton, "Overlord Revisited," *American Historical Review,* July 1963, 919+; Porch, 460 (*British ports could not handle*); *StoC,* ix ("*static warfare*").
"*One rather wondered*": Francis De Guingand, *Operation Victory,* 333; Farley Mowat, *And No Birds Sang,* 333.
"*a plan that was distinctly conservative*": Moorehead, *Eclipse,* 60; Nigel Nicolson, *Alex: The Life of Field Marshal Earl Alexander of Tunis,* 238 ("*weeks and months of forethought*"), 239 ("*average brain*"); Mark M. Boatner III, *The Biographical Dictionary of World War II,* 379; "The German Operation at Anzio," Apr. 1946, German Military Document Section, Military Intelligence Div., WD, MHI, JPL, box 9 (*allowed German forces to shift*); Ronald Lewin, *Ultra Goes to War,* 343 (*better informed about his adversaries*); F. H. Hinsley et al., *British Intelligence in the Second World War,* 182, 507 ("*the Allies often knew as much*"); J. Hamilton, "Italy, Sept.–Dec. 1943," n.d., Cabinet Historical Section, UK NA, CAB 101/124, 42 ("*old methodical way*").
Eisenhower privately wished: Eisenhower Diary, HCB, DDE Lib, A-756, A-773-74, A-779; diary, MWC, Dec. 10, 1943, Citadel, box 64 (*groused about Lucas*); memo, Oct. 11, 1943, JPL, MHI, box 12 (*groused about Middleton*); Robert R. Palmer et al., *The Procurement and Training of Ground Combat Troops,* 467 ("*The battalion commander problem*").
Twenty-three German divisions: Battle, 166–67; MEB, "Shifting of German Units," R-75 (*nearly*

300,000); Louis P. Lochner, ed., *The Goebbels Diaries, 1942–1943,* 435; Steiger, "The Campaign in Southern Italy," 59–60 ("*For two months now*").
"*What will 1944 do*": JPL, 283; memoir, P. Royle, ts, 1972, IWM, 99/72/1 ("*You got the feeling*").
"*A terrible year has ended*": David Hapgood and David Richardson, *Monte Cassino,* 95.
A ferocious storm with gale winds: N. P. Morrow, "Field Artillery in Italy," Feb. 2, 1944, HQ, NARA RG 334, NWC Lib, ANSCOL, AGF OR M83, box 148; Wagner, 90; Bowlby, 13 ("*pinched the enemy's song*"); Harriet Stradling, ed., *Johnny,* 251.
Truscott's 3rd Division: aide's diaries, Dec. 31, 1943, LKT Jr., GCM Lib, box 18, folder 3; LKT Jr. to Sarah, Jan. 2 and 5, 1944, LKT Jr., GCM Lib, GCM Lib, box 1, folder 6.
"*I do not know if you will miss me*": De Guingand, 337, appendix A; Moorehead, *Montgomery,* 175
"*So there we are*": B. L. Montgomery, "Reflections on the Campaign in Italy, 1943," ts, addendum, Dec. 26, 1943, IWM, BLM 48, micro, reel 4; T.E.B. Howarth, ed., *Monty at Close Quarters,* 44n ("*He was a real human*").
Eisenhower also left on the thirty-first: Chandler, vol. 5, 14; Michael J. McKeough and Richard Lockridge, *Sgt. Mickey and General Ike,* 98; Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe,* 217 ("*Allow someone else to run the war*"); OH, Henry Maitland Wilson, Apr. 3, 1947, Howard M. Smyth, SM, MHI (*hoped for three days' overlap*). Eisenhower asserted that he "exhaustively reviewed" the military situation with Wilson during Christmas dinner at La Marsa. Eisenhower, *Crusade,* 214.
"*rather going to seed*": Macmillan, 321; JPL, 273.
He left believing he had accomplished: Kenneth Strong, *Intelligence at the Top,* 169; DDE, "Allied Commander-in-Chief's Report, Italian Campaign," n.d., 155 ("*Elimination of Italy*"); Roskill, *The War at Sea,* 210 (*more than a thousand ships*); Anthony Eden, *The Reckoning,* 479 (*Even Stalin had conceded*).
From Algiers, he would take: Alexander S. Cochran, "Constructing a Military Coalition from Materials at Hand," Apr. 16, 1999, paper, SMH conference.
"*I am very disappointed*": Chandler, vol. 3, 1631, 1646n (*uneasy at Churchill's advocacy*); "Press Conference of General Eisenhower, 1430 hours, 23 Dec 1943, AFHQ Advance, Italy," MWC, Citadel, box 3 ("*Jerry is going to write off*").
The White House sent a cooler: Three Years, 467; Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Letters to Mamie,* 161; Davis, 456 ("*Nothing seems real*"); John S. D. Eisenhower, *General Ike,* 100 ("*heavier*); John S. D. Eisenhower, *Strictly Personal,* 51 ("*Hell, I'm going back*"); Stephen E. Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Soldier, General of the Army, President-Elect, 1890–1952,* vol. 1, 278, 280 (*absentmindedly called his wife* "*Kay*").
"*Until we meet again*": Chandler, vol. 3, 1650.

CHAPTER 7: A RIVER AND A ROCK

Colonel Warden Makes a Plan

Marrakesh in midwinter: Seth Sherwood, "In an Ancient Desert, a Modern Oasis Beckons," *NYT,* Jan. 23, 2005; John Colville, *The Fringes of Power,* 463; http://whc.unesco.org/pg.cfm?cid=31&id_site=331; http://www.mincom.gov.ma/english/reg_cit/cities/marrakes/marrakes.html; James Parton, "*Air Force Spoken Here,*" 229 ("*sat on his leather hassock*"); "Marrakech Air Base," n.d., in "Observations in A.B.S," NARA RG 492, MTO, pm gen'l. corr, 333 ("*statement of intercourse*").
The Red City: Roy Jenkins, *Churchill,* 727; Lord Moran, *Churchill: Taken from the Diaries of Lord Moran,* 167; Martin Gilbert, *Winston S. Churchill,* vol. 7, 626; Gerald Pawle, *The War and Colonel Warden,* 280 ("*When the Midnight Choo-Choo*"); Duff Cooper, *Old Men Forget,* 318 ("*Colonel*

Warden").
In Marrakesh he occupied La Saadia: Lisa Lovitt-Smith, *Moroccan Interiors,* 78 (*wall mosaics*); Colville, 457–59 ("*wildly rash*"); Cooper, 318; Gilbert, 634 (Pirates of Penzance); W. H. Thompson, *I Was Churchill's Shadow,* 133 ("*certainly heavy going*").
The borrowed Cadillac roared: Pawle, 288; Cooper, 318; Thompson, 133 (*V-for-victory*); Moran, 167–70.
"*Can't I ever get any commanders*": OH, C.A.P. Portal, Feb. 7, 1949, FCP, MHI; OH, C. E. Lambe, Feb. 26, 1947, FCP, MHI ("*negative as usual*"); Gilbert, 650; Cooper, 319.
"*Undue discretion*": Harold Macmillan, *The Blast of War, 1939–1945*, 370; Harold Macmillan, *War Diaries*, 347; Danchev, 510; Moran, 170.
Churchill's "*bright idea*": diary, Oct. 21, 1943, MWC, Citadel, box 64; OH, Lyman Lemnitzer, Jan. 16, 1948, SM, MHI; Martin Blumenson, "General Lucas at Anzio (1944)," Kent Roberts Greenfield, ed., *Command Decisions,* 245–50; diary, Dec. 18, 1943, MWC, Citadel, box 64; *CM*, 292 ("*destroy the best damned division*"); *SSA,* 324; *GS* V, 209.
"*It would be folly*": "Record of conference held by the prime minister at Tunis," Dec. 25, 1943, H. Alexander papers, UK NA, WO 214/13; H. M. Wilson, "Report by the Supreme Allied Commander Mediterranean," n.d., NARA RG 319, OCMH, historical background files, American Forces in Action, Anzio, box 119, 7–8 ("*regard our campaign*"); *SSA,* 325 ("*whoever holds Rome*"); *Calculated,* 260 ("*peter out*"); *StoC,* 352 ("*the decisive way*").
"*a good idea to go around*": *StoC,* 352; Robert H. Adleman and George Walton, *Rome Fell Today,* 116 ("*hasn't been predictable*"); Greenfield, ed., 250; "Record of conference held by the prime minister at Tunis" ("*signified their agreement*"); *Three Years,* 465 ("*taken tactical command*").
"*I have arrived in Italy*": Christopher Lee Lewis, "The Byzantine Invasion of North Africa, Sicily, and Italy," *Proceedings,* Nov. 1943, 1435+; John Ellis, *Brute Force,* 321 (*45,000 landing vessels*); Alan Gropman, ed., *The Big "L,"* 349 (*every major Allied campaign*).
"*Shipping [is] at the root*": Richard M. Leighton and Robert W. Coahley, *Global Logistics and Strategy, 1940–1943,* 697; H. M. Wilson, "Report by the Supreme Allied Commander Mediterranean," 1946, part 1, 7 (*sustain two divisions)*; *GS* V, 210; James Leasor, *The Clock with Four Hands,* 273 ("*set after set*"); msg, WSC to FDR, Dec. 28, 1943, Warren F. Kimball, ed., *Churchill & Roosevelt: The Complete Correspondence,* vol. 2, 638.
"*Clark and I are confident*": msg, H. Alexander to Col. Warden, Jan. 4, 1944, NARA RG 331, AFHQ micro, R-369-F, box 216; OH, MWC, 1972, Forrest S. Rittgers, Jr., SOOHP, MHI, 86-88 (*three-division landing*); diary, MWC, Jan. 2 and 4, 1944, Citadel, box 65.
Regardless of Fifth Army's request: Hill/O'Neill, 1; diary, MWC, Dec. 27, 1943, Citadel, box 64; msg, WSC to H. Alexander, Dec. 26, 1943, UK NA, WO 214/13; msg, H. Alexander to WSC and A. Brooke, Dec. 1943, UK NA, WO 214/13 ("*the best American corps commander*"). Some accounts assert that Clark was not invited to the conference. Lloyd Clark, *Anzio,* 73.
The conference convened at La Saadia: Pawle, 285; Hill/O'Neill, 1; *StoC,* 303, 353; *Anzio Beachhead,* 5; *GS* V, 218.
"*the seamy side of the question*": Kenneth Strong, *Intelligence at the Top,* 171; OH, Kenneth W. D. Strong, Oct. 30, 1947, SM, MHI; Michael Carver, *Harding of Peterton, Field-Marshal,* 123 ("*Of course there is risk*"); Hill/O'Neill, 2.
The conclave broke for supper: Hill/O'Neill, 3; Macmillan, *War Diaries* 295 ("*sum total of their fears*"); H. Alexander, "The Allied Armies in Italy," n.d., CMH, II-25.
Could the Germans quickly reinforce: Nigel Nicolson, *Alex: The Life of Field Marshal Earl Alexander of Tunis,* 228; memo, I. Jacob to Hollis, record of Christmas conference, n.d., NARA RG 331, AFHQ micro, R-369-F, box 216; Greenfield, ed., 250 ("*unavoidable risk*"); *Calculated,* 284 ("*seal off the*

beachhead").
"*he is getting old*": Eisenhower Diary, Jan. 20, 1944, HCB, DDE Lib, A-995; "Hill/O'Neill," 3 ("*Not until Saturday morning*"); Nicolson, 228–30 ("*Keep a reserve*").
Bleary-eyed, they reassembled: Hill/O'Neill, 3; JPL, Jan. 10, 1943, 295 ("*astonish the world*"); Pawle, 285 ("*I do hope, General*"); Macmillan, *The War Diaries*, 304 ("*more and more dogmatic*").
"*It was a bluff*": OH, H. Alexander, Jan. 10–15, 1949, SM, CMH, Geog Files, II-5; F.H. Hinsley et al., *British Intelligence in the Second World War,* 185 (*No flinty-eyed assessment*).
Moreover, the SHINGLE force was sized: Molony V, 772; Frank James Price, *Troy H. Middleton: A Biography,* 169; corr, Troy H. Middleton to Hal C. Pattison, Sept. 8, 1964, NARA RG 319, OCMH, 2-3.7 CC3, Salerno to Cassino, box 255; Evelyn M. Cherpak, ed., *The Memoirs of Admiral H. Kent Hewitt,* 195.
"*Where can the enemy land?*": memo, S. Westphal, Dec. 8, 1943, VI Corps, G-2 periodic report No. 140, Feb. 1944, JPL, MHI, box 1; David Fraser, *Alanbrooke,* 398 (*Churchill continued to underestimate*).
"*imposed his will on the generals*": *SSA,* 328; W.G.F. Jackson, *Alexander of Tunis as Military Commander,* 258 ("*out of loyalty*").
"*Operation SHINGLE is on!*": diary, MWC, Jan. 8, 1943, Citadel, box 65.
"*A unanimous agreement*": Kimball, ed., vol. 2, 657; Colville, 461 ("*garden path*").

"Nothing Was Right Except the Courage"

On the chilly Sabbath morning: Chester G. Starr, ed., *From Salerno to the Alps,* 77 (*sixteen thousand casualties*); *StoC,* 315; author visit, May 4, 2004; Margaret Bourke-White, *Purple Heart Valley,* 154, 176 ("*fell in gusts*").
Ahead lay a pastoral river plain: "Engineer History, Fifth Army, Mediterranean Theater," n.d., MHI, 67, 70 (*seventy thousand aerial photos*); Molony V, 598; Martin Blumenson, *Bloody River,* 61.
German "flooding program": "Special Investigation and Interrogation Report: Operation Lightening [*sic*]," March 15, 1947, Military Intelligence Service, Austria, CMH, Geog Files, 370.2, 39.
The highland glens above Cassino: CtoA, 16; Frank Gervasi, "Battle at Cassino," *Collier's,* March 18, 1944, 20+; *CtoA,* 17; Alex Bowlby, *Countdown to Cassino,* 82; Albert Kesselring, "The Construction of Positions in the Italian Theater," Aug. 1948, FMS, #C-031, MHI, 4; Hans Bessell, "Construction of Strategic Field Fortifications in Italy," March 1947, FMS, #D-013, MHI, 3, 7–10 (*more concrete, mines, and barbed wire*).
Clark now counted seven divisions: StoA, 83–84 ("*momentum of our advance*").
In Operations Instructions No. 34: ibid.; corr, MWC to John Meade, Sept. 22, 1955, SM, MHI, box 2; *StoC,* 314.
Clark later denied paternity: P. A. Crowl, "Command Decision: The Rapido River Crossing," lecture, Sept. 30, 1955, U.S. Army War College, SM, MHI, 1–2; *StoC,* 322; memo, "36th Division at the Rapido River, January 1944," n.d., Robert P. Patterson, WD, to U.S. Senate Committee on Military Affairs, CMH, 370.2 (*most direct route*).
"*As long as this condition existed*": corr, Don E. Carleton to Hal C. Pattison, Feb. 10, 1965, NARA RG 319, OCMH 2-3.7 CC3, Salerno to Cassino, box 256.
The prospect of being cut to pieces: StoC, 326; *Texas,* 295–96, 302 ("*I do not see how*"); diary, Jan. 16, 1944, FLW, HIA, box 1 ("*a tough job*").
"*amiable mastiff*": Des Hickey and Gus Smith, *Operation Avalanche,* 54; "Statement by Major General Fred L. Walker, G.S.C.," Dec. 6, 1945, FLW, HIA, box 3 (*mustard burns*); OH, Martin Blumenson, Apr. 13, 2004, author, Washington, D.C. (*excellent dancer*); notebook, n.d., FLW, HIA,

box 6 (*jotted down unfamiliar words*); Lee Carraway Smith, *A River Swift and Deadly,* 4 ("*very good friends*"); OH, MWC, Rittgers (*give Walker command of the 36th*).
Perhaps envious of his former protégé: Texas, 207, 288–90 ("*Our wasteful policy*"); OH, MWC, Rittgers, 69–70 [redacted pages opened at author's request] (*Walker resented not receiving command*); Blumenson, *Bloody River,* 22 (*soldiers grumbled*).
At fifty-six: corr, FLW to Gov. Coke R. Stevenson, July 24, 1944, FLW, HIA, box 3; "Statement by Major General Fred L. Walker, G.S.C.," Dec. 6, 1945, FLW, HIA, box 3 (*Since the summer of 1942*); diary, Jan. 20, 1944, FLW, HIA, box 1 (*bad cold*).
"*I have mentioned the difficulties involved*": diary, Jan. 13, 16, 17, 1944, FLW, HIA, box 1; testimony, FLW, "The Rapido River Crossing," Committee on Military Affairs, U.S. House of Representatives, Feb. 20, 1946, CMH, 370.2, 26–30 (*proposed attacking upriver*); Smith, 22 ("*sounding so pessimistic*"); *Texas,* 296 ("*end in failure*"), 302 ("*We have to cross*").
"*sickly, whitish and weak*": Harold L. Bond, *Return to Cassino,* 27.
Walker reviewed his attack plan: StoC, 331; AAR, "Report of Operations, January 1944," 36th ID, MHI, 05-36 ("*fighting patrols*"); corr, FLW to Eric Sevareid, Feb. 26, 1946, FLW, HIA, box 3.
Those were formidable: memo, William A. Walker, "Report of Interview with Maj. Gen. Fred L. Walker," Feb. 4, 1946, MWC, Citadel, box 39, folder 9; testimony, R. J. Butchers, II Corps G-3, Jan. 24, 1944, IG investigation, CMH, 370.2 ("*very well organized*"); AAR, 141st Inf, Feb. 9, 1944, Aaron W. Wyatt, Jr., ASEQ, MHI (*Of seven patrol boats*); AAR, Thaddeu J. Session, "111th Engineer Combat Battalion, Operations in Italy, Jan. 1944," MHI (*four miles per hour*); "Synopsis of 36th Inf. Div. Activity," Jan. 24, 1944, II Corps, IG investigation, CMH, 370.2; Donato D'Epiro, *S. Angelo in Theodice,* 155 (*demolitionists had blown the bridge*); "Report on Reconnaissance of Rapido River, 16 Dec. 1943," Dec. 20, 1943, in "History of 81st Armored Reconnaissance Battalion," 1st AD, John F. Davis papers, USMA Arch, box 2 (*river had been dredged*); Smith, 24 ("*shoe-mouth deep*"), 25 ("*traumatic amputations*"); Clifford W. Dorman, "Too Soon for Heroes," ts, n.d., 19th Combat Engineers, author's possession, 73 (*hands and knees*); Alfred M. Beck et al., *The Corps of Engineers: The War Against Germany,* 191.
Keyes listened intently: OH, Robert W. Porter, Jr., June 30, 1950, NARA RG 319, OCMH, CA, box 005, 1 ("*unsound*"); OH, Robert W. Porter, Jr., 1981, John N. Sloan, SOOHP, MHI, 310 ("*Big Cassino*"), 324–31 ("*fishbowl*"), 323–24; OH, GK, Sept 22, 1955, Philip A. Crowl, SM, MHI, 1; OH, GK, Feb. 14, 1950, NARA RG 319, OCMH, CA, box 005: *StoC,* 326–27.
"*If the enemy withdraws forces now*": memo, GK to MWC, "Impending Operations," Dec. 28, 1943, II Corps IG, CMH, 370.2; memo, GK to MWC, Jan. 13, 1944, II Corps IG, CMH, 370.2 ("*effort of the 46th Division*"); Blumenson, *Bloody River,* 70 ("*gradualism*").
Geoff Keyes knew his business: Perhaps stopping Thorpe was relative; the West Point yearbook found his running in 1912 "the most wonderful and spectacular ever seen on our field." Army lost to the Carlisle Indian School, 27–6. Obit, *Assembly,* Sept. 1973, 121; *Howitzer,* 1913, 168.
Son of a cavalryman: Blumenson, *Bloody River,* 46–47; memo, A. C. Wedemeyer, Aug. 24, 1943, NARA RG 319, OCMH, 2-3.7 CC2, AFG file no. 319.1, box 247, appendix C ("*calm, deliberate, circumspect*"); Adleman and Walton, 89–90 ("*everything but a sense of humor*"); Chandler, vol. 3, 1465 ("*intensely human*").
"*God forbid*": GK, Jan. 16–18, 1943.
"*too cavalry*": Blumenson, *Bloody River,* 46–49; memo, William A. Walker, "Report of Interview" ("*visionary*").
both men remained mute: GK, "Statement Covering the Rapido River Operation, 20–22 Jan. 1944," Sept. 10, 1946, WD, in "The Rapido River Crossing," CMH, 370.2; testimony, R. J. Butchers, II Corps G-3, Jan. 24, 1944, IG investigation, CMH, 370.2.

"*We have done everything*": diary, Jan. 20, 1944, FLW, HIA, box 1.
Sant'Angelo was a drab farm village: author visits, Sept. 1995, May 2004, Nov. 2006; D'Epiro, 135–38, 151–56 ("*she-wolf*").
Three hundred impressed Italians: Don Whitehead, "*Beachhead Don*," 78–80; "Investigation and Interrogation Report: Operation Lightening [*sic*]," 70 ("*strongest point*"); analysis, "Effect of Rapido Operation on German Plans and Dispositions," n.d., MWC, Citadel, box 39 ("*strongest single German division*"); Tenth Army journal cited in memo, Thomas North, "Rapido Operation Action," March 18, 1946, MWC, Citadel, box 39 ("*enemy has crept up*").
"*The waiting is the worst part*": Matthew Parker, *Monte Cassino,* 92 ("*oil my tommy gun*"); Molony V, 609–11; Ralph S. Mavrogordato, "XIV Panzer Corps Defensive Operations Along the Garigliano, Gari, and Rapido Rivers, 17–31 January, 1944," Nov. 1955, NARA RG 319, E 145, R-78, 20; Robin Neillands, *Eighth Army,* 260–72 ("*Moving off in trucks*"); Field Marshal Lord Carver, *The Imperial War Museum Book of the War in Italy, 1943–1945,* 113 ("*blood wagons*").
They gained the far bank: StoC, 320; John Ellis, *Cassino: The Hollow Victory,* 77 ("*mine marsh*"); Mavrogordato, "XIV Panzer Corps Defensive Operations," 20 (*storm the Liri Valley*).
46th Division soldiers, drawn from Yorkshire: Gregory Blaxland, *Alexander's Generals,* 33; David Scott Daniell, *The Royal Hampshire Regiment,* vol. 3, 153 ("*bleak, disturbing place*").
"*Then nothing went right*": Daniell, 155, 157; "Engineer History, Fifth Army," 73; "Air Support of Fifth Army for Rapido River and Cassino Attacks," Apr. 7, 1944, HQ, Fifth Army, air support control, Robert J. Woods papers, "Report on Cassino Operations," MHI; Starr, ed., 88 (*Boats bucked and spun*); Blaxland, 38; *StoC,* 320.
A few hours later the burly British: Blaxland, 39; diary, FLW, Jan. 20, 1944, HIA, box 1.
"*Always the same story*": diary, GK, Jan. 20, 1943; *Calculated,* 269 ("*lack of strong aggressive leadership*"); "Engineer History, Fifth Army," 73; diary, MWC, Jan. 20, 1943, Citadel, box 65; Brian Harpur, *The Impossible Victory,* 121, 125 ("*Man of Destiny*").
"*It is essential that I make the attack*": diary, MWC, Jan. 20, 1943, Citadel, box 65.
Since the Salerno landings nineteen weeks earlier: testimony, Andrew F. Price, XO, 141st Inf, "The Rapido River Crossing," U.S. House, 26–30 (*60 percent*); Smith, 44 (*three-quarters of the officers*); corr, John D. Goode to Robert L. Wagner, n.d., Texas MFM ("*no longer a team*"); Fred Walker, Jr., "Mission Impossible at Cassino," ts, 1986, MHI, 3, 8 (*units were understrength*); notebook, Will Lang, n.d., USMA Arch (*New bazooka teams*); corr, John E. Phillips to chief of staff, U.S. Army, July 8, 1946, CMH, Geog Files, 370.2 ("*physically, mentally, and morally*").
Several hundred replacements showed up: OH, Paul D. Adams, 1975, Irving Monclova and Marlin Lang, SOOHP, MHI; Ray Wells, "Battalion Commander," *Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly,* spring 1992, part 2 ("*some would die*"); notebook, Will Lang, n.d., USMA Arch.
"*The mission should never*": *Texas,* 305–6; *StoC,* 332 (*extra bandoliers*); Smith, 36 ("*handed a cigar*").
At 7:30 P.M., sixteen artillery battalions: narrative of events, and testimony, Andrew F. Price, XO, 141st Inf, 26–30; John E. Krebs, *To Rome and Beyond,* 48–49; Hamilton H. Howze, *A Cavalryman's Story,* 90–91; Brooks E. Kleber and Dale Birdsell, *The Chemical Warfare Service: Chemicals in Combat,* 443 (*smoke spiraled vertically*).
The attack was to fall across a three-mile front: corr, Phillips to chief of staff, July 8, 1946; Blumenson, *Bloody River,* 91.
Along the rail tracks south of Trocchio: AAR, Arthur J. Lazenby, 19th Engineer Regt, S-3, n.d., NARA RG 407, ENGR-19-03.0; Robert L. Wagner, *The Texas Army,* 103; Blumenson, *Bloody River,* 81; testimony, Leon F. Morand, II Corps asst. engineer, Jan. 24, 1944, IG investigation, CMH, 370.2 (*twenty rubber boats*); Herman M. Volheim, "The Operations of the 3rd Battalion, 143rd Infantry in

the Attacks Across the Rapido River," 1949, IS (*Wooden catwalks*); Howze, 89 (*two hundred tanks waiting*).
Hoisting the heavy boats: "Operations on Rapido River," 141st Inf, Jan. 23, 1944, in AAR, "Report of Operations, January 1944," 36th ID (*rush of eastbound German shells*); "History of the 26th Infantry in the Present Struggle," ts, n.d., MRC FDM, 1991.25, box 445, 38; Flint Whitlock, *The Rock of Anzio,* 109 ("*blood turn solid*"); Franz Kurowski, *Battleground Italy, 1943–1945,* 78 ("*Hitler's bandsaw*"); testimony, John C.L. Adams, in IG investigation, NATOUSA, March 1, 1944, NARA RG 492, 333.5, box 1055 ("*Riflemen tossed away*"); Paul W. Pritchard, "Smoke Generator Operations in the Mediterranean and European Theaters of Operation," ts, 1985, U.S. Army Chemical School, 62 (*thousand smoke pots*); AAR, 68th Armored Field Artillery Bn, Feb. 1944, NARA RG 338, II Corps historical section, box 145 ("*check all shells for mustard*").
Little else went right: "Operations on Rapido River," 141st Inf, Jan. 23, 1944; Wagner, 105; *StoC,* 333; Smith, 37, 41; testimony, R. J. Butchers, II Corps G-3, Jan 25, 1944, IG investigation, CMH, 370.2 (*Paddles, rifles, and human limbs*); AAR, 2nd Bn, 19th Engineer Regt, "Rapido River Crossing," Feb. 6, 1944, NARA RG 407, ENGR-19-03.0 (*switched to a brown cord*); AAR, 141st Inf Regt, Feb. 9, 1944, Aaron W. Wyatt, Jr., ASEQ, MHI ("*hard when you're dying*"); Frank Gervasi, *The Violent Decade,* 545 ("*walked as men do in a cow pasture*").
"*a streetcar coming down sideways*": Smith, 42; Warner Wisian, "Reminiscence," ts, Nov. 1995, 141st Inf Regt, ASEQ, MHI (*dragged the cumbersome rubber boats*).
Soldiers fell without ever firing a shot: summary, IG investigation, NATOUSA, March 1, 1944, NARA RG 492, 333.5, box 1055; Smith, 38 ("*Eight of us drowned*"), 41–42 ("*octopus in a crooked sack*"); corr, Phillips to chief of staff, July 8, 1946 ("*I could hear paddles slapping*").
helmets to scrape a few inches: Warner Wisian, "Reminiscence" "Report on Cassino Operations," June 5, 1944, HQ, Fifth Army, Robert J. Wood papers, MHI (*Thirty-one thousand artillery rounds*); corr, Goode to Wagner, n.d., Texas MFM ("*tuning fork*"); testimony, Leon F. Morand, Jan 24, 1944, IG investigation, CMH, 370.2 (*four MG-42s*); AAR, 2nd Bn, 19th Engineer Regt.
"*like a Judas goat*": corr, Goode to Wagner, n.d., Texas MFM; *StoC,* 335–36; AAR, "Operations on Rapido River," 141st Inf ("*So many litter carriers*"); *Texas,* 315–16 ("*there were plenty*").
Engineers stretched a net: testimony, Andrew F. Price, 26–30.
"*I knew something was wrong*": Wagner, 92.
Two crossing sites had been selected: Volheim, "The Operations of the 3rd Battalion, 143rd Infantry" AAR, "143rd Infantry," Jan. 1944, ASEQ, MHI; *StoC,* 337.
lashing the buttocks, backs, and legs: "Report on Cassino Operations," June 5, 1944, HQ, Fifth Army, Robert J. Wood papers, MHI, 7; AAR, "143rd Infantry," Jan. 1944, ASEQ, MHI (*Facing annihilation*).
Five hundred yards downstream: AAR, William H. Martin, "Narrative of Rapido Crossing," Jan. 27, 1944, 143rd Inf Regt, 36th ID, MHI, 05-36; *StoC,* 338; Volheim, "The Operations of the 3rd Battalion, 143rd Infantry" ("*flashes seemed to turn the fog*").
"*I had to throw dirt at it*": testimony, Clarence D. Dalton, II Corps, Jan. 25, 1944, IG investigation, CMH, 370.2.
"*The attack last night was a failure*": diary, Jan. 21, 1943, FLW, HIA, box 1; Blumenson, *Bloody River,* 102.
"*bend every effort*": *StoC,* 341; GK, "Statement Covering the Rapido River Operation" (*staff officers with a clipboard*).
"*Anybody can draw lines*": diary, Jan. 21, 1944, FLW, HIA, box 1.
An Ultra intercept two nights earlier: Hinsley et al., 510–11; MEB, "Shifting of German Units Before and During Nettuno Landing," Jan. 1956, NARA RG 319, E 145, OCMH, R-75, 26; Blaxland, 38; Ralph Bennet, "Ultra and Some Command Decisions," in Walter Laquer, ed., *The Second World War:*

Essays in Military and Political History, 223; *StoC*, 319 ("*a slender thread*").
"*a dead man every ten yards*": Smith, 60; Bill Hartung, ts, n.d., 143rd Inf, Texas MFM website, 36th ID Assoc, www.kwanah.com/36Division/pstoc.htm ("*what we were walking on*").
On the division left, the 143rd Infantry: Volheim, "The Operations of the 3rd Battalion" *StoC*, 341, 343 ("*couple of fingers shot off*"); Smith, 57 ("*my last old day*").
neglected to bring an air compressor: Leonard B. Gallagher, II Corps engineer, "Memo C/S," Jan. 24, 1944, addendum, IG investigation, CMH, 370.2; Blumenson, *Bloody River*, 105–15 (*found no survivors*); AAR, 2nd Bn, 19th Engineer Regt ("*draw more of our troops over*"); *StoC*, 351 *(Some soldiers had balked*).
"*Fire wholeheartedly*": Wagner, 112–14. Another account quotes Chapin's war cry as, "Fire foolhardily, men, fire foolhardily!" Smith, 53–54.
Corraled by minefields and barbed wire: The 141st Infantry bridgehead on January 22 was estimated as two hundred yards deep by six hundred yards wide. "Synopsis of 36th Inf. Div. Activity," Jan. 24, 1944, II Corps, IG investigation, CMH, 370.2; Wagner, 114 ("*May I shake hands?*").
GIs inched forward: Russell J. Darkes, "Twenty-five Years in the Military," ts, n.d., Texas MFM, 28; affidavit, George G. Davis, 16th Engineer Bn, n.d., IG investigation, CMH, 370.2 ("*Get out of your holes*"); Robert Wallace, *The Italian Campaign*, 116–17 ("*pushed his body along*").
A private sobbed: Ralph G. Martin, "Rapido Fight Shapes Up as One of Toughest Yet," Jan. 25, 1943, *Stars and Stripes*, 1; Gervasi, 544 (*PIECES*); Allan Palmer, "Casualty Survey, Cassino, Italy," *Wound Ballistics*, 536–37 ("*definitive treatment*").
Certainly the doctors were busy: Charles M. Wiltse, *The Medical Department: Medical Service in the Mediterranean and Minor Theaters*, 244; Smith, 72, 74 ("*Patch up these holes*").
Three hundred German artillery rounds: AAR, "Report of Operations, January 1944," 36th ID, chronology; GK, Jan. 22, 1944 ("*Something wrong*"); testimony, Leonard B. Gallagher, II Corps engineer, Jan. 24, 1944, and Wade M. Green, II Corps assistant engineer, Jan. 25, 1944, IG investigation, CMH, 370.2; AAR, 2nd Bn, 19th Engineer Regt ("*Talking or coughing drew fire*"); AAR, "Report of Operations, January 1944," 36th ID, chronology ("*no work being done*").
Smoke hardly helped: Kleber and Birdsell, 444–45 (*complained about German smoke*); testimony, Henry H. Carden, XO, 143rd Inf, IG investigation, March 1, 1944, NATOUSA, NARA RG 492, 333.5, box 1055; testimony, Kenneth F. Zitzman, II Corps signal officer, Jan. 27, 1944, IG investigation, CMH, 370.2 (*only fifty yards*).
"*a pathetic inertia*": Blumenson, *Bloody River*, 116; testimony, William B. Chase, II Corps asst. G-3, Jan. 25, 1944, IG investigation, CMH, 370.2 ("*The situation as I saw it*"); GK, "Statement Covering the Rapido River Operation" *Texas*, 311–13 ("*groggy*").
But Clark in a phone call: GK, Jan. 22, 1944; diary, FLW, Jan. 22, 1944, HIA, box 1 ("*not going to do it anyway*"); memo, William A. Walker, "Report of Interview"("*might as well call it off*").
Clark "seemed inclined to find fault": GK, Jan. 23, 1944; diary, FLW, Jan. 22, 1944, HIA, box 1 ("*I have done everything possible*"); Krebs, 50 ("*Too many damned Germans*").
"*Tell me what happened*": diary, GK, Jan. 23, 1944; diary, FLW, Jan. 23, 1944, HIA, box 7.
As soon as Clark and Keyes drove off: memo, W. H. Wilbur, Jan. 23, 1944, FLW, HIA, box 7; diary, FLW, Jan. 23, 1944, HIA, box 7.
By midday on Sunday: Clifford H. Peek, Jr., ed., *Five Years, Five Countries, Five Campaigns*, 39; AAR, "Report of Operations, January 1944," 36th ID, chronology; *StoC*, 346; Ray Wells, "Battalion Commander" (*deflected by the Parker pen*); Smith, 62–63 ("*I guess it's your leg*").
swam the river with one foot blown off: Peek, ed., 39; Shelby Foote, *The Civil War*, vol. 2, 520 (*inured to supplication*); AAR, "Report of Operations, January 1944," 36th ID ("*American firing had ceased*"); Bruce L. Barger, *The Texas 36th Division*, 170–71 ("*I was never the same*").

Official medical records: Wiltse, 244n.
Some counts were a bit lower: corr, Robert P. Patterson, WD, n.d., and corr, WD, Apr. 3, 1946, in "The Rapido River Crossing," U.S. House, 31; *StoC,* 346; memo, Thomas North to A. Gruenther, "Rapido Operation Action," March 18, 1946, and attached note to Gruenther, Apr. 5, 1944, MWC, Citadel, box 39; Wagner, 121n.
Clark would accuse Walker: OH, MWC, Rittgers, 71. Redacted pages opened at author's request.
The Germans found 430 American bodies: analysis, "Effect of Rapido Operation on German Plans and Dispositions," n.d., MWC, Citadel, box 39; diary, FLW, Jan. 23, 1944, HIA, box 7 ("Freuen wir uns").
"*I had 184 men*": William L. Allen, *Anzio: Edge of Disaster*, 39; Wagner, 92; testimony, Andrew F. Price, 26–30 (*Two scarecrow battalions*); AAR, 2nd Bn, 19th Engineer Regt ("*bad tangled mess*"); Bowlby, 171 ("*crying halt*").
Clark soon summoned Walker: Texas, 322–23,
"*No, you are doing all right*": memo, William A. Walker, "Report of Interview" *Texas,* 322, 325 ("*I am marked for relief*"); OH, Adams, 1975, Monclova and Lang ("*no sins of commission*").
"*a series of mishaps*": *StoC,* 350; *Calculated,* 282 ("*If I am to be accused*").
"*Some blood had to be spilled*": *StoC,* 347–48; *Battle*, 181; Blumenson, *Bloody River*, 127 (*failed to enlighten Walker*).
"*From a military standpoint*": Wagner, 227; OH, Frido von Senger u. Etterlin, Sept. 22, 1955, Philip A. Crowl, SM, MHI, 2; MEB, "Shifting of German Units Before and During Nettuno Landing," 27; Mavrogordato, "XIV Panzer Corps Defensive Operations," 44.
"*The attack was insufficiently planned*": Charles W. Pence, "An Interview with Genfldm Albert Kesselring, Rapido River Crossing," May 6, 1946, ETHINT 71, Don E. Carleton papers, HIA, box 1; Wallace, 113 ("*this ain't the place*"); Lloyd M. Wells, *From Anzio to the Alps*, 50 ("*untainted by association*").
"*edge of mutiny*": corr, Goode to Wagner, n.d., Texas MFM; C. L. Sulzberger, *A Long Row of Candles,* 231; AAR, "143rd Infantry," Jan. 1944, ASEQ, MHI ("*cannon fodder*"); Blumenson, *Bloody River,* 142 ("*faulty orders*").
That resolution would be revivied: StoC, 351; "The Rapido River Crossing," U.S. House, Feb. 20 and March 18, 1946; Wagner, 224 ("*Walker's mental attitude*").
"*Nothing was right except the courage*": Parker, 124.
"den englischen Kommandeur": diary, FLW, Jan. 23, 1944, box 7; Wagner, 123 (*towels and iodine*).
They found a few survivors: Bill Adler, ed., *World War II Letters*; Ray Wells, "Battalion Commander" (*half his face blown away*).
For three hours they gathered the dead: Texas, 318; notebook, Will Lang, n.d., USMA Arch (*German photographers*); Hal Boyle, quoted in Gervasi, 546 ("*blow that place all to hell*").
The short peace ended: Bond, 49; AAR, "Report of Operations, January 1944," 36th ID; Smith, 107; Sulzberger, 223 (*ravenous dogs*).

The Show Must Go On

Much has happened through antiquity: Virgil, *The Aeneid,* trans. Robert Fagles, 197; H.V. Morton, *A Traveller in Southern Italy*, 275–76 (*sixty trapdoors*); Norman Lewis, *Naples '44,* 154 (*lions here refused to eat*); http://www.geocities.com/lorensophia/bio.html.
the staging for SHINGLE neared completion: "Outline Plan, Operation SHINGLE," Fifth Army, Jan. 12, 1944, Robert J. Wood papers, MHI; S. W. Roskill, *White Ensign*, 333 (*four-hundred-ship armada*); AAR, "Mounting and Initial Phase of Operation SHINGLE," VI Corps, March 15, 1944, NARA RG 407, 206-3.0, box 3740 (*eighty-four LSTs*); Field-Marshal Lord Wilson, *Eight Years Overseas,* 193

(*meteorologists for days*); *SSA*, 334.
A festive mood: Fred Sheehan, *Anzio: Epic of Bravery*, 35; Wells, 51 (*Columns of jeeps*); *SSA*, 333 (*Italians vendors sang out*); Peter Verney, *Anzio 1944*, 29 (*Irish Guardsmen marched*); Leo G. Meyer, "Strategy and Logistical History: MTO," ts, n.d., CMH, 2-3.7 CC5, XXII-8; F. J. Lowry, "The Naval Side of the Anzio Invasion," *Proceedings*, Jan. 1954, 22+ (*portable organ*); diary, Robert M. Marsh, Jan. 21, 1944, 81st Armored Reconnaissance Bn, 1st AD, ASEQ, MHI.
Bum boats swarmed: Verney, 29; diary, William Russell Hinckley, Jan. 1944, author's possession ("*dagoes were fast*"); Hans Juergensen, *Beachheads and Mountains*, 27 ("*The show must go on*").
Robert Capa arrived: Robert Capa, *Slightly Out of Focus*, 120; Robert W. Black, *Rangers in World War II*, 136 (*6615th Ranger Force*).
Boarding the Princess Beatrix: AAR, "Report of Actions," 1st Ranger Bn, Jan. 22–Feb. 5, 1944, USMA, micro, MP63-8, roll 1; Anders Kjar Arnbal, *The Barrel-Land Dance Hall Rangers*, 217; Verney, 26 ("*love and nickel beer*").
"*All that fanfare*": Edmund F. Ball, *Staff Officer with the Fifth Army*, 281–82.
"*no inclination to lighten burdens*": *CM*, 295; JPL, 305 (*turnover of lieutenants*); aide's diaries, Jan. 21, 1944, LKT Jr. papers, GCM Lib, box 18, folder 3 (*silver nitrate*).
"*I have many misgivings*": JPL, 322–23.
The commander of VI Corps: JPL, 141 (*iron-tipped cane*), 310 ("*I feel every year*"); Raleigh Trevelyan, *Rome '44*, 42 ("*Father Christmas*"); D.H.L. Fitzgerald, *History of the Irish Guards in the Second World War*, 201 ("*layers of overcoats*").
Born in West Virginia: Benjamin S. Persons, *Relieved of Command*, 82; JPL, 2; OH, MWC, Rittgers, 66 (*privately preferred*).
Lucas drove a jeep: JPL, 145, 217 ("*unutterable swine*"); Wynford Vaughan-Thomas, *Anzio*, 30 ("*by the yard*"); Allen, 46; Carver, *Harding of Petherton*, 125; Ball, 316 ("*never seemed to want to hurt*"); Nicolson, 233 ("*no presence*"); John Nelson, "Always a Grenadier," ts, 1982, LHC, 38 ("*our spirits sank*" 4); L. James Binder, *Lemnitzer*, 118–20 (*yellow fever*).
"*I think too often of my men*": JPL, 230, 295 ("*led to slaughter*"), 305 ("*OVERLORD would be unnecessary*"), 320, 322; Greenfield, ed., 254 ("*desperate attack*"); OH, JPL, May 24, 1948, SM, MHI; John S. D. Eisenhower, *They Fought at Anzio: A Study in Command* (forthcoming, University of Missouri Press, 2007), mss 178 (*last will and testament*).
Could Alexander and others have: Greenfield, ed., 256; weekly intelligence summary, No. 74, Jan. 24, 1944, AFHQ, CMH, Geog files, Italy, 370.2, 6 ("*very questionable*"); "Outline Plan, Operation SHINGLE," Jan. 12, 1943, Fifth Army, Robert J. Wood papers, MHI ("*lowering of morale*"); *Anzio Beachhead*, 6–7 (*no more than 31,000 Germans*); memo, E. Hughes to W. B. Smith, Feb. 1, 1944, Walter Bedell Smith papers, DDE Lib, box 7 ("*entertainment fund*").
Lucas beheld a different vision: "Outline Plan, SHINGLE," Jan. 18, 1944, VI Corps, G-2, JPL papers, MHI, box 11; memo, Joseph L. Langevin, VI Corps G-2, to JPL, Jan. 4, 1944, JPL papers, MHI, box 12 ("*even under favorable conditions*"); JPL, 305 ("*Gallipoli*").
"*John, there is no one*": JPL, 305.
Under Alexander's instructions to Clark: Greenfield, ed., 251.
"*seize and secure a beachhead*": "Outline Plan, Operation SHINGLE," Jan. 12, 1944, Fifth Army, NARA RG 331, AFHQ micro, R 97-I, box 270; Greenfield, ed., 251–53 (*Clark remained deliberately vague*); diary, MWC, Jan. 9, 1944, Citadel, box 65 ("*feature duster*").
In a private message: JPL, 307.
"*Don't stick your neck out*": JPL, 333; OH, JPL, May 24, 1948, SM, MHI ("*goddam Rome*").
The XII Air Support Command: "Operation Plan SHINGLE," Jan. 8, 1944, XII Air Support Command, JPL papers, MHI, box 11; "Notes by Comd 1 (Br) Division," Jan. 2, 1944 ("*advance north towards*

fulfillment"), and Jan. 20, 1944 ("*at last talking of plans*") William R. C. Penney papers, LHC, Penney 8/2; Field Order no. 19, Jan. 15, 1944, VI Corps, NARA RG 319, OCMH, historical background files, American Forces in Action, Anzio, box 119; Nigel Hamilton, *Master of the Battlefield*, 441 ("*complete nonsense*").

The British failed to disembark: AAR, "The First Division in Action," Apr. and July 1944, Philip L. E. Wood papers, LHC, Wood 2/2; Meyer, "Strategy and Logistical History: MTO," XXII-11 (*only eleven of thirty-seven*); J. W. Totten, "Anzio Artillery," ts, 1947, CGSC, Ft. L, CARL N-2253.6, 7; *SSA*, 332; JPL, 321 ("*I stood on the beach*").

"*If this is to be a forlorn hope*": diary, MWC, Jan. 19, 1944, Citadel, box 65 ("*overwhelming mismanagement*"); *CM*, 304 ("*I've got your report*").

land of omen and divination: Livy, *The War with Hannibal*, trans. Aubrey de Sélincourt, 89, 94.

ancient sailors' injunction: Carver, *The Imperial War Museum Book of the War in Italy*, 119, 120 ("*more like a review*"); aide's diaries, Jan. 21, 1944, LKT Jr. papers, GCM Lib, box 18, folder 3 (*at 5:20* A.M.); *Anzio Beachhead*, 14 (*Others snoozed*); Robert M. Hill and Elizabeth Craig, *In the Wake of War*, 55; diary, Hinckley, Jan. 1944 ("*Most talk is of home*").

"*More training is certainly necessary*": JPL, 319, 284–85 ("*Little Big Horn*").

CHAPTER 8: PERDITION

"Something's Happening"

Only the bakers were astir: OH, Silvano Casaldi, director, Museum of the Allied Landings, Nettuno, May 7–8, 2004; e-mail, Silvano Casaldi to author, May 25, 2004; C.R.S. Harris, *Allied Administration of Italy, 1943–1945*, 160 (*coastal exclusion zone*); Francesco Rossi and Silvano Casaldi, *Those Days at Nettuno*, 39–41.

Dusted with flour: Rossi and Casaldi, 32–39, 44–50, 54–55; Frank M. Snowden, *The Conquest of Malaria: Italy, 1900–1962*, 186.

"*Keep still a moment*": Rossi and Casaldi, 44–50.

Three miles offshore: aide's diaries, Jan. 22, 1944, LKT Jr., papers, GCM Lib, box 18, folder 3; Charles Moran, "The Anzio-Nettuno Landings, January 1944," n.d., SEM, NHC, box 49, 31; memo, Henry W. Noel, scout boat officer, "Report of marking of Ranger beach for SHINGLE," Jan. 23, 1944, SEM, NHC, box 47; *Anzio Beachhead*, 14; JPL, 325; AAR, "Beach Landing," May 30, 1944, PBS Branch, Military Intelligence Div, WD, NARA RG 334, NWC Lib, box 491 ("*a tremendous noise*").

Before the war: Wynford Vaughan-Thomas, *Anzio*, 10–11; Frank Gervasi, *The Violent Decade*, 527–28; L. V. Bertarelli, *Southern Italy*, 246; William Shakespeare, *The Tragedy of Coriolanus*, act V, scene 6; Plutarch, *The Parallel Lives*, http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Coriolanus*.html; Raleigh Trevelyan, *Rome '44*, 41, 71; *SSA*, 335 (*Fortune*).

Anchoring the VI Corps left flank: AAR, "Mounting and Initial Phase of Operation SHINGLE," March 15, 1944, VI Corps, NARA RG 407, 206-3.0, box 3740, 4; *SSA*, 339 ("*No amount of shouting*"); AAR, A. G. Young, 3rd Beach Group, March 15, 1944, UK NA, CAB 106/393, 2 ("*waste of time*"); Vaughan-Thomas, 3 ("*half-plucked fowl*").

twelve-foot lanes were cleared: AAR, "Beach Landing," May 30, 1944, PBS Branch, WD, Military Intelligence Div, NARA RG 334, NWC Lib, box 491; John Lardner, "Anzio, February 10th," *The New Yorker Book of War Pieces*, 260–61 (*sleeping in a cowshed*); D.J.L. Fitzgerald, *History of the Irish Guards in the Second World War*, 216 ("*very gentlemanly*").

Truscott's 3rd Division made land: Unable to secure a license, the casino had never opened. Author visit, May 7, 2004; OH, Casaldi; William O. Darby and William H. Baumer, *Darby's Rangers: We*

Led the Way, 147; Anders Kjar Arnbal, *The Barrel-Land Dance Hall Rangers*, 218 (*Christmas tree*); "Report on Enemy Demolitions at Anzio-Nettuno," March 1, 1944, AFHQ, G-2, CARL, N-6961 (*twenty tons of explosives*); Trevelyan, 43 (*Wehrmacht rustlers*).

"*could not believe my eyes*": JPL, 325; diary, MWC, Jan. 22, 1944, Citadel, box 65 ("*Paris-Bordeaux*"); *Calculated*, 288.

Truscott made for shore: aide's diaries, Jan. 22, 1944; *SSA*, 341; *StoC*, 359 (*blowing up bridges*).

By sunrise at 7:30: "The Mounting and Initial Phase of Operation SHINGLE," 4; Rossi and Casaldi, 101–3 (*Soldiers liberated six women*).

DUKWs rolled through the streets: film, "Liberation of Rome," Combat Report No. 1, 1944, NARA RG 111, CR001; Lardner, "Anzio, February 10th," 48; Milton Bracker, "When the Fight Means Kill or Be Killed," *NYT Magazine*, May 28, 1944, 10 ("*dusty, sweaty*"); Vaughan-Thomas, 91 ("*Move on, superman*"); Don Whitehead, "*Beachhead Don,*" 100–103 ("*did not miss a man*").

Success brought sightseers: diary, MWC, Jan. 22, 1944, Citadel, box 65; S. W. Roskill, *The War at Sea, 1939–1945*, 305 (*Anzio's port*).

"*a chief umpire visiting*": David Erskin, *The Scots Guards, 1919–1955*, 201; Fitzgerald, 218 ("*I am very satsified*"); Nigel Nicolson, *Alex: The Life of Field Marshal Earl Alexander of Tunis*, 231 (*two men complimented Lucas*); Vaughan-Thomas, 51 ("*they concurred*").

Left alone to command his battle: The VI Corps command post formally moved ashore at two P.M. on January 23. "The Mounting and Initial Phase of Operation SHINGLE," 6; author visit, May 7, 1944; Rossi and Casaldi, 158 (*Sycamores ringed*); JPL, 337 (*brandy glass*). By another account, the half-empty glass contained wine. Rossi and Casaldi, 158.

By midnight on D-day: daily troop strength, Jan. 22, 1944, JPL papers, MHI, box 12; "The Mounting and Initial Phase of Operation SHINGLE," 5–6; *StoC*, 359 ("*very hard to believe*").

White haze scarped the hills: Bertarelli, 233; Trevelyan, 41 (*riding a white mule*), 54.

"*We knew the lights meant*": JPL, 340; Darby and Baumer, 149.

Thirty-four miles from this window: Molony V, 648; "Miscellaneous Intelligence," Jan. 10, 1944, VI Corps, JPL papers, MHI, box 11 (BOTANY); *StoC*, 385.

"*only sixteen miles from Rome*": Milton Bracker, "Harbor Captured," *NYT*, Jan. 23, 1944; "Censorship Takes Anzio," *Time*, Feb. 28, 1944, 46 ("*Alexander's brave troops*").

The first alarm had come: Molony V, 661; Vaughan-Thomas, 55 (*panicked officers*); "The Allied Landing at Nettuno-Anzio," German Naval Command war logs, Jan. 22, 1944, NARA RG 334, NWC Lib, ANSCOL, box 645 ("*a very bad time*").

"*There is not the slightest chance*": *StoC*, 319; A. G. Steiger, "The Italian Command, 4 Jan.–4 June 1944," July 1948, historical section, Canadian Army HQ, report #20, MHI, 6 ("*next four to six weeks*"); "The German Operation at Anzio," Apr. 1946, German Military Document Section, Military Intelligence Div, WD, JPL papers, MHI, box 9, 10; Ralph Bennett, *Ultra and the Mediterranean Strategy*, 262.

"*huge wave about to break*": Trevelyan, 50; Thomas R. Brooks, *The War North of Rome*, 27.

Managing to steer the plane into a pond: Kesselring was shot down five times during the war. Kenneth Macksey, *Kesselring: The Making of the Luftwaffe*, 191–92, 199.

At six A.M. he told Berlin of the landings: "The German Operation at Anzio," 11–14; B.H. Liddell Hart, *The Other Side of the Hill*, 372 (*prearranged march routes*); William L. Allen, *Anzio: Edge of Disaster*, 59 (*all or part of eleven divisions*); Albrecht Kesselring, *The Memoirs of Field-Marshal Kesselring*, 194 ("higgledy-piggledy jumble"); Hans-Wolfgang Schoch, "Deployment of Light Infantry Regiment 741 in the Anzio-Nettuno Beachhead," June 1947, FMS, #D-200, MHI, 2 (*Italians would toss flowers*).

Allied air strategists had asserted: Eduard Mark, *Aerial Interdiction in Three Wars*, 114, 131–32

(*Italian rail workers remained*); F. Specne, "Did Allied Air Interdiction Live Up to Expectations in the Italian Campaign, 1943–1944?" *Air Power Review,* RAF, vol. 8, no. 4 (winter 2005), 53+; Ralph S. Mavrogordato, "The Battle for the Anzio Beachhead," Apr. 1958, NARA RG 319, E 145, OCMH, R-124, 9 (*rerouted trains*); Allen, 67 (*within three days portions of eight divisions*).

on "clear days it was possible": Nigel Nicolson, *The Grenadier Guards in the War of 1939–1945,* vol. 2, 392; http://www.generals.dk/general/Mackensen/Eberhard_von_/Germany.html (*Mackensen*); Trevelyan, 89; Fred Sheehan, *Anzio: Epic of Bravery,* 136f.

"*insufficient for an attack*": "The German Operation at Anzio," 14.

"*Salerno complex*": Macksey, 201; directive, A. Hitler, Jan. 28, 1944, NARA RG 319, OCMH, CA, box 9 ("*holy hatred*").

"*Please answer the following*": msg, MWC to JPL, Jan. 24, 1943, JPL papers, MHI, box 12. The Army official history indicates that this query was on sent Jan. 23, but Lucas's papers show it was received Jan. 24 at 11:23 a.m.

"*must take some chances*": *StoC,* 386.

"*will attempt to contain our forces*": JPL to MWC, Jan. 24, 1943, JPL papers, MHI, box 12; JPL, 350–51 (*infantry fight*); Nicolson, *The Grenadier Guards,* 389–92 (*slept in pajamas*); Fitzgerald, 220 (*thin panes of ice*); George F. Howe, *The Battle History of the 1st Armored Division,* 282 (*Owls hooted*); Lawrence D. Collins, *The 56th Evac Hospital,* 200 ("*All those hills*").

"*fever-ridden corkcutters*": Fitzgerald, 223; Snowden, 146–47 (*a single night*).

Mussolini had reclaimed: Snowden, 155–61, 176 ("*rural warriors*"); Sheehan, 25 (*bright blue*).

With Mussolini's apparent consent: Siegfried Westphal, "The View of the Army Groups," 1947, MHI, FMS, #T-1a, chapter XI, 4–5; Col. Count von Klinckowstroem, "Italian Campaign," 1947, MHI, FMS, #T-1a, chapter X, 2–3 ("*what measures could be taken*"); Snowden, 187, 192 (*100,000 acres*), 193 ("*biological warfare*").

"*bog, bush, and water*": William Woodruff, *Vessel of Sadness,* 74; Trevelyan, 70 (*British patrols edged*); Fitzgerald, 225 (*Italian women clapped*); Lardner, "Anzio, February 10th," 48 ("*damned good people*"); Sheehan, 66; *StoC,* 387; Molony V, 669–70.

"*throat is worse today*": diary, Jan. 23, 1944, Don E. Carleton papers, HIA, box 1; *Anzio Beachhead,* 23.

A Ranger lieutenant rummaging: Martha Harris, ed., "The Harris Family in World War II," 45–47; Martin Gilbert, *Winston S. Churchill,* vol. 7, 662.

Clark and Alexander came calling: daily troop strength, Jan. 26, 1944, JPL papers, MHI, box 12; *StoC,* 387 (*finish seizing Campoleone*); JPL, 335 ("*splendid piece of work*"); OH, JPL, May 24, 1948, SM, MHI ("*really hurt the Germans*").

H.M.S. Janus: *SSA,* 344; http://uboat.net/allies/warships/ship/4450.html; Vaughan-Thomas, 60 ("*Roll Out the Barrel*").

More than one hundred bombers: SSA, 346–47; "Fifth Army Medical History," n.d., NARA RG 112, MTO surgeon general, box 6, 21–23 (*hospital ship* St. David); "Field Operations of the Medical Department in the MTOUSA," Nov. 10, 1945, NARA RG 407, E 427, 95-USF2-26-0 ("*I was being dragged*"); *SSN,* 346n.

The strikes continued through the week: corr, "Elwan" to Phil Lundeberg, Feb. 24, 1950, SEM papers, NHC, box 50 (*beachhead eavesdroppers*); *SSA,* 348–50 ("*terrific wall of flame*").

Danger lurked below: "Dictionary of American Fighting Ships," Department of the Navy, http://www.history.navy.mil/danfs/l17/lst-422.htm (LST-422); corr, William S. Hutchinson, Jr., CO, 83rd Chemical Bn, Oct. 13, 1944, to Charles S. Shadle, AFHQ, NARA RG 492, MTO, chemical warfare section, 200.6, box 1686; "Reports of Two LST-422 Survivors," *Muzzleblasts,* 83rd Chemical Mortar Battalion Veterans Association, Dec. 2004,

http://www.4point2.org/muzzleblasts83/muzzleblasts-2004-dec.pdf, 5; Roskill, 307–8.
"*Using the boat hook*": "The Sinking of the *LST-422*," http://www.dvrbs.com/historymil./LST-422.htm.
mortar companies lost nearly three hundred men: Brooks E. Kleber and Dale Birdsell, *The Chemical Warfare Service: Chemicals in Combat*, 446; "*LST-422*," http://members.iinet.net.au/~gduncan/maritime-2b.html (*canvas bags*); George Rhoads, "WWII—The Story of Billy Rhoads," http://beoutrageous.com/IYP/billy%20rhoads.htm; http://www.abmc.gov/search/detailwwnew.php.
One shell hit a fragrance shop: Edmund F. Ball, *Staff Officer with the Fifth* Army, photo caption; Field Marshal Lord Carver, *The Imperial War Museum Book of the War in Italy, 1943–1945*, 125 ("*demented beings*").
"*We were the fish*": Howard D. Ashcraft, *As You Were*, 90.
"*I have not the slightest doubt*": John Slessor, *The Central Blue*, 562.
"*Apparently some of the higher levels*": JPL, 344.
The excoriation of Old Luke: Molony V, 687; Greenfield, ed., 262 ("*Having gained surprise*").
"*probably saved the forces at Anzio*": Michael Carver, *Harding of Petherton, Field-Marshal*, 125; Nicolson, *Alex*, 233 ("*within a week or fortnight*"); Allen, 117 ("*for every mile of advance*").
"*the actual course of events*": Molony V, 686; Field-Marshal Lord Wilson, *Eight Years Overseas*, 193 ("*irreparable disaster*"); Nicolson, *Alex*, 233 ("*absolutely full of inertia*"); Greenfield, ed., 264 ("*Had I been able to rush*").

Through the Looking Glass

On a brisk January day in 1752: Nearby Cápua had been the largest, richest city in southern Italy before earning Rome's enmity by befriending Hannibal. H.V. Morton, *A Traveller in Southern Italy*, 267–68, 270 ("*beauty and gaiety*"). The slave revolt began in the Cápua amphitheater. Bertarelli, 258. Edward D. Churchill, *Surgeon to Soldiers*, 292; Walter L. Medding, "The Road to Rome," ts, n.d., 337th Engineer Regt, CEOH, box X-38, 55 (*hole-and-mirror contraption*); author visit, May 3, 2004; Karl Baedeker, *Southern Italy and Sicily*, 10; Charles J. Bové, "The Royal Palace of Caserta," n.d., Fifth Army, administrative files, USMA Arch.
Captured on October 8: "Engineer History, Fifth Army, Mediterranean Theater," n.d., MHI, 15; Carver, *The Imperial War Museum Book of the War in Italy*, 134 ("*muddling sort of maze*"); Churchill, *Surgeon to Soldiers*, 267; James Parton, "*Air Force Spoken Here*," 387; Harold Macmillan, *War Diaries*, 365 ("*in disorder*"); Rupert Clarke, *With Alex at War*, 130 (*messed at the palace kennel*); "Trip Reports Concerning Use of ULTRA in the Mediterranean Theater, 1943–1944," n.d., NARA RG 457, E 9002, SRH-031, 73; Ronald Lewin, *Ultra Goes to War*, 325.
Fifteen thousand soldiers: Parton, 355, 386; Raymond H. Croll, memoir, ts, 1973, R.H. Croll papers, MHI, 215 ("*in and out of windows*"); corr, Graham Erdwurm to author, Sept. 5, 2003 ("*New England cotton mill*"); corr, Jon Clayton to family, Feb. 14, 1944, 7th Inf Regt, 3rd ID, ASEQ, MHI, 2 ("*midnight in a madhouse*"); John North, ed., *The Alexander Memoirs, 1940–1945*, 109 ("*whoever arrived first*").
The building had little heat: Parton, 389 ("*shivering and scratching*"); Lavinia Holland-Hibbert Orde, "Better Late Than Never," ts, n.d., IWM, 96/34/1, 193; Medding, "The Road to Rome," X-38, 49–50, 53.
The twelve hundred rooms: Charles F. Marshall, *A Ramble Through My War*, 13; Medding, The Road to Rome," X-38, 41, 55 (*soldiers' fingerprints*); corr, Clayton, Feb. 14, 1944 (*basketball court*); memoir, P. Royle, ts, 1972, IWM, 99/72/1, 116 (*venereal disease*); Lynn H. Nicholas, *The Rape of*

Europa, 234; memo, H. M. Wilson, March 20, 1944; memo, J. L. Devers, March 20, 1944; corr, H. M. Wilson, March 28, 1944; corr, J. L. Devers, March 31, 1944, all in NARA RG 492, MTOUSA AG, 33.5-446, box 1431.

An errant bomb had bent: Churchill, *Surgeon to Soldiers,* 292 ("*stuffy, swank dining room*"); Bill Mauldin, *Up Front,* 139; Medding, "The Road to Rome," X-38, 48–49 (*palace porcelain*); letter, R.L.V. ffrench Blake to author, July 27, 2003 ("*if anyone dropped a plate*").

Officers in the palace bar: Malcolm S. McLean, "Adventures in Occupied Areas," ts, 1975, MHI, 68; George Biddle, *Artist at War,* 223; Carver, *The Imperial War Museum Book of the War in Italy,* 138 ("*made less and less sense*"); Parton, 368 ("*big as cabbage leaves*"); David Hunt, *A Don at War,* 250–51 (*San Carlo Opera Company*); Marshall, 14; Medding, "The Road to Rome," X-38, 55.

a "looking glass war": Churchill, *Surgeon to Soldiers,* 292, 294; "History of the Aviation Engineers in the Mediterranean Theater of Operations," June 1946, historical section, AAF Engineer Command, CEOH, X-39; C. L. Sulzberger, *A Long Row of Candles,* 234; Nicolson, *The Grenadier Guards,* 368; JPL, 185 (*hungry soldiers soon emptied*); Medding, "The Road to Rome," X-38, 36–37, 59; Marshall, 13.

engineers built a colony for generals: Morton, 269; Bertarelli, 259; "History of the Aviation Engineers," X-39 ("*feeling of the men*"); Parton, 390.

maintained twenty-two lofts: AAR, 6681st Signal Pigeon Co, July 9, 1944, NARA RG 407, SGCO-6681-0.1, box 23228; Hunt, 250–51 ("*extremely noisy*"); Vaughan-Thomas, 201 ("*get in your bones*").

Clark rarely missed a chance: diary, MWC, Jan. 28, 1944, Citadel, box 65; corr, Graham Erdwurm to author, Sept. 5, 2003 (*rope factories*); Medding, "The Road to Rome," X-38, 53; http://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/USN/ships/PT/PT-201.html; http://www.history.navy.mil/faqs/faq60-5.htm (*motor torpedo boats*); *Calculated,* 292; memo, HKH to Ernest J. King, June 6, 1944, "Report of the Engagement Between the USS *Sway* and PTs *201* and *206* on 28 January 1944," MWC, Citadel, box 3, folder 7 (*Neither boat crew took time*).

Alexander had prodded Clark: Martin Blumenson, *Mark Clark,* 187; Viscount Alexander of Tunis, "The Allied Armies in Italy," n.d., CMH, II-34 ("*Risks must be taken*").

"*The left corner of Clark's mouth*": *PP,* 396; MWC to Renie, Jan. 18, 1944, personal corr, Citadel ("*by massaging my hair*"); diary, MWC, Jan. 23, 25, 28, 1944, Citadel, box 65.

"*The more stars a man gets*": Maurine Clark, *Captain's Bride, General's Lady,* 115; Blumenson, *Mark Clark,* 196–97 ("*You turn your lamb chops*"); MWC to Renie, Jan. 11, 1944, personal corr, Citadel ("*I am distressed*").

"*an awfully good man*": Blumenson, *Mark Clark,* 196–97; Eisenhower diary, Nov. 23, 1943, HCB, DDE Lib, A-908 ("*victimized by his wife*").

"*It causes me some embarrassment*": DDE to MWC, Nov. 22, 1943, DDE Lib, PP-pres, box 23. Released from restricted materials at author's request.

"*I do not want you to refer to me*": MWC to Renie, Nov. 27, Dec. 17, 1943, personal corr, Citadel.

Clark's virtues as a commander: OH, Jacob E. Smart, Nov. 1978, Arthur W. McCants and James C. Hasdorff, AFHRA 239.0512-1108 ("*broad-gauged*"); "Beyond the Bridgehead," *Time,* Oct. 4, 1943, 28+ ("'*ringside' visits*"); OH, Harry Lemley, 1974, Gerald F. Feeney, SOOHP, MHI, 2/32; Eric Sevareid, *Not So Wild a Dream,* 379 (*puzzled theatergoers*); Charles D'Orsa, "Trials and Tribulations of an Army G-4," ts, n.d., CARL, N-4906, 1 ("*I want my headquarters*").

"*The general was a difficult man*": Vernon A. Walters, *Silent Missions,* 93, 95; OH, Robert J. Wood, former asst. G-3, Fifth Army, March 4, 15, 1948, and "Memo for Mr. Matthews," March 22, 1948, SM, MHI ("*very impatient man*"); Sulzberger, 232 ("*rather Renaissance Florentine*").

"*entitled to take Rome*": *Calculated,* 289; Sulzberger, 231; Sevareid, 383.

Since Salerno, battle casualties alone: Salerno, 93–94; *From the Volturno to the Winter Line,* 114;

Fifth Army at the Winter Line, 114; attributed to Joseph Stalin. Elizabeth Knowles, ed., *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*, 636 (*million deaths a statistic*); Chester G. Starr, ed., *From Salerno to the Alps*, 269 (*twenty thousand dead*).

"*Sometimes if I appear to be unreasonable*": Walters, 109.

"*what looked like a piece of driftwood*": Burtt Evans [*sic*] and Burgess W. Scott, "Nightmare Job at Anzio," March 3, 1944, in Steve Kluger, *Yank*, 159+.

At 8:40 A.M., twelve miles south of Anzio: memo, H. S. Strauss, CO, U.S.S. *Sway*, to CO, Task Force 81, Jan. 29, 1944, MWC papers, Citadel, box 3, folder 7.

One minute after the initial challenge: memo, S.M. Barnes, CO, Motor Torpedo Boat Squadron 15, to HKH, March 26, 1944, MWC, Citadel, box 3, folder 7; Gervasi, 533

"*What shall we do?*": Blumenson, *Mark Clark*, 175–77.

Clark helped brace the helmsman: memo, unsigned, to MWC, Jan. 28, 1944, MWC, corr, Oct. 1943–Jun 1944, box 3; Gervasi, 533; memo, Strauss, Jan. 29, 1944, ("*weight on the conscience*"); memo, HKH to King, June 6, 1944; diary, MWC, Jan. 28, 1944, Citadel, box 65 ("*as flagrant an error*").

"*a downward slant*": *Calculated*, 294; Rossi and Casaldi, 159; OH, Casaldi, May 7–8, 2004 (*into the wine cellars*); *SSA*, 356 ("*this white apartment house*").

marooned all Navy pontoons ashore: "Report on Port and Beach Operations at Anzio," 540th Engineer Combat Regt, Apr. 29, 1944, NARA RG 334, NWC Lib, ANSCOL, box 343; minutes, Anzio supply conference, Jan. 30, 1944, Naples, NARA RG 492, MTOUSA, transportation section, box 2697 (*civilian schooners*).

As for the enemy: Charles W. Crawford, III, "A Study of the Adequacy of the Intelligence Provided Maj. Gen. John P. Lucas," ts, June 1970, CARL, N-8224.494; "Historical Record, HQ, VI Corps, Mounting and Initial Phase of Operation SHINGLE," March 15, 1944, LKT Jr., GCM Lib, box 13, folder 2 ("*horse-and motorcycle-mounted*"); Sheehan, 71f (*estimated 72,000*); E. T. Williams and R. H. Humphreys, "Reports Received by U.S. War Department on Use of Ultra in the European Theater, WWII," Oct. 1945, NARA RG 457, E 9002, SRH-037, 9 ("*We deal not with the true*").

"*Our enemies did not react*": memo, "Morale of Troops," JPL to R.T. Frederick, Feb. 22, 1944, Robert T. Frederick papers, HIA, box 1.

None of this surprised Clark: Arthur F. Fournier, "Influence of Ultra Intelligence upon General Clark at Anzio," thesis, 1983, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Ft. L, 102–6; Mark, 129–30; Andrew Brookes, *Air War over Italy, 1943–1945*, 53 (*venereal disease hospital*); *StoC*, 388 ("*three full divisions*").

Truscott today had drafted his order: "Historical Record, HQ, VI Corps, Mounting and Initial Phase of Operation SHINGLE."

short ride to the Villa Borghese: SSA, 358.

"*His gloomy attitude*": JPL, 348–49; *StoC*, 390 ("*Will go all out*").

On January 27 and 28 an obscure fighter unit: AAFinWWII, 424.

Blacks had fought in every American war: Morris J. MacGregor, Jr., *Integration of the Armed Forces, 1940–1965*, 4; Hondon B. Hargrove, *Buffalo Soldiers in Italy*, 2; memo, Truman K. Gibson, Jr., office, secretary of war, to Ray E. Porter, Aug. 6, 1945, NARA RG 165, WD, special planning division, general corr, 291.2, box 32 (*four black Army regiments*);
http://www.nps.gov/fols/Buffalo_Soldier/body_buffalo_soldier.html. Other accounts suggest the nickname derived from buffalo hides worn by the men to stay warm.

"*hopelessly inferior, lazy, slothful*": Daniel K. Gibran, *The 92nd Infantry Division and the Italian Campaign in World War II*, 3; Krewasky A. Salter, *Combat Multipliers: African-American Soldiers in Four Wars*, 80 ("*a thousand years behind*"); "History of the Office of the Inspector General in World War II," 1946, CMH, 2-3.6 AA, 2–3, 12 (*Jim Crow laws*).

When World War II began: Ulysses Lee, *The Employment of Negro Troops,* 88, 416 (*633,000 soldiers*); "The Negro in the Navy," 1947, Bureau of Naval Personnel, "United States Naval Administration in WWII," 1 (*only six black sailors*), 14–15, 41 (*no black officers*); Salter, 82 ("*segregation will be maintained*"); Matt Schudel, "Frederick C. Branch Was 1st Black Officer in U.S. Marine Corps," Apr. 13, 2005, *WP,* B6.

segregation "*has proven satisfactory*": memo, "War Department policy in regard to negroes," Oct. 16, 1940, WD, AG office, NARA RG 165, E 501, WD, special planning division, general corr, 291.2, box 32; "Attitudes of White Enlisted Men Toward Sharing Facilities with Negro Troops," July 30, 1942, SOS, research branch, NARA RG 165, E 501, WD, general corr, 291.2, box 32 ("*strong prejudice against sharing*"); Hargrove, 4 ("*not a sociological laboratory*"); memo, HQ, AGF, July 20, 1943, chief of staff journal, NARA RG 337 ("*93rd Division has three bands*"); Bernard C. Nalty, *Strength for the Fight,* 147 ("*fraught with danger*").

The 1940 Draft Act: "African Americans in World War II," 1994, fact sheet, commemoration committee, 50th anniversary, WWII; David M. Kennedy, *Freedom from Fear,* 632–33 (*only 250 blacks*); Lee, 213 (*Mississippi congressional delegation*); Hargrove, 8; article, Deton J. Brooks, Jr., *Chicago Defender,* Nov. 6, 1943, in *Reporting World War II,* vol. 1, 662; Patrick K. O'Donnell, *Beyond Valor,* 108 (*German and Italian prisoner trustees*); *Time,* July 10, 1944, 65, in Bell I. Wiley, "The Training of Negro Troops," 1946, AGF, historical section, study no. 36, 13; "History of the Office of the Inspector General in World War II," 1946, CMH, 2-3.6 AA, 2–3, 12 ("*boy, darky*"); Alan M. Osur, "Separate and Unequal: Race Relations in the AAF During WWII," 7 ("*Double V*"), 32, 42, 45 ("*Heil, Hitler!*").

"*lack of education and mechanical skill*": Wiley, "The Training of Negro Troops," iii, 3 ("*too great a concentration of Negroes*"), 7; MacGregor, 24; memo, Gibson to Porter, Aug. 6, 1945 (*lowest two categories*).

blacks were shunted into quartermaster companies: Erna Risch and Chester L. Kieffer, *The Quartermaster Corps: Organization, Supply, and Services,* vol. 2, 168–69; Collins, 190; Lee, 406 (*only two in ten*); Hargrove, vii.

the 92nd would endure trials: Dale E. Wilson, "Recipe for Failure: Major General Edward M. Almond and Preparation of the U.S. 92nd Infantry Division for Combat in World War II," *Journal of Military History,* vol. 56, no. 3 (July 1992), 473; Gibran, 17, 21, 35–36 (*overbearing Virginian*); OH, Edward M. Almond, Nov. 16, 1953, Lee Nichols, NARA RG 319, OCMH, CA, box 005, 1–8 ("*The Negro doesn't care*").

Almond asserted that black officers lacked: In a cover note, Lucian Truscott, then commander of Fifth Army, declared himself "in entire agreement." E. M. Almond, "Combat Effectiveness of Negro Officers and Enlisted Men," July 2, 1945, NARA RG 165, WD, special planning div, general corr, 291.2, box 34; Wiley, "The Training of Negro Troops," 8 ("*learn slowly*").

Such obstacles and more faced the 99th: William Alexander Percy, "Jim Crow and Uncle Sam," *Journal of Military History,* vol. 67, no. 3 (July 2003), 773+; http://www.wpafb.af.mil/museum/history/prewwii/ta.htm; Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., *Benjamin O. Davis, Jr.: American,* 26–28, 75.

A week before the invasion of Sicily: Herman S. Wolk, "Pantelleria, 1943," *Air Force Magazine,* vol. 85, no. 6, June 2002; Charles E. Francis, *The Tuskegee Airmen,* 85; Stanley Sandler, *Segregated Skies,* 46 ("*proper reflexes*"); Percy, "Jim Crow and Uncle Sam," 773 ("*releasing a white squadron*").

Davis, who was promoted: Lee, 450, 460; Francis, 75 ("*collection of born dive bombers*"); Richard G. Davis, *Carl A. Spaatz and the Air War in Europe,* 294 ("*fault of the whites*"); Percy, "Jim Crow and Uncle Sam," 773 (*225 missions*).

Then came the morning of January 27: Sandler, 56–57; Francis, 87 ("*I started firing*").

After refueling in Naples: The official Army history claimed that thirteen German planes were destroyed. Davis and others claimed only twelve. Lee, 517; Davis, 104.
"*Negroes are doing their bit*": John C. McManus, *The Deadly Brotherhood,* 246.

Jerryland

On Saturday afternoon, January 29: aide's diaries, Jan. 29, 1943; Francis A. Even, "The Tenth Engineers," ts, 1996, author's possession, 34; author visit, Borgo Montello formerly Conca, May 7, 2004; e-mail, S. Casaldi to author, June 28, 2004; Hugh A. Scott, *The Blue and White Devils,* 103.
He still spoke in a raspy whisper: diary, Jan. 24, 1944, Don E. Carleton papers, HIA, box 1; *CM,* 312; LKT Jr. to Sarah, Jan. 25, 1943, LKT Jr. papers, GCM Lib, box 1, folder 6.
Two miles farther lay Highway 7 and Cisterna: Acts, 28:15; Trevelyan, 74; Jeff R. Stewart, "The Ranger Force at the Battle of Cisterna," 2004, thesis, CGSC, Ft. L, 70 (*five major roads*); aide's diaries, Jan. 26, 1943; *CM,* 312.
"*Spirits are not particularly high*": G-2 periodic report No. 130, Feb. 5, 1944, VI Corps, JPL papers, MHI, box 1; attachment, G-2 periodic report No. 138, Feb. 13, 1944, VI Corps, JPL papers, MHI, box 1 ("*the air roars*"); "Estimate of the Situation," 3rd ID, G-2, Jan. 29, 1944, Robert W. Black papers, MHI, box 2, folder 10; Stewart, "The Ranger Force at the Battle of Cisterna," 64; Nicolson, *The Grenadier Guards in the War of 1939–1945,* 399–400 (*missed a turn*); Verney, 69–70; *CM,* 313; Allen, 70.
Kesselring had planned a massive counterattack: journal, Fourteenth Army, Jan. 29, 1944, "The German Operation at Anzio," Apr. 1946, German Military Document Section, Military Intelligence Div, WD, JPL papers, MHI, box 9; "Air Participation in Operation SHINGLE, Jan. 1–Feb. 15, 1944," Oct. 1945, CARL, N-11614, 10, appendices K and R (*foul weather obscured rail targets*); *Calculated,* 295 ("*not seriously considered*"); *CM,* 313 (*Thousands of grenadiers*); Anthony J. Abati, "Cisterna di Littoria: A Brave Yet Futile Effort," *Army History,* fall 1991, 13+; Lloyd Clark, *Anzio,* 136 (*exceeded 71,000*), 147; Molony V, 648 (*33 battalions*); note on Carraceto operations, William R. C. Penney, Jan. 29, 1944, LHC, 8/12.
Darby's Rangers spent the afternoon: Darby and Baumer, 157; Arnbal, 229 ("*solemn, tired, and quiet*"), 227 (*never carried personal letters*); OH, William P. Yarborough, 1975, J. R. Meese and H. P. Houser, SOOHP, MHI, 54 ("*cutthroats*"); Milton Lehman, "The Rangers Died Fighting at Dawn," mss, March 11, 1944, *Stars and Stripes,* "Combat Reports, 1st Ranger Battalion," USMA micro, MP63-8, roll 1 (*barbers stayed busy*); Martin Blumenson, *Anzio: The Gamble That Failed,* 97 ("*Mail arrived late Saturday*"); Hans Juergensen, *Beachheads and Mountains,* 24 (*like dry bones*).
Darby had been busy since dawn: AAR, "Account of Ranger Force During Period 28 January to 31 January 1944," HQ, Ranger Force, Feb. 2, 1944, "Combat Reports, 1st Ranger Battalion," USMA micro, MP63-8, roll 1 ("*avoiding contact*"); Michael J. King, *William Orlando Darby,* 150–51; Jerome J. Haggerty, "A History of the Ranger Battalion in World War II," 1982, Ph.D. diss, Fordham University, MHI, 154; Darby and Baumer, 156 ("*Jerryland*"); Anthony J. Abati, "Cisterna di Littoria: A Brave Yet Futile Effort," *Army History,* fall 1991, 13+; Nicholas J. Grunzweig, "The Operations of the 1st Battalion, 7th Infantry, at Le Mole Creek Near Cisterna," 1949, IS.
The size of the attack heartened him: King, 150–51; James J. Altieri, *Darby's Rangers: An Illustrated Portrayal of the Original Rangers,* 74; Arnbal, 227; "The OSS Detachment at the Anzio Beachhead," NARA RG 226, E 99, OSS history office, box 39, 1, 4 (*only four enemy battalions*); "The Rangers," *Life,* July 2, 1944, 59+ ("*shaking with patriotism*"); Donald Downes, *The Scarlet Thread,* 150 ("*finest body of troops*").
Yet the expansion of the force: Each Ranger battalion was about half the size of a regular infantry

battalion, and was divided into six companies.

Too many men still bunched up: Michael J. King, "Rangers: Selected Combat Operations in World War II," June 1985, CSI, 31; Haggerty, "A History of the Ranger Battalion in World War II," 154; Thomas M. Johnson, "The Army's Fightingest Outfit Comes Home," Nov. 5, 1944, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, condensed in *Reader's Digest*, Dec. 1944, 51+ (*muffle a canteen*).
Would Truscott's infantry quickly reinforce: After the war, the 4th Ranger Battalion commander said Darby believed that the Cisterna attack was "too risky." OH, Roy Murray, May 21, 1948, SM, CMH, Geog Files, Italy 314.7.
No Ranger reconnaissance: David W. Hogan, Jr., *Raiders or Elite Infantry?*, 58, 60; Robert W. Black, *Rangers in World War II*, 150–51; Grunzweig, "The Operations of the 1st Battalion, 7th Infantry" (*hedgerows*); AAR, "Account of Ranger Force" Ranger Force journal, Jan. 29, 1944, 1835 hrs, "Combat Reports, 1st Ranger Battalion," USMA micro, MP63-8, roll 1 ("*city may have considerable opposition*").
"*Pistol Packin' Mama*": James Altieri, *The Spearheaders*, 308–10; Darby and Baumer, 157–59; Oscar W. Koch, *G-2: Intelligence for Patton*, 40–43 (*sounds difficult for German-speakers*); Ranger Force journal, Jan. 30, 1944; Field Order no. 2 (*red Very flares*).
"*Morale of men excellent*": AAR, 1st Ranger Bn, March 31, 1944, "Combat Reports, 1st Ranger Battalion," USMA micro, MP63-8, roll 1; Alvah H. Miller, "The Men of My Command," n.d., in "2004 Reunion Program Book," Fort Wayne, Ind., Aug. 2004, author's possession, 84.
isolated farmhouse on the right side of the road: Ranger Force journal, Jan. 29, 1944; King, 152; Altieri, *Darby's Rangers*, 75; *StoC*, 391.
Barely half a mile up the Conca road: AAR, 4th Ranger Bn, Feb. 15, 1944, and "Journal of Operations," 4th Ranger Bn, Jan. 22–31, 1944, Robert W. Black papers, MHI, box 4, folder 11; Altieri, *Darby's Rangers*, 75; OH, Roy Murray, May 21, 1948; "Personal Diary of Langan W. Swent," Jan. 30, 1944, Langan W. Swent papers, HIA, box 1 (*white pillar of flame*); Ranger Force journal, Jan. 30, 1944, 0433 hrs, "Combat Reports, 1st Ranger Battalion" King, 154; Darby and Baumer, 159 ("*all was not well*").
"*We could hear mortar and artillery*": James P. O'Reilly, "A Tough Decision," 3rd Ranger Bn, in Altieri, *Darby's Rangers*, 80, 159–60 (*blown to pieces point-blank*).
Dobson pressed ahead: Lehman, "The Rangers Died Fighting at Dawn" Darby and Baumer, 159; Carlo D'Este, *Fatal Decision*, 163; author visits, May 7, 2004, Nov. 30, 2006.
A German sentry flopped: Jack Dobson, "With the Rangers at Cisterna," Jan. 1945, told to Noland Norgaard, Associated Press, in Altieri, *Darby's Rangers*, 83; Black, 157; Stewart, "The Ranger Force at the Battle of Cisterna," 41; O'Donnell, 90 ("*I emptied my M-1*"); memo, "Capture of the First and Third Ranger Battalions," Charles M. Shunstrom to William O. Darby, July 10, 1944, "Combat Reports, 1st Ranger Battalion," USMA micro, MP63-8, roll 1.
Dawn, that harsh betrayer: Stewart, "The Ranger Force at the Battle of Cisterna," 42.
"*Then it opened up on us*": Lehman, "The Rangers Died Fighting at Dawn" Altieri, *Darby's Rangers*, 77; memo, "Capture of the First and Third Ranger Battalions," Shunstrom to Darby; D'Este, *Fatal Decision*, 165 (*Dobson shot a tank commander*).
Step by step the Rangers retreated: Stewart, "The Ranger Force at the Battle of Cisterna," 37; Micky T. Romine, "My Life in Combat, and as a POW," n.d., in "2004 Reunion Program Book," 89–89 ("*I have shot that man*"); Milton Lehman, "The Rangers Died Fighting at Dawn" ("*You could run about twenty yards*").
Rangers held in reserve: memo, "Capture of the First and Third Ranger Battalions," Shunstrom to Darby; memo, "Operation at Sisterna" [*sic*], Charles M. Shunstrom, n.d., "Combat Reports, 1st Ranger Battalion," USMA micro, MP63-8, roll 1; Donald G. Taggart, *History of Third Infantry Division in World War II*, 119; Darby and Baumer, 167 ("*The tracers were flying*"); O'Donnell, 91 (*sprayed*

blood); Black, 159, 164; AAR, 1st Ranger Bn, March 31, 1944.
"*Them bastards is giving up*": O'Donnell, 91. Some eyewitnesses said the German armored vehicles were tanks. Testimony from James Robert Dew, May 24, 1945; Donald Richard Clark, Aug. 2, 1945; James D. Cooney, May 21, 1944, all in JAG case file, Cisterna shootings, War Crimes Office, NARA RG 153, box 536.
"*we shall shoot the prisoners*": memo, "Capture of the First and Third Ranger Battalions," Shunstrom to Darby; King, 156–57; D'Este, 166.
Darby for several hours had labored: Taggart, 115; Ranger Force journal, Jan. 30, 1944, 0615 hrs ("*Murray is having a hell of a time*"); *Anzio Beachhead*, 30.
News from Truscott's regiments: Stewart, "The Ranger Force at the Battle of Cisterna," 61; Grunzweig, "The Operations of the 1st Battalion, 7th Infantry" Joseph Edgar Martin, "Memoir of World War II," ts, 2003, author's possession; *Anzio Beachhead,* 31–32. Third Division soldiers earned four more Medals of Honor at Cisterna in the May 1944 breakout battle; thus, of thirty-one such decorations awarded the division's soldiers during World War II, more than one-quarter were for valorous acts in this one small Italian town. Nathan William White, *From Fedala to Berchtesgaden*, 82; D'Este, 174, 361.
At seven A.M., the first radio dispatch: King, 156–57; D'Este, 493n.
"*Some of the fellows are giving up*": Darby and Baumer, 164.
"*Shoot if they come any closer*": Taggart, 115.
"*They are coming into the building*": Darby and Baumer, 164–65; King, "Rangers," 38–39 ("*So long, Colonel*").
"*Use your head*": Taggart, 115; Altieri, *The Spearheaders,* 312 ("*God bless all of you*").
"*Ehalt, I leave everything*": Black, 160.
"*My old sergeant major*": Taggart, 115; King, 157; Altieri, *The Spearheaders,* 312; Darby and Baumer, 167 ("*couldn't stand the thought*").
"*Situation is confused*": aide's diaries, Jan. 30, 1944; Scott, 103–4 ("*tiny, darting figures*").
Confusion and cacophony persisted: AAR, 1st Ranger Bn; AAR, 4th Ranger Bn, Feb. 15, 1944, and "Journal of Operations," 4th Ranger Bn, Jan. 22–31, 1944, Robert W. Black papers, MHI, box 4, folder 11; Altieri, *Darby's Rangers*, 76; Darby and Baumer, 159–60; diary, Jan. 30, 1944, Don E. Carleton papers, HIA, box 1 ("*Whole show is folded*").
"*packing meat*": Audie Murphy, *To Hell and Back*, 83, 107, 121; Juergensen, *Beachheads and Mountains,* 18, 23; Don Graham, *No Name on the Bullet,* 52–53 (*knocked Murphy senseless*).
For a renewed push on Monday: diary, Jan. 30–31, 1944, Don E. Carleton papers, HIA, box 1; aide's diaries, Jan. 30, 1944; *AAFinWWII*, vol. 3, 349; JJT, XII-9, 11, 15 ("*Not a man to let a weapon sit*").
"*Toffey is rolling*": Scott, 104; Taggart, 117; *Anzio Beachhead,* map no. 7; White, 84; Grunzweig, "The Operations of the 1st Battalion, 7th Infantry" ("*barely existed as a fighting force*"); Darby and Baumer, 167; AAR, 4th Ranger Bn, Feb. 15, 1944, and "Journal of Operations," 4th Ranger Bn, Jan. 22–31, 1944; Murphy, 108.
The division was spent: Anzio Beachhead, 36, map no. 7; JJT, XII-16 ("*fearless leadership*").
Darby drove to the bivouac: Milton Lehman, "The Rangers Fought Ahead of Everybody," *Saturday Evening Post*, June 15, 1946, 50+; D'Este, 169.
Captured Rangers shuffled: film, "Liberation of Rome," 1944, combat report no. 1, NARA RG 111, CR001; O'Donnell, 96; Romine, "My Life in Combat, and as a POW," 88–89; memoir, Frank Mattivi, n.d., in "2004 Reunion Program Book," 88–89 ("*I am a prisoner*").
The February 1 morning report: morning report, 1st Ranger Bn, Feb. 1, 1944, Robert W. Black papers, MHI, box 2, folder 9; Hogan, 58; *Anzio Beachhead*, 30; Stewart, "The Ranger Force at the Battle of Cisterna," 57.

An estimated 250 to 300: Estimates of Rangers killed vary widely. While scholars such as Carlo D'Este put the number as high as three hundred, a report to the Ranger Battalions Association thirty years after the battle claimed, perhaps improbably, that only a dozen died. D'Este, 169; O'Donnell, 84; Black, 165. See also King, "Rangers," http://www-cgsc.army.mil/carl/resources/csi/King/King.asp#C.
the 4th Battalion suffered: Hogan, 58; memo, G. B. Devore, "Armored Replacements," March 18, 1944, AGF Board, AFHQ, DTL, Ft. B (*Anglo-American losses on January 30*); journal, Fourteenth Army, Jan. 31, 1944, 10 ("*enemy has suffered heavily*").
The hunt for scapegoats: diary, MWC, Jan. 30, 1944, Citadel, box 65; King, "Rangers," 31; OH, JPL, May 24, 1948, SM, MHI (*until Lucas pointed out*); Associated Press, March 8, 1944, cited in Marsha Henry Goff, "Reunion to Bring World War II Rangers to Lawrence," Lawrence [Kans.] *Journal-World*, May 19, 2006; Hogan, 58; Ivan Peterman, "Peterman Discloses Story of Lost Rangers at Anzio Beachhead," Apr. 15, 1944, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 1; AAR, "Mounting and Initial Phase of Operation SHINGLE," March 15, 1944, VI Corps, NARA RG 407, 206-3.0, box 3740 ("*ascribed only to chance*").
The beachhead on the VI Corps right: Molony V, 676; diary, MWC, Feb. 4, 1944, Citadel, box 65 ("*consolidate your beachhead*").
Lucas invited reporters to his upstairs suite: Vaughan-Thomas, 90 ("*a mighty tough fighter*"); H. M. Wilson, "Report by the Supreme Allied Commander Mediterranean," 1946, part 1, 28 (*more than six thousand casualties*).

CHAPTER 9: THE MURDER SPACE

This World and the Next World at Strife

"*indulged in his wild orgies*": Karl Baedeker, *Southern Italy*, 5; National Archeological Museum, Cassino; author visits, Sept. 1995, May 2004, Nov. 2006; *The Tiger Triumphs*, 50 ("*a preacher above his congregation*"); Tommaso Leccisotti, *Monte Cassino*, 13 ("*From here is the way*").
Rounding the last bend: David Hapgood and David Richardson, *Monte Cassino*, 238–39; Fred Majdalany, *Cassino: Portrait of a Battle*, 5; http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02467b.htm ("*agreeable to the Lord*"); Leccisotti, 14–15, 19; "The Abbey of Montecassino," tourist brochure, n.d. ("*on a bright street*"); *StoC*, 401; Bradford A. Evans, *The Bombing of Monte Cassino*, 11–12; "Monte Cassino," *The Complete Poetical Works of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*, http://www.worldwideschool.org/library/books/lit/poetry/TheCompletePoeticalWorksofHenryWadswo
The town below had first been bombed: Leccisotti, 112; *StoC*, 399; Rudolf Böhmler, *Monte Cassino*, 105, 107–13 ("*To befoul the Abbey*"); Franz Kurowski, *The History of the Fallschirmpanzerkorps Hermann Göring*, 220 (*swag was breathtaking*); Hapgood and Richardson, 35 (*silk-clad reliquaries*); Lynn H. Nicholas, *The Rape of Europa*, 244 (*fifteen crates went missing*).
As the evacuation concluded: StoC, 400–401; memo, "The bombing of Monte Cassino Abbey," W.M. Harris, Sept. 2, 1949, CMH, Geog Italy, 373.11 ("allein das Gebäude"); diary, WFST, Dec. 27, 1943, CMH, Geog Italy, 373.11 ("*best reserves must stand*").
"*every rock-drilling machine*": Franz Kurowski, *Battleground Italy, 1943–1945*, 359; Leccisotti, 117; *StoC*, 400–401; diary, WFSt, Nov. 17, 1943 (*tobacco bonuses*); Böhmler, 163 (*German field hospitals*).
The first stray shell: Leccisotti, 118; Hapgood and Richardson, 7, 81, 100–101 ("*these terrible days*").
Forty terrified women rushed: memo, "Monte Cassino Abbey," HQ, Fifth Army, G-2, Feb. 28, 1944, in F. Jones, "The Bombing of Monte Cassino, 15 February 1944," Oct. 14, 1949, Cabinet Historical Section, UK PRO, CAB 106/699, appendix 3, 69; *StoC*, 401; Fred Majdalany, *Cassino: Portrait of a Battle*, 112–13 (*pounded on the oak door*); Leccisotti, 118 ("*Insane with fear*").

The door swung open: Leccisotti, 118; Herbert Bloch, "The Bombardment of Monte Cassino," 1973, CMH, Geog Italy, 373.11, 411.
The failure of the frontal attack: StoC, 367, 374; N. C. Phillips, *Official History of New Zealand in the Second World War: Italy,* vol. 1, 185 ("*dejected landscape*").
The French nearly won through: "Draft Report on FEC," n.d., SM, CMH, box 1.
"*Look for the fellow wearing*": "Special Report on Attitude of U.S. Troops Toward French," March 8, 1944, HQ, SOS, NATOUSA, NARA RG 492, 311.7, box 931; "Draft Report on FEC" (*bowing back the German line*); Gregory Blaxland, *Alexander's Generals,* 43 (*occupied Monte Belvedere*); Ralph S. Mavrogordato, "XIV Panzer Corps Defensive Operations Along the Garigliano, Gari, and Rapido Rivers," Nov. 1955, NARA RG 319, E 145, OCMH, R series, R-78, 57 (*escarpment so vital*).
"*It is ordinary men*": John Ellis, *Cassino: The Hollow Victory,* 65, 58 ("*tearing at his brains*"), 146–47 ("*That calmed them*"); Molony V, 627.
Six German battalions: Ian Gooderson, *Cassino 1944,* 65; operations report, 3rd Algerian Div, Feb. 16, 1944, in "French Action and Pertinent Orders, Rapido-Cassino," Fifth Army, HQ, Robert J. Wood papers, MHI ("*Hill 700 has been taken*"); Blaxland, 43 (*sip of water*); Douglas Porch, *The Path to Victory,* 533 ("*Haven't eaten or drunk*").
"*The human mechanism*": Ellis, 149; "Draft Report on FEC" *StoC,* 372; Molony V, 629n (*a battalion each day*); Blaxland, 43 ("*could do no more*").
Now the thankless task: http://www.army.mil/CMH/topics/apam/100BnWW2.htm; 201 file, Charles W. Ryder papers, DDE Lib, box 2.
the 34th attacked north of Cassino: StoC, 371.
The attack resumed farther north: AAR, 2nd Bn, 168th Inf, CMH, Geog files, 370.2; *StoC,* 373, 377 ("*Cassino heights will be captured*"); OH, Andrew J. Goodpaster, Aug. 17, 2004, with author, Washington, D.C. (*S-mines popping*); AAR, "Attack on Cassino," G. B. Devore, Co C, 760th Tank Bn, attached to 756th Tank Bn, in report no. 140, AFG board, Apr. 3, 1944, CARL, N-7245-G (*followed the faint glow*); John L. Powers, "Crossing the Rapido," *IJ,* May 1945, 50+ (*six-inch ruts*); Kenneth Maitland Davies, *To the Last Man,* 122 (*phosphorus*); "Historical Narrative and Journal," G-3, 34th ID, Oct. 1943–May 1944, Charles W. Ryder papers, DDE Lib, box 4; GK, Feb. 1, 1944 ("*Believe we shall have Cassino*").
Kesselring had shifted: Chester G. Starr, ed., *From Salerno to the Alps,* 108; *StoC,* 374–75 ("*two boxers in the ring*"); Hapgood and Richardson, 75, 133–35; "The Background of the 135th Infantry," ts, n.d., Iowa GSM; Matthew Parker, *Monte Cassino,* 139 ("*every night the rumor*").
In a two-acre field diced by German artillery: James A. Luttrell, "The Operations of the 168th Infantry in the Rapido River Crossing," 1948, IS; Donald C. Landon, "The Operations of the 2nd Bn, 135th Inf in the Cassino Offensive," 1946, IS (*Six new lieutenants*); Parker, 144 (*sulfa powder in salt shakers*); Belfrad H. Gray, Jr., "The Crossing of the Rapido River and Occupation of Positions Above Cassino by Company I, 168th Infantry," 1947, IS; Davies, 124–25; OH, Howard Kippenberger, Feb. 4 and 12, 1947, SM, MHI (*so hobbled by frozen feet*).
three efforts were made to break through: Majdalany, 85; *StoC,* 382–83; memoir, C. N. "Red" Morgan, 3rd Bn, 141st Inf, n.d., Texas MFM Web site, www.kwanah.com/36Division/pstoc.htm; Clifford H. Peek, Jr., ed., *Five Years, Five Countries, Five Campaigns,* 47 (*ricochet shell*).
"*within a bare 100 meters*": Molony V, 704; Porch (*attacked on too broad a front*); "34th Division Casualties, Cassino Operation," Feb. 15, 1944, MWC, corr, Citadel, box 3; censorship morale reports, Nov. 1943–June 1944, NARA RG 492, MTO AG, 311.7 ("*Personally I'm glad*"); GK, Feb. 10, 1944 ("*Full moon*").
"*suspended by invisible wires*": Brian Harpur, *The Impossible Victory,* 57; Harold L. Bond, *Return to Cassino,* 82 (*smacked the roof*).

Early on February 14: "Historical Narrative and Journal," G-3, 34th ID; G. R. Stevens, *Fourth Indian Division,* 284; *StoC,* 374 (*seven hundred litter bearers*); Bond, 101–3 (*sawed logs*); William Shakespeare, *Henry IV, Part 2,* act 2, scene 2; B. Smith, "Waltonia," ts, 1981, IWM, 67/254/1 ("*Thank God their mothers*"); Robert Capa, *Slightly Out of Focus,* 116 (*white shoes*).
an American detail delivered 150 corpses: OH, Paul Adams, 1975, Irving Monclova and Marlin Lang, MHI, SOOHP; Nicholas M. Bozic, "36th Infantry Division, Salerno to Rome," ts, n.d., Texas MFM ("*bodies all over the hill*"); Hal Reese, IG, 36th ID, "Intermission at Cassino," n.d., Texas MFM ("*It is such a tragedy*"). Lt. Col. Reese was killed near Anzio three months later.
Saddest of all: G. L. Hanssen, *The Hanssens of Eastern Iowa,* 32–33, 39–44, 47.
They had been at it so long: Pyle, 127, 134–35.
"*They live and die so miserably*": James Tobin, *Ernie Pyle's War,* 132; OH, Harold Alexander, Jan. 10–15, 1949, SM, CMH, II-23; *StoC,* 383 ("*almost mutinous*").
Shit Corner: memoir, P. Royle, ts, 1972, IWM, 99/72/1, 108; Thomas Drake Durrance, "Battle for the Abbey," ts, n.d., author's possession ("*Halt!*"); Paul Fussell, *Wartime,* 274–75 ("*Don't be scared*").
The lucky ones found shelter: Nigel Nicolson, *Alex: The Life of Field Marshal Earl Alexander of Tunis,* 248; C. L. Sulzberger, *A Long Row of Candles,* 236 ("*steam*"); Martha Gellhorn, *The Face of War,* 131 ("*perfume and gasoline*"); Howard H. Peckham and Shirley A. Snyder, *Letters from Fighting Hoosiers,* vol. 2, 76 ("*We sit around quibbling*"); Warren P. Munsell, Jr., *The Story of a Regiment,* 40 (*Berlin Bitch*); Klaus H. Huebner, *A Combat Doctor's Diary,* 51 (*daily passwords*).
The unlucky crouched in damp sangars: memoir, Anthony "Butch" Buccieri, 133rd Inf Regt, written by John F. Sackheim, 2001, VHP; *StoC,* 380; C. Richard Eke, "A Game of Soldiers," IWM, 92/1/1, 91-92 (*wooden plows*); Blaxland, 55; Parker, 152 (*urinate, if necessary*); memoir, Henry E. Gardiner, ts, n.d., USMA Arch, 208; memo, N.P. Morrow to L. J. McNair, Jan. 28, 1944, AGF Board, NARA RG 407, E 427, NATOUSA (*99,000 sets*); "Operations in Italy, January 1944," 142nd Inf Regt, MHI, 603-142, 9 (*too thick for most GI boots*); Samuel David Spivey, *A Doughboy's Narrative,* 84 ("*a life of extremes*").
"*the quartermaster must be running*": memoir, Gardiner, 214; June Wandrey, *Bedpan Commando,* 85 ("*Our meat is dead*"); Ivan Dmitri, *Flight to Everywhere,* 145 ("*no fresh milk*"); Maurice R. P. Bechard, "This Is an Account of What Was to Be," ts, n.d., 16th Armored Engineer Bn, 1st AD, ASEQ, MHI, 2 ("*fighting the whole fucking war*"); Neil McCallum, *Journey with a Pistol,* 142 ("*cold as a corpse*").
"*disheveled, unshaven, unkempt*": J. B. Tomlinson, "Under the Banner of the Battleaxe," ts, n.d., IWM, 80/29/1, 105, 139,144; Parker, 207; C. T. Fram, "The Littlest Victory," ts, n.d., IWM 85/19/1, 72.
"*regular as a scythe-stroke*": Lawrence Durrell, from *Sicilian Carousel,* in Alcie Leccese Powers, *Italy in Mind,* 82; Walter Bernstein, *Keep Your Head Down,* 149 ("*finger of God*"); *StoC,* 380 (*200,000 shells*); AAR, II Corps, Jan. 1944, NARA RG 407, E 427, 202-0.3, 15 (*240mm howitzer*); Peckham and Snyder, 68 ("*a lot of war bonds*"); Cyril Ray, *Algiers to Austria,* 119 ("*most heavily shelled pinpoint*"); Durrance, "Battle for the Abbey," 16 ("*pounding the soles of my feet*"); N. P. Morrow, "Field Artillery Technique and Procedure," Jan. 7, 1944, AGF observer report, file #56, NARA RG 337, box 52; N.P. Morrow, "Employment of Artillery in Italy," *FAJ,* Aug. 1944, 499+; "Lessons in Combat," 34th ID, Sept. 1944, Iowa GSM, 47 ("*murder space*"); "AFHQ Intelligence Notes No. 63," June 13, 1944, NARA RG 407, E 47, 95-AL1-2.18 ("*Wet earth*").
learned to relieve the overpressure: Carl Rollyson, *Nothing Ever Happens to the Brave,* 193; Ray, 118; Spike Milligan, *Mussolini: His Part in My Downfall,* 255 ("*Digging and swearing*"); Alex Bowlby, *The Recollections of Rifleman Bowlby,* 26 ("*Keep your nut down*").
"*Enlisted men expect everything*": Douglas Allanbrook, *See Naples,* 180; Ben Shephard, *War of Nerves,* 237 ("*gutful men*"); "Lessons from the Italian Campaign," Apr. 14, 1944, 1st SSF, Robert D.

Burhans papers, HIA, box 7 ("*Use good judgment*").
"*Came across three dead G.I.s*": Maurice R. P. Bechard, "This Is an Account of What Was to Be," ts, n.d., 16th Armored Engineer Bn, 1st AD, ASEQ, MHI, 2.
Schubert's "Unfinished Symphony": Fussell, 183; John Muirhead, *Those Who Fall*, 101 ("*bright beads*")
"The initial crack": B. Smith, "Waltonia," ts, 1981, IWM, 67/254/1.
"*You could never lose it*": memoir, P. Royle, t.s, 1972, IWM, 99/72/1, 106; Harpur, 65 ("*That brooding monastery*").
A new warlord arrived: Paul Freyberg, *Bernard Freyberg, V.C.,* 458 ("*torch is now thrown*").
"*I'm Freyberg*": W. G. Stevens, *Freyberg, the Man*, 103, 35 ("*large all over*"); H. Essame, "A Controversial Campaign—Italy, 1943–45," *Army Quarterly and Defence Journal,* Jan. 1968, 219+ ("*shelling did everyone good*"); Stevens, *Freyberg, the Man*, 96 ("*lack of imagination*"); Freyberg, 112–13 ("*St. Sebastian*"), 186–87 ("*diastolic murmur*"); Peter Singleton-Gates, *General Lord Freyberg VC,* 8; obit, "Gen. Lord Freyberg, British Leader at Monte Cassino," *Washington Star,* July 5, 1963 ("*two wounds for every bullet*"); Michael Carver, ed., *The War Lords*, 583 (*india-rubber*); Lisa Chaney, *Hide-and-Seek With Angels: A Life of J. M. Barrie*, 316 ("*his lack of humour*").
lined it with flowering sage: Freyberg, 51; Stevens, *Freyberg, the Man*, 56–57 ("*fine gloves*"), 60, 76 ("*your turn tomorrow*").
Even his admirers acknowledged: Freyberg, 62–63 ("*wouldn't try to think*"), 118; "Operations of N.Z. Corps on the Fifth Army Front," part I, May 1944, HQ, AAI, UK NA, CAB 106/366, 4 (*a new creation*).
"*clean and spritely*": E. D. Smith, *The Battles for Cassino,* 65; Phillips, 178–79; Majdalany, 102–3; B. Smith, "Waltonia," ts, 1981, IWM, 67/254/1 ("*crates of live chickens*").
At first Freyberg considered: Molony V, 706–7; *Battle,* 193; Phillips, 222; Hapgood and Richardson, 151 ("*no brains*"); Howard Kippenberger, *Infantry Brigadier*, 356 ("*soviet of division commanders*"). Tuker considered Freyberg "brave as a lion" but "no planner of battles and a niggler in action." Raleigh Trevelyan, *Rome '44,* 133.
"*helpless lunacy*": Bishenwar Prasad, ed., *Official History of the Indian Armed Forces in the Second World War, 1939–1945: The Campaign in Italy, 1943–1945,* 98 (*deemed Monte Cassino impregnable*), 105; F. Jones, "The Bombing of Monte Cassino, 23–25; "The Bombing of Cassino Abbey," 1965, monograph for official history, UK NA, CAB 101/229, 7.
"*No practicable means available*": Singleton-Gates, 277.
"Spadger still wants": GK, Feb. 11, 1944; diary, MWC, Feb. 4, 1944, Citadel, box 65 ("*bull in a china closet*").
"*I would level the Vatican itself*": censorship morale reports, Nov. 1943–June 1944, NARA RG 492, MTO AG, 311.7.

The Bitchhead

Sixty miles away: beachhead census, D+10, JPL papers, MHI, box 12; Pyle, 173; Francesco Rossi and Silvano Casaldi, *Those Days at Nettuno,* frontispiece; Fred Sheehan, *Anzio: Epic of Bravery,* 102; *Anzio Beachhead,* 113 (*empty wine barrels*); Edmund F. Ball, *Staff Officer with the Fifth Army,* 294 (*sandstone seemed to telegraph*); "Engineer History, Fifth Army, Mediterranean Theater," n.d., MHI, 81 (*tunnel rumored to have been built by Nero*); Trevelyan, 152 ("*So back we go to World War I*").
"*My cost of living*": Flint Whitlock, *The Rock of Anzio*, 179.
"*We have found our religion*": diary, William Russell Hinckley, Feb. 1944, author's possession; "Background Material, Historical Branch G-2," n.d., ASF, QM General, technical information branch,

CMH, 000.75, 3 (*punctured all fifteen ovens*); Pyle, 168, 188; F.J. Lowry, "The Naval Side of the Anzio Invasion," *Proceedings,* Jan. 1954, 22+ (*skippers weighed anchor*); Justin F. Gleichauf, *Unsung Sailors: The Naval Armed Guard in World War II,* 293 ("*brighter than Yankee Stadium*"); Roberta Love Tayloe, *Combat Nurse,* 80 ("*Anzio, my Anzio*").

Hell's Half-Acre: "Fifth Army Medical Service History," Feb. 1945, CMH, 19–20, 23 (*killed the VI Corps surgeon*); Charles M. Wiltse, *The Medical Department: Medical Service in the Mediterranean and Minor Theaters,* 275 (*a Luftwaffe bomber*); testimony, Paul Sauer, n.d., Fifth Army JAG, war crimes office, NARA RG 153, box 530 ("*I'm dying*"); Sheehan, 166 (*treated in the same hospital*).

"*God, help us*": "Fifth Army Medical Service History," 24; Carlo D'Este, *Fatal Decision,* 2; journal, Fourteenth Army, Feb. 5, 1944, in "The German Operation at Anzio," German military document section, Military Intelligence Div, WD, MHI, JPL papers, box 9; corr, George H. Revelle, Jr., to wife, Feb. 5, 1944, author's possession ("*dog on an iceberg*"); George C. Harper, "The World War II Years," ts, 1999, 16th Armored Engineer Bn, 1st AD, MHI, ASEQ, 27 ("*outhouse*"); Pyle, 160; Malcolm Munthe, *Sweet Is War,* 182 ("*dining room table*"); David Cole, *Rough Road to Rome,* 199 ("*Morphine*"); Charles F. Marshall, *A Ramble Through My War,* 64 ("*too much iron*").

Deep holes grew deeper: diary, Robert M. Marsh, Feb. 11, 1944, 81st Armored Reconnaissance Bn, 1st AD, MHI, ASEQ; Paul Dickson, *War Slang,* 113+; Ball, 295; William J. Sweet, Jr., "Operations of the 2nd Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, on the Anzio Beachhead," 1947, IS (*eliminate tree bursts*); Munthe, 182 ("*sons of the prophet*"); George Forty, *M4 Sherman,* 67 ("*can't get used to bein' scared*"); Paul W. Brown, *The Whorehouse of the World,* 392–93; T. Moffatt Burriss, *Strike and Hold,* 87 (*firing at the helmets*); Cole, 205 ("*shooting gallery*").

"*Get moving*": Tom Roe, *Anzio Beachhead,* 43, 53; John Lardner, "Anzio, February 10th," in *The New Yorker Book of War Pieces,* 262 ("*like sunburned skin*"); John Lardner, "The Show at Anzio," in John Stenbuck, ed., *Typewriter Battalion,* 117 ("*small, wet world*"); GK, March 25, 1944 (*Bitchhead*); Donald G. Taggart, ed., *History of the Third Infantry Division in World War II,* 125 ("*squirt of white tracer*"); Lloyd Clark, *Anzio,* 144 ("*I was alone*"); George Aris, *The Fifth British Division, 1939 to 1945,* 210–11, 239; Cole, 198 (*recalled his Virgil*).

Yanks veered to the right: Sweet, "Operations of the 2nd Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment" Trevelyan, 222 ("*Otto, Otto*"); Lloyd M. Wells, *From Anzio to the Alps,* 83 ("*Nerves became frayed*"); Pyle, 194.

Grave diggers halted their poker game: Allan Jaynes, "Mud, Misery and Messerschmitts," ts, 1990, 45th ID Mus; "The 30 Years of Army Experience of Thomas E. Hannum," ts, n.d., 91st Armored FA Bn, 1st AD, MHI, ASEQ, 74; Pyle, 194; Peter Verney, *Anzio 1944,* 86 ("*can never be as bad*").

disrupted Mackensen's timetable: journal, Fourteenth Army, Feb. 3, 5, 12, 1944; AAR, 3 Inf Bde, Jan. 30–Feb 14, 1944, UK NA, CAB 106/850 (*exposed salient*).

The attack fell heaviest: Sheehan, 94; Wynford Vaughan-Thomas, *Anzio,* 96 ("*dirty, ragged wave*"), 101; Verney, 98 ("*Germans are at the door*"); D.J.L. Fitzgerald, *History of the Irish Guards in the Second World War,* 268, 275 ("*never saw so many people killed*"); Robley D. Evans et al., "American Armor at Anzio," 1949, AS, Ft. K, table; AAR, "Report on Action at Campoleone," 3 Inf Bde, Feb. 21, 1944, Philip L. E. Wood papers, LH, Wood 2/1 (*438 tubes*).

"*All the shells in hell*": Vaughan-Thomas, 106; *StoC,* 396; journal, Fourteenth Army, Feb. 4, 1944; *Anzio Beachhead,* 46.

The attack resumed on Monday evening: Anzio Beachhead, 55; Nigel Nicolson, *The Grenadier Guards in the War of 1939–1945,* vol. 2, 408 ("*Nothing heard of Number 1 company*"), 39 (*looking for breath plumes*); Verney, 137, 142 ("*hit in the arse*"); D'Este, 222 ("*eaten by pigs*").

Aided by a captured map: journal, Fourteenth Army, Feb. 8, 1944; David Erskin, *The Scots Guards, 1919–1955,* 216–17, 221 ("*even more unpleasant*").

More unpleasant yet: StoC, 396; *Anzio Beachhead,* 55; Vaughan-Thomas, 124; Erskin, 223 ("*Where is the sea?*").
On sleepless nights: Trevelyan, 157; author visit, May 7, 2004 (*ramps for rolling barrels*); Rossi and Casaldi, 159; JPL, 367 (*hunched over plywood desks*); Marshall, 38, 41 (*maps with grease pencil markings*).
"*The old Hun is getting ready*": JPL, 360, 365 (*shrinking by nine thousand*); James Parton, "*Air Force Spoken Here,*" 351 (*largest air command*); "Mediterranean Allied Air Forces in Operation SHINGLE, 1 Jan–18 March '44," 1945, CMH, 5-1 DA, 23–24 (*traveled from southern France*).
"*A terrible struggle all day*": JPL, 369; Rossi and Casaldi, 169 ("*hermaphrodites*"); msg, JPL to MWC, Feb. 9, 1944, 2040 hrs, JPL papers, MHI, box 12; Verney, 23; Molony V, 751 (*high-strung engineer*); OH, MWC, May 10–21, 1948, SM, MHI, 76 ("*good telephone operator*"); OH, JPL, May 24, 1948, SM, MHI ("*Well, I do*").
"*Complete gaff, no decision*": diary, William R. C. Penney, Jan. 29, 1944, LH, 8/11, 8/14 ("*infuriating delay*"); D'Este, 221 ("*Corncob Charlie*"); Trevelyan, 157 ("*We'll lose the beachhead*"); Molony V, 738 ("*I trust you are satisfied*" and "*Clark might be the man to go*"); Martin Gilbert, *Winston S. Churchill*, vol. 7, *Road to Victory, 1941–1945,* 666; Winston S. Churchill, *Closing the Ring,* 488 ("*superiority in chauffeurs*"); Vaughan-Thomas, 111 ("*a great disappointment*").
As Mackensen tightened his grip: Anzio Beachhead, 61; Verney, 128–29; Nicolson, *The Grenadier Guards,* 386; diary, William R. C. Penney, Jan. 29, 1944, LH, 8/19. ("*immediate corps plan*"); JPL, 370.
He popped out of the command post: CM, 329; Vaughan-Thomas, 127; diary, William R. C. Penney, Jan. 29, 1944, LH, 8/11, and msg, JPL to Penney, Feb. 11, 1944, 8/20 ("*reinforcements are on the way*").
A counterattack at dawn on Saturday: Molony V, 736; Sheehan, 111; Whitlock, 171 ("*gray-coated infantry*").
General Alex had long been celebrated: Sulzberger, 229–30 (*red hat drew fire*).
"*We wanted a breakthrough*": Vaughan-Thomas, 146 ("*Were any of you at Dunkirk?*"); Sheehan, 124 ("*German opposite us*"); Betsy Wade, ed., *Forward Positions: The War Correspondence of Homer Bigart,* 37 (*stories were censored*); "Censorship Takes Anzio," *Time,* Feb. 28, 1944, 46 ("*such rot*"); Phillip Knightley, *The First Casualty,* 330.
"*I tried to stop the tirade"*: Vaughan-Thomas, 147 (La Traviata).
Lucas was left alone: JPL, 378–79 ("*I failed to chase the Hun*").
General Mackensen, the Hun himself: journal, Fourteenth Army, Feb. 13, 1944 (*Lake Nemi*); author visit, Dec. 1, 2006; Fritz Meske, "The Anzio-Nettuno Bridgehead: A German Account," *Die Wehrmacht,* March 8, 1944, in *MR,* June 1944 ("*not a flash of a gun*").
the counterattack would fling six divisions: Anzio Beachhead, 67; "German Version of the History of the Italian Campaign," CARL, N-16671.1-3, 90; *StoC,* 420; Vaughan-Thomas, 156.
"*concentrated, overwhelming, ruthless*": Ralph S. Mavrogordato, "The Battle for the Anzio Beachhead," Apr. 1958, NARA RG 319, E 145, OCMH, R-series, R-124, 11,13; Vaughan-Thomas, 156; *StoC,* 419 (*delay their invasion*).
mask the clank of approaching panzers: journal, Fourteenth Army, Feb. 13 and 15, 1944; Eberhard von Mackensen, "Field Fortifications Around the Anzio-Nettuno Beachhead," 1950, MHI, FMS, #C-061, 7 (*streambeds ran perpendicular*); msg, Hermann Göring Div, Feb. 14, 1944, in VI Corps G-2 report no. 148, JPL papers, MHI, box 1 ("*for short errands*"); Sheehan, 124 ("*house lights*").
"*like the rolling of a drum*": D'Este, 192; Henry Kaufman, *Vertrauensmann,* 20 (*Birds tumbled*); Whitlock, 185, 190 ("*coffee grinders*").
They were not unexpected: G-2 periodic report no. 141, Feb 16, 1944, JPL papers, MHI, box 1; G-2

weekly intelligence summary, no. 77, Feb. 12, 1944, AFHQ, NARA RG 407, E 427, 95-AL1-2.6; F.H. Hinsley et al., *British Intelligence in the Second World War,* 190–93; Ralph Bennett, *Ultra and the Mediterranean Strategy,* 267–68; James H. Cook, Jr., "The Operations of Company I, 179th Infantry, in the Vicinity of the Factory, Anzio Beachhead," 1949, IS (*few forward units had sufficient girded*); *StoC,* 420–21; Whitlock, 187 ("*I watched the dust*"); Fitzgerald, 335 ("*savage, brutish*"); "Defense of a Position by 2nd Battalion, 157th Infantry, 45th Division," n.d., AGF Board, NARA RG 407, 95-USF1-2.0, box 253; Ralph E. Niffenegger, "The Operations of the 3rd Platoon, Company G, 157th Infantry, Astride the Anzio–Albano Road," 1949, IS; Wells, 62–69; Vaughan-Thomas, 180 ("*a bastard of a place*").

Forward companies of Royal Fusilier: Sheehan, 119, 159–61; Burriss, 75 ("*flock of canaries*"); John Embry, "A Time to Honor," ts, n.d., 160th FA Bn, 45th ID Mus; Ball, 308 ("*Give us everything*").

Grim as the day had been: Molony V, 745; journal, Fourteenth Army, Feb. 16, 1944 ("*Enemy resistance*"); Sheehan, 159; N. P. Morrow, "Employment of Artillery in Italy," 499; *Anzio Beachhead,* 90.

fourteen howling German battalions had driven: StoC, 421; Cook, "The Operations of Company I, 179th Infantry" ("*verge of panic*").

"*179th lost 1,000 men*": "Diary Notes of Gen. McLain," Feb. 18, 1944, MHI, OCMH WWII Europe interviews; Whitlock, 227; Munsell, 55 ("*tears rolled down*"); Wells, 57–58 ("*load my rifle*").

Four hundred Allied gun tubes: Roe, 62; Walter Karig, *Battle Report: The Atlantic War,* 284 ("*count the rivets*"); *AAFinWWII,* vol. 3, 356 ("*heaviest payload*").

Jeeps careering to the rear: Whitlock, *Anzio;* corr, John P. O'Malley to Yarborough, n.d., CJB, "Chrono. File: Sicily," box 48 ("*Don't leave the phone*"); R. Close-Brooks, "Anzio Beach-Head," ts, 1946, in James Scott Elliott papers, LH, 4 (*obliged to sit on the knees*).

flinging the contents over the lip: Robert A. Guenthner, "The Operations of Company F, 180th Infantry, Six Days Previous to and During the Major German Offensive," 1948, IS; Whitlock, 199 (*dull the glint*); Walter Fries, "29th Panzer Grenadier Division, February 1944," 1947, FMS, #D-141, MHI, 7–10; Edward A. Raymond, "The Caves of Anzio," *FAJ,* Dec. 1944, 851+; Starr, ed., 154; Whitlock, 224 ("*as small as you can*").

"*Men trickled back*": Cook, "The Operations of Company I, 179th Infantry"("*I guess you will relieve me*").

He was right: Molony V, 745 (*carving a bulge from the Allied line*); D'Este, 504n ("*not very attractive*").

In the midst of the crisis: diary, MWC, Feb. 16, 1944, Citadel, box 65; Mark M. Boatner III, *The Biographical Dictionary of World War II,* 399 ("*Iron Mike*"); OH, James M. Wilson, Jr., former Truscott aide, Apr. 23, 2004, with author, Washington, D.C.; JPL, 386.

a Piper Grasshopper pilot spotted 2,500 Germans: "Historical Record, Headquarters VI Corps, February 1944," Apr. 27, 1944, LKT Jr., papers, GCM Lib, box 13, folder 2; J.W. Totten, "Anzio Artillery," ts, 1946, CGSC, Ft. L, CARL, N-2253.6, 14; Fitzgerald, 346 ("*Bits of Kraut*"); William Seymour, *Yours to Reason Why,* 268–71 ("*struggling, field-gray figures*"); Embry, "A Time to Honor," 142 (*falling truck tailgates*); Nicolson, *The Grenadier Guards,* 412 (*32,000 rounds*); Wiley H. O'Mohundro, "From Mules to Missiles," ts, n.d., MHI, 55 ("*turned and ran*"); Verney, 174 ("*Light Brigade*").

At 9:30 P.M. a lull: R. Close-Brooks, "Anzio Beach-Head," ts, 1946, in James Scott Elliott papers, LH, 4 (*Tanks lurched forward*); journal, Fourteenth Army, Feb. 17 and 18, 1944 ("*No decisive breakthrough*").

Lucas sensed his shifting fortunes: Molony V, 748; Vaughan-Thomas, 171–74 (*cooks, drivers*); George F. Howe, *The Battle History of the 1st Armored Division,* 297; William L. Allen, *Anzio: Edge*

of Disaster, 112–13.
Harmon woke every morning: E.N. Harmon, *Combat Commander,* 7, 12, 32; obit, *Assembly,* Dec. 1980, ENH; *Register of Graduates and Former Cadets,* 1989 ed., 314; OH, ONB, n.d., Kitty Buhler, MHI, 182 ("*poor man's George Patton*"); OH, Hamilton H. Howze, Apr. 1973, Robert T. Reed, SOOHP, MHI, 49 ("*hog on ice*"); *Texas,* 209 ("*stupidity of the high command*"); corr, E. N. Harmon to JPL, Feb. 12, 1944, ENH, box 1 ("*well-established plan*"); Jack F. Wilhm et al., "Armor in the Invasion of North Africa," 1950, AS, Ft. K ("*enemy has his troubles*").
"*Give 'em hell!*": Whitlock, 235.
Two hundred prisoners trotted: Howe, 299; *Anzio Beachhead,* 86; Fries, "29th Panzer Grenadier Division, February 1944," 7–10; Vaughan-Thomas, 178 ("*made him worried*").
Mackensen's troops poked: Molony V, 749; Fritz Wentzell, "The Italian Campaign from August 1943 to February 1945," Dec. 1945, CMH, Geog Files, Italy, 370.2, 43 ("*many hounds*"); journal, Fourteenth Army, Feb. 20, 1944 ("*evacuate the wounded*"); *Anzio Beachhead,* 91 (*mustered 673 men*).
VI Corps casualties also exceeded five thousand: StoC, 424; Whitlock, 248; Lawrence D. Collins, *The 56th Evac Hospital,* 169 (*nurses' summer fatigues*).
"*Message from Clark*": JPL, 393.
"*proved to be an old woman*": John Keegan, ed., *Churchill's Generals,* 120–21; msg, DDE to GCM, Feb. 16, 1944, SM, MHI, box 2.
"*done all he could*": OH, MWC, May 10–21, 1948, SM, MHI, 77; OH, Alexander, Jan. 10–15, 1949, II-18 ("*ambition was key*"); diary, MWC, Feb. 22, 26, 1944, MWC papers, Citadel, box 65 ("*old physically and mentally*"); John North, ed., *The Alexander Memoirs, 1940–1945,* 126 ("*That would be very bad*"); aide's diaries, Feb. 18, 1944, LKT Jr., Citadel, box 18, folder 3 ("*four or five days*").
At midmorning on February 22: C. Webber, "Observers' Notes on the Italian Campaign," June 14, 1944, NARA RG 337, E 15A, AGF observer reports, #112, box 55, 4; OH, Theodore J. Conway, 1977, Robert F. Ensslin, SOOHP, MHI, III-10; OH, Harry O. Paxson, Nov. 1981, Herbert M. Hart, CEOH, 119–21; e-mail, Silvano Casaldi to author, Feb. 16, 2005; memo, R. W. Komer, "Report on Historical Observation in the Field," Feb. 24, 1944, in "Report on Activities of the Historical Section, Fifth Army," Nov. 1945, Chester G. Starr papers, HIA, box 1 ("*General Officers Only*").
"*could no longer resist the pressure*": JPL, 394; *CM,* 328; OH, James M. Wilson, Jr., Apr. 23, 2004, with author, Washington, D.C.; diary, cover letter, JPL to son, Jan. 1, 1946, MHI.
Despite persistent ailments: aide's diaries, Feb. 11 and 14, 1944, LKT Jr., Citadel, box 18, folder 3; OH, Walter T. Kerwin, Jr., Nov. 1, 2004, with author, Washington, D.C.; *CM,* 325. Kerwin rose to four-star rank.
"*You can't relieve a corps commander*": OH, JPL, May 24, 1948, SM, MHI; *CM,* 328; diary, MWC, Feb. 24, 1944, Citadel, box 65 ("*prefer to be second*").
The new corps commander returned: diary, Don E. Carleton, Feb. 22, 1944, HIA, box 1; corr, LKT Jr., to Sarah, March 8, 1944, LKT Jr., papers, GCM Lib, box 1, folder 6.
"*cool, level, taciturn*": OH, Theodore J. Conway, 1977, Robert F. Ensslin, SOOHP, MHI, III-10; diary, MWC, Feb. 22, 1944, MWC papers, Citadel, box 65 (*72,982 casualties*); MWC to Ann Clark, Feb. 27, 1944, personal corr, Citadel.
"*It is sheer nonsense*": MWC to Renie, Feb. 27, 1944, personal corr, Citadel.
Prodded by Hitler: Anzio Beachhead, 99; corr, John W. O'Daniel to Hal C. Pattison, Sept. 3, 1964, NARA RG 319, OCMH, 2-3.7 CC3, box 256; Hugh A. Scott, *The Blue and White Devils,* 109.
Truscott pinned a Bill Mauldin cartoon: Vaughan-Thomas, 182.
bloodiest month in the Mediterranean: "Summary of Activities," June 1, 1944, NA TOUSA, analysis and control division, CMH; Molony V, 750; memo, H. Alexander to MWC, Feb. 26, 1944, Robert T. Frederick papers, HIA, box 1 ("*He is quicker*").

"*Without air support*": Fritz Wentzell, "The Italian Campaign from August 1943 to February 1945," 20–23; Parton, 356 ("*flat on his back*"); Molony V, 747n; J. W. Totten, "Anzio Artillery," 10; Walter Kühn, "The Artillery at Anzio-Nettuno," March 1947, FMS, #D-158, CARL, N-17500.838.2, 11–15; memo, H. Alexander to MWC, Feb. 26, 1944, Robert T. Frederick papers, HIA, box 1; OH, Edward J. O'Neill, June 22, 1948, NARA RG 319, OCMH, CA, box 005 (*counterbattery fire in four minutes*); Arthur R. Harris, "The Bigger They Are the Harder They Fall," *FAJ*, May–June 1938, 229; Joseph M. Kolisch, POW interrogation report, Feb. 29, 1944, no. 405, HQ, Fifth Army, NARA RG 337, E 15A, AGF observer report no. 93, box 53; Andrew Brookes, *Air War over Italy, 1943–1945,* 60 (*three-quarters of all German battle casualties*).
"*the last year of the war*": Walter von Unruh, "Inspection of the Italian Theater of War," 1947, FMS, #D-016, MHI, 34–35; Siegfried Westphal, "The Italian Campaign," chap. 13, NARA RG 319, OCMH, CA, box 9 ("*progressive exhaustion*").
"*A turning point had been reached*": Westphal, "The Italian Campaign" A. G. Steiger, "The Italian Campaign, 4 Jan–4 June 1944," July 1948, report no. 20, Historical Section, Canadian Army HQ, MHI Lib, 17 ("*bowed down*").
German engineers trucked in: Rossi and Casaldi, 192; Daniel Lang, "Letter from Rome," *New Yorker*, June 24, 1944, 52+; Roe, 73 ("*successor would soon*"); Fitzgerald, 321 ("*an old man now*").

"Man Is Distinguished from the Beasts"

had gone missing at Anzio: Captured on Feb. 7, 1944, Paul Freyberg escaped and eventually took refuge in Vatican City. Freyberg, 465, 470–71; Trevelyan, 146; *Mountain Inferno*, 743 ("*holding up all our lives*").
"*consistent with military necessity*": *StoC,* 397; "The Bombing of Cassino Abbey," CAB 101/229, 16 (*Eisenhower in turn warned*); memo, 15th Army Group to MWC, Jan 10, 1944, Fifth Army, AG file no. 105-32.7, SM, MHI ("*ecclesiastical centres*"); "Preservation of Works of Art in Italy," May 8, 1944, Henry C. Newton papers, MHI, box 4 ("*man is distinguished*"); Solly Zuckerman, *From Apes to Warlords,* 211 (*crew briefing packets*); Robert Wallace, *The Italian Campaign,* 120 ("*Venus Fixers*").
Bombs had damaged forty churches: "The Damaged Neapolitan Churches," ts, n.d., and corr, Herbert L. Matthews, *NYT,* to DDE, Nov. 17, 1943, in monthly report, Allied Control Commission, subcommission for monuments, fine arts and archives, July 9, 1944, both in Henry C. Newton papers, MHI, box 4; "The Bombing of Cassino Abbey," CAB 101/229, 18 (*hit Castel Gandolfo*); Wallace, 120 ("*war in a museum*").
The unit ordered to capture: Field Marshal Lord Carver, *The Imperial War Museum Book of the War in Italy, 1943–1945*, 144–45; "The Bombing of Cassino Abbey," CAB 101/229, 20 ("*Violation of Geneva Convention*"); "Monte Cassino Bombing," Dec. 1944, HQ, Fifth Army, CMH, Geog L Italy, 373.11 (*thirty machine guns*); *StoC,* 408 (*flash of field glasses*); John Ezard, "Error Led to Bombing of Monte Cassino," *Guardian* (U.K.), Apr. 4, 2000, 5 ("*Nazis Turn Monastery*").
flew in an observation plane: OH, Ira Eaker, Feb. 1975, Hugh N. Ahmann, AFHRA, K239.0512-829, 444–47; Hapgood and Richardson, 185, 164 ("*I have Catholic gunners*"); North, ed., 120 ("*dead tooth*"); intel annex, HQ, Fifth Wing, Feb. 14, 1944, in Evans, *The Bombing of Monte Cassino.*
Others passionately disagreed: diary, MWC, Feb. 14, 1944, Citadel, box 65; GK, Feb. 2-5, 10, 12, 14, 1944; *StoC,* 405 (*two thousand refugees*); corr, MWC to GK, Feb. 4, 1944, NARA RG 200, "Personal-Official File," 130/76/1/4, box 3 ("*belligerent attitude*").
no better than "fifty–fifty": Freyberg, 458; memo, A. Gruenther, "Monte Cassino Abbey Bombing," Feb. 12, 1944, MWC, Citadel, box 3, folder 5.
"*I now have five corps*": diary, MWC, Feb. 4, 1944, Citadel, box 65; memo, MWC, Feb. 13, 1944,

Citadel, box 3, folder 5; *StoC,* 407; *Calculated,* 318 (“*If the Germans are not*”).
“*Bricks and mortar*”: North, ed., 121, 130 (“*What are you doing*”); Hapgood and Richardson, 172 (“‘*they wouldn’t let me use air’*”).
“*due to the political daintiness*”: memo, MWC, Feb. 13, 1944, Citadel, box 3, folder 5 (“*unduly interfering*”).
The attack would be launched quickly: Molony V, 713; Phillips, 207 (*single token bomb*); Hapgood and Richardson, 191 (*lobbed two dozen shells*); Bloch, “The Bombardment of Monte Cassino,” 403 (“Amici italiani”); *StoC,* 409.
A pleasant morning sun: Frido von Senger und Etterlin, *Neither Fear nor Hope,* 198–99, 208.
For five months: Corelli Barnett, ed., *Hitler’s Generals,* 375–78; “Small World,” CBS television segment, 1959, moderated by Edward R. Murrow; Hapgood and Richardson, 39 (“*more French than Prussian*”), 204; http://www.islandfarm.fsnet.co.uk/index.html (*killed at Cambrai*).
In this war he had helped capture Cherbourg: Senger, 5–6, 130, 163–67, 202; Boatner, 497–97; Frido von Senger und Etterlin, “War Diary of the Italian Campaign,” 1953, FMS, #C-095b, MHI, 40–41, 78; *StoC,* 407.
“*The rotten thing is to keep fighting*”: Hapgood and Richardson, 174.
“*annihilation was only a matter of time*”: Senger, “War Diary of the Italian Campaign,” 69. The British official history later accused Senger of exaggerating for effect. Molony V, 629n.
“*optimism is the elixir*”: Senger, *Neither Fear nor Hope,* 227, 198–99 (*listening to evening concerts*); Hapgood and Richardson, 175; http://www.movies-and-more.ch/movies/1943/103327.php (Der Weisse Traum); Barnett, ed., 381 (“*Oh the loneliness*”).
An officer in the 4th Indian Division: Molony V, 713; Evans, 22 (“*gust upward*”); Homer R. Ankrum, *Dogfaces Who Smiled Through Tears,* 430 (“*smoke coming out of a man’s ears*”).
They were the first of 250 bombers: AAFinWWII, vol. 3, 363; *StoC,* 411 (*hundreds of artillery rounds*); Durrance, “Battle for the Abbey,” 10 (“*poplar trees*”).
Soldiers on both sides of the hill: Bloch, “The Bombardment of Monte Cassino,” 407; Durrance, “Battle for the Abbey,” 12–13 (“*Shovel it on*”); *Mountain Inferno,* 743 (“*hugging each other*”); Hapgood and Richardson, 213 (“*like all the other fools*”); Frank Gervasi, *The Violent Decade,* 560 (“*Beautiful precision*”).
The leaflet barrage the previous evening: StoC, 414; Böhmler, 166 (*confused attempts to contact*).
Abbot Diamare planned to evacuate: Majdalany, 128, 131–32 (“*beseech Christ*”); Leccisotti, 119–21; Hapgood and Richardson, 205, 209 (*stuffed their ears*).
Thirteen hundred bombs: Molony V, 713; Majdalany, 133–35; Böhmler, 169–70 (“*Parents abandoned*”); Leccisotti, 125 (*monks forced a passage*); Bloch, “The Bombardment of Monte Cassino,” 406–7 (“*crazy with terror*”).
No mortal would ever know how many died: Hapgood and Richardson, 211; author visit, Monte Cassino abbey museum, Oct. 1, 1995; Molony V, 713.
Alexander’s headquarters asserted: StoC, 411; “Monte Cassino Bombing,” Dec. 1944, HQ, Fifth Army, CMH, Geog L Italy, 373.11 (*grenadiers searched the grounds*); Phillips, 218–19; Katriel Ben Arie, *Die Schlacht Bei Monte Cassino, 1944,* 201 (*field kitchen opened*).
Not until dawn on Thursday: Majdalany, 150, 152; Hapgood and Richardson, 218.
The 4th Indian Division had expected: “Operations of N.Z. Corps on the Fifth Army Front,” 8–9; “The Bombing of Cassino Abbey,” CAB 101/229, 14; Smith, 78; Stevens, *Fourth Indian Division,* 285 (*two dozen Indian troops were injured*); Majdalany, 142 (“*They told the monks*”).
Freyberg’s tactical incompetence: “The Bombing of Cassino Abbey,” 28; Carver, 143; Hapgood and Richardson, 153; corr, D.R.E.R. Bateman to F. Tuker, Feb. 18, 1959, IWM 72/117/1 (“*far out of his depth*”).

Not until Tuesday night did the attack begin: Majdalany, 144; Prasad, ed., 106–7; "Operations of N.Z. Corps on the Fifth Army Front," 9; Molony V, 714; Stevens, 287–90; *The Tiger Triumphs*, 47–48 (*trussed in tripwires*).

But nine thousand Kiwi smoke shells: OH, Kippenberger, Feb. 4 and 12, 1947; Phillips, 237; "Operations of N.Z. Corps on the Fifth Army Front," 15–16; Carver, 146–48 ("*A star shell went up*"); Prasad, ed., 111 (*Of two hundred mules*).

AVENGER petered out: Carver, 151; Senger, *Neither Fear nor Hope*, 206; Molony V, 713 ("*no military advantage*"); *StoC*, 417 ("*nothing beyond destruction*").

Military authorities pressured the OSS: Jones, "The Bombing of Monte Cassino, 15 February 1944," 25–38; msg, Wilson to British chiefs of staff, in "Monte Cassino Bombing," Dec. 1944, HQ, Fifth Army, CMH, Geog L Italy, 373.11 ("*irrefutable evidence*"); John G. Norris, "Cassino Abbey Attack Order Laid to Briton," *WP*, Sept. 4, 1949, 1 (*no civilian bodies*); memo, psychological warfare, n.d. Wallace Carroll papers, LOC, box 1, folder 2, 12–15 (*campaign to blame Germany*).

A German staff car picked him up: Senger, "War Diary of the Italian Campaign,", 83–84; "Monte Cassino Bombing," Dec. 1944, HQ, Fifth Army, CMH, Geog L Italy, 373.11 ("*Everything was done*").

Berlin overplayed its hand: Hapgood and Richardson, 172, 224; Phillips, 220; Bloch, "The Bombardment of Monte Cassino," 386 ("*everlasting shame*"); J.F.C. Fuller, *The Second World War, 1939–1945*, 272; Brian Holden Reid, "The Italian Campaign, 1943–1945:A Reappraisal of Allied Generalship," *Journal of Strategic Studies*, March 1990, 128+ ("*imagination was petrified*").

"*tomb of miscalculation*": Allanbrook, 175; Reid, "The Italian Campaign," 128 (*exhausted eight divisions*); Phillips, 241 ("*vistas of deadlock*"); msg, GCM to J. L. Devers, Feb. 18, 1944, "Eyes Only, General Devers, Incoming," NARA RG 492, MTOUSA, SGS, box 135.

Public opinion in the United States: George Gallup, "Public Would Bomb Religious Buildings," *NYT*, Apr. 19, 1944, 3.

"*Whenever I am offered a liqueur*": *Texas*, 330.

CHAPTER 10: FOUR HORSEMEN

A Fairyland of Silver and Gold

"*The bay was as blue*": Donald Downes, *The Scarlet Thread*, 166; Frank Gervasi, *The Violent Decade*, 562–63; Karl Baedeker, *Southern Italy and Sicily*, 27; Roger A. Freeman, *The American Airman in Europe*, 36 ("*Chicken-a-shit*"); Norman Lewis, *Naples '44*, 93, 152, 187; obit, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=%2Fnews%2F2003%2F07%2F23%2Fdb2301.xml.
"*the most loathsome nest*": H. V. Morton, *A Traveller in Southern Italy*, 234, 273; Betsy Wade, ed., *Forward Positions: The War Correspondence of Homer Bigart*, 230; F. Majdalany, *The Monastery*, 52.
Each afternoon, a hospital train: Alton D. Brashear, *From Lee to Bari*, 175; Alan Moorehead, *Eclipse*, 69; Paul W. Pritchard, "Smoke Generator Operations in the Mediterranean and European Theaters of Operation," n.d., CMH, 4-7.1 FA 1, 49; Brooks E. Kleber and Dale Birdsell, *The Chemical Warfare Service: Chemicals in Combat*, 331; OH, Robert J. Wood, 1973–74, William E. Narus, SOOHP, MHI, 3–25 (*shine flashlights at the curb*); Margaret Bourke-White, *Purple Heart Valley*, 35; Lewis, 100 ("*thrust into their arms*").
"*I&I*": Paul W. Brown, *The Whorehouse of the World*, 6; C. Richard Eke, "A Game of Soldiers," IWM, 92/1/1, 102 ("*passion wagons*"), 99 ("*Everywhere were G.I.s*"); Lloyd M. Wells, *From Anzio to the Alps*, 31; Masayo Umezawa Duus, *Unlikely Liberators*, 115; "History of the Peninsular Base Section," 1944, CMH, 8-4 HA 1 (*city jail*); Gervasi, 562; Joseph Edgar Martin, "Memoir of World War II," ts, 2003, author's possession, II-19; Brashear, 172 (*Red Cross auditorium*); memo, Office of the Special Service Office, Apr. 29, 1944, MWC, Citadel, box 3; Eugenia M. Kielar, *Thank You, Uncle Sam*, 80; Ralph G. Martin, *The G.I. War, 1941–1945*, 119 (*Bogart in the Hotel Parca*).
So, too, was Pompeii: Fred Howard, *Whistle While You Wait*, 120–21 (*House of the Two Bachelors*); corr, Jon Clayton to family, Feb. 14, 1944, ASEQ, 7th Inf Regt, 3rd ID, MHI ("*old Romans certainly knew*"); Lawrence D. Collins, *The 56th Evac Hospital*, 105 ("*evil-minded people*").
Soldiers also jammed the reopened San Carlo: Walter L. Medding, "The Road to Rome," ts, n.d., CEOH, box X-38, 56; Richard S. Malone, *A Portrait of War, 1939–1943*, 204; Martin, 118 ("*That's good*"); John Guest, *Broken Images*, 164.
New Neapolitan cabarets: "Settled Front," *Time*, May 1, 1944, 27; Bourke-White, 101; Harold L. Bond, *Return to Cassino*, 135–36; Brashear, 171; memoir, Aidan Mark Sprot, ts, 1947, LH 109–10 and 117 (*aimed champagne corks*); Moorehead, 69 ("*nodule of lotus-eating*"); Eric Sevareid, *Not So Wild a Dream*, 419 (*straw hats*); Robert Capa, *Slightly Out of Focus*, 110; Collins, 131, 140; Paul A. Cundiff, *45th Infantry CP*, 164; diary, William Russell Hinckley, AAF, March 1944, author's possession.
list the shades of the sea: Guest, 166–67; Bourke-White, 102.
"*The people are terribly poor*": Kielar, 73; Robert W. Komer, "Civil Affairs and Military Government in the Mediterranean Theater," 1954, CMH, 2-3.7 AX, vi–26; "British Administrative History of the Italian Campaign," appendix, "distribution of civil supplies," 1946, NARA RG 94, E 427, 95-USF2-5.0; Bill Mauldin, *The Brass Ring*, 211 ("*wizened bundle*"); *Reporting World War II*, vol. 2, 39; Raleigh Trevelyan, *Rome '44*, 159 ("*snatched the bones*").
typhus raged unchecked: "History of the Peninsular Base Section" Brashear, 171; Edward D. Churchill, *Surgeon to Soldiers*, 295; Moorehead, 70 (*Carts hauled away the dead*); Albert E. Cowdrey, *Fighting for Life*, 122 (*killed three million*); *A Military Encyclopedia: Based on Operations in the Italian Campaign, 1943–1945*, HQ, 15th Army Group, n.d., CARL, N-11069-1, 518 (*90 percent of the civilian population*); Harry L. Coles and Albert K. Weinberg, *Civil Affairs: Soldiers Become Governors*, 325–26 ("*disordered throng*"); monthly report, AMG, public health and welfare dept,

region 3, Dec. 1943, NARA RG 226, E 99, OSS history office, box 3.
Army physicians had quarantined Naples: minutes, "typhus committee," Jan. 7, 1944, Naples, NARA RG 331, AFHQ micro, R-235-D, job 78; Robert M. Hill and Elizabeth Craig Hill, *In the Wake of War*, 22; "Fifth Army Medical History," ts, n.d., NARA RG 112, 390/17/8/2-3, box 6, 100; "History of the Peninsular Base Section" James Phinney Baxter III, *Scientists Against Time*, 368; "The ASF in World War II," ts, n.d., CMH, 3-1.1A AA, IV-3; Coles and Weinberg, 325–26; Malcolm S. McLean, "Adventures in Occupied Areas," ts, 1975, MHI, 71 ("*People queued up*"); James Stevens Simmons, "How Magic Is DDT?" *Saturday Evening Post*, Jan. 6, 1945, 18+. Later found to have grave environmental consequences, DDT was effectively banned in the United States in the early 1970s.
"*A victorious army found in Italy*": "Operations of British, Indian and Dominion Forces in Italy," part V, n.d., UK NA, CAB 106/453, II-1; corr, Graham Erdwurm, former OSS officer, to author, Jan. 5, 2004 ("*army is all clapped-up*"); Peter Schrijvers, *The Crash of Ruin*, 181 (*world's largest bordello*); Spike Milligan, *Mussolini: His Part in My Downfall*, 157 ("*pox galore*").
With the average worker earning only sixty lire: "Fifth Army Medical History," 71, 75 ("*60 percent of all women in Italy*"); Hill and Craig, 56; "History of the Peninsular Base Section" "Observations at P.B.S.," ts, n.d., NARA RG 492, MTO, pm, gen'l corr, 290/54/26/2, box 2209 ("*finest pimp system*"); Brashear, 168–69 ("*DDT hairdos*"); Bill Harr, *Combat Boots*, 52 (*hung a sign around his neck*); Charles M. Wiltse, *The Medical Department: Medical Service in the Mediterranean and Minor Theaters*, 258; Lewis, 112 ("*Madame Four-Dollars*").
The "perfunctory jogging": Don Graham, *No Name on the Bullet*, 74; "Logistical History of NATOUSA/MTOUSA," Nov. 1945, NARA RG 407, E, 427, 95-AL1-4, box 203, 299–300; "Fifth Army Medical History," 81–86; "Operations of British, Indian and Dominion Forces in Italy," part V, n.d., UK NA, CAB 106/453, II-1 ("*Italian strain of gonococci*"); Wiltse, 258; OH, Albert Kenner, May 27, 1948, FCP, MHI (*same black market price as morphine*); Eric Lax, *The Mold in Dr. Florey's Coat*, 227–28 ("*best military advantage*").
"*Girls Who Take Boarders*": Gervasi, 563; corr, G. Erdwurm to author, Jan. 5, 2004 ("*ablution centers*"); Brown, *The Whorehouse of the World*, 253, 290; "History of the Peninsular Base Section" (*15 percent*); "Fifth Army Medical Service History," 78 ("*whorespitals*"); Trevelyan, 295; "Observations at P.B.S." Wiltse, 336; memo, N. P. Morrow, Feb. 26, 1944, VI Personnel Center, NARA RG 407, E 427, 95-USF1-2.0, AGF board reports (*tear gas grenades*).
"*The chaplains thought the whores*": memoir, Edward R. Feagins, ts, n.d., 143rd Inf, Texas MFM, 30.
"*that huge and gassy thing*": Phillip Knightley, *The First Casualty*, 320; "Beachheads and Mountains," MTO pamphlet, June 1945, Theodore J. Conway papers, MHI (*keep a single GI fighting*).
"*prodigy of organization*": Eric Larrabee, *Commander in Chief*, 120; Bernard C. Nalty et al, *With Courage*, 137 (*86,000 planes*); Alan Gropman, ed., *The Big L*, 89–93; Henry F. Pringle, "Weapons Win Wars," ts, n.d., WD, CMH, 2-3.7 AB.B, 159; James A. Huston, *The Sinews of War*, 477 (*71 million rounds*).
The nation's conversion from a commercial: Richard Overy, *Why the Allies Won*, 195; *Logistics in World War II*, 95.
In February 1944, the U.S. Army shipped: Harold Larson, "Handling Army Cargo in the Second World War," ts, 1945, CMH, 4-13.1 AA 19, 5; OH, LeRoy Lutes, Nov. 12, 1974, Maclyn Burg, DDE Lib, OH-408, II-108 (*six million separate supply items*); Brehon B. Somervell, "Army Service Forces," Aug. 9, 1943, NARA RG 334, "Records of Interservice Agencies," NWC Library, ANSCOL, L-1-43, box 167; Lee B. Kennett, *G.I.: The American Soldier in World War II*, 96–97 (*three sheets per soldier*); Marvin A. Kreidberg and Merton G. Henry, *History of Military Mobilization in the United States Army, 1775–1945*, 674–75 (*Lend Lease program*); Overy, 254 ("*Second Fronts*"); OH, Frederick E. Morgan, n.d., FCP, MHI ("*American bounty*").

"*one ship out of every five is stolen*": corr, B. B. Somervell to DDE et al, March 23, 1945, and E. S. Hughes to B. B. Somervell, Apr. 26, 1943, NARA RG 336, ASF, historical program files, chief of transportation, 190/22/30/00, box 58; Lewis, 119 ("*derives from transactions*"); "Logistical History of NATOUSA/MTOUSA," 159, 176; memo, unsigned, to Walter A. Hardie, Dec. 28, 1944, NARA RG 492, MTO, pm, gen'l corr, 333, 290/54/26/2, box 2209 (*tapped fuel pipelines*); Gervasi, 566; Charles F. Marshall, *A Ramble Through My War*, 119 (*funeral hearses*); Hill and Hill, 17, 38 ("*Pork. Beef*").
A separate prison was built at the port: memo, "Port of Naples," HQ, SOS, Sept. 11, 1944, NARA RG 492, MTO, pm, gen'l corr, 333, 290/54/26/2, box 2209; Schrijvers, 122 ("*whip the gold*"); Lewis, 134–35.
"Total war" was largely a German concept: http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-52981; Richard M. Leighton and Robert W. Coakley, *Global Logistics and Strategy: 1940–1943*, 14 (*Americans made it their own*); Overy, 198 (*fourfold in heavy guns*); Gropman, ed., 91 (*sevenfold in transport planes*), 54–55 (*tank production in 1943 alone*); John Ellis, *Brute Force*, xviii (*seventy thousand trucks*).
Even though Kesselring's divisions: Walter Warlimont, "The Drive on Rome," Sept. 1951, FMS, #C-097a, MHI, 11; "The German System of Supply in the Field," Feb. 1946, AFHQ, G-2, CARL, N-13305.1, 92, 85, 123 ("*severe pinch*"); Max Wehrig, "Duties and Operation of the Italian Section of the Chief of Wehrmacht Motor Transportation," 1947, FMS, #D-126, MHI, 23 (*three thousand different types*).
Wehrmacht quartermasters reported: "The German System of Supply in the Field," 86, 106, 135; Albert Kesselring et al., "German Version of the History of the Italian Campaign," n.d., CARL, N-16671.1-3, 227 (Shortages of trucks and dray horses); Hans Henrici, "The Use of Italian Industry in the Service of German Munitions Production," March 1947, FMS, #D-015, MHI, 1–2 (*scheme to produce German munitions*).
Allied quartermasters had their own woes: OH, Francis Oxx, PBS commander, May 21, 1948, NARA RG 319, OCMH, CA, box 005; msg, SOS NATOUSA to PEMBARK, Feb. 9, 1944, NARA RG 331, AFHQ micro, R-369-F, box 216; William G. Ashmore, "Supply Planning for Beachhead Operations," *Quartermaster Review*, Jan.–Feb. 1945, 18+ (*toll in water cans*); "Ordnance Activities in the Mediterranean Theater of Operations," Nov. 1942–June 1945, CMH, 5 (*ordnance requisitions, in sextuplicate*); Robert Wagner, *The Texas Army*, 195 ("*most hated folk in Italy*"); E. R. Keller, "Quartermasters—Battle Proved," *Quartermaster Review*, May–June 1944, 24+ (*4AA to 16EEE*).
As the fifth year of carnage played out: Leighton and Coakley, 14.

The Weight of Metal

Now overwatched by the gray stub: Janusz Piekalkiewicz, *The Battle for Cassino*, 10.
All approaches from the south: Martha Gellhorn, *The Face of War*, 126–27; Christopher Buckley, *Road to Rome*, 308 ("*straight as a bar of steel*"); E. D. Smith, *The Battles for Cassino*, 99 ("*Time seems to have stopped*").
Not far from here, in 217 B.C.: Livy, *The War with Hannibal*, 117–18; http://www.greektexts.com/library/Plutarch/Fabius/eng/print/502.html.
"*master of his own destiny*": Smith, 96; Field Marshal Lord Carver, *The Imperial War Museum Book of the War in Italy, 1943–1945*, 151; Bishenwar Prasad, ed., *Official History of the Indian Armed Forces in the Second World War, 1939–1945: The Campaign in Italy, 1943–1945*, 117; Andrew Brookes, *Air War over Italy*, 71 (*tail now wagged the dog*).
"*Anything that will divest me*": diary, MWC, Feb. 28, 1944, Citadel, box 65. Until mid-February, when the responsibility had been shifted to others, Clark had also overseen the plans for landings in southern France, which eventually occurred in August 1944.

Before that happy day arrived: Battle, 209; Smith, 98 (*Minefields and inundations*); Prasad, ed., 119 ("*faith in the weight of metal*").
As the abbey had been pulverized: Ian Gooderson, *Cassino 1944*, 93; *StoC,* 435 (*six to twelve hours*).
The use of airpower to bludgeon: msg, H. Arnold to I. Eaker and J. Devers, Feb. 24, 1943, NARA RG 492, MTOUSA, SGS, "Eyes Only, General Devers, Incoming," box 135; James Parton, "*Air Force Spoken Here*," 372 ("*lack of ingenuity*"); corr, H. Arnold to I. Eaker, n.d., NARA RG 319, OCMH, CA, box 6 ("*really make air history*").
Lieutenant General Eaker yielded to no man: OH, Ira C. Eaker, 1972, Joe B. Green, SOOHP, MHI; Mark M. Boatner III, *The Biographical Dictionary of World War II*, 145.
"*due to cratering and debris*": "Air Support of Fifth Army for Rapido River and Cassino Attacks," Apr. 7, 1944, HQ, Fifth Army, air support control, MHI, Robert J. Woods papers, "Report on Cassino Operations" corr, I. Eaker to H. Arnold, March 6, 1944, NARA RG 319, OCMH, CA, box 6 ("*Do not set your heart*"); *StoC,* 434–35 ("*We shall go forward*").
Yet in the absence of a plausible alternative: StoC, 434–35; N. C. Phillips, *Official History of New Zealand in the Second World War*, vol. 1, 244 ("*deep sounding of its bell*").
Freyberg insisted the bombing coincide: Charles C. Bates and John F. Fuller, *America's Weather Warriors,* 78–80, 283n.
Sickness or battle wounds claimed another Indian soldier: Phillips, 252–53, 254–57, 261; Howard Kippenberger, *Infantry Brigadier,* 360 ("*undetected S-mine*"); Fred Majdalany, *Cassino: Portrait of a Battle*, 170.
Never in his legendary career: Phillips, 252–53.
Unknown to Freyberg: General Sir Sidney Chevalier Kirkman, article on 3rd and 4th Cassino, *Proceedings*, Royal Artillery Historical Society, Jan. 1969, 94+.
The ground grew boggier: Rudolf Böhmler, *Monte Cassino,* 208; Robert Geake, "Mule Pack Trains in Italy," *Cavalry Journal,* March–Apr. 1944, 74+; "Lessons from the Italian Campaign," March 10, 1944, NARA RG 407, E 427, NATOUSA, 95-USF1-04, box 250; Lewis A. Riggins, "Report on Italian Campaign," Dec. 31, 1943, DTL, Ft. B, 5 ("*mules are tranquil*"); "History of the Peninsular Base Section" (*packboards*).
"*engaged by a holocaust of fire*": Phillips, 258–59.
At seven A.M. on Wednesday, March 15: diary, MWC, March 15, 1944, Citadel, box 65; Bates and Fuller, 257 ("*frontal system over France*"); Prasad, ed., 127 ("*Bradman will be batting*").
Operation LUDLUM had attracted an eager crowd: Parton, 373; Harold Macmillan, *War Diaries*, 374 ("*calm, detached and attractive*"); Rupert Clarke, *With Alex at War,* photocopied letter ("*there are witches*").
Before reaching Monte Trocchio: Calculated, 330; diary, MWC, March 15, 1944, Citadel, box 65.
Fifth Army comprised 438,782 soldiers: memo, "JDB" to MWC, March 14, 1944, MWC, corr, Citadel, box 3; "Small World," CBS, 1959 ("*very depressed*"); diary, MWC, Feb. 27, 1944, Citadel, box 65 ("*whom the Lord loveth*"); MWC to Renie, March 5, 1944, MWC, personal corr, Citadel.
If broad-gauged and resolute: "Small World," CBS, 1959 ("*keen and abiding interest*"); GK, March 13, 1944; diary, MWC, March 1 ("*greatly annoyed*"), March 8 ("*difficult subordinate*"), March 11, 1944 ("*all dispatches sent personally*"), Citadel, box 65.
A few days earlier, he had mailed Renie: MWC to Renie, Feb. 10, 1944, in note from Renie Clark to GCM, Feb. 23, 1944, GCM papers, GCM Lib, corr, box 61; MWC to Renie, March 8, 1944, MWC, personal corr, Citadel.
"*Into the silence obtruded a drone*": J. B. Tomlinson, "Under the Banner of the Battleaxe," ts, n.d., IWM, 90/29/1, 126.
"*The object of the attack*": James Parton, "The Bombardment of Cassino, March 15, 1944, MAAF,"

Oct. 1944, CARL, N-6058; Brookes, 78; *StoC*, 410.
"*Sprout after sprout of black smoke*": Parton, 373; Matthew Parker, *Monte Cassino,* 182 ("*Target cabbaged*").
"*After a few minutes*": Smith, 103; "The Bombardment of Cassino," Oct. 1, 1944, AFHRA, 622.310-4, 6–7, 24 (*LENTIL, TROTSKY*).
"*Stop those damn maniacs!*": B. Smith, "Waltonia," ts, 1981, IWM 67/254/1; Paul Freyberg, *Bernard Freyberg, V.C.,* 466 ("*terrible one-sidedness*"); Phillip Knightley, *The First Casualty,* 326–30 ("*evidence of my own eyes*").
At 12:12 P.M.: Parton, "The Bombardment of Cassino, March 15, 1944," CARL, N-6058; "The Bombardment of Cassino," AFHRA, 8 ("*flat as a stone city*").
Clark left his rooftop: diary, MWC, March 15, 1944, Citadel, box 65; OH, H. Alexander, Jan. 10–15, 1949, SM, CMH, II-4 ("*could still be alive*"); speech, Ira C. Eaker, March 15, 1944, "Blue Network," transcript in MWC, corr, Citadel, box 3.
He should have known better: memo, office of the AA officer to chief of staff, HQ, Fifth Army, March 15, 1944, in "The Bombardment of Cassino," Oct. 1944, CARL, N-6058; msg, A.P. Juin to MWC, March 16, 1944, MWC, Citadel, box 3 (*killing fifteen French*); Clarke, photo caption (*Eighth Army command post*); Rowland Ryder, *Oliver Leese,* 160 ("*our American friends*").
Other bombs fell on the 4th Indian Division: memo, "Summary of Reports of Bombing Behind Our Lines," HQ, MAAF, March 17, 1944, in "The Bombardment of Cassino," Oct. 1944, CARL, N-6058; "Draft Report on FEC," n.d., CMH, SM, box I; Brookes, 74. The tally given Clark on March 17 included 75 Allied dead and 250 wounded, but that number appears incomplete. *StoC,* 441n; Molony V, 785; "Report on Effect of Bombing and Shelling of Cassino, 15 March 1944," HQ, Fifth Army, Apr. 7, 1944, MHI, Robert J. Woods papers; Brookes, 74; "The Bombardment of Cassino," AFHRA, 29.
In Venafro alone as many as 75 civilians: "Report on Effect of Bombing and Shelling of Cassino, 15 March 1944" bomb plot, HQ, MAAF, operations analysis section, Apr. 5, 1944, in Parton, "The Bombardment of Cassino" (*Of 2,366 bombs dropped*); "The Bombardment of Cassino," AFHRA, 7.
Investigators found that flight leaders: "Report of Investigation, Cassino Operation," HQ, USAAF, MTO, Apr. 12, 1944, in "The Bombardment of Cassino" "The Bombardment of Cassino," AFHRA; Parton, 375; Molony V, 785.
Freyberg's intelligence had assumed: Parton, 373; interrogation report, Richard Heidrich, Nov. 13, 1946, Canadian Military HQ, MHI, SM, box 2; *The Tiger Triumphs,* 52 ("*ruthless and not overnice*").
Roughly half the paratroopers caught in Cassino: Phillips, 345; *StoC,* 442 ("*scraps of paper*"), 443 (*eighty-nine of ninety-four tubes*); Böhmler, 210–11 ("*We could no longer see*"); Trevelyan, 199 ("*weep and rage*"); "The Bombardment of Cassino," AFHRA, 32 ("*Speak about women*").
The town was "blown asunder": Molony V, 785; "The Bombardment of Cassino," 1944, MAAF, UK NA, AIR 8/1358, 11–12 ("*rendered comatose*"); memo, I. H. Crowne to L. Norstad, "Preliminary Memorandum on Cassino," May 23, 1944, HQ, MAAF, Lauris Norstad papers, DDE Lib, box 1 ("*two rows of houses remain intact*"); "Operations of N.Z. Corps on the Fifth Army Front," May 1944, HQ, AAI, part I, UK NA, CAB 106/366, 25; James Parton, "The Bombardment of Cassino" ("*Bombs falling three to four yards*").
"*Cassino was so ideally situated*": interrogation report, Richard Heidrich; memo, Crowne to Norstad, "Preliminary Memorandum on Cassino."
"*The Germans would do well*": Böhmler, 213.
Three hundred and fifty Allied tanks: Phillips, 269–71, 298, 305, 336.
The planned pace of one hundred yards' advance: Molony V, 787; Phillips, 272 ("*like a flotilla*"); "Operations of N.Z. Corps," 28; Parton, "The Bombardment of Cassino."

Teeming rain fell at dusk: StoC, 443; "Operations of N.Z. Corps," 26; Majdalany, *Cassino,* 179.
In the dying light, a single intrepid company: John H. Green, "The Battles for Cassino," *AB,* No. 13, 1976, 1+; Phillips, 289, 347; "Report on Cassino Operations," June 5, 1944, HQ, Fifth Army, Robert J. Wood papers, MHI, 16; Smith, 116; "Operations of N.Z. Corps," 28 (*ruined radios and cut phone lines*).
Several hundred feet above the town: Dharm Pal, *The Campaign in Italy, 1943–1945,* 129; "Operations of N.Z. Corps," 27.
This isolated, eight-acre lodgment: Majdalany, *Cassino,* 201; Phillips, 349 ("*moral lien*").
"*The fire was so heavy":* Parker, 254; *The Tiger Triumphs,* 61–63 (*amputated limbs*); Majdalany, *Cassino,* 201 (*dead mule at the bottom*); Molony V, 794 (*mutinied rather than cross*); C. M. Emeis, "Report on Italian Campaign," June 15, 1944, NARA RG 337, AGF, observer reports, #111, box 55, 12; Prasad, ed., 131; Böhmler, 235 (*bags of blood*).
Enough food and ammo fell: Smith, 7, 126–27 ("*God help us all*").
"*Freyberg's handling":* diary, MWC, March 17, 1944, Citadel, box 65; Phillips, 299–301; Molony V, 793; Smith, 122.
"*I told Freyberg*": diary, MWC, March 17, 18, 23, 1944, Citadel, box 65; Phillips, 352 (*he intended to abandon the attack*).
"*Push on, you must go hard*": Majdalany, *Cassino,* 186; Smith, 125; Prasad, ed., 132.
"*Almost every building*": "Operations of N.Z. Corps," 31–32, 41–42; Molony V, 800 ("*unexpected encounters*"); Phillips, 323; *The Tiger Triumphs,* 59; Robert S. Rush, *The U.S. Infantryman in World War II,* 131 ("*Little Stalingrad*").
Just before dawn, three hundred paratroopers: Smith, 127; Majdalany, *Cassino,* 190–91; Stevens, 303 ("*smother of enemies*"); Parker, 237 (*through arrow loopholes*).
An arcing signal flare: The Tiger Triumphs, 56–57; Parker, 241 ("*We talked a bit*"); Prasad, ed., 135; Green, "The Battles for Cassino," 1+; Molony V, 797; Stevens, 305 (*fur-lined gloves*).
Two thousand yards across the crest: Green, "The Battles for Cassino," 1; AAR, "The Attack on Albenette House," n.d., Co. D, 760th Tank Bn, in "Report No. 140, Army Ground Forces Board, AFHQ-NATO," Apr. 3, 1944, CARL, N-7245-G ("*cause chaos*"); Prasad, ed., 137; Phillips, 311.
Then the noose cinched: Green, "The Battles for Cassino," 1+; "The Attack on Albenette House" ("*I hated to shoot the mules*"); Pal, 137.
General von Senger on several occasions: Frido von Senger und Etterlin, "War Diary of the Italian Campaign," 1953, FMS, #C-095b, MHI, 102–3; Frido von Senger und Etterlin, *Neither Fear nor Hope,* 226.
Little reliable information: Senger, *Neither Fear nor Hope,* 214–15; Smith, 119 ("*Things are not too splendid*"); Molony V, 791, 802; Böhmler, 233.
Yet the failed Allied tank foray: Böhmler, 233–35; Phillips, 304–5 (*22,000 smoke rounds*); Majdalany, *Cassino,* 188 ("*unpleasant wounds*"); Prasad, ed., 136 ("*screened nothing from nobody*").
As for the town, Senger thought: Senger, "War Diary of the Italian Campaign," 101; Senger, *Neither Fear nor Hope,* 216; Molony V, 793–94, 802–3.
General Freyberg also prowled: Stevens, 96; Phillips, 316 (*"Another lovely day"*); Freyberg, 467 (*his arithmetical scribbles*); Smith, 132 (*"both groggy"*);
http://www.catholicforum.com/saintS/saintb02.htm (*date St. Benedict died*); diary, MWC, March 21–22, 1944, Citadel, box 65 (*he rallied Alexander*); Winston S. Churchill, *Closing the Ring,* 509.
"*Unfortunately we are fighting*": Arthur Bryant, *Triumph in the West,* 127; "Report on Cassino Operations," 21; Majdalany, *Cassino,* 193 ("*Passchendaele*").
Alexander concurred, as did Clark: memo, A. Gruenther to I. Eaker, Apr. 5, 1944, in "The Bombardment of Cassino," CARL, N-6058; diary, MWC, March 23, 1944, Citadel, box 65.

That calumny: "Notes on Converation Between Commander 13 Corps and Lieut. Col. Nangle, commanding 1/9 Ghurka Rifles," ts, May 28, 1944, in diary, General Sir Sidney Chevalier Kirkman, Jan.–Sept. 1944, LHC; Trevelyan, 207 (*paper bag holding a carrier pigeon*); Smith, 138 ("*spot of shooing*"); Kirkman, article on 3rd and 4th Cassino, 94+.
At 8:15 P.M. on Friday, March 24: "Operations of N.Z. Corps," 43–44; Molony V, 801n; Majdalany, *Cassino,* 204, 209 (*keg of rum*); Smith, 138 ("*Never will I forget*").
By late Saturday, a swastika flag: Senger, "War Diary of the Italian Campaign," 93; Trevelyan, 208 ("*a heavy fall of snow*").
The New Zealand Corps disbanded at noon: Prasad, ed., 142; Phillips, 341; Molony V, 803. During the last three weeks of March, the 1st Parachute and 15th Panzer Grenadier Divisions reported 1,800 casualties, but during the eleven-day battle for Cassino in March the German losses are estimated at roughly 1,200.
"*that valley of evil memory*": Parton, 360; GK, March 24, 1944.
"*a persistent feeling that something, somewhere*": *StoC,* 447; Molony V, 806; Smith, 141 ("*The strongest defences in Europe*"); Phillips, 344 ("*little of that tactical originality*").
Something had *gone wrong:* Brian Holden Reid, "The Italian Campaign, 1943–1945:A Reappraisal of Allied Generalship," *Journal of Strategic Studies,* March 1990, 128+; OH, Andrew J. Goodpaster, Aug. 17, 2004, author ("*unsynchronized schemes*"); OH, Robert J. Wood, March 4 and 15, 1948, SM, MHI (*probing for soft spots*); "Report on Cassino Operations," June 5, 1944, HQ, Fifth Army, Robert J. Wood papers, MHI, 21 (*almost 600,000 artillery shells*); Phillips, 338 ("*a battle of the First World War*").
the strategy of "*naked attrition*": Molony V, 806n, 835, 852 ("*a crawling monster*"); Chester G. Starr, ed., *From Salerno to the Alps,* 120 (*six hundred tanks parked*); Phillips, 339 (*never could fling more than one-tenth*); J.F.C. Fuller, *The Second World War, 1939–1945,* 272; Reid, "The Italian Campaign, 1943–1945," 128+; Smith, 144 ("*military sins no less*").
"*Bombardment alone never had*": *Calculated,* 331; corr, E. N. Harmon to MWC, March 28, 1944, ENH, box 1.
"*A little later when snow goes off*": Churchill, *Closing the Ring,* 509 ("*war weighs very heavy*"); Fuller, 274 ("*presiding deity*").
It weighed heavy on the far side: Senger, *Neither Fear nor Hope,* 219.

Dragonflies in the Sun

"*After you get whipped and humiliated*": Parker, 69; Howard H. Peckham and Shirley A. Snyder, eds., *Letters from Fighting Hoosiers,* vol. 2, 71 ("*a callousness to death*"); corr, 324th Service Group, n.d., censorship morale reports, NARA RG 492, MTO, AG, 311.7 ("*We get quite a kick*").
"*One goes on fighting, killing*": Trevelyan, 1; Sevareid, 417; John Muirhead, *Those Who Fall,* 4, 122.
"*Watched an amputation last night*": diary, John G. Wright, American Field Service driver, May 29, 1944, author's possession, 26; Schrijvers, 77 ("*possessed by a fury*"); e-mail, David Roberts to author, May 23, 2003 (*flatulent noises*); J. Glenn Gray, *The Warriors,* 139, 164 ("*help me to keep my humanity*").
A survey of infantry divisions: Schrijvers, 77; John B. Romeiser, ed., *Combat Reporter,* 211 ("*The more you hate*"); Wagner, 64 ("*He has no right to do this*"); Collins, 97 (*wounded German prisoners*); Trevelyan, 149 ("*sure hate their guts*").
"*There's no rules in this war*": Quentin Reynolds, *The Curtain Rises,* 212; "Comment Sheets," censorship reports, NARA RG 492, MTO G-2, box 387 ("*Take No Prisoners*").
"*three R's—ruthless, relentless, remorseless*": diary, Norman Lee Baldwin, Dec. 13, 1943, HIA, N. L.

Baldwin papers.
"*This is a war for keeps*": Annette Tapert, ed., *Lines of Battle,* 124.
Eager boys no longer scaled: John Patrick Carroll-Abbing, *But for the Grace of God,* 63; Daniel Lang, "Letter from Rome," *New Yorker,* July 15, 1944 (*Allied flags flapped*); Jane Scrivener, *Inside Rome with the Germans,* 26 (*Jumpy German sentries*).
"*dragonflies in the sun*": Scrivener, 60, 134–35 (*those queued up for water*); Robert Katz, *The Battle for Rome,* 205–19 (*a B-17 day*); Trevelyan, 229–30 (*Graffiti on city walls*); George F. Botjer, *Sideshow War,* 103 ("*Allies, don't worry*").
"*Everything went*": Scrivener, 36; Walter von Unruh, "Inspection of Italian Theater of War," 1947, FMS, #D-016, MHI, 17 ("*Do you want work?*"); Walter Warlimont, "OKW Activities—The Italian Theater, 1 Apr.–31 Dec. 1944," n.d., FMS, #C-099b, MHI, 13 (*Fifty thousand Italians*).
The shadows soon deepened: Michael Burleigh, *The Third Reich,* 741–42; Richard Lamb, *War in Italy, 1943–1945,* 41–42 (*arrest all Jews in the city*), 55; Botjer, 100 (*son of a Stuttgart chauffeur*); Trevelyan, 62, 117 ("*intolerant, cold, vengeful*"); Alessandro Portelli, *The Order Has Been Carried Out,* 85–86; Martin Gilbert, *The Second World War,* 467; Katz, 71–75; Dan Kurzman, *The Race for Rome,* 61; U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum Web site, articles on Italy and Rome, http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/.
Even for Romans not facing extermination: C.R.S. Harris, *Allied Administration of Italy, 1943–1945,* 170; Trevelyan, 229 (*felling trees*); Robert H. Adleman and George Walton, *Rome Fell Today,* 81–82 (*neighborhoods went without power*); "Contributions of Italy Toward the Allied War Effort," Aug. 31, 1945, OSS, MHI Lib, 38n (*infant mortality spiked*); Kurt Mälzer, "The Problem of Rome During the Fighting Near Anzio-Nettuno," Jan. 1948, FMS, #D-314, MHI, 8 (*destruction of supply trucks*).
Prices doubled: Botjer, 92; Katz, 283, 276 (*shot them as they faced the Tiber*); Trevelyan, 229 (*ground chickpeas*).
Blackshirts finding a film too tedious: Botjer, 95; Scrivener, 148 (*five hundred eavesdroppers*), 152 (*priest condemned for subversion*); Trevelyan, 287; Portelli, 125.
Soon half of Rome was said to be hiding: Lang, "Letter from Rome" Trevelyan, 97; Kurzman, 183 (*had their shoes removed*); Anthony Cave Brown, *The Last Hero,* 492 ("*They pulled out the hairs*"); Riccardo Luzzatto, *Unknown War in Italy,* 114 ("*Long live Italy*").
Allied planes flying from Brindisi: "History of Special Operations (Air) in the Mediterranean Theater," n.d., U.K., NARA RG 94, E 427, 95-USF-2-0.3.0, 270/50/29-30/G-1, 5; Eugene Warner, "Morale Operations, Report for 16–30 April 1944," HQ 2677th HQ Co., OSS, MO branch, NARA RG 226, OSS history office, E 99, box 25, folder 1, 1–9 (*Intended to inspirit Italian insurgents*); OSS activities, March 1944, NATOUSA, NARA RG 226, E 99, OSS history office, box 122; Anthony Cave Brown, ed., *The Secret War Report of the OSS,* 222 (Das Neue Deutschland).
In Rome, the OSS by March 1944: "Italian Operations Centering on Rome," n.d., NARA RG 226, OSS history office, E, 99, box 41; Carl J. Friedrich, ed., *American Experiences in Military Government in World War II,* 133; Patrick K. O'Donnell, *Operatives, Spies, and Saboteurs,* 62 (*German order of battle*).
No OSS spy in Rome was more flamboyant: Katz, 49; http://muse.jhu.edu/cgi-bin/access.cgi?uri=/journals/annual_of_bernard_shaw_studies/v024/24.1carter.html (*George Bernard Shaw*); diary, Peter Tompkins, Jan. 1944, NARA RG 226, E 99, OSS history office, 190/6/10/7, box 47, 21, 42, 49 (*a Roman prince*); "Peter Tompkins, Author," obituary, *WP,* Feb. 1, 2007, B-6.
Favoring a blue sharkskin suit: Katz, 144; Peter Tompkins, "The OSS and Italian Partisans in World War II," *Studies in Intelligence,* spring 1998, http://www.cia.gov/csi/studies/spring98/OSS.html (*daily radio bulletins*); Brown, *The Last Hero,* 487–88, 495; "Italian Operations Centering on Rome."
Still, it was part of the good fight: diary, Tompkins, Feb.–March 1944, 55–58, 77, 61, 67, 70–71, 130;

Brown, ed., 202; Brown, *The Last Hero*, 494.
An *estimated 25,000 Italian partisans:* "Contributions of Italy Toward the Allied War Effort," 26–27; "The Resistance Movement in German-Controlled Italy," CCS Joint Intel Committee, March 8, 1944, weekly summary, #61, NARA RG 334, NWC Lib, box 326; Luzzatto, 80–82.
"*Singing at the top of our lungs*": Katz, 204.
From the Piazza del Popolo: diary, Tompkins, 127–28; Portelli, 134.
He was in fact a medical student: Katz, 49–51, 57–62; Portelli, 161; author visits, May 10, 2004, Dec. 1, 2006.
As the singing troops approached: transcript, war crimes trial of Albert Kesselring, Feb.–Apr. 1947, Venice, NARA RG 492, MTO, AG HQ, 290/53/32/5-6, 000.5, boxes 816–18; Katz, 62, 72, 224.
"*blown down by a great wind*": Trevelyan, 213; Portelli, 136–37, 139 ("*pulp with a coat*"); Katz, 68; diary, Tompkins, 127–28 (*at least one head*); Trevelyan, 213 (*firing wildly*).
Lieutenant Colonel Kappler was enjoying: Katz, 58–62; transcript, Kesselring trial (*thirty-two men dead*); Kurzman, 176 ("*Revenge!*"); Portelli, 142 (*water and salt*).
Late that afternoon the German high command: transcript, Kesselring trial.
"*I am giving you now a Führer order*": ibid.; Kenneth Macksey, *Kesselring: The Making of the Luftwaffe*, 207; Lamb, 57.
Kappler spent all night: Katz, 101, 116–18; Lamb, 59 (*Kappler added fifteen more*); Trevelyan, 222; Portelli, 150, 175.
"*I feel the flowers growing*": http://www.john-keats.com/biografie/chapter_viii.htm#last_days_and_death; Portelli, 7 (*tuberoses perfumed the air*); transcript, Kesseling trial (*Five sharp cracks*).
Five by five by five they staggered: Katz, 140–42; Portelli, 28.
Relatives of the dead from the Bozen Regiment: Botjer, 100.
A brief public statement: Katz, 273; Lamb, 61; "Under the German Yoke," ts, n.d., CEOH, X-39, 12–13, 16 ("*You will be avenged*").
"*When Rome falls*": memo, Wallace Carroll to "Bannes," Psychological Warfare Bureau, May 31, 1944, Wallace Carroll papers, LOC, box 1, folder 6.
Not for three months: diary, Tompkins, Jan. 19, 1944; statement, Brother Robert Pace, Oct. 1946, NARA RG 492, JAG war crimes branch, box 2046; Portelli, 191.
some Roman families received a curt note: Portelli, 188, and jacket art from archive of the Associazione Nazionale tra le Famiglie Italiane dei Martiri.
"*I dream of the hills*": Trevelyan, 230.

CHAPTER 11: A KETTLE OF GRIEF

Dead Country

Fifth Army meteorologists for months: Charles C. Bates and John F. Fuller, *America's Weather Warriors*, 257, 282n; William Murray, "Naples: Variations on a Neapolitan Air," *NYT*, Nov. 19, 2000 (*one eye open*); Tom Gidwitz, "The Hero of Vesuvius," 2005, http://www.vesuvius.tomgidwitz.com/html/the_hero_of_vesuvius.html, chapter 7; "Activity of Vesuvius Between 1631 and 1944," http://vulcan.fis.uniroma3.it/vesuvio/1944eng_text.html; "Vesuvioinrete, il portale del vulcano Vesuvio," http://www.vesuvioinrete.it/e_storia.htm; Moorehead, *Eclipse*, 69; memo on Vesuvius eruption, "Report of Mission," May 5, 1944, Fifth Army, MWC corr, Citadel, box 3 (*the smoke stopped*); Spike Milligan, *Where Have All the Bullets Gone?*, 20–21 (*more anxious*).
The eruption began at 4:30 P.M.: Susan Sontag, *The Volcano Lover*, in Alice Leccese Powers, *Italy in*

Mind, 288–89; Walter L. Medding, "The Road to Rome," ts, n.d., CEOH, box X-38, 58; Alton D. Brashear, *From Lee to Bari,* 203–5; Eric Sevareid, *Not So Wild a Dream,* 367–69 ("*The risk of life*"); Norman Lewis, *Naples '44,* 104–6; *Texas,* 342 (*Peasants wept*).

Just after nine P.M. on Tuesday: Milligan, 20–21; memo on Vesuvius eruption, "Report of Mission" (*incandescent sheets*); "Activity of Vesuvius Between 1631 and 1944," http://vulcan.fis.uniroma3.it/vesuvio/1944eng_text.html; Kenn C. Rust, *Twelfth Air Force Story,* 32; "Pliny the Younger's Observations," http://www.mcli.dist.maricopa.edu/tut/final/pliny.html; Michael Howard, *Captain Professor,* 86.

"*Smoke of a thick oily character*": Harold Macmillan, *War Diaries,* 397; David Erskin, *The Scots Guards, 1919–1955,* 229; Brashear, 207 (*snow showers*); Wynford Vaughan-Thomas, *Anzio,* 212–13 ("*this gesture of the gods*"); Lavinia Orde, "Better Late Than Never," ts, n.d., IWM, 96/34/1, 186; memoir, Aidan Mark Sprot, ts, 1947, LHC, 115.

Twenty-six deaths were reported: "Who's Afraid of Vesuvius?" *NYT,* Aug. 26, 2003; Brashear, 203–5; H. H. Dunham, "U.S. Army Transportation and the Italian Campaign," Sept. 1945, monograph #17, ASF, Chief of Transportation, NARA RG 336, 190/33/30/00, box 142, 199 (*Rail lines remained blocked*); Rust, 32; "History of the Aviation Engineers in the Mediterranean Theater of Operations," June 1946, AAF Engineer Command, CEOH, X-39 ("*enemy rocks*").

Ash mixed with rain: W. H. Connerat, Jr., "Ordnance in the North Africa and Med Theater," ts, n.d., AFHQ, SM, MHI, box 2; corr, J.W. Crawford, Jr., Jan. 3, 2003, to author ("*Sweepers, start your brooms*"); Fred Howard, *Whistle While You Wait,* 165 ("*Never trust a volcano*").

The world had not ended: Peter Verney, *Anzio 1944,* 156 ("*Anzio Worse Than Salerno*"); *Anzio Beachhead,* 105–6; Warren P. Munsell, Jr., *The Story of a Regiment,* 65.

Wide-eyed they lined the rails: Vaughan-Thomas, 191; memo, F. J. Lowry, "Guide to Merchant Vessels Unloading at Anzio," March 7, 1944, SEM, NHC, box 47 ("*The chances of being hit*"); "History of Ordnance Service in the Mediterranean Theater," ts, n.d., CMH, 8-4 JA, 85 (*fifty vehicles from an LST deck*); "Report on Port and Beach Operations at Anzio," Apr. 29, 1944, 540th Engineer Combat Regt, NARA RG 334, NWC Lib, box 343 (*three tons of cargo into a DUKW*); "The United States Eighth Fleet," ts, n.d., in "The Administrative History of the Eighth Fleet," #139, NHC, folder 2, 3 (*277 Luftwaffe raids*); Charles Moran, "The Anzio-Nettuno Landings, January 1944," ts, n.d., SEM, NHC, box 49, 56; memo, "Radio-Controlled Bombs Can Be Jammed," March 10, 1945, SEM, NHC, box 47, 5–7 (*Fritz-X bombs*).

The toll could be seen in the hundred or so casualties: Beachhead casualties in early spring 1944 averaged 107 per day. *Anzio Beachhead,* 105–6; "Evacuation of Casualties by L.S.T.," Apr. 1944, HQ, Combined Operations, GB COB X-22, NARA RG 334 NWC Lib, box 461.

wounded men on litters: Pyle, 196–97; Paul A. Cundiff, *45th Infantry CP,* 159 (*outscreamed the screaming shells*); OH, Russell W. Cloer, 7th Inf, May 26, 2006, with author ("*You came here to suffer*").

A British officer arriving in March: David Cole, *Rough Road to Rome,* 191–92; Lloyd Clark, *Anzio,* 226 ("*a very moth eaten look*"); memoir, Henry E. Gardiner, ts, n.d., USMA Arch, 238.

Most of the cargo hoisted: "History of Ordnance Service in the Mediterranean Theater," 85, 88–91; "Engineer History, Fifth Army, Mediterranean Theater," n.d., MHI, 101; Charles D'Orsa, "Trials and Tribulations of an Army G-4," ts, n.d., Fifth Army, CARL, N-4906, 10. Further complicating Anzio logistics was the fact that most British and American weapons used incompatible ammunition. John A. Hixson, "Operation SHINGLE," *Military Review,* March 1989, 64+.

That the cost was not greater: Chester G. Starr, ed., *From Salerno to the Alps,* 173; Paul W. Pritchard, "Smoke Generator Operations in the Mediterranean and European Theaters of Operation," n.d., CMH, 4-7.1 FA 1; Walter A. Guild, "That Damned Smoke Again," *IJ,* Oct. 1944, 25+; Brooks E. Kleber and

Dale Birdsell, *The Chemical Warfare Service: Chemicals in Combat*, 336–39.
Six Allied divisions: Milton Bracker, "Anzio, 20 Years After Battle, Evokes Memories," *NYT*, Jan. 22, 1964; Masayo Umezawa Duus, *Unlikely Liberators*, 131 ("*Dracula days*"); OH, Michael S. Davison, 1976, Douglas H. Farmer and Dale K. Brudvig, SOOHP, MHI, 43 (*soldiers near the "dead country"*); Audie Murphy, *To Hell and Back*, 117 ("*We believe nothing*"); George F. Howe, *The Battle History of the 1st Armored Division*, 305; Vaughan-Thomas, 193; Robert Capa, *Slightly out of Focus*, 124; Bill Mauldin, *Up Front*, 193.
The demand for sandbags: Leo J. Meyer, "Strategy and Logistical History: MTO," ts, n.d., CMH, 2-3.7 CC5, XXII-26; Tom Roe, *Anzio Beachhead*, 82 (Mr. Lucky); Adrian Clements Gore, "This Was the Way It Was," Enid A. Gore, ed., 1987, IWM, 90/29/1, 23 ("*with one ear cocked*"); Munsell, 60, 63 ("*Men dreamed of steaks*"); Lawrence D. Collins, *The 56th Evac Hospital*, 192 ("*anziopectoris*"); Vaughan-Thomas, 191 ("*Anzonians*").
"*The main thing you want*": *Reporting World War II*, vol. 2, 56; Lee G. Miller, *The Story of Ernie Pyle*, 314; Don Whitehead, "*Beachhead Don*," 106 ("*palsied old gentleman*"); James Tobin, *Ernie Pyle's War*, 152 ("*Instead of growing stronger*").
Those perturbations only intensified: David Nichols, ed., *Ernie's War*, 238–42 ("*pressing your luck*"); Lee G. Miller, *An Ernie Pyle Album*, 96–97 ("*cut on my right cheek*"). Pyle returned to London, where he learned he had won a Pulitzer Prize for his reporting in 1943.
Lucian Truscott had also pressed his luck: OH, James M. Wilson, Jr., former LKT Jr. aide, Apr. 23, 2004, author, Washington, D.C.
"*I have almost become oblivious*": corr, LKT Jr. to Sarah, March 8, 13, 26 and Apr. 18, 1944, LKT Jr., GCM Lib, box 1, folder 6.
His throat still nagged him: aide's diary, Apr. 1944, LKT Jr., GCM Lib, box 18, folder; diary, March 1, 2, 9, 12, 18, 19, 22, 30, 1944, VI Corps, Don E. Carleton papers, HIA, box 1; corr, LKT Jr. to Sarah, Apr. 16, 1944, LKT Jr., GCM Lib, box 1, folder 6 ("*lack of voice*"); diary fragment, Fred Walker, n.d., NARA RG 319, OCMH, CA, box 006; OH, Harry Lemley, 1974, Gerald F. Feeney, SOOHP, MHI, 2/44-51 (*remained energetic, buoyant*).
"*I can close my eyes and imagine*": corr, LKT Jr. to Sarah, Apr. 19, 1944, LKT Jr., GCM Lib, box 1, folder 6; diary, Apr. 7, 9 (*slept eight hours straight*), 17, 1944, VI Corps, Don E. Carleton papers, HIA, box 1; Hugh A. Scott, *The Blue and White Devils*, 113 (*bathrobe and slippers*).
But heartbreak was never further away: Emajean Jordan Buechner, *Sparks*, 97–98.
Truscott had ordered the beachhead evacuated: C.R.S. Harris, *Allied Administration of Italy, 1943–1945*, 160; *StoC*, 451; Daniel J. Petruzzi, *My War Against the Land of My Ancestors*, 250; Francesco Rossi and Silvano Casaldi, *Those Days at Nettuno*, 201; corr, Ivar H. Aas to parents, March 24, 1944, provided author by Andrew Carroll; diary, Robert M. Marsh, March 9, 1944, 81st Armored Reconnaissance Bn, 1st AD, ASEQ, MHI (*cesarean delivery with an ax*).
"*This beachhead is the craziest place*": corr, William J. Segan to Herman H. Segan, May 6, 1944, author's possession; Robert D. Burhans, *The First Special Service Force*, 194; Robert H. Adleman and George Walton, *The Devil's Brigade*, 177, 190; Carlo D'Este, *Fatal Decision*, 322 ("*I can't do a thing*"); Harold B. Simpson, *Audie Murphy, American Soldier*, 92; Dan Kurzman, *The Race for Rome*, 259–59; Duus, 130 (*watercress garnishes*).
Troops played baseball: Edmund F. Ball, *Staff Officer with the Fifth Army*, 327; Flint Whitlock, *The Rock of Anzio*, 260; William L. Allen, *Anzio: Edge of Disaster*, 130 (*water-skiers*); Ralph G. Martin, *The G.I. War, 1941–1945*, 141; Fred Sheehan, *Anzio: Epic of Bravery*, 174; Bill Harr, *Combat Boots*, 82–93.
More than thirty Anzonian newspapers: Edgar Clark, "Anzio Papers Headline Men Who Make the News," May 1, 1944, *Stars and Stripes*, draft, SM, MHI, box 2; John Lardner, "Anzio, February 10th,"

in *The New Yorker Book of War Pieces,* 263 ("*following rats*"); Verney, 227 (*beetle racing*); George Aris, *The Fifth British Division, 1939 to 1945*, 220, 225 (*Thousand of dollars were wagered*).
Alcohol provided some consolation: Charles F. Marshall, *A Ramble Through My War*, 73 ("*catacomb courage*"); Allen, 130; F. Eugene Liggett, "No, Not Yet: Military Memoirs," ts, n.d., 158th FA, ASEQ, MHI, 6 ("*Plastered in Paris*"); diary, Marsh, May 10, 1944 ("*The still blew up*"); *Stars and Stripes*, Apr. 25, 28, 1944, Italy edition, 1 (*first authorized beer*).
Toffey's change-of-command party: JJT, XII-27; Nathan William White, *From Fedala to Berchtesgaden*, 98.
"*There are days and other days*": JJT, XII-23, XIII-3, XIII-17 ("*Efficiency in general*") XII-12 ("*seen about enough of Italy*"); White, 98 (*he had come full circle*).
Only a few miles from the beetle races: Vaughan-Thomas, 199, 202; Hans Paul Joachim Liebschner, "Iron Cross Roads," ts, 1999, IWM, 99/82/1, 82–83; corr, Albert Lewis Pyle to Carl Swickerath, Feb. 23, 1973, ALM, box 1 ("*Roosevelt is a Jew*"); Trevelyan, 208 (*trapped rats in empty sandbags*); R. W. Komer, "Report on Historical Observation from the Field," Feb. 24, 1944, Chester G. Starr papers, HIA, box 1.
No field glasses could reveal: "The German Operation at Anzio," Apr. 1946, Military Intelligence Division, WD, JPL papers, MHI, box 9, 75, 86–87, 99 ("*German divisions are battle weary*"); Walter Kühn, "The Artillery at Anzio-Nettuno," March 1947, FMS, D-158, CARL, N-17500.838.2, 11–13 ("*blast and gouge effect*"); Arthur Robert Moore, "Memoirs—World War II," ts, 1993, 1st AR, 1st AD, ASEQ, MHI, 5–6; Robley D. Evans et al., "American Armor at Anzio," ts, May 1949, CARL, N-490214, 80; Verney, 211 ("*Call the roll, Kesselring*").
A pair of seventy-foot barrels, named Robert and Leopold: R. J. O'Rourke, *Anzio Annie*, 23, 43, 91–94, 141, 164; Francesco Rossi and Silvano Casaldi, *Those Days at Nettuno*, 177; Lida Mayo, *The Ordnance Department: On Beachhead and Battlefront*, 200; Marshall, 45.
Yet it was the close fight: White, 98; Donald E. MacDonald, *"My Buttons Are in the Way,"* s.p., 1952, HIA, 77n ("*saving it to use on Hitler*"); "Training Notes from the Sicilian Campaign," Oct. 25, 1943, AFHQ, G-3, CMH, Geog Sicily 353, 28 ("*pickers-off*"); OH, William P. Yarborough, 1975, J. R. Meese and H. P. Houser, SOOHP, MHI, 63 (*shield their eyes*).
"*The march up is something*": MacDonald, *"My Buttons Are in the Way,"* 26; Whitlock, 255 ("*skeletons in clothes*"); Joseph A. Springer, *Black Devil Brigade*, 145 (*Scouts sniffed the air*); David McClure, "How Audie Murphy Won His Medals," ts, Oct. 1969, and David McClure, "Audie Murphy," ts, Jan. 1958, both in ALM, box 1.
More than four billion Allied leaflets: "Psychological Warfare in the Mediterranean Theater," Aug. 1945, MTO; Margaret Bourke-White, *Purple Heart Valley*, 167 ("*Where is the hot water?*"); Burhans, 193 (*"Abe Levy" series*), 199; Roe, 85 ("*What goes on at home*"); William Woodruff, *Vessel of Sadness*, 139 ("*very cheeky*").
Enemies who could not be talked from their works: Starr, ed., 171; Robert J. Williams, observer report, n.d., #93, NARA RG 337, E 15A, box 53; Springer, 165 (das dicke Ende kommt); AAR, 3rd ID, Apr. 14, 1944, DRL, Ft. B; William P. Yarborough, "House Party in Jerryland," *IJ*, July 1944, 8+ ("*House 5 and 6*").
In this "kettle of grief": O'Rourke, 150; memoir, Gardiner, 243–44; "Engineer History, Fifth Army, Mediterranean Theater," n.d., CMH, 9-2.5 AB, 90 (*bomb on a combat engineer bivouac*); memoir, James R. Pritchard, ts, n.d., 68th Armored FA Bn, 1st AD, ASEQ, MHI, 35 (*pierced their Piper Grasshopper*); T. Moffatt Burriss, *Strike and Hold*, 78 ("*holding his face together*"); Adleman and Walton, 190 ("*got an extra foot*").
"*Yesterday made 60 days*": censorship morale reports, Nov. 1943–June 1944, NARA RG 492, MTO AG, 311.7, box 931 ("*All the boys who never prayed*"); "Lessons from the Italian Campaign," March

15, 1945, HQ, MTO, CMH, Ital. 353, 72 ("*foxhole-itis*"); Collins, 190 (*S.I.W.*); OH, John A. Heintges, 1974, Jack A. Pellicci, SOOHP, MHI, 231 (*bottle of tranquilizers*); Albert E. Cowdrey, *Fighting for Life,* 150 (*Anzio Beachhead Psychiatric Society*); MacDonald, 43 ("*stumbling figure*").
"*This war has become a very personal affair*": censorship morale reports, Nov. 1943–June 1944; Michael Gonzalez, curator, 45th ID Mus, to author, March 25, 2005 (*German scalps*); letter, "Bob" to family in New Haven, Conn., Apr. 20, 1944, MCC, YU ("*Henry would shoot him again*"); Woodruff, 144 ("*struggle so hard*"); Liebschner, "Iron Cross Roads," 82 ("*simply refused to die*"); Martin, 127 ("*What's your name now*").
The days warmed, the seasons advanced: memoir, Gardiner, 231; memoir, Pritchard, 35 (*camouflaging craters*); "Fifth Army Medical History," ts, n.d., NARA RG 112, MTO surgeon general, 390/17/8/2-3, box 6, 91–98; Meyer, "Stratgy and Logistical History: MTO," XXII-30.
"*We seem to be having phenomenal success*": Collins, 167–69, 179; Edward D. Churchil, *Surgeon to Soldiers,* 279.
The new season stirred the dull roots: "Report of William Russell Criss," ts, n.d., 45th ID Mus, 317 ("*getting us fat*"); Marshall, 30 (*Axis Sally*).
"*Next to missing you all terribly*": JJT, XIII-13; D'Este, 418 ("*where many of us ceased to be young*").

"Put the Fear of God into Them"

High above the mud and the misery: "Air Power in the Mediterranean," Feb. 1945, MAAF, historical section, MHI, 7, 10, 33 ("*non-operational*"); F. M. Sallagar, "Operation STRANGLE: A Case Study of Tactical Air Interdiction," Feb. 1972, RAND, R-851, 11 (*Barely five hundred German planes*); Edward B. Westermann, *Flak,* 234 (*4,300 German flak batteries*).
a crewman flying from Italy listed in his diary: Mina Curtiss, ed., *Letters Home,* 318; Albert F. Simpson, "Air Phase of the Italian Campaign to 1 January 1944," June 1946, AAFRH-115, CMH, 239, 255, 265, 365n; *AAFinWWII,* vol. 3, 55, 66 (*growing pains*); Kenn C. Rust, *Fifteenth Air Force Story,* 19 ("*disorganized mob*").
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As the war's fifth winter ended: Westermann, 1 (*over a million civilians*); Biddle, 174, 205–7 (*long-range fighters*); *AAFinWWII,* vol. 3, 49; Richard G. Davis, *Carl A. Spaatz and the Air War in Europe,* 66; Leroy W. Newby, *Target Ploesti,* 38 ("*barroom brawlers*"); "Eighth Air Force Tactical Development," July 1945, Eighth AF, MHI ("*fear of God*").
offensive code-named ARGUMENT*:* Glenn Infield, *Big Week,* 4, 44; *AAFinWWII,* vol. 3, 43 (*Allied losses were bitter*); James H. Doolittle, *I Could Never Be So Lucky Again,* 396 (*more Luftwaffe planes*); Davis, 322–26; John Ellis, *Brute Force,* 195, 204; Bernard C. Nalty et al., *With Courage,* 225, 228 (*less than a month*); e-mail, Conred C. Crane to author, March 2, 2007.
"*un-gear the German war economy*": "The Effect of Allied Strategic Bombing on the Present Status of the War," Feb. 2, 1945, in "Air Power in the Mediterranean," 7, 10, 33; H. H. Arnold, *Global Mission,* 328; "An Analysis of the Weather Factor in This War," Apr. 1944, NARA RG 334, NWC Lib, AAF WIB A 4-44, box 27 (*average two tons of high explosives*); "Target Priorities of the Eighth Air Force," 21–23 (*German synthetic oil facilities*).

Even so, the hard winter for airmen: Davis, 358, 379; Charles R. Shrader, "Amicicide: The Problem of Friendly Fire in Modern War," Dec. 1982, CSI, 36 (*bombing Switzerland*).
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"*When I fly a mission*": John Muirhead, *Those Who Fall,* 98; Stephen E. Ambrose, *The Wild Blue,* 169 ("*You must remember this*"); Nalty, 184 (*13,000 U.S. airmen*); Michael Burleigh, *The Third Reich,* 746 (*140,000 Allied crewmen*); censorship morale reports, Nov. 1943–June 1944, NARA RG 492, MTO AG, 311.7, box 931 ("*On my last four raids*"); Newby, 46 (*aluminum patches*); Howard, 51, 85 ("*the enlarged pupil*").
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"*Fly 'til I die*": Howard, 165.
Among those affected by the ever spiraling quotas: Michael C. Scoggins, "Joseph Heller's Combat Experiences in *Catch-22*," *War, Literature & the Arts,* vol. 15, nos. 1 & 2 (2003), 213+; Joseph Heller, *Now and Then,* 181.
Command of the Italian skies: Sallagar, "Operation STRANGLE," 19 ("*German withdrawal*").
Extravagant claims for airpower's efficacy: OH, Ira C. Eaker, Feb. 1975, Hugh N. Ahmann, AFHRA, K239.0512-829, 375–76; *Battle,* 14.
Much of the thinking about how best: Mark M. Boatner III, *The Biographical Dictionary of World War II,* 641; Vincent Orange, *Tedder,* 223; Solly Zuckerman, *From Apes to Warlords,* 185–95, 203, 209–10; Eduard Mark, *Aerial Interdiction in Three Wars,* 94; Molony VI, 35.
"*without critically weakening the enemy*": Andrew Brookes, *Air War over Italy, 1943–1945,* 80; *AAFinWWII,* vol. 3, 372–73 (*hard to cut*); Sallagar, "Operation STRANGLE," 26, 29; "Isolation of the Battlefield as Effected in the Italian Campaign," July 1944, HQ, AAF, CARL, N-9818, 7, 10–11; "Report on Operation STRANGLE, 19 March–11 May 1944," July 24, 1944, HQ, MATAF, AFHRA, 626.430, 3 ("*could have afforded to discard*").
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An Italian fisherman who spotted a dinghy: Max Corvo, *The O.S.S. in Italy,* 155–62; affidavit, Capt. Clifford M. Bassett, M.D., and Capt. Robert J. Willoughby, M.D., May 24, 1945, forensic examination of "15 men dressed in American military uniforms on Punto Bianca," author's possession (*hands lashed with wire*); http://www.ess.uwe.ac.uk/WCC/dostler.htm; Brown, 480–81. General Dostler was tried at Caserta after the war and executed by firing squad.

The bombing campaign proved more potent: AAFinWWWII, vol. 3, 378–79 (*twenty-seven bridges*); 384; Sallagar, "Operation STRANGLE," 41n; memo, "How STRANGLE Worked on Four Targets," ts, n.d., Lauris Norstad papers, DDE Lib, box 18 (*hit at twenty-two points*).
Stations, bridges, engine repair shops: Sallagar, "Operation STRANGLE," 34, 38 (*tripled to seventy-five*), 46; "Analysis of Tactical Attacks on Bridges and Viaducts," n.d., HQ MAAF, CMH, Geog Italy, 370.2, 2; Klaus Stange, "Railroad Situation from January 1944," Apr. 1947, FMS, D-049, 8 (*shot up rail electrical conduits*); "Interdiction of Italian Railways," Apr. 15, 1944, HQ, MAAF, NARA RG 319, OCMH, CA, box 8 (*trains often halted in Florence*); Ernst Eggert, "Supply During Allied Offensive, May 1944," 1947, FMS, #D-128, MHI, 3–4 (*drums ran short*).
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With that maddening blend of dexterity: Walter Warlimont, "OKW Activities—The Italian Theater, 1 Apr.–31 Dec. 1944," n.d., FMS, C-099b, 17–18; "Report on Operation STRANGLE, 19 March–11 May 1944," 3 (*For every boxcar destroyed*); Karl Theodor Koerner, "Rail Transportation Problems in Italy," Apr. 1947, FMS, D-010, MHI, 11 (*bridge spans across the Po*); Sallagar, "Operation STRANGLE," 54; Britt Bailey, "The German Situation in Italy," July 1951, NARA RG 319, E 145, OCMH, R-series mss, #R-50, 34; Mark, 178.
"*achieved nothing more than nuisance value*": *StoC,* 451; Kesselring et al., "German Version," 107–15; Molony VI, 42 (*grew sclerotic*); Parton, 384 ("*virtually without air support*"); "Air Power in the Mediterranean," 50 ("not *forced to withdraw*").

"You Are All Brave. You Are All Gentlemen"

Spring crept up the Italian boot: Harold L. Bond, *Return to Cassino,* 133; Farley Mowat, *The Regiment,* 184; Cyril Ray, *Algiers to Austria,* 122 (*flowers enameled the fields*); Walter Robson, *Letters from a Soldier,* 91; Klaus H. Huebner, *A Combat Doctor's Diary,* 59 (*whiff of charred villages*).
Herders tended their white, sloe-eyed cattle: Robson, 91; John Guest, *Broken Images,* 163, 172, 175; Medding, "The Road to Rome," 59 (*Children with big mallets*); "Report of William Russell Criss," ts, May 5, 1944, 45th ID Mus ("*I feel like a Dago*"); Margaret Bourke-White, "Over the Lines," in *Reporting World War II*, vol. 2, 753 (*like scattered coins*); corr, Russell Bodeen to Maxin Kohn, May 14, 1944, 141st Inf, 36th Div, ASEQ, MHI ("*field of blood red poppies*").
Only at Cassino did spring seem hesitant: F. Majdalany, *The Monastery,* 48–49 ("*Golgotha*"); diary, John G. Wright, May 18, 1944, American Field Service, author's possession, 23–24 ("*down to bedrock*"); Jack Kros, *War in Italy,* chapter 6, 12 ("*Ghost Village*"); Diana F. Butler, ed., "Human Interest," UK NA, CAB 101/346, 1 (*crimped to a goat path*); Alex Bowlby, *The Recollections of Rifleman Bowlby,* 20.
Yet in Cassino the living were also unseen: Nigel Nicolson, *The Grenadier Guards in the War of 1939–1945,* vol. 2, 421–22 (*Fifteen hundred soldiers*); war diary, 1st Guards Bde, March–Apr. 1944, UK NA, WO 170/514, 4, 6–8 (*occupied a wide crescent*).
Each evening Guardsmen porters: George Aarons, "Cameraman in Cassino," May 21, 1944, *Yank,* 3+; C. T. Framp, "The Littlest Victory," ts, n.d., IWM, 85/19/1, 83 (*Most wore gym shoes*); Nicolson, 422–23 (*dead American nurse*); J. K. Windeatt, "Very Ordinary Soldier," ts, 1989, IWM, 90/20/1, 105 ("*smell marks*"); memoir, P. Royle, ts, 1972, IWM, 99/72/1, 109 ("*fairly serious stammer*").

"*Good evening, Hans":* Frank Beckett, *Prepare to Move,* 149; Nicolson, 421–24; Betsy Wade, ed., *Forward Positions: The War Correspondence of Homer Bigart,* 43–44; war diary, 1st Guards Bde, March–Apr. 1944, 8; Robson, 101–3.
"*There is no day*": Fred Majdalany, *Cassino: Portrait of a Battle,* 198; Nicolson, 422 (*standing watch at their periscopes*); C. T. Framp, "The Littlest Victory," ts, n.d., IWM, 85/19/1, 84 ("*a dead world*"); memoir, P. Royle, ts, 1972, IWM, 99/72/1, 111 (*half-inch in their morning mugs*); Majdalany, *The Monastery,* 46 ("*deadly sameness*"), 24 ("*grotesque friezes*"); J. K. Windeatt, "Very Ordinary Soldier," ts, 1989, IWM, 90/20/1, 106 (*Ginger Rogers*).
Life across the rubble: Raleigh Trevelyan, *Rome '44,* 209 (*cologne*); Robert Mulcahy, "If You Die, You Die," *World War II,* vol. 21, no. 7; Robert Wagner, *The Texas Army,* 281 ("*the word 'catastrophe'*"); war diary, 1st Guards Bde, March–Apr. 1944, 7 (*swastika banners*); R. C. Taylor, "A Pocketfull of Time," ts, n.d., author's possession (*Death holding a pair of calipers*).
"*Everything is in the hands*": "AFHQ Intelligence Notes No. 57," May 2, 1944, NARA RG 407, E 47, AFHQ, 95-AL1-2.18, box 164.
"*You are all brave*": Michael Howard and John Sparrow, *The Coldstream Guards, 1920–1946,* 219.
Shortly after seven A.M. on Monday, May 1: MWC to Renie, Apr. 24, 1944, MWC, personal corr, Citadel.
Mark Clark was a meticulous creature: A. M. Gruenther to Maurine Clark, May 1, 1944, MWC, corr, box 3; signed lyrics, diary, MWC, Feb. 23, 1944, Citadel, box 65 ("Mile by mile").
The trailer door swung open: MWC to Renie, May 4, 1944, MWC, personal corr, Citadel; diary, MWC, May 1, 1944, Citadel, box 65; A.M. Gruenther to Maurine Clark, May 1, 1944, MWC, corr, box 3 ("*hard-boiled soldier*").
"*comes at a most inopportune moment*": msg, MWC to J. L. Devers, Apr. 6, 1944, and GCM to J. L. Devers, Apr. 7, 1944, NARA RG 492, MTOUSA, SGS, "eyes only, General Devers, incoming," box 135; Maurine Clark, *Captain's Bride, General's Lady,* 115 ("*fluttery as a schoolgirl*"), 116–17; memo, GCM to MWC, Apr. 11, 1944, GCM papers, GCM Lib, corr, box 61 (*no hint of welcome*); "Momentous Days," ts, Apr. 1944, MWC, corr, Citadel, box 3.
Mrs. Clark had been promoting: Maurine Clark to GCM, Feb. 23, 1944, with MWC letter dated, Feb. 10, 1944, GCM papers, GCM Lib, corr, box 61.
"*You are aware*": GCM to Maurine Clark, March 1, 1944, GCM papers, GCM Lib, corr, box 61.
"*I know it will be somewhat of a shock*": MWC to mother, Apr. 17, 1944, GCM papers, GCM Lib, corr, box 61; diary, MWC, Apr 10, 1944, Citadel, box 65; http://www.greenbrier.com/site/other/about_history.aspx; Maurine Clark, 118 ("*sorry I took those guys prisoner*").
Before returning to Italy: http://www.bizjournals.com/washington/stories/2002/07/15/focus10.html; Forrest C. Pogue, *George C. Marshall: Organizer of Victory,* 328; "Momentous Days" (*dozen powerful figures*); OH, MWC, May 10–21, 1948, SM, MHI, 53; press conference, MWC, May 9, 1944, Citadel, box 63, folder 3.
the family cocker spaniel: Calculated, 336–37; Maurine Clark, 119; MWC to Renie, May 4, 1944, MWC, personal corr, Citadel ("*seems like a dream*").
Under Alexander's reorganization: Calculated, 334n, 337; OH, Charles E. Saltzman, former deputy chief of staff, Fifth Army, March 26, 1948, NARA RG 319, OCMH, CA, box 005 (*Cool and remote*).
"*He treats his corps commanders*": GK, May 4, 1944; OH, Edward J. O'Neill, VI Corps G-4, June 22, 1948, NARA RG 319, OCMH, CA, box 005 (*Truscott twice reminded him*); diary, MWC, Feb. 28, 1944, Citadel, box 65 ("*whining attitude*"); Martin Blumenson, *Mark Clark,* 166 (*mathematics instructor*); L. James Binder, *Lemnitzer: A Soldier for His Time,* 129 (*Devers refused to deal directly*); OH, L. L. Lemnitzer, Jan. 16, 1948, SM, MHI ("*could not be together three minutes*"); OH, MWC,

May 10–21, 1948, SM, MHI, 65 ("*too many bosses*"); OH, Jacob L. Devers, Aug. 12, 1958, FCP, GCM Lib, transcript, tape #68, 72–73 ("*God Almighty*").
"*acted in many high-handed ways*": diary, MWC, Feb. 19, 26 ("*in no way cooperating*"), 1944, Citadel, box 65; OH, L. L. Lemnitzer, Jan. 16, 1948, SM, MHI (*grew so insolent with Alexander*); D. Clayton James, *A Time for Giants*, 158–59 ("*vexatious attitude*"); Macmillan, 404–5 (*insurrection collapsed*).
"*Many happy returns*": MWC to Renie, May 4, 1944, MWC, personal corr, Citadel; Danchev, 527 ("*hoped to land a wildcat*"), 522, 534 ("*chariot of a lunatic*"); Martin Gilbert, *Churchill and America*, 292 ("*feeling of bitterness*").
"*Temperamental, very sensitive*": OH, Harold Alexander, Jan. 10–15, 1949, SM, CMH, geog files, II-8. *Never frightened, perhaps, but often anxious: CM*, 353; *CtoA*, 23, 36; diary, MWC, Apr. 30, 1944, Citadel, box 65 John Ellis, *On the Front Lines*, 163 (*132 second lieutenants*); Robert R. Palmer et al., *The Procurement and Training of Ground Troops*, 185; "History of the Peninsular Base Section," 1944, CMH, 8-4 HA 1, vol. 2; "Investigation of the Replacement System," Nov. 6, 1943, NARA RG 492, MTO AG, 333.5-212; observer reports: Kenneth I. Hittle, "Report of Returned Overseas Observer," n.d., #83; M.S. Crallé, untitled, n.d., #90; George Artman, untitled, n.d., #94, all in NARA RG 337, E 15A, AGF, box 53; John Sloan Brown, *Draftee Division*, ix (*built mostly from draftees*); msg, MWC to GCM, May 17, 1944, MWC, Citadel, box 3 ("*age and physical reasons*"); corr, A. Gruenther to DDE, May 27, 1944, DDE Lib, PP-pres, corr, box 48.
two British divisions still at Anzio: diary, MWC, Feb. 27, Apr. 12 ("*Many British troops*"), 1944, Citadel, box 65; LKT Jr., "Notes on Future Operations," n.d., MWC, corr, box 3; *CM*, 352; Molony V, 421n; OH, LKT Jr., Apr. 3, 1958, SM, MHI.
"*Absenteeism and desertion*": note, William R.C. Penney, Apr. 21, 1944, LHC, Penney 8/33. More than three hundred British soldiers were executed for desertion or cowardice in World War I, but capital punishment for those crimes had been abolished in the 1930s. John Laffin, *Surgeons in the Field*, 281.
On average, ten British soldiers: "Operations of British, Indian and Dominion Forces in Italy," part V, n.d., UK NA, CAB 106/453, 1; Diana Butler, "The British Soldier in Italy, Sept. 1943–June 1944," ts, n.d., UK NA, CAB 101/224, 35, 43–44; Ben Shephard, *A War of Nerves*, 240 ("*slinkers*"); memo, Maj. Gen. John Yeldham Whitfield, CG, UK 6th Div, "Battle Absentees," Apr. 10, 1944, in James Scott Elliott papers, LHC ("*matter is hushed up*").
The U.S. Army would convict 21,000 deserters: "Military Executions," 1994, MHI, Ref Bib; memos, MWC to II Corps and VI Corps, March 13, 1944, and Dec. 4, 1943, NARA RG 338, II Corps JAG, 250.1, box 156; "Operations of British, Indian and Dominion Forces in Italy," 8; Morse P. Manson and Harry M. Grayson, "Why 2,776 American Soldiers in the Mediterranean Theater of Operation Were Absent Without Leave," *American Journal of Psychiatry*, July 1946, 50+.
"*I feel like my nervous system*": Stephen W. Ranson, "Military Medicolegal Problems in Field Psychiatry," *Bulletin of the U.S. Army Medical Department*, vol. 9, Nov. 1949, 181+; Michael D. Doubler, *Closing with the Enemy*, 242; Shephard, 217; memo, "Neuropsychiatric Treatment in the Combat Zone," June 12, 1943, circular letter no. 17, NARA RG 292, records of special staff, MTOUSA surgeon, box 2551; William C. Menninger, "Psychiatry in the War," June 1946, MHI, "professional papers," group 1; memo, "Psychiatric Services in the U.S. Army in NATOUSA," Dec. 31, 1943, NARA RG 292, records of special staff, MTOUSA surgeon, box 2551.
All troops were at risk: "Casualties, Wounded and Wounds, 1946–7," Army Field Forces, G-3, NARA RG 337, 704, 1942–1952, series 10, box 46, 11 (*70 percent of the casualties*); "Battle Casualties," *IJ*, Sept. 1949, 18+ ("whether *he will be hit*"); Palmer et al., 228. Ten combat days typically equaled seventeen calendar days in Army calculations. Bruce C. Clarke, "Study of AGF Battle Casualties,"

Sept. 1946, AGF HQ, NARA RG 537, E 16A, adm div subject file, 1942–1949, box 48.
Treatment by "narcosynthesis": "Fifth Army Medical Service History," Feb. 1945, CMH, 52; Brashear, 352–56 (*shock therapy*); Charles M. Wiltse, *The Medical Department: Medical Service in the Mediterranean and Minor Theaters*, 255; memo, Fifth Army surgeon, Oct. 2, 1944, NARA RG 292, records of special staff, MTOUSA surgeon, box 2551; Cowdrey, 148. Half of the Army's 2,400 psychiatrists were young physicians given a three-month crash course in psychiatry; most others had worked primarily with psychotics in state hospitals. Eli Ginberg, "Logistics of the Neuropsychiatric Problem of the Army," Feb. 1946, MHI, "professional papers," group 1.
All of these issues impaired Fifth Army's: OH, MWC, Nov. 17, 1959, FCP, GCM Lib, transcript of tape 37, 25.
of dubious military value: The U.S. Joint Chiefs in late March voiced doubt that "the capture of Rome is worth heavy engagement in Italy." Molony VI, 9.
a rightful and prestigious prize: OH, MWC, May 10–21, 1948, SM, MHI, 53; Kent Roberts Greenfield, ed., *Command Decisions*, 277, 280.
But getting there quickly was paramount: OH, Robert J. Wood, Fifth Army G-3 staff, March 4, 1948, NARA RG 319, OCMH, CA, box 005, 2–3; Greenfield, ed., 277, 280.
"*I know factually*": diary, MWC, May 5, 1944, Citadel, box 65.

"On the Eve of Great Things"

Alexander often quoted Lord Nelson's: Viscount Alexander of Tunis, "The Allied Armies in Italy," n.d., CMH, II-41; http://www.wtj.com/archives/nelson/1805_10b.htm; Molony VI, 95, 97 (*equivalent of twenty-eight divisions*); Sidney T. Matthews, "The French Drive on Rome," *Revue Historique de l'Armée*, special issue, 1957, 123; *CtoA*, 40; Michael Carver, *Harding of Petherton, Field-Marshal*, 126; *Battle*, 203–5.
"*Between ourselves*": John Keegan, ed., *Churchill's Generals*, 121; H. E. Pulliam, "Operations in Italy," Sept. 1, 1944, AGF board, AFHQ, DTL, Ft. B, 2–3 ("*on an axis generally parallel*").
Alexander's final order: CtoA, 40; Nigel Nicolson, *Alex: The Life of Field Marshal Earl Alexander of Tunis*, 248; Carver, 134.
"*no invidious comparison*": minutes, conference, AFHQ chief of staff and French chief of staff, May 6, 1944, CMH, Geog files, Italy 337.
Their commander, Lieutenant General Oliver W. H. Leese: Gregory Blaxland, *Alexander's Generals*, 21–22; GK, Apr. 4, 1944 ("*ungainly bruiser*"); Rowland Ryder, *Oliver Leese*, ix (*horticultural succulents*), 152–53, 168; Douglas Porch, *The Path to Victory*, 513; Dominick Graham and Shelford Bidwell, *Tug of War*, 254.
"*having a baby*": Ryder, 163, 160 ("*I can work with Clark*"); OH, H. Alexander, Jan. 10–15, 1949, SM, CMH, II-8 ("*Not the pusher Clark was*"); Daniel G. Dancocks, *The D-Day Dodgers: The Canadians in Italy, 1943–1945*, 237 ("*like a whore in heat*").
Leese's seven infantry and three armor divisions: Molony V, 591n; Blaxland, 26 ("*ardour of a boy*"); Janusz Piekalkiewicz, *The Battle for Cassino*, 16, 102 (*fought both Germans and Russians*); Kurzman, 26; David Hapgood and David Richardson, *Monte Cassino*, 182–93.
Anders's two divisions were understrength: "Operations by 2nd Polish Corps Against the High Ground, Monte Cassino," ts, June 1944, possession of Roger Cirillo, 12; John Nelson, "Always a Grenadier," ts, 1982, LH, 44 ("*We never take prisoners*"); W. Anders, *An Army in Exile*, 170–73 ("*no men to spare*").
"*The eyes of suffering France*": Michael Carver, ed., *The War Lords*, 604 ("*invading the mountains*"); *CtoA*, 24; Porch, 554 (*retraining his forces*).

That meant scaling the Auruncis: CtoA, 30; OH, Robert J. Wood, March 4 and 15, 1948, SM, MHI; OH, Lyman Lemnitzer, Jan. 16, 1948, SM, MHI.
Wrapped in a greatcoat: Frank Gervasi, *The Violent Decade,* 557; G. K. Tanham, "Battlefield Intelligence in World War II: A Case Study of the Fifth Army Front in Italy," Sept. 1956, Project RAND, RM-1792, CMH, iii–iv, 28 (*photo reconnaissance*); Diana F. Butler, "The French Expeditionary Corps in the Battle for Rome," n.d., UK NA, CAB 101/226, 3–5 (*persuaded first Keyes*); John Ellis, *Cassino: The Hollow Victory,* 47 ("*They like us a lot*").
Rather than employ the FEC: Matthews, "The French Drive on Rome," 125–26; Butler, "The French Expeditionary Corps," 2–5.
Clark's admiration for Juin: memo, phone code names, March 5, 1944, Fifth Army, Robert J. Wood papers, MHI; Anthony Clayton, *Three Marshals of France,* 79 (*surrendered one of his four stars*); Carver, ed., 607 ("*Radiate confidence*"); *CtoA,* 35.
Half a million players: Clifford W. Dorman, "Too Soon for Heroes," ts, n.d., 19th Combat Engineers, author's possession, 78–79 ("*not to camouflage too well*"); Alexander, "The Allied Armies in Italy," III-9 (*twenty undetected French battalions*); Clayton, 83 (*soup-bowl helmets*); Butler, "The French Expeditionary Corps," 11 (*hand tools to minimize the noise*); Dharm Pal, *The Campaign in Italy, 1943–1945,* 158 (*scattered brushwood*).
Canadian signalers in April: Mark Zuehlke, *The Liri Valley,* 78; "Engineers in the Italian Campaign, 1943–1945," ts, n.d., UK, MHI, 88 (*spread garnished nets*); Harold E. Miller, "G-2 Report on Italian Campaign," June 15, 1944, NARA RG 337, AGF, observer report, #110, box 54, 10; Anthony Cave Brown, ed., *The Secret War Report of the OSS,* 217.
Military traffic signs appeared: Martha Gellhorn, "Cracking the Gothic Line," *Collier's,* Oct. 28, 1944, 24+; "Operations by 2nd Polish Corps Against the High Ground, Monte Cassino," 22–23 (*seven thousand mottled sniper suits*); "Engineer History, Fifth Army, Mediterranean Theater," MHI, 65 (*screens made of chicken wire*); Dancocks, 237.
Scouts in canvas shoes: Matthew Parker, *Monte Cassino,* 296; *The Tiger Triumphs,* 72; Neil Orpen, *Victory in Italy,* 28 (*South African troops lay low*).
Every tree along Highway 6: "History of Ordnance Service in the Mediterranean Theater," 77; Alfred M. Beck et al., *The Corps of Engineers: The War Against Germany,* 239, 250; AAR, 1621st Engineer Model Making Detachment, n.d., NARA RG 407, ENDT-1621-0.1, 270/62/12/1, box 19220 (*intricate terrain replicas*); Miller, "G-2 Report on Italian Campaign," 5 (*mixed ersatz inks*).
Endless supply convoys crept forward: William J. Diamond, "Water Is Life," *Military Engineer,* Aug. 1947, 330+; Orpen, 33 (*hoods wrapped in rubber pads*); "Fifth Army Medical History," 146 (*clop of hooves*); John Buchan, "Report on a Visit to the French Expeditionary Corps," Canadian Army, n.d., CMH, Geog files, Italy 337, 1 ("*No mules*").
"*I think of you every day*": corr, LKT Jr. to Sarah, May 3, 7, 14, 1944, LKT Jr. papers, GCM Lib, box 1, folder 6.
More than one million tons of matériel: OH, Francis Oxx, PBS CG, May 21, 1948, SM, MHI, box IIA1; "Engineer History, Fifth Army, Mediterranean Theater," CMH, 9-2.5 AB, 90; Allan L. Swaim, "The Operations of the Communications Platoon Headquarters Company, 15th Infantry Regiment, on Anzio Beachhead," 1947, IS, 16 (*jeep-drawn plow*); "10th Engineer Combat Battalion, Cisterna-Rome Operation," ts, n.d., CMH, Geog files, Italy, 314.7 (*stockade for five thousand prisoners*).
Patrols reclaimed small swatches: Earl M. Cooper, "The Operation of the 2nd Battalion, 180th Infantry at Anzio Beachhead," 1947, IS; msg, LKT Jr. to MWC, May 7, 1944, NARA RG 319, OCMH, CA, box 6 ("*one additional infantry division*"); *CtoA,* 117 (*trundled forward each night*); Moore, "Memoirs—World War II," 7–8 ("*It was crowded*").
In a letter to his old friend: corr, ENH to L. J. McNair, May 8, 1944, ENH, MHI, box 1; corr, LKT Jr.

to Sarah, May 11, 1944, LKT Jr. papers, GCM Lib, box 1, folder 6 ("*on the eve of great things*").
It was precisely this issue that General Alex: Sidney T. Matthews, "Drive to Rome," ts, 1954, MHI, 26–27, 31; *CM*, 369.
The quizzical tilt: CtoA, 39 (*had eyed the stretch of Highway 6*); "Notes by General Alexander for Conference Held at HQ, AAI, on 2 April 1944," NARA RG 319, OCMH, CA, box 8 (*cut the highway at Valmontone*); Matthews, "Drive to Rome," 29 (*code-named* BUFFALO); memo, AFHQ, deputy chief of staff, March 21, 1944, NARA RG 331, AFHQ micro, R-225B (*might take a month*); "Notes on Conference," May 5, 1944, Fifth Army, MWC papers, Citadel, box 3 (*decisive battle of annihilation*); Pulliam, "Operations in Italy," 2–3 ("*thereby prevent the supply*").
"*Gen. Alex arrived this morning*": msg, LKT Jr. to MWC, May 5, 1944, NARA RG 319, OCMH, CA, box 6.
"*Alex trying to run my army*": diary, MWC, May 5, 1944, Citadel, box 65.
"*The capture of Rome is the only important*": *CM*, 369, Matthews, "Drive to Rome," 31 (*detour onto other routes*).
"*I told him he had embarrassed me*": diary, MWC, May 8, 1944, Citadel, box 65.
At four P.M. *on Tuesday:* diary, MWC, May 9, 1944, Citadel, box 65; Clark press conference, May 9, 1944, MWC, Citadel, box 63, folder 3 ("*not quite up to strength*"); Matthews, "The French Drive on Rome," 122; Ralph Bennett, *Ultra and the Mediterranean Strategy*, 279–81; F. H. Hinsley et al., *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, 202.
"*Everybody throws everything they have*": "Notes on Conference," May 5, 1944; Clark press conference, May 9, 1944 ("*The more Boche we can hold*").
He made no mention of his quarrel: In a postwar interview with the Army historian Sidney Matthews, Clark acknowledged that he "foresaw that the time might come when the shift in the axis would be desirable." OH, MWC, May 10–21, 1948, SM, MHI, 72.
"*The attack I would like to make*": Clark press conference, May 9, 1944.
Albert Kesselring knew nothing: Count von Klinckowstroem, "Italian Campaign," 1947, FMS, #T-1a, chap. 10, 5, 8; *Battle*, 227–28; Tanham, "Battlefield Intelligence in World War II," 33–35 (*nine of twenty-two Allied regimental command posts*); *StoA*, 211; Harold E. Miller, "G-2 Report on Italian Campaign," 7; Robin Kay, *Official History of New Zealand in the Second World War*, vol. 2, *Italy: From Cassino to Trieste*, 16.
A Moroccan deserter several weeks earlier: A. G. Steiger, "The Italian Campaign, 4 Jan.–4 June 1944," July 1948, Canadian Army HQ, historical section, report #20, 33; Kesselring et al, "German Version," 119 (*May 20 or later*); Bailey, "The German Situation in Italy," 114 (*did* "*not expect anything*"); Frido von Senger und Etterlin, "War Diary of the Italian Campaign," 1953, FMS, #C=095b, MHI, 114–16.
If Kesselring was blind and misinformed: Kesselring et al., "German Version," 117; *Battle*, 226; *CtoA*, 17–18, 111; Bailey, "The German Situation in Italy," 58 ("*make the enemy exhaust himself*"), 67; Molony VI, 71n; Porch, 549 (*82,000 held the southern front*).
"*To my great pleasure, everything is quiet*": Steiger, "The Italian Campaign," 39.
"*It was like a goodbye gift*": C. T. Framp, "The Littlest Victory," ts, n.d., IWM, 85/19/1, 102; Beckett, 150 (*conspicuously white animals*); Peter Schrijvers, *The Crash of Ruin*, 213, 216 (*guide to Italian cities*); Huebner, 61 ("*Blackjack for twenty dollars*").
"*Who the hell would want to live here*": Fred Cederberg, *The Long Road Home*, 113; Majdalany, *Cassino: Portrait of a Battle*, 228 ("*a cause in its own right*"); Charles Connell, *Monte Cassino*, 179 ("*alive with rats*"); Trevelyan, 273.
A dozen miles to the southwest: Nicole Solignac O'Connor, "Mektoub: A Young Woman's War Journal," ts, 2002, author's possession, 124.

On the gunline in the rear: C. V. Clifton, "The 240mm Howitzer & the 8-inch Gun in a Mobile Situation," June 27, 1944, CARL, N-7276, 3; Mayo, 205; Constance M. Green et al., *The Ordnance Department: Planning Munitions for War,* 362; N. P. Morrow, "Employment of Artillery in Italy," *FAJ,* Aug. 1944, 498+; "Lessons from the Italian Campaign," 91–94.
"*Busy days, nerve trying days*": JJT, XIV-3-8.
"*If Alex is a military genius*": GK, May 10, 1944; Nicolson, *Alex* ("*Our objective is the destruction*"); msg, W. Churchill to GCM, Apr. 16, 1944, NARA RG 165, E 422, OPD exec files, 390/38/2/4-5, box 18
H-hour was fixed for eleven P.M.: CtoA, 37; Orpen, 34; *The Princeton Class of 1942 During World War II,* 509 ("*I do not know where my son is*"); Alexander, "The Allied Armies in Italy," III-10 ("*strange, impressive silence*"); Michael Pearson, "Hard in the Attack: The Canadian Army in Sicily and Italy," Sept. 1996, Ph.D. diss, Carleton University, Ottawa, 332 ("*New boys with fear*").

CHAPTER 12: THE GREAT PRIZE

Shaking Stars from the Heavens

The BBC pips had not finished: Matthew Parker, *Monte Cassino,* 309; Viscount Alexander of Tunis, "The Allied Armies in Italy," n.d., CMH, III-10 (*two thousand gun pits*); C. T. Framp, "The Littlest Victory," ts, n.d., IWM, 85/19/1, 102 ("*shake the very stars*").
Men peered from their trenches: Diana F. Butler, ed., "Human Interest," n.d., UK NA, CAB 101/346, 3–4; Klaus H. Huebner, *A Combat Doctor's Diary,* 61–63, 73 ("*Rome, then home*"); Rowland Ryder, *Oliver Leese,* 165 (*Nightingales had sung*); David Scott Daniell, *The Royal Hampshire Regiment,* vol. 3, 167 ("*full of noises*").
Gunners draped wet rags: Olgierd Terlecki, *Poles in the Italian Campaign, 1943–1945,* 73; Lida Mayo, *The Ordnance Department: On Beachhead and Battlefront,* 211 (*174,000 shells*); *Mountain Inferno,* 749 ("*bridge of iron*"); Martin Gilbert, *Winston S. Churchill,* vol. 7, 769 ("*Zip*").
At midnight on the Allied right: E. D. Smith, *The Battles for Cassino,* 153, 162 ("*no Germans could possibly outlive*"); Fred Majdalany, *Cassino: Portrait of a Battle,* 231.
"*Soldiers! The moment for battle*": W. Anders, *An Army in Exile,* 174; Raleigh Trevelyan, *Rome '44,* 269, 273 (*Troops surged up Snakeshead Ridge*); "Operations by 2nd Polish Corps Against the High Ground, Monte Cassino," June 1944, possession of Roger Cirillo, 26–31 (*Nine German battalions*).
"*Many of us had lost*": Janusz Piekalkiewicz, *The Battle for Cassino,* 169, 172–73; Majdalany, *Cassino,* 246; Anders, 175–76 ("*small epics*"); *CtoA,* 44; Dan Kurzman, *The Race for Rome,* 235 ("*If they do not obey orders*"); "Operations by 2nd Polish Corps," 29 (*of twenty engineers*"); Robert Wallace, *The Italian Campaign,* 164 ("*how dreadful death can be*").
At dawn, the rising sun: Charles Connell, *Monte Cassino,* 186 ("*sitting birds*"); memo, "Flamethrowers and Napalm," July 1944, HQ, 2nd Polish Corps, NARA RG 492, MTO chemical warfare section, 470.71, box 1756; Trevelyan, 271 ("*I was working on my knees*").
Yet even Polish valor could not win: Terlecki, 75; *Battle,* 233; Piekalkiewicz, 171 ("*costly reconnaissance*").
"*Let's pick some cornflowers*": Ryder, 166.
"*What do we do now?*": Kurzman, 215.
Vehicles crept forward, hauling boats: newsletter, 8th Indian Division, March–Nov. 1944, Dudley Russell papers, LH, 5; *The Tiger Triumphs,* 73 (*banged angle iron*).
Fire they drew, but so did the rest: Dharm Pal, *The Campaign in Italy, 1943–1945,* 160–61; Ryder, 166 ("*yellow London fog*").
Men stumped about in flame-stabbed confusion: The Tiger Triumphs, 73; Pal, 161–62; Field Marshal

Lord Carver, *The Imperial War Museum Book of the War in Italy, 1943–1945,* 184–85 (“*Oh, God, don’t let me die*”).
Twelve of sixteen Gurkha boats: Pal, 162; Alexander, “The Allied Armies in Italy,” III-11; David Scott Daniell, *History of the East Surrey Regiment,* vol. 4, 207.
By midday, no battalion: Gregory Blaxland, *Alexander’s Generals,* 89; Robin Neillands, *Eighth Army,* 291 (“*an autocratic man*”); Molony VI, 99 (“*sough and whiffle*”); Parker, 314 (“*passed ever so slowly*”).
Yet the enemy had missed: Molony VI, 112; Kenneth Macksey, *Kesselring: The Making of the Luftwaffe,* 211; Blaxland, 95–96; *CtoA,* 55.
Three bridges, dubbed Cardiff, Oxford, and Plymouth: “Engineers in the Italian Campaign,” ts, n.d., UK NA, CAB 106/575, 34–35; Pal, 165; *The Tiger Triumphs,* 74–75; newsletter, 8th Indian Division, March–Nov. 1944, Dudley Russell papers, LHC.
Upstream between Sant’Angelo and Cassino town: Daniell, *History of the East Surrey Regiment*; Beckett, 157–58 (“*Cries for help*”); Frank Mills, “Well Dressed at Cassino,” n.d., author’s possession, 3–4 (*glimpses of the abbey*).
Gurkhas twice surged into Sant’Angelo: Molony VI, 121; Pal, 165; *The Tiger Triumphs,* 75–76.
Putrefying corpses were soaked in petrol: memoir, P. Royle, 1972, IWM, 99/72/1, 122–23 (“*I had no regrets*”); Connell, 191 (*wounds dressed with paper*); Blaxland, 99 (“*This is real war*”).
They pushed on: C. N. Barclay, *History of the 16th/5th The Queen’s Royal Lancers,* 125, 126n.
“*He was thrashing and fighting*”: John Ellis, *On the Front Lines,* 331.
Two secure bridgeheads merged: *Battle,* 232–33; Molony VI, 80, 123; Trevelyan, 297 (“*Flames of Jerry guns*”).
In four days Eighth Army would advance: Trevelyan, 272; Molony VI, 128.
“*Mark Clark has laid 4–1*”: Ryder, 170.
Clark had troubles enough: James C. Fry, *Combat Soldier,* 17, 33, 43; John J. Roche, “First Squad, First Platoon,” 1983, 351st Inf, 88th ID, MHI, ASEQ, 6–7; Wyndham H. Bammer, “Operations of Company K, 339th Infantry, in the Attack on Hills 66 and 69,” 1948, IS; Douglas Allanbrook, *See Naples,* 179 (“*who gets Rome?*”).
Sheaves of fire from the entrenched 94th Division: G. K. Tanham, “Battlefield Intelligence in World War II: A Case Study of the Fifth Army Front in Italy,” Sept. 1956, Project RAND, RM-1792, CMH, 42; John J. Roche, “First Squad, First Platoon,” 1983, 351st Inf, 88th ID, MHI, ASEQ, 6 (“*noise was all of a piece*”); John Sloan Brown, *Draftee Division,* 107 (*Red tracer vectors*); Eric Sevareid, *Not So Wild a Dream,* 390.
“*a serpentine column of steam*”: Roche, “First Squad, First Platoon,” 13; Sevareid, 388.
Yet neither division moved far: CtoA, 52, 54; Chester G. Starr, ed., *From Salerno to the Alps,* 201–2; http://www.wisc.edu/wisconsinpress/books/2387.htm; Sidney T. Matthews, “Writing Small Unit Actions with the Fifth Army in Italy,” SM, MHI, box 2, 2 (*Frederick Schiller Faust*); Sevareid, 388 (“*stupefyingly dead*”); John E. Wallace, *The Blue Devil “Battle Mountain” Regiment in Italy,* 13–18; Alexander, “The Allied Armies in Italy,” III-11.
That left Juin’s FEC: Anthony Clayton, *Three Marshals of France,* 83–85; “Draft Report on FEC,” SM, CMH, box 1; Starr, ed., 186–88.
Plunging fire greeted them: Diana F. Butler, “The French Expeditionary Corps in the Battle for Rome,” Cabinet historical section, UK NA, CAB 101/226, 13; Claude R. Hinson, “755th Tank Battalion Supporting the 3rd Algerian Infantry Division of the French Expeditionary Corps During the Advance on Rome,” 1948, IS (*singed hair and burning flesh*); George Bouille and Pierre Le Goyet, *Le Corps Expeditionnaire Française en Italie, 1943–1944,* n.d., MHI, trans. Antonio Ali Winston for author, 56–63 (*Counterattacking grenadiers*).

By midmorning on Friday, May 12: Douglas Porch, *The Path to Victory,* 556; Fred Majdalany, *Cassino,* 243; Butler, "The French Expeditionary Corps," 13; Starr, ed., 267n (*casualties approached sixteen hundred*); "Draft Report on FEC" ("*considerable alarm*"); Parker, 320 ("*dead take on a waxy look*").
Juin went forward shortly before noon: Michael Carver, ed., *The War Lords,* 607; Butler, "The French Expeditionary Corps," 13 (*three wounded battalion commanders*); Sidney T. Matthews, "The French Drive on Rome," *Revue historique de l'armée,* special issue, 1957, 128 ("*the wrong foot*").
Through much of the afternoon he scrambled: Clayton, 83–85; John Buchan, "Report on a Visit to the French Expeditionary Corps," n.d., CMH, appendix A, 1 ("*It's gone wrong*"); "Draft Report on FEC" *CtoA,* 61; Porch, 556 (*only reserve division*); Carver, ed., 607 ("*it will go*").
It went, spectacularly: Butler, "The French Expeditionary," 15; Porch, 556; Clayton, 83–85; Bouille and Le Goyet, 74–78 (*reported Monte Majo captured*); Heinrich von Vietinghoff, "71st Infantry Division in Italy," Sept. 1948, FMS, #C-025, MHI, 7–9, 22; Hans von Greiffenberg, "Field Fortifications in Central Italy," 1950, FMS, #C-071, MHI, 3–5, 16; *CtoA,* 61 ("*Accelerate the general withdrawal*").
By Sunday the French had advanced: Starr, ed., 188–89; Matthews, "The French Drive on Rome," 128–29; Molony VI, 139, 145 ("En avant!"), 140 ("*Most unpleasant*"); Bouille and Le Goyet, 78 (*worse than in Russia*); Parker, 341; *CtoA,* 62; Buchan, "Report on a Visit," appendix A, 1 ("*warfare to which we are accustomed*").
The unpleasantries had only begun: "Draft Report on FEC" Starr, ed., 189–92.
"*Dark men, dark night*": Trevelyan, 271; Robert Capa, *Slightly Out of Focus,* photo, 113; Fry, 43 ("*troops of the last century*"); O'Connor, "*Mektoub,*" 119 ("*dozens of wristwatches*"); Hinson, "755th Tank Battalion," 10 (*One unit kept a tiger*); Joe Chmiel, "Invasion of Normandy," ts, n.d., in Matt Urban file, 60th Inf Regt, 9th ID, SOOHP, MHI ("*Smokie, smokie*").
It was said that in Sicily: Peter Schrijvers, *The Crash of Ruin,* 47; OH, Robert J. Wood, 1973, William E. Narus, SOOHP, MHI, 3–42; John Steinbeck, *Once There Was a War,* 168; Roberta Love Tayloe, *Combat Nurse,* 77, 79, 83 (*doctors assigned numbers*); Huebner, 81 ("*sing, chatter, and howl*"); Alan Williamson, "Adviser to French Colonial Troops," ts, n.d., Texas MFM, 4 ("*women, horses, and guns*").
Up and up they climbed: Starr, ed., 192–93; Butler, "The French Expeditionary Corps," 19 ("*sky was a changeless blue*").
By four P.M. on May 15: Starr, ed., 192–93; Molony VI, 149 ("*falling boulders*"); Butler, "The French Expeditionary Corps," 21; Buchan, "Report on a Visit," appendix F ("*grinning savages*").
Men and beasts had exhausted themselves: "Draft Report on FEC."
On the French left: Brown, 117, 120; *CtoA,* 65–68, 77; Starr, ed., 207 (*dust-churning flotilla*).
"*rushed off his feet*": Buchan, "Report on a Visit," 1; Matthews, "The French Drive on Rome," 128–29 (*nearly extinct 71st Division*); *CtoA,* 86 (*no more than one hundred riflemen*); Starr, ed., 210 (*terrorizing horses*); Macksey, 212 ("*One could cry*").
All this buoyed the Allied high command: diary, MWC, May 14, 1944, Citadel, box 65 ("*very pleased*"); Carver, ed., 607 ("*We've got them*").
Only Clark remained somber: diary, MWC, May 14, 1944, Citadel, box 65; *CtoA,* 77; Tanham, "Battlefield Intelligence in World War II," 53 (*compared with two miles*); *CtoA,* 71–73 ("*disciplinary action*"); Brown, 127 (*traffic snarls*).
"*I am disappointed*": diary, MWC, May 14, 1944, Citadel, box 65; GK, May 14, 1944 ("*Called me about 6 times*").
Even as he lashed: Starr, ed., 226; diary, MWC, May 15, 1944, Citadel, box 65 ("*effort of the Eighth Army*").

That same Eighth Army: Anders, 178; Terlecki, 83; Kurzman, 237; Ken Ford, *Cassino 1944*, 78–79; Molony VI, 130n ("*oddments*"); Rudolf Böhmler, *Monte Cassino,* 266 ("*Impossible to get wounded*").
In danger of encirclement: Albrecht Kesselring, *The Memoirs of Field-Marshal Kesselring,* 200–205; Jean-Yves Nasse, *Green Devils*, 113; Nigel Nicolson, *The Grenadier Guards in the War of 1939–1945*, vol. 2, 427; Butler, ed., "Human Interest," 4; war diary, 1st Guards Bde, May 18, 1944, UK NA, WO 170/514 ("*Cassino is lost*").
The struggle for the high ground: "Operations by 2nd Polish Corps," 40; Anders, 179 (*six-man patrol*); John H. Green, "The Battles for Cassino," *AB,* no. 13, 1976, 1+ (*cracked church bell*); Piekalkiewicz, 181 (*Benedict's candlelit crypt*).
Just before ten A.M. the lancers': Anders, 178; Parker, 352-53; http://www.krakowinfo.com/signal2.way; Trevelyan, 274.
At 11:30 A.M. British signalers: Butler, ed., "Human Interest," 4; Nicolson, 427–28; Ryder, 169; "Operations by 2nd Polish Corps," 41; Molony VI, 134; Smith, 172 ("*means a great deal*").
For the first time in five months: war diary, 1st Guards Bde, May 18, 1944; Betsy Wade, ed., *Forward Positions: The War Correspondence of Homer Bigart,* 44–45; General Sir Sidney Chevalier Kirkman, "3rd and 4th Cassino," Royal Artillery Historical Society, *Proceedings*, vol. 11, no. 3, Jan. 1969, 94+.
In the abbey itself, further investigation: Trevelyan, 274; Tommaso Leccisotti, *Monte Cassino,* 132–33; E. T. DeWald, "Inspection Trip to Abbey of Monte Cassino, May 27, 1944," Henry C. Newton papers, MHI ("*a Mesopotamian tell*").
A solitary American fighter pilot: Parker, 357; Walter Robson, *Letters from a Soldier*, 96–97.
General von Senger, freshly bemedaled: Frido von Senger und Etterlin, "War Diary of the Italian Campaign," 1953, FMS, #C-095b, MHI, 124; Vietinghoff, "71st Infantry Division in Italy," 31 (*found the Gustav Line ruptured*); Molony VI, 114, 143 ("*frightful*"); Frido von Senger und Etterlin, "The Drive on Rome," Sept. 1951, FMS, #C-097b, MHI, 11 ("*the corps had been breached*"); Neil Short, *German Defences in Italy in World War II*, 9n.
"*It was left to me*": Frido von Senger und Etterlin, *Neither Fear nor Hope*, 248.
The task was formidable: Albert Kesselring et al., "German Version of the History of the Italian Campaign," n.d., CARL, N-16671.1-3, 216; Walter Warlimont, "OKW Activities—The Italian Theater, 1 Apr.–31 Dec. 1944," n.d., FMS, #C-099b, MHI, 23 (*spotter planes*); F. M. Sallagar, "Operation STRANGLE: A Case Study of Tactical Air Interdiction," Feb. 1972, RAND, R-851, 68 ("*unremitting Allied fighter-bomber*"); II Corps G-2, May 19, 1944, NARA RG 319, OCMH, CA, box 6 (*horses had been killed*); memo, Joseph L. Langevin, VI Corps G-2, to LKT Jr., May 18, 1944, LKT Jr., GCM Lib, box 13, folder 4 (*59 German battalions*); John Ellis, *Brute Force,* 324 (*only 405 men fit to fight*).
Italian supply-truck drivers: journal, Fourteenth Army, May 19–22, 1944, "The German Operation at Anzio," Apr. 1946, WD, John Lucas papers, MHI, box 9, 104; Kesselring et al, "German Version," 127 (*barrages severed phone lines*); A. G. Steiger, "The Italian Campaign," July 1948, historical section, Canadian Army HQ, report no. 20, MHI, 59 ("*I demand a clear picture*"); F. W. Winterbotham, *The Ultra Secret*, 116.
In truth, Kesselring had been outgeneraled: W.G.F. Jackson, *Alexander of Tunis as Military Commander,* 285; Matthews, "The French Drive on Rome," 128–29; Sallagar, "Operation STRANGLE," 70–71 (*not until May 19*); Kesselring, *Memoirs,* 201–5; Senger, "The Drive on Rome," 11; Robin Kay, *Official History of New Zealand in the Second World War,* vol. 2, *From Cassino to Trieste,* 29; Walter Warlimont, *Inside Hitler's Headquarters, 1939–1945*, 416; Molony VI, 164.
"*offensive against the cultural center of Europe*": weekly air intelligence summary, #78, May 15, 1944, Fifth Army, G-3 journal, NARA RG 319, OCMH, CA, box 6; corr, May 18, 1944, in G-2 report, II Corps, June 3, 1944, Robert H. Adleman papers, HIA, box 13 ("*You have no idea*").

"*like spontaneous fires exploding*": Fred Cederberg, *The Long Road Home,* 121; Blaxland, 107 (*crammed along a six-mile front*); C. F. Comfort, *Artist at War,* 153 ("*a vaporous fantasy*"); Trevelyan, 297 ("*clear their own minefields*").
"*the Shermans pitching like destroyers*": Kay, 46; Robin Neillands, *Eighth Army,* 293; Carver, 317; Butler, ed., "Human Interest," 4–5 (*eighteen hours to travel thirteen miles*); Mark Zuehlke, *The Liri Valley,* 232 ("*nose to arse*").
If the Hitler Line lacked natural impediments: Erich Rothe, "Tactical Mission, Trace and Organization of the 'Senger-Riegel,'" May 1947, FMS, #D-170, MHI, 3–6; Molony VI, 183; Mayo, 215; Short, 10, 18, 30–31, 50; John E. Krebs, *To Rome and Beyond,* 66 ("*only trace of the crew*").
"*Head wounds are many*": Huebner, 77.
Sergeants doled out rum rations: Cederberg, 121; Carver, 194 ("*I couldn't run a race*"); Butler, ed., "Human Interest," 3–5 ("*melancholy sight*"); Krebs, 77 (*shot through the heart*).
On average a thousand German prisoners: memo, "Advances Made by Fifth Army Corps [*sic*]," n.d., MWC papers, Citadel, box 3; "Interrogation Reports," May 1944, Combined Services Detailed Interrogation Center, NARA RG 407, E 47, AFHQ, 95-AL1-2.13, box 164 ("*weird and wonderful collection*"); Huebner, 76.
As the second week of the Allied offensive: CtoA, 94–97; author visits, May 6, 2004, Nov. 29, 2006; Blaxland, 119 (*eight hundred artillery shells*); *Calculated,* 323 (*bulldozers were needed*); Matthews, "The French Drive on Rome," 135 ("*bleeding to death*"); "Draft Report on FEC" Butler, "The French Expeditionary Corps," 25–26.
From west to east the Hitler Line: CtoA, 156; weekly intel summary, "No. 91, week ending 22 May 1944," AFHQ G-2, NARA RG 407, E 427, 95-AL1-2.6 ("*The enemy has denuded*").

A Fifth Army Show

Mark Clark shifted his command post: Calculated, 357; diary, MWC, May 22, 1944, Citadel, box 65; Sevareid, 393 ("*Sit down, gentlemen*").
For half an hour, unhurried and precise: Robert H. Adleman and George Walton, *Rome Fell Today,* 188; Alexander, "The Allied Armies in Italy," III-16; Winston S. Churchill, *Closing the Ring,* 603; *CM,* 372.
Under Operation BUFFALO: diary, MWC, May 22, 1944, Citadel, box 65; Sevareid, 394; Adleman and Walton, 188.
As the correspondents shuffled: Sevareid, 394 ("*in personal command*"); msg, MWC to A. Gruenther, May 23, 1944, MWC papers, Citadel, box 63 ("*no restriction*").
If Clark had disclosed much: Calculated, 350–51.
A face-to-face meeting at Caserta: msg, J. Harding to MWC, May 19, 1944, MWC papers, Citadel, box 63; *Calculated,* 351–53; diary, MWC, May 20, 1944, Citadel, box 65.
Clark suspected double-dealing: Texas, 370; diary, MWC, May 20 and 22, 1944, Citadel, box 65.
"*Hell, we shouldn't even be thinking*": Adleman and Walton, 206–7; *Calculated,* 252–53 ("*more than deserved*"); msg, MWC to LKT Jr., May 21, 1944, 1705 hrs, LKT Jr. papers, GCM Lib, box 12, folder 11.
"*Regrouping would take place*": diary, MWC, May 18, 1944, Citadel, box 65; Adleman and Walton, 206–7 ("*the great prize*").
"*I'm just a dog-face soldier*": Donald G. Taggart, ed., *History of the Third Infantry Division in World War II,* 149.
Light rain had fallen: CM, 371; Joseph A. Springer, *Black Devil Brigade,* 211 (*parachute cord*); John Shirley, *I Remember: Stories of a Combat Infantryman in World War II,* 4 (*after receiving no mail*

from home); Sevareid, 395–96 ("*nothing ever new*").
Clark had snatched a few hours' rest: MWC to Renie, May 26, 1944, MWC pers corr, Citadel; msg, MWC to A. Gruenther, May 23, 1944, MWC papers, Citadel, box 63; aide's diaries, May 23, 1944, LKT Jr., GCM Lib, box 18, folder 3; OH, Robert T. Frederick, Jan. 7, 1949, SM, MHI; *CM*, 371; *Calculated,* 357; Adleman and Walton, 188 (*Neither man said much*).
"*They can hear this in Rome*": Sevareid, 395; diary, Robert M. Marsh, May 23, 1944, 81st Armored Reconnaissance Bn, 1st AD, MHI, ASEQ (*like heat from a blacktop road*); *CtoA,* 120.
Then, at 6:30, the riflemen spilled: Frank M. Izenhour, "Breakout Anzio Beachhead," ts, 1946, CARL, N-2253.10; George F. Howe, *The Battle History of the 1st Armored Division,* 318; *CtoA,* 128; Shirley, 9 ("*I rolled him over*").
Farther east, Company K: G-3 journal, 3rd ID, May 23, 1944, 0800 hrs, 1935 hrs, NARA RG 319, OCMH, CA, box 6 ("*It is going too slow*"); *CtoA,* 130, 133 ("*We have no such words*").
Just past noon, five more Sherman tanks: msg, MWC to GCM, May 17, 1944, NARA RG 165, OPD, WD, top secret general corr, 312.4-319.1, box 16; Mayo, 210; OH, John A. Heintges, 1974, Jack A. Pellicci, SOOHP, MHI, 241; Shirley, 2–7.
Yard by bloody yard: Initial 3rd Division casualties for the day exceeded 1,600, but many of those were lost soldiers temporarily listed as missing. *CtoA,* 137; Taggart, ed., 164.
Damaged boys outnumbered the litter bearers: Nathan William White, *From Fedala to Berchtesgaden,* 113; Trevelyan, 284 ("*Must I be knocked off*").
Truscott's flanks found hard fighting: CtoA, 120, 138; OH, Frederick, Jan. 7, 1949; William G. Sheldon, "Anzio to Rome, Battle, 1944, "ts, n.d., in Robert H. Adleman papers, HIA, box 7, 5–6; Robert D. Burhans, *The First Special Service Force,* 216–17; G-3 journal, VI Corps, May 23–24, NARA RG 319, OCMH, CA, box 6 ("*All hell has broken*"); Flint Whitlock, *The Rock of Anzio,* 288, 300 (*sidestepping skeletons*).
By nightfall the 45th reported 458 casualties: CtoA, 138; Van T. Barfoot, "The Operation of the 3rd Platoon, Company L, 157th Infantry, in the Battle of Anzio During the Push to Rome," 1948, IS. Sergeant Barfoot earned the Medal of Honor for his heroism on May 23.
"*The fellow in the bed next to me*": F. Eugene Liggett, "No, Not Yet: Military Memoirs," ts, n.d., 158th FA, 157th Inf, 45th ID, ASEQ, MHI, 7–8; Whitlock, 297 ("*always getting cold*").
"*Whether or not we can get our tanks through*": corr, E. N. Harmon to David G. Barr, May 15, 1944, NARA RG 319, CA, box 6; OH, T. J. Conway, Fifth Army planner, June 27, 1950, NARA RG 319, OCMH, CA, box 5 (*hundred tanks in the first half hour*); OH, James S. Simmerman, CO, 2nd Bn, 13th Armored Regt, Apr. 24, 1950, SM, NARA RG 319, OCMH, CA, box 5 (*poorly marked American minefield*); "History of Ordnance Service in the Mediterranean Theater," n.d., CMH, 8-4 JA, 83; Howe, 324.
On the left, however, Combat Command A: *CtoA,* 121–23; AAR, "10th Engineer Combat Battalion, Cisterna-Rome Operation," ts, n.d., CMH, Geog Italy, 314.7; OH, Robert Linville, CO, 3rd Bn, 6th Armored Inf Regt, May 9, 1950, SM, NARA RG 319, OCMH, CA, box 5 (*tin cans filled with rocks*); Howe, 324.
By one P.M. U.S. tanks had crossed: AAR, "Salerno to Florence," Fifth Army Antiaircraft Artillery, 1945, MHI, 21–22.
fear that a premature detonation: OH, Linville, May 9, 1950; OH, ENH, Dec. 14, 1948; OH, Ben Crosby, XO, CCB, March 9, 1950, all in SM, NARA RG 319, OCMH, CA, box 5.
The day had cost Harmon eighty-six tanks: Anzio Beachhead, 119; OH, Lawrence R. Dewey, 1st AD chief of staff, July 20, 1948, SM, NARA RG 319, OCMH, CA, box 5; *StoA,* 267n.
Yet across the front fifteen hundred enemy: CM, 372–74; journal, Fourteenth Army, May 23, 1944, 107; *CtoA,* 140; Steiger, "The Italian Campaign," 74.

"*All attacks jumped off*": VI Corps G-3 journal file, May 23–24, 1944, NARA RG 319, OCMH, CA, box 6.
Harmon's tanks looped behind Cisterna: Howe, 325; Carmene J. DeFelice, "Carmene's Wartime Chronicle," ts, n.d., 12th AR, 1st AD, ASEQ, MHI; Audie Murphy, *To Hell and Back*, 154 ("*shooting skeets*"); *CtoA*, 142–44; ADC journal, VI Corps, May 24, 1944, 1515 hrs, NARA RG 319, CA, box 6 ("*I could get into Valmontone*").
Thursday morning was better yet: Howe, 328; Wiley H. O'Mohundro, "From Mules to Missiles," ts, n.d., MHI, 57; "Lessons Learned in the Battle from the Garigliano to North of Rome," July 15, 1944, Fifth Army, training memo, #12, DTL, Ft. B, 10; Paul A. Cundiff, *45th Infantry CP*, 181 (*most destroyed town*); *CtoA*, 147, 155.
Clark watched with pleasure: Alfred M. Beck et al., *The Corps of Engineers: The War Against Germany*, 211; Sevareid, 400; *CtoA*, 220 (*filled the craters*).
"*The joining up of my two Fifth Army forces*": msg, MWC to A. Gruenther, May 25, 1944, MWC papers, Citadel, box 63.
"*you make damn sure that their communique*": diary, MWC, May 24, 1944, Citadel, box 65; Sevareid, 398.
"*Where in hell do you think you're going?*": "Beachhead Offensive," *Newsweek*, June 5, 1944, 23; Sevareid, 398.
Three hours later Clark roared up: diary, MWC, May 25, 1944, Citadel, box 65; Wynford Vaughan-Thomas, *Anzio*, 230; *Calculated*, 357; film, "Liberation of Rome," 1944, combat report no. 1, NARA RG 111, CR001 (*much backslapping*); msg, MWC, May 25, 1944, MWC papers, Citadel, box 63 ("*junction took place*").
"*It may have sounded dramatic*": MWC to Renie, May 26, 1944, personal corr, Citadel.
Truscott drove toward his Conca command post: CM, 375; *CtoA*, 153–54.
The 1st Armored Division continued to bull: Howe, 329; msg, MWC to A. Gruenther, May 26, 1944, MWC papers, Citadel, box 63 (*fratricidal air attacks*); diary, Robert M. Marsh, May 25, 26, 30, 1944.
At the point of the VI Corps spear: Bogardus S. Cairns, "The Breakout at Anzio," *MR*, Jan. 1949, 23+; *CtoA*, 168; OH, Hamilton H. Howze, June 16, 1949, SM, NARA RG 319, OCMH, CA, box 5 (*within a half mile*); Hamilton H. Howze, "The Rome Operation," ts, June 6, 1944, CMH, Geog files, Italy, 370.2, 3–7; OH, Hamilton H. Howze, Apr. 1973, Robert T. Reed, MHI, SOOHP, 38–40; corr, Don E. Carleton, former VI Corps chief of staff, to U.S. Army chief of military history, Jan. 12, 1960, NARA RG 319, OCMH, CA, box 4; *CM*, 375 ("*astride the German line*").
That agreeable vision dissolved: corr, LKT to U.S. Army chief of military history, Nov. 5, 1961, with witness statements from Don E. Carleton et al, NARA RG 319, OCMH, CA, box 4; *CM*, 375 ("*The boss wants you*").
Truscott was dumbfounded: Kent Roberts Greenfield, ed., *Command Decisions*, 276–78.
"*I discussed this with General Clark*": OH, James M. Wilson, Jr., LKT Jr. aide, Apr. 23, 2004, with author, Washington, D.C.
"*He's not at the beachhead*": corr, Carleton to chief of military history, Jan. 12, 1960, Don E. Carleton papers, HIA, box 1; *CM*, 375–76 ("*more complicated plan*").
Then he fell silent: CtoA, 165; corr, LKT to chief of military history, Nov. 5, 1961 ("*poor leadership*"); OH, LKT Jr., Apr. 3, 1958, SM, MHI; msg, GCM to J. Devers, May 26, 1944, NARA RG 492, MTOUSA, SGS, "eyes only, General Devers, incoming," box 135; corr, FLW to Harold L. Bond, Sept. 30, 1965, NARA RG 319, OCMH, CA, box 4; Sidney T. Matthews, "Drive to Rome," ts, 1954, MHI, 314 ("*we should do this thing*").
Privately, however, the corps commander could not shake: OH, Wilson, Apr. 23, 2004; aide's journal, VI Corps, May 25, 1944, NARA RG 319, OCMH, CA, box 6; OH, LKT Jr., Apr. 3, 1958; aide's

diaries, May 25, 1944, LKT Jr., papers, GCM Lib, box 18, folder 3; Greenfield, ed., 281 ("*shooting the works*").
Glum yet resigned: A broken radio apprently prevented Mackensen's order from reaching Cisterna. Matthews, "Drive to Rome," 174, 188; Franz Kurowski, *Battleground Italy 1943–1945,* 226.
After hours of street brawling around the Castle: Vaughan-Thomas, *Anzo,* 225; OH, Jack M. Duncan and Ralph M. Flynn, 7th Inf Regt, Apr. 27, 1950, NARA RG 319, OCMH, CA, box 5; White, 117 (*3rd Battalion of the 7th Infantry*). The Cisterna rubble "had the stillness of ancient ruins, but without their dignity." Sevareid, 402.
"*The fact that the enemy is withdrawing*": minutes, "Division Commanders' Meeting, 25 May 1944," VI Corps, NARA RG 319, OCMH, CA, box 8.
None of his battle captains shared: corr, Carleton to chief of military history, Jan. 12, 1960; OH, Wilson, Apr. 23, 2004; *CtoA,* 166; OH, LKT Jr., March 1, 1962, NARA RG 319, OCMH, CA, box 5 ("*I realize perfectly*").
"*I propose to begin this*": minutes, "Division Commanders' Meeting, 25 May 1944" diary, MWC, May 26, 1944, Citadel, box 65 ("*the most direct route*"); OH, Wilson, Apr. 23, 2004 ("*These are the orders*").
"*This is ridiculous, for many roads*": diary, MWC, May 27, 1944, MWC papers, Citadel, box 65; OH, MWC, 1972–73, Forest S. Rittgers, Jr., MHI, 93–94.
Senger subsequently confirmed: Senger, *Neither Fear nor Hope,* 252. Tenth Army maps depcited four withdrawal routes besides Highway 6. Molony VI, 238; OH, LKT Jr., Apr. 3, 1958; *Battle,* 241.
Clark also feared that German artillery: Nigel Nicolson, *Alex: The Life of Field Marshal Earl Alexander of Tunis,* 252; OH, MWC, Rittgers, 93–94; Matthews, "Drive to Rome," 308–13 (*only the Göring reconnaissance battalion*); *CtoA,* 152, 157; R.J. O'Rourke, *Anzio Annie,* 177; Böhmler, 281.
Two final points must be conceded: OH, Robert W. Porter, Jr., 1981, John N. Sloan, SOOHP, MHI, 338.
"*scheming to get into Rome*": GK, May 28, 1944; Molony VI, 234 ("*thirst for glory*").
"*Not only did we intend*": *Calculated,* 352.
The fixation…marred: Matthews, "Drive to Rome," 312, 338, 200 ("*admirably situated to outflank*"); *CtoA,* 157 (*partial withdrawal of both armies*); Greenfield, ed., 276–79; Blaxland, 117; AAR, Wilhelm Schmalz, ts, n.d., NARA RG 319, OCMH, CA, box 9.
"*a terrible congestion of itineraries*": *Calculated,* 359; diary, MWC, May 27, 1944, Citadel, box 65 ("*no attack left in them*"); *Battle,* 231 ("*never appears to have accepted Alexander*"); Greenfield, ed., 280.
"*fire on the Eighth Army*": U.S. Army historian Sidney T. Matthews's detailed notes from interviews with Clark in May 1948 include this passage: "When Alexander told Clark he wanted the Eighth Army to take part in [Rome's] capture, he got pretty sore. He told Alex if he gave him such an order he would refuse to obey it and if Eighth Army tried to advance on Rome, Clark said he would have his troops fire on Eighth Army. Alex did not press the point to its conclusion." In interviews conducted by Matthews seven months later, Alexander denied ever telling Clark that he wanted Eighth Army to participate in the capture of Rome, and added that Clark "never told Alexander that if Alexander gave such an order he (Clark) would refuse to obey it." OH, MWC, May 10–21, 1948, SM, MHI, 60; OH, Harold Alexander, Jan. 10–15, 1949, SM, CMH, Geog files, III-13; Trevelyan, 303.
Alexander had remained in the dark: diary, MWC, May 26, 1944, Citadel, box 65; Matthews, "Drive to Rome," 319; msg, A. Gruenther to MWC, May 26, 1944, MWC papers, Citadel, box 63 ("*Gen. Alexander agreed*").
Gruenther assured him: Nicolson, *Alex,* 252 ("*pretty upset*"); L. James Binder, *Lemnitzer: A Soldier for His Time,* 122 ("*terribly disappointed*"); Jackson, *Alexander of Tunis as Military Commander,* 289

(“*should not ‘urge’*”); *Battle*, 231 (“*prima donna*”).
The contretemps remained hidden: Sevareid, 401; msg, GCM to J. Devers, May 26, 1944, NARA RG 492, MTOUSA, SGS, “eyes only, General Devers, incoming,” box 135 (“*this hurts Clark*”); diary, MWC, May 27, 1944, MWC papers, Citadel, box 65 (“*I do not feel that his exploits*”).
“*I never violated his orders*”: Nicolson, *Alex*, 252; OH, Alexander, Jan. 10–15, 1949, III-7 (*Clark had assured him*).
“*power to command and readiness to obey*”: Livy, *The War with Hannibal*, 26; Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, 607 (“*Glory of this battle*”).
“*He is terrified*”: Ryder, 171–72; Carver, 207.
Beneath brilliant vernal sunshine on May 26: Hamilton H. Howze, *A Cavalryman’s Story*, 109; Howze, “The Rome Operation,” 10; *CtoA*, 169–70; OH, Howze, Reed, 43.
The day soon darkened: White, 118; *CtoA*, 168; Maurice R. P. Bechard, “This Is an Account of What Was to Be,” ts, n.d., 16th Armored Eng Bn, 1st AD, MHI, ASEQ, 5; Howze, *A Cavalryman’s Story*, 102; Howe, 331 (“*ruinous effect*”); OH, Bogardus S. Cairns, CO, 3rd Bn, 13th AR, Apr. 24, 1950, NARA RG 319, OCMH, CA, box 5; Howze, “The Rome Operation,” 11.
“*All daytime movement*”: AAR, Schmalz; Franz Kurowski, *The History of the Fallschirmpanzerkorps Hermann Göring*, 244–45; Sallagar, “Operation STRANGLE,” 72–74.
Counterattacks against Howze’s left flank: OH, Howze, June 16, 1949; Howze, *A Cavalryman’s Story*, 111 (*trucks heaped*), 129 (“*something to cling to*”); ADC journal, VI Corps, May 28, 1944, 1502 hrs.
Reluctantly, Clark agreed to halt: CtoA, 171; OH, MWC, May 10–21, 1948, 62; Matthews, “Drive to Rome,” 370 (*traffic swept up and down*); Vaughan-Thomas, 226 (“*take your war*”).
It was much too late: Carver, 203 (“Unbek. Soldat”); Howe, 331–32; *CtoA*, 175; Matthews, “Drive to Rome,” 354 (“*a little sticky*”).
The I Parachute Corps improvised: OH, ENH, Dec. 14, 1948, SM, and OH, Edwin A. Russell, G-3 of 1st AD, n.d., SM, both in NARA RG 319, OCMH, CA, box 5; Starr, ed., 247–49; Homer R. Ankrum, *Dogfaces Who Smiled Through Tears*, 501 (“*blood could be seen*”).
Before dawn on Monday, May 29: CtoA, 176; Starr, ed., 249; Lloyd Clark, *Anzio*, 306 (“*An 88-mm round blew up the Sherman*”); Howe, 333 (*sixty tanks*); Sheehan, 202.
“*The day’s attack*”: Howze, *A Cavalryman’s Story*, 111; Carver, 204 (“*grisly bric-a-brac*”); msg, J. Devers to GCM, May 31, 1944, and biographical sketch, Katherine Tupper Marshall papers, GCM Lib; msg, ENH to MWC, May 29, 1944, MWC, corr, Citadel, box 3; Eric Larrabee, *Commander in Chief*, 113.
“*halted at every point*”: *CtoA*, 180; intel summary, AFHQ G-2, May 29, 1945, no. 92, NARA RG 407, E 427, 95-AL1-2.6; Warlimont, “OKW Activities,” 31–32.
A reproachful Clark phoned Truscott: Matthews, “Drive to Rome,” 387; diary, MWC, May 30 and 31, 1944, Citadel, box 65; MWC to Renie, May 31, 1944, personal corr, Citadel.
“*The offensive has bogged*”: diary, Peter Tompkins, NARA RG 226, OSS history office, E 99, box 47, 260.

The Cuckoo’s Song

It had bogged in the south, too: G.W.L. Nicholson, *The Canadians in Italy, 1943–1945*, vol. 2, 425; Michael Person Cessford, “Hard in the Attack,” Ph.D. diss, Carleton University, Ottawa, 357; Daniel G. Dancocks, *The D-Day Dodgers*, 253 (“*I just don’t know*”); Zuehlke, 221 (“*Alouette*”), 322, 293.
Eighth Army had long “lacked”: Blaxland, 121; Molony VI, 290–91.
“*After months of static warfare*”: Molony VI, 241, 247, 285; Blaxland, 124; Cessford, “Hard in the Attack,” 405–13.

"*Traffic criminals of every kind*": Molony VI, 257, 291; Alex Bowlby, *The Recollections of Rifleman Bowlby*, 42 ("*I don't toil*").
The Sacco River valley beyond the Liri: Neil Orpen, *Victory in Italy*, 44–47; Robson, 108 ("*You are welcome*"); Strome Galloway, *A Regiment at War*, 142–43 ("*rose and an egg*").
Canadian troops would enter Frosinone: Molony VI, 276.
"*When we got to him*": Dancocks, 253; Bowlby, 41 ("*six feet*").
On Leese's left, Juin and his FEC: Richard Doherty, *A Noble Crusade*, 220; Molony VI, 168 ("*damned French*"), 253.
Soon others damned them: memo, Brunis M. Rogness, 17th FA, to MWC, May 29, 1944, NARA RG 338, Fifth Army HQ, general corr, 000.51, box 1.
Another chaplain cited specifics: memo, Raymond F. Copeland, 17th FA, to MWC, May 28, 1944; memo, Robert M. Douglass, 995th FA Bn, to MWC, June 2, 1944 ("*approximately 75 women*"); memos, Sam H. Long, 933rd FA Bn, to MWC, May 30 and June 1, 1944 ("*delegation of frenzied citizens*"); memo, C. C. Bank, 13th FA Bde, to MWC, May 31, 1944 (*all thirteen of his battalion commanders*), all in NARA RG 338, Fifth Army HQ, general corr, 000.51, box 1.
Italian authorities tallied seven hundred: Robert Katz, *The Battle for Rome*, 287; affidavit, May 25, 1944, in "Reports relative to acts of violence and use of force committed by Moroccan soldiers," May 25 1944, HQ, Italian 210th Infantry Division, Robert J. Wood papers, MHI ("*I was taken*"); Norman Lewis, *Naples '44*, 143.
"*At any hour of the day*": corr, Giuseppe Cortese, 210th Italian Infantry Div, to MWC, May 25, 1944, NARA RG 338, Fifth Army HQ, general corr, 000.51, box 2.
Vengeful Italians: Lewis, 147; memo, Raymond F. Copeland, May 28, 1944 ("*a 'so-what' shrug*"); J. Glenn Gray, *The Warriors*, 67.
General Juin was not *laughing:* memo, A. Juin, "Ill Treatment of Civilian Population," May 24, 1944, Robert J. Wood papers, MHI; memos, A. Gruenther to MWC, May 27 and 29, 1944, MWC, corr, Citadel, box 3 (*Clark dispatched Gruenther*); memo, A. Juin, May 27, 1944, NARA RG 338, Fifth Army HQ, general corr, 000.51, box 1 ("*excited indignation*"); Edward L. Bimberg, *The Moroccan Goums*, 64; Kurzman, 251 (*hanged in village squares*).
transport of Berber women: Bimberg, 64; Kurzman, 228; Isobel Williams, "Law and Order in Allied Occupied Southern Italy, 1943–1945," Ph.D. diss, University of Wales, Swansea, 2005, and e-mail to author; letter, Ministerio della Difesa, "*statistica incidenti e crimini commessi dalle truppe alleate*," Oct. 18, 1947, NARA RG 492, MTO, AG HQ records, 290/53/32/5-6, 000.5; Trevelyan, 277 ("*suffered more*"); Schrijvers, 47 ("*savages*").
Lucian Truscott was in pain: Ernest F. Fischer, Jr., "A Classic Strategem on Monte Artemisio," draft, n.d., CMH, Geog files, 370.24, 5–6; aide's diaries, LKT Jr., May 30, 1944, GCM Lib, box 18, folder 3 (*cracked rib*); Matthews, "Drive to Rome," 375–78 ("*thing is cinch*").
The usual camp smells: Texas, 421 (*hard-luck reputation*); OH, LKT Jr., Apr. 3, 1958, SM, MHI ("*crushing blow*"); Fisher, "A Classic Stratagem," 10.
To the stocky officer at Truscott's elbow: corr, FLW to Eric Sevareid, Feb. 26, 1946, FLW papers, HIA, box 3; *Texas*, 360–67 ("*can't always trust*").
"*I am fed up*": *Texas*, 335–36; GK, Apr. 25, 1944 ("*a new man*").
Now the new man was determined: Kurzman, 317; Fisher, "A Classic Stratagem," 5–6; "ADC's Journal for Gen. Fred L. Walker," May 29, 1944, NARA RG 319, OCMH, CA, box 6 (*Piper Grasshopper*).
"*I didn't sleep much*": *Texas*, 372–74; author visit, May 9, 2004.
Truscott disagreed, brushing aside: Matthews, "Drive to Rome," 365–66; Jack L. Scott, *Combat Engineer*, 70; Fisher, "A Classic Stratagem," 9 (*two-mile gap*).

"*You may have something*": *Texas*, 375; Fisher, "A Classic Stratagem," 10–12; *CM*, 377; Matthews, "Drive to Rome," 381; Robert Wagner, *The Texas Army*, 171; *CtoA*, 186.
"*We are taking chances*": diary, FLW, May 30, 1944, NARA RG 319, OCMH, CA, box 6.
Albert Kesselring was alive: Matthews, "Drive to Rome," 269; *CtoA*, 186; AAR, Schmalz; Kurowski, *Battleground Italy*, 224 (*The 362nd*); journal, Fourteenth Army, May 31, 1944, 118 (*thirty-three tanks*).
"*Douse that cigarette*": memoir, Harvey Reves, ts, n.d., Texas MFM.
"*No news here*": Wagner, 161; George Kerrigan, "The Velletri Road Block," ts, n.d., Texas MFM (*vowing to court-martial*); AAR, "Operations in Italy, May 1944," 142nd Inf Regt, NARA RG 319, OCMH, CA, box 6 ("*breathless anticipation*").
At eleven P.M., an hour late: AAR, "Operations in Italy, May 1944," 142nd Inf Regt, ASEQ, MHI; Bruce L. Barger, *The Texas 36th Division*, 186 ("*expected to meet the enemy*"); Eric Sevareid, "On the Standards of the 36th Proudly Inscribe 'Velletri,'" *American Legion*, in *A Pictorial History of the 36th "Texas" Infantry Division* ("*corn popping*"); OH, George Lynch, 142nd Inf, Jan. 16, 1950, SM, MHI.
The first gray wash: AAR, "Operations in Italy, May 1944," 142nd Inf Regt, NARA RG 319, OCMH, CA, box 6; James M. Estepp, "I Left My Friend on Mt. Artemisio," ts, n.d., Texas MFM (*tiny figures in field gray*).
Behind the column came the bulldozers: Sevareid, 405; Fisher, "A Classic Stratagem," 5, 14–15; corr, FLW to Gov. Coke Stevenson, July 24, 1946, FLW papers, HIA, box 3; "Engineer History, Fifth Army, Mediterranean Theater," n.d., MHI, 128 (*two-man timber saws*); Barger, 189 ("*Up, up, up*"); Wagner, 171 ("*white tracing tape*").
Through the night: Scott, 72; AAR, 143rd Inf Regt, vol. I, June 1944, NARA RG 319, OCMH, CA, box 6 ("*crows on a telephone line*").
Kesselring learned that the enemy: Matthews, "Drive to Rome," 267–71, 274–75, 287, 298 (*mounted on bicycles*); *CtoA*, 185; journal, Fourteenth Army, May 31, 1944, 117.
"*cork out of a champagne bottle*": Adleman and Walton, 17; OH, Paul D. Adams, 143rd Inf CO, 1975, Irving Monclova and Marlin Lang, SOOHP, MHI; corr, FLW to C. Stevenson, July 24, 1946; Michael B. Anderson, "Personal History," ts, n.d., Texas MFM ("*I measured him*"); OH, David W. Sisco, B Co., 142nd Inf, May 1950, NARA RG 319, OCMH, CA, box 5 (*filled with cognac*).
"*state of perturbation*": Sevareid, "On the Standards of the 36th" *Texas*, 377 ("*Most unbecoming*").
Through Thursday afternoon: Fisher, "A Classic Stratagem," 15–17; memoir, Paul H. Duffey, 141st Inf, ts, n.d., Texas MFM ("*didn't bother me*"); *CtoA*, 200; dispatch, Wick Fowler, *Dallas Morning News*, n.d., in *A Pictorial History of the 36th "Texas" Infantry Division* ("*The town is yours*").
"*torn wide open*": AAR, Schmalz; Molony VI, 276; Wagner, 180 ("*Going fine*").

Expulsion of the Barbarians

Cypress trees stood sentinel: Harold L. Bond, *Return to Cassino*, 182; Sevareid, 408 (*dead man's boots*); Gray, 108; O'Rourke, 197 (*scratched their initials*).
"*Over each one of them*": *Il Tempo*, June 1, 1984, from "The First Special Service Force: Participants in the Liberation of Rome," ts, n.d., MHI, 3; James O'Neill, "Welcome to Rome," *Yank*, June 18, 1944, 10+ ("*Is he hurt*").
Clark took nothing for granted: CtoA, 188 ("*handsprings*"), 192 (*369,000 strong*); Starr, ed., 254; Howe, 337; msg, A. Gruenther to MWC, June 2, 1944, 2230 hrs, MWC, Citadel, box 63.
"*I'm disappointed in the 45th*": G-2/G-3 journal, VI Corps, June 2, 1944, 1840 hrs, NARA RG 319, OCMH, CA, box 6.
With casualties climbing: Most of the damaged tanks were disabled by mines and soon repaired.

Molony VI, 272, 277 ("*a combined attack*"); addendum, "Statistical Data on Italian Campaign," in corr, E. N. Harmon to GCM, July 15, 1944, GCM Lib, box 70; Matthews, "Drive to Rome," 411 ("*get into the act*"); "Clark's Mother Happy," *NYT,* June 5, 1944, 4 ("*frazzled out*").
"*Rome is now in Allied hands*": diary, MWC, June 2, 1944, Citadel, box 65; Churchill, *Closing the Ring,* 608; Neillands, 299 (*few Tommies could be found*); Patrick Howarth, *My God, Soldiers,* 165 (*Polish contingent*).
"*The attack today*": diary, MWC, June 2, 1944, Citadel, box 65.
Valmontone was found abandoned: Molony VI, 276; journal, 3rd ID, June 2, 1944, 0730 hrs, NARA RG 319, OCMH, CA, box 8; *CtoA,* 202, 206; Schrijvers, 123 (*Italian barbers*).
Palestrina, an ancient Etruscan town: Karl Baedeker, *Central Italy and Rome,* 482–83; http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palestrina.
That would be his last dispatch: JJT, XIV-14-16; OH, Russell W. Cloer, May 26, 2005, phone interview from Tampa; Russell W. Cloer, "A Short War Story," ts, 1998, 7th Inf Regt, 3rd ID MHI, ASEQ.
"*I am sending them home*": memo, MWC to A. Gruenther, June 7, 1944, MWC, Citadel, box 63.
"*Perhaps he was kept overseas*": JJT, XV-8-11, 14.
Even before the American thrust: Warlimont, "OKW Activities," 36.
On June 2, he advised Berlin: Ultra intercepted these dispatches. Ralph Bennett, *Ultra and the Mediterranean Strategy,* 285–86; Böhmler, 285 ("*huge snake*").
Vietinghoff himself was a casualty: CtoA, 199; Blaxland, 131.
Kesselring had earlier proposed: CtoA, 203, 206; Molony VI, 235, 281 ("*Führer decision*"); Trevelyan, 305 (*Elefante*).
The sound of gunfire: John Patrick Carroll-Abbing, *But for the Grace of God,* 106; Jane Scrivener, *Inside Rome with the Germans,* 197, 187 ("*Brighter Berlin*"), 193; Lynn H. Nicholas, *The Rape of Europa,* 239 (*white peacocks*); Walter L. Medding, "The Road to Rome," ts, n.d., CEOH, box X-38, 76 (*pilfered the silverware*).
"*Germans streaming through*": diary, Tompkins, 272; Daniel Lang, "Letter from Rome," *New Yorker,* June 17, 1944, 65+ (*three and four abreast*); Scrivener, 195–96 ("*Wild-eyed, unshaven*").
And in the Gestapo cells: Kurzman, 356–57.
niggling suburban gunfights: Molony VI, 281; Starr, ed, 263; Burhans, 242.
"*Looks as if the Boche*": journal, VI Corps, G-3, June 3, 1944, 1305 hrs, NARA RG 319, OCMH, CA, box 6; Howe, 339; Howze, 113.
"*No one is doing any work*": msg, A. Gruenther to MWC, June 3, 1944, 1615 hrs, MWC, Citadel, box 63; intel summary #333, II Corps, June 3, 1944, NARA RG 319, OCMH, CA, box 8 ("*a rout*"); msg, MWC to corps commanders, June 3, 1944, 1642 hrs, II Corps, G-3 journal, NARA RG 319, OCMH, CA, box 8 ("*destroy the enemy*").
Precisely who first crossed: memos, MWC, "Initial Entry into Rome," Aug. 31 and Nov. 16, 1944, in "Reports on Capture of Rome," Chester G. Starr papers, HIA, box 1; dispatch, Seymour Korman, *Chicago Tribune,* June 9, 1944, Robert T. Frederick papers, HIA, box 1; *CtoA,* 212–16.
Traffic jams and friendly fire: OH, Cairns, Apr. 24, 1950; Howe, 344; Sevareid, 410; Richard Collier, *Fighting Words,* 157; diary, MWC, June 4, 1944, Citadel, box 65 (*Clark left Anzio*); Fred Sheehan, *Anzio: Epic of Bravery,* 210 ("*I'm holding off the artillery*").
As he walked with Frederick: Clark later hung the perforated sign on his garden wall. *Calculated,* 363–64; Maurine Clark, *Captain's Bride, General's Lady,* 114.
"*one little gun stopping us*": OH, Cairns, Apr. 24, 1950; GK, June 4, 1944.
By late Sunday the rear guards: journal, VI Corps, G-3/G-2, June 4, 1944, 1215 hrs, NARA RG 319, OCMH, CA, box 6; Howe, 345–46 (*chocolate bars*); Adleman and Walton, 210 (*bombed that too*);

John J. Roche, "First Squad, First Platoon," ts, 1983, 351st Inf Regt, 88th ID, ASEQ, MHI, 22 ("*too cluttered*"); Alton D. Brashear, *From Lee to Bari*, 238 (*S.P.Q.R.*).

Howze at twilight led a tank company: Howze, 117; *CtoA*, 218; Howze, "The Rome Operation," 19 ("*kissed me*"); AAR, 351st Inf Regt, June 1944, NARA RG 319, OCMH, CA, box 7 ("*Vino offered*"); Howe, 346; Roche, "First Squad, First Platoon," 22; David Hunt, *A Don at War*, 259; OH, Russell Cloer, 3rd ID, Sept. 11, 2001, ROHA (*summary execution*); Charles F. Marshall, *A Ramble Through My War*, 107 ("*won't be hard to be killed*").

Frederick set out for the Tiber: Burhans, 244–45; *CtoA*, 218-19; dispatch, Korman, June 9, 1944; *Register of Graduates*, USMA, 1989 ed., 359; Adleman and Walton, 218.

"*a complete hysteria*": Howe, 346; Lang, "Letter from Rome," 65+ ("*Weekend!*"); Martin Blumenson, *Mark Clark*, 215–16; Sherman W. Pratt, *Autobahn to Berchtesgaden*, 403 ("*Welcome to the Liberators*"); Sheehan, 213; *Il Tempo*, June 4, 1984, from "The First Special Service Force," 3 ("*Brothers*").

Shortly before dawn, a column: Medding, "The Road to Rome," 63–71; "History of the Fifth Army Counter Intelligence Corps Detachment," June 20, 1945, NARA RG 319, OCMH, CA, box 9; Marshall, 107–8, 113 (*Artie Shaw record*); "Attain by Surprise," ts, n.d., 30th Assault Unit, and "Inventory of Documents and Equipment Taken from the German Embassy Rome," June 8–23, 1943, 30th Assault Unit, LHC ("*revealed nothing*").

"*Got across thirteen bridges*": G-2/G-3 journal, VI Corps, June 5, 1944, 0630 hrs.

"*Victory! Not for Mussolini*": Francesco Rossi and Silvano Casaldi, *Those Days at Nettuno*, 90.

The Allied victory had cost: Molony VI, 284. U.S. estimates of German casualties were somewhat lower; also, total Allied casualties in DIADEM were placed at 40,205. *CtoA*, 223.

Columns of weary GIs shuffled: Scrivener, 200; Sevareid, 412; Molony VI, 282 ("*Allies are in Rome*").

In classical Rome: H. V. Morton, *A Traveller in Rome*, 60–64; John Julius Norwich, *The Middle Sea*, 33n; Brigitte Hintzen-Bohlen, *Art and Architecture: Rome and the Vatican City*, 39; Georgina Masson, *The Companion Guide to Rome*, 37, 44; Trevelyan, 319.

At 7:30 Clark flew from Nettuno: diary, MWC, June 5, 1944, Citadel, box 65; Adleman and Walton, 226 ("*the hell with that*").

Within minutes they were lost: diary, MWC, June 5, 1944, Citadel, box 65; Kurzman, 421.

"*Well, gentlemen*": Sevareid, 414; Adleman and Walton, 226; *CM*, 379.

Then it was off to a luncheon: OH, Theodore J. Conway, 1977, Robert F. Ensslin, SOOHP, MHI, III-14; Vernon A. Walters, *Silent Missions*, 108; diary, MWC, June 5, 1944, Citadel, box 65 ("*the same thing*").

"*We waded through crowds*": GK, June 5, 1944.

"*You have made the American people*": msg, FDR to MWC, June 6, 1944, MWC, Citadel, box 3; Harold Macmillan, *The Blast of War*, 415 ("*expulsion*"); Churchill, 611 ("*the great victory*"); Blaxland, 133–37 (*turning some British officers*); Warren F. Kimball, ed., *Churchill & Roosevelt: The Complete Correspondence*, vol. 3, 163.

Across the capital the celebration: Sheehan, 215; Huebner, 97 ("*beautiful girls*"); Collier, 157 ("*habit of twenty years*"); Adleman and Walton, 219; David Cole, *Rough Road to Rome*, 231 ("*had my hair cut*").

Exhausted soldiers wrapped: diary, Tompkins, 272; Wallace, 178 ("*slept on the street*"); Murphy, 163.

"*Every block is interesting*": corr, George Revelle to Evelyn, June 14, 1944, author's possession; Sevareid, 415; Cundiff, 178 (*Priests offered tours*); Trevelyan, 322 ("*Hold it, Pope*"); editorial, "The Fall of Rome," *Life*, July 14, 1944, 38 ("*changing of the guard*").

"*How do you like that?*": Walters, 97.

"*Boys, we're on the back page*": Collier, 157; Sevareid, 418.

On June 6, Alexander: Molony VI, 281; Blaxland, 139 ("*If only the country*").
Howitzers barked wheel to wheel: Medding, "The Road to Rome," 65; memoir, Edward R. Feagins, 143rd Inf Regt, ts, n.d., Texas MFM, 45 ("*I often wondered*").
"*C'mon, man, c'mon*": *Stars and Stripes*, June 5, Italy edition, 1; DeFelice, "Carmene's Wartime Chronicle" ("*Drove through Rome*"); G-3 journal, II Corps, June 5, 1944, 2015 hrs, NARA RG 319, OCMH, CA, box 8 ("*Beyond Rome*").
Olive-drab columns streamed: Bond, 191; Medding, "The Road to Rome," 65; corr, FKW to H. L. Bond, Sept. 30, 1965; *Texas*, 387.
Then up they climbed: Morton, 79, 115, 352; http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gianicolo; Bond, 199; Samuel Ball Platner, *A Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome*, 274, in http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Gazetteer/Places/Europe/Italy/Lazio/Roma/Rome/_Texts/PLAT

EPILOGUE

More than three weeks passed: JJT, XV-3; *Columbus* [Ohio] *Evening Dispatch*, June 26, 1944, 1, A8; *Columbus Dispatch*, June 3 and 8, 1944.
The news from Rome: Columbus Sunday Dispatch, June 4, 1944, 1, A5, B1, and June 11, B1; *Columbus Dispatch*, June 6, 1944, 1, A10, B1; *Columbus Evening Dispatch*, June 7, 1944, 1.
The fatal telegram: JJT, XV-6, 14; author visit, May 7, 2004; "Sicily-Rome American Cemetery and Memorial," American Battle Monuments Commission booklet, n.d., 3–18.
Here, on Memorial Day in 1945: Bob Fleisher, "Truscott Leads Memorial Day Rites," *Stars and Stripes* 2, no. 174, May 31, 1945, 1; Leda M. Silver, "Cartoonist for All Wars," *Retired Officer*, Oct. 1992, 42+; Bill Mauldin, *The Brass Ring*, 272.
The fall of Rome proved: Brooks, 29.
"*Morale is irresistibly high*": W.G.F. Jackson, *Alexander of Tunis as Military Commander*, 295; Thomas R. Brooks, *The War North of Rome*, 13 ("*advance is splendid*").
Kesselring had tried to persuade: Albrecht Kesselring, *The Memoirs of Field-Marshal Kesselring*, 205; J. Duncan Love, "Artillery Usage in World War II," Apr. 1959, vol. II, Operations Research Office, Johns Hopkins University, 125 (*eight miles a day*); directive, A. Kesselring, June 13, 1944, NARA RG 492, MTO G-2, 319, box 354 ("*sadistic imaginativeness*"); Robert Wagner, *The Texas Army*, 202 ("*Damned shame*").
Alexander's blithe dismissal: Battle, 255–57; OH, Charles de Gaulle, Jan. 14, 1947, FCP, MHI.
"*an overriding priority*": *CtoA*, 270; *Battle*, 247, 258; Chester G. Starr, ed., *From Salerno to the Alps*, 268 (*shrunk by more than half*); "Beachheads and Mountains," pamphlet, June 1945, MTO, Theodore J. Conway papers, MHI, box 2 (*peaked at 880,000*); Viscount Alexander of Tunis, "The Allied Armies in Italy," n.d., CMH, III-25 ("*disastrous*"); John North, ed., *The Alexander Memoirs, 1940–1945*, 41 ("*triumphant advance*"); *Calculated*, 369 ("*political mistakes*").
If their disappointment was understandable: Molony VI, 274; *Battle*, 259; George F. Howe, "American Signal Intelligence in Northwest Africa and Western Europe," U.S. Cryptologic History, Series IV, vol. 1, NARA RG 57, SRH-391, 78 ("*neither strong nor quick*"); Eduard Mark, *Aerial Interdiction in Three Wars*, 208–9 ("*cloak of darkness*"); OH, Willis D. Crittenberger, July 19, 1947, NARA RG 319, OCMH, CA, box 5.
The stress in Fifth Army: OH, GK, Feb. 14, 1950, and Edward J. O'Neill, June 22, 1948, both in NARA RG 319, OCMH, CA, box 5; Robert H. Adleman and George Walton, *The Devil's Brigade*, 219 ("*infested with lice*"); *CtoA*, 236–37; memos, 1st AD G-4 to ENH, and 1st AD G-1 to ENH, both July 4, 1944, ENH papers, MHI, corr, box 1.
If the past year had been: Iris Origo, *War in Val D'Orcia*, xiii; Richard Lamb, *War in Italy, 1943–*

1945, 64–66 (*ten Italian deaths*); "AFHQ History of Special Operations," July 1945, MTO, NARA RG 407, E 427, 95-Al1-3.0, box 173, 3 (*85,000 armed partisans*); obit, "Friedrich Engel: Nazi Officer Known as 'Butcher of Genoa,'" Associated Press, *Washington Post*, Feb. 14, 2006, B6.

Alexander in late August: Battle, 269, 287; B. H. Liddell Hart, *The Other Side of the Hill*, 344; Paul A. Cundiff, *45th Infantry CP*, 162 ("*wished that I were dead*").

"*a vast holding operation*": *CtoA*, 235; H. Essame, "A Controversial Campaign—Italy, 1943–45," *Army Quarterly and Defence Journal*, Jan. 1968, 219+ (*twenty-nine nations*); Andrew Brookes, *Air War over Italy, 1943–1945*, 155 (*thousand cigarettes*).

"*Many men will never know*": Annette Tapert, ed., *Lines of Battle*, 135; John Muirhead, *Those Who Fall*, 20.

The 608-day campaign: Battle, 317; Eugenio Corti, *The Last Soldiers of the King*, ix; *CtoA*, 545 (*equivalent to 40 percent*); "Beachheads and Mountains" (*three-quarters of a million*); "Tools of War," Dec. 1946, Peninsular Base Section, MHI; Starr, ed., 451–52; *Operations in Sicily and Italy*, USMA Dept. of Military Art and Engineering, 1947, 97. Another statistical summary lists as many as 29,560 American dead and missing in Italy. John Ellis, *World War II: A Statistical Survey*, 255. See also "U.S. Army Battle Casualties in Italy," n.d., CMH, Geog files, Italy, 704, which lists 30,050 U.S. dead, but without giving methodological detail.

German casualties in Italy: G. A. Shepperd, *The Italian Campaign, 1943–45*, 391; *CtoA*, 545; Corti, ix; Starr, ed., 451-52 (*212,000 prisoners*); "Age Distribution of Dead in the German Ground Forces," OSS, Research and Analysis Branch, Apr. 3, 1945, NARA RG 334, NWC Lib, box 888.

The Pontine Marshes: "Richiesta di soccorsi per la popolazione di Anzio e Nettuno," Nov. 18, 1944, provided by Silvano Casaldi, curator, Museum of the Allied Landings, via Andrew Carroll; Donna Martha Budani, "Women, War, and Text: Orsognese Women's Experience in a Sector of the Italian Front in World War II," 1997, Ph.D. diss, American University, 24, 28 (*half million mines*); "The Battle for San Pietro," *AB*, no. 18 (1977), 1+; Maurizio Zambardi, *War Memories*, trans. Monia Cozzolino, 72 (*disarm live shells*).

Sant'Angelo refugees: Donato D'Epiro, *S. Angelo in Theodice*, 181–83.

"*The men that war does not kill*": Vernon A. Walters, *Silent Missions*, 114; Lem Vannatta, "Summer of '43," 1988, Texas MFM ("*scared for 23 months*"); J. Glenn Gray, *The Warriors*, 175 ("*sooted*"); OH, Louis Bednar, Sept. 17, 2002, VHP ("*smell of anything dead*").

"*Any estimate of the value*": *Battle*, 317; Jackson, 291 ("*severely mauled*"); Walter Warlimont, *Inside Hitler's Headquarters, 1939–1945*, 416 ("*sucked into the vortex*"); WSC, *Triumph and Tragedy*, 531 ("*The principal task*").

"*There is little doubt that Alexander*": Douglas Porch, *The Path to Victory*, xii; Trumbull Higgins, "The Anglo-American Historians' War in the Mediterranean, 1942–1945," *Military Affairs*, Oct. 1970, 84+ ("*never really knew*").

Others would be even harsher: Porch, xi ("*cul-de-sac*"); John Ellis, *Brute Force*, table 35 (*22 German divisions*); Liddell Hart, 373; Higgins, "The Anglo-American Historians' War," 84; David M. Kennedy, *Freedom from Fear*, 596 ("*war of attrition*").

"*bound to their fixed plans*": OH, Albert Kesselring, Sept. 18, 1945, R.H. Brock and O.J. Hale, SEM, NHC, box 47; A. Kesselring, "Concluding Remarks on the Mediterranean Campaign," 1948, FMS, #C-014, MHI, 25 ("*tied down in Italy*"); Kesselring, *Memoirs*, 206 ("*utterly failed*").

"*to advance is to conquer*": S.L.A. Marshall, *Men Against Fire*, 194; S. W. Roskill, *The War at Sea, 1939–1945*, 327 (*eleven German U-boats*); Russell F. Weigley, *The American Way of War*, 356–57; Kent Roberts Greenfield, *American Strategy in World War II*, 114; "Air Power in the Mediterranean," Feb. 1945, MAAF, historical section, MHI, 11–12; Bernard C. Nalty et al., *With Courage*, 234; Porch, 668–69.

"*Events generate their own momentum*": Martin Blumenson, "Sicily and Italy: Why and What For?," *MR*, Feb. 1966, 61; Richard M. Leighton, "Overlord Revisited: An Interpretation of the American Strategy in the European War, 1942–1944," *American Historical Review*, 919+ (*overwhelmed by the American hordes*); *SSA*, 382.
"*Our war of attrition*": William D. Hassett, *Off the Record with F.D.R.*, 192.
Certainly lessons learned in Sicily: A. Kesselring, "German Strategy During the Italian Campaign," FMS, #B-270, MHI, 37; Lida Mayo, *The Ordnance Department: On Beachhead and Battlefront*, 216–17.
American soldiers could slug it out: Peter R. Mansoor, *The GI Offensive in Europe*, 255; censorship morale reports, Nov. 1943–June 1944, MTO AG, NARA RG 492, 311.7, box 931 ("*I really belong*").
On the day Rome fell: "Strength of the Army," May 31, 1944, CMH; Eric Larrabee, *Commander in Chief*, 638.
Of those eight million American soldiers: "Summary of Activities," June 1, 1944, NA TOUSA, analysis and control div., CMH; Edmund F. Ball, *Staff Officer with the Fifth Army*, 262 ("glad that I came").
Kesselring continued to command: Mark M. Boatner III, *The Biographical Dictionary of World War II*, 272–73.
Some blew to other fronts: 201 file, Charles W. Ryder papers, DDE Lib, box 2; "Notice of Award of Decoration," Oct. 23, 1944, FLW papers, HIA, box 3; *Texas*, 393 ("*will not be sorry*").
Others were fated to remain: "Small World," CBS, 1959 ("*never quite get over it*"); Peter Neville, *Mussolini*, 185–86; Benito Mussolini, *My Rise and Fall*, 322; Sergio Luzzatto, *The Body of Il Duce*, 46, 100–102, 117, 208–10.
Alexander received: Nigel Nicholson, *Alex: The Life of Field Marshal Earl Alexander of Tunis*, 238.
"*The limitations of his ability*": Jackson, 295; Boatner, 6; http://www.gg.ca/gg/fgg/bios/01/alexander_e.asp.
Geoffrey Keyes continued: U.S. Third Army Web site, http://www.arcent.army.mil/history/com_bios/cg_gkeyes.asp.
Bill Darby's life: Michael J. King, "Rangers," June 1985, CSI, 41; Boatner, 117.
"*I tried to tell you*": corr, LKT Jr. to Sarah, June 11 and 15, 1944, LKT Jr. papers, GCM Lib, box 1, folder 6; Boatner, 574.
Clark also felt on edge: MWC to Renie, June 8 and 11, July 4, 1944, MWC, personal corr, Citadel; Boatner, 98–99.
"*It is the most cruel and unfair*": corr, MWC to Renie, March 13, 1946, "Rapido River Controversy, 1946," MWC, Citadel, box 39, folder 1; Sidney T. Matthews, "Writing Small Unit Actions with the Fifth Army in Italy," n.d., SM, MHI, box 2 (*commissioned an immense history*).
"*clairvoyant and energetic*": Martin Blumenson, *Mark Clark*, 288; William L. Allen, *Anzio: Edge of Disaster*, 49 ("*had his limitations*").
"*tough old gut*": Pyle, 201.
"*the dreamt land*": Richard Wilbur, "A Baroque Wall-Fountain in the Villa Sciarra," in Alice Leccese Powers, *Italy in Mind*, 342.
"*the surge of a marching world*": Pyle, 201–2.
"*misery, destruction, frustration*": George Biddle, *Artist at War*, 240; Silver, "Cartoonist for All Wars," 42 ("*I stopped regarding the war*"); Glenn G. Clift, *A Letter from Salerno*, 10 ("*born deep inside us*"); Virgil, *The Aeneid*, trans. Robert Fagles, 145 (*circling stars*).
"*I watched a full moon*": Gray, 34.

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The Guns at Last Light

THE WAR IN WESTERN EUROPE, 1944–1945

VOLUME THREE OF THE LIBERATION TRILOGY

Rick Atkinson

To those who knew neither thee nor me, yet suffered for us anyway

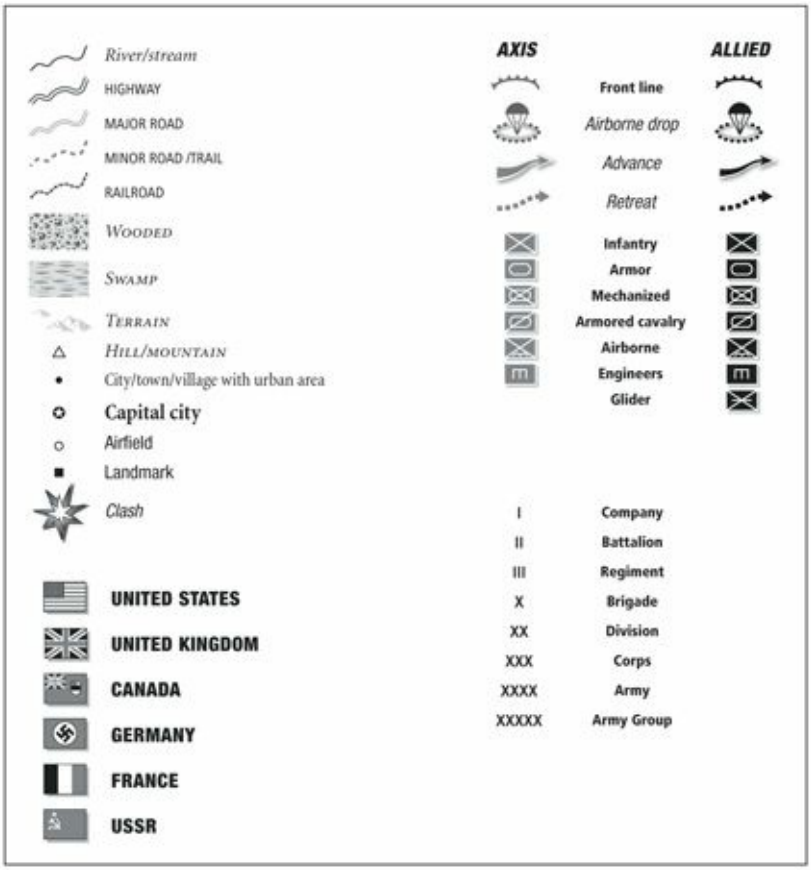
But pardon, gentles all,
The flat unraisèd spirits that hath dared
On this unworthy scaffold to bring forth
So great an object. Can this cockpit hold
The vasty fields of France?

Shakespeare, *Henry V,* Prologue

Maps

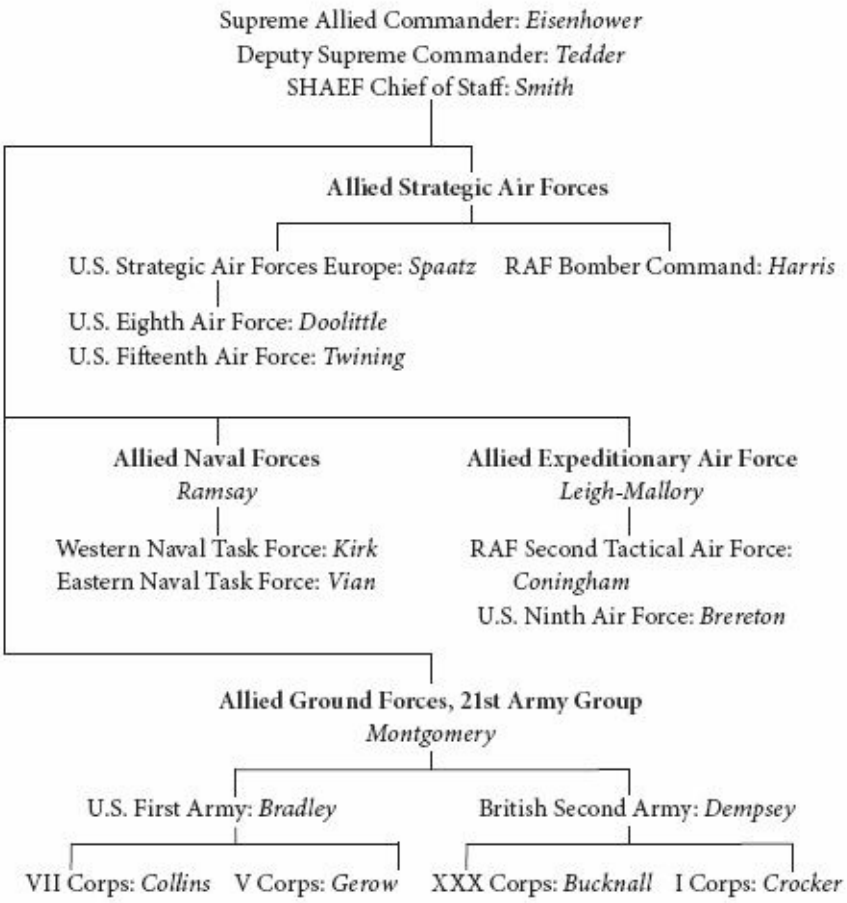
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Map Legend


River/stream
HIGHWAY
MAJOR ROAD
MINOR ROAD /TRAIL
RAILROAD
Wooded
Swamp
Terrain
Hill/mountain
City/town/village with urban area
Capital city
Airfield
Landmark
Clash
UNITED STATES
UNITED KINGDOM
CANADA
GERMANY
FRANCE
USSR
AXIS
ALLIED
Front line
Airborne drop
Advance
Retreat
Infantry
Armor
Mechanized
Armored cavalry
Airborne
Engineers
Glider
I Company
II Battalion
III Regiment
X Brigade
XX Division
XXX Corps
XXXX Army
XXXXX Army Group

Allied Chain of Command

Assault Forces, Operation Overlord, June 6, 1944




Mediterranean and European Theaters in World War II
FINLAND
NORWAY
SWEDEN
Helsinki
Oslo
Stockholm
EST.
LAT.
LITH.
GER.
Moscow
U S S R
North Sea
Baltic Sea
DEN.
Copenhagen
Dublin
IRE.
BRITAIN
NETH.
Amsterdam
Berlin
Warsaw
POLAND
London
GERMANY
BELG.
LUX.
Prague
CZECHOSLOVAKIA
Atlantic Ocean
Paris
Vienna
Budapest
AUSTRIA
HUNGARY
FRANCE
Bern
SWITZ.
ROMANIA
Bay of Biscay
Belgrade
Bucharest
Black Sea
YUGOSLAVIA
BULGARIA
Sofia
Adriatic Sea
ITALY
Rome
CORSICA
PORTUGAL
Madrid
SPAIN
ALB.
TURKEY
Aegean Sea
MINORCA
MAJORCA
SARDINIA
Tyrrhenian Sea
GREECE
Ionian Sea
Mediterranean Sea
SICILY
Algiers
Tunis
MALTA
Rabat
FRENCH MOROCCO
ALGERIA
TUNISIA

PROLOGUE

A KILLING frost struck England in the middle of May 1944, stunting the plum trees and the berry crops. Stranger still was a persistent drought. Hotels posted admonitions above their bathtubs: "The Eighth Army crossed the desert on a pint a day. Three inches only, please." British newspapers reported that even the king kept "quite clean with one bath a week in a tub filled only to a line which he had painted on it." Gale winds from the north grounded most Allied bombers flying from East Anglia and the Midlands, although occasional fleets of Flying Fortresses still could be seen sweeping toward the Continent, their contrails spreading like ostrich plumes.

Nearly five years of war had left British cities as "bedraggled, unkempt and neglected as rotten teeth," according to an American visitor, who found that "people referred to 'before the war' as if it were a place, not a time." The country was steeped in heavy smells, of old smoke and cheap coal and fatigue. Wildflowers took root in bombed-out lots from Birmingham to Plymouth—sow-whistle, Oxford ragwort, and rosebay willow herb, a tall flower with purple petals that seemed partial to catastrophe. Less bucolic were the millions of rats swarming through three thousand miles of London sewers; exterminators scattered sixty tons of sausage poisoned with zinc phosphate, and stale bread dipped in barium carbonate.

Privation lay on the land like another odor. British men could buy a new shirt every twenty months. Housewives twisted pipe cleaners into hair clips. Iron railings and grillwork had long been scrapped for the war effort; even cemeteries stood unfenced. Few shoppers could find a fountain pen or a wedding ring, or bedsheets, vegetable peelers, shoelaces. Posters discouraged profligacy with depictions of the "Squander Bug," a cartoon rodent with swastika pockmarks. Classified advertisements included pleas in the *Times* of London for "unwanted artificial teeth" and cash donations to help wounded Russian war horses. An ad for Chez-Vous household services promised "bombed upholstery and carpets cleaned."

Other government placards advised, "Food is a munition. Don't waste it." Rationing had begun in June 1940 and would not end completely until 1954. The monthly cheese allowance now stood at two ounces per citizen. Many children had never seen a lemon; vitamin C came from "turnip water." The Ministry of Food promoted "austerity bread," with a whisper of sawdust, and "victory coffee," brewed from acorns. "Woolton pie," a concoction of carrots, potatoes, onions, and flour, was said to lie "like cement upon the chest." For those with strong palates, no ration limits applied to sheep's head, or to eels caught in local reservoirs, or to roast cormorant, a stringy substitute for poultry.

More than fifty thousand British civilians had died in German air raids since 1940, including many in the resurgent "Baby Blitz" begun in January 1944 and just now petering out. Luftwaffe spotter planes illuminated their targets with clusters of parachute flares, bathing buildings and low clouds in rusty light before the bombs fell. A diarist on May 10 noted "the great steady swords of searchlights" probing for enemy aircraft as flak fragments spattered across rooftops like hailstones. Even the Wimbledon tennis club had been assaulted in a recent raid that pitted center court; a groundskeeper patched the shredded nets with string. Tens of thousands sheltered at night in the Tube, and the cots standing in tiers along the platforms of seventy-nine designated stations were so fetid that the sculptor Henry Moore likened wartime life in these underground rookeries to "the hold of a slave ship." It was said that some young children—perhaps those also unacquainted with lemon—had never spent a night in their own beds.

Even during these short summer nights, the mandatory blackout, which in London in mid-May lasted from 10:30 P.M. to 5:22 A.M., was so intense that one writer found the city "profoundly dark, like a mental condition." Darkness also cloaked an end-of-days concupiscence, fueled by some 3.5 million soldiers now crammed into a country smaller than Oregon. Hyde and Green Parks at dusk were said by a Canadian soldier to resemble "a vast battlefield of sex." A chaplain reported that GIs and streetwalkers often copulated standing up after wrapping themselves in a trench coat, a position known as "Marble Arch style." "Piccadilly Circus is a madhouse after dark," an American lieutenant wrote his mother, "and a man can't walk without being attacked by dozens of women." Prostitutes—"Piccadilly Commandos"—sidled up to men in the blackout and felt for their rank insignia on shoulders and sleeves before tendering a price: ten shillings (two dollars) for enlisted men, a pound for officers. Or so it was said.

Proud Britain soldiered on, a bastion of civilization even amid war's indignities. A hurdy-gurdy outside the Cumberland Hotel played "You Would Not Dare Insult Me, Sir, If Jack Were Only Here," as large crowds in Oxford Street sang along with gusto. London's West End cinemas this month screened *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, starring Gary Cooper and Ingrid Bergman, and *Destination Tokyo*, with Cary Grant. Theater patrons could see John Gielgud play Hamlet, or Noël Coward's *Blithe Spirit*, now in its third year at the Duchess. At Ascot on Sunday, May 14, thousands pedaled their bicycles to the track to watch Kingsway, "a colt of the first class," gallop past Merchant Navy and Gone. Apropos of the current cold snap, the Royal Geographical Society sponsored a lecture on "the formation of ice in lakes and rivers."

Yet nothing brightened the drab wartime landscape more than the brilliant uniforms now seen in every pub and on every street corner, the exotic military plumage of Norwegians and Indians, Belgians and Czechs, Yorkshiremen and Welshmen and more Yanks than lived in all of Nebraska. One observer in London described the panoply:

> French sailors with their red pompoms and striped shirts, Dutch police in black uniforms and grey-silver braid, the dragoon-like mortar boards of Polish officers, the smart grey of nursing units from Canada, the cerise berets and sky-blue trimmings of the new parachute regiments … gaily colored field caps of all the other regiments, the scarlet linings of our own nurses' cloaks, the electric blue of Dominion air forces, sand bush hats and lion-colored turbans, the prevalent Royal Air Force blue, a few greenish-tinted Russian uniforms.

Savile Row tailors offered specialists for every article of a bespoke uniform, from tunic to trousers, and the well-heeled officer could still buy an English military raincoat at Burberry or a silver pocket flask at Dunhill. Even soldiers recently arrived from the Mediterranean theater added a poignant splash of color, thanks to the antimalaria pills that turned their skin a pumpkin hue.

* * *

Nowhere were the uniforms more impressive on Monday morning, May 15, than along Hammersmith Road in west London. Here the greatest Anglo-American military conclave of World War II gathered on the war's 1,720th day to rehearse the death blow intended to destroy Adolf Hitler's Third Reich. Admirals, generals, field marshals, logisticians, and staff wizards by the score climbed from their limousines and marched into a Gothic building of red brick and terra-cotta, where American military policemen—known as Snowdrops for their white helmets, pistol belts, leggings, and gloves—scrutinized the 146 engraved invitations and security passes distributed a month earlier. Then six uniformed ushers escorted the guests, later described as "big men with the air of fame about them," into the Model Room, a cold and crepuscular auditorium with black columns and hard, narrow benches reputedly designed to keep young schoolboys awake. The students of St. Paul's School had long been evacuated to rural Berkshire—German bombs had shattered seven hundred windows across the school's campus—but many ghosts lingered in this tabernacle of upper-class England: exalted Old Paulines included the poet John Milton; the astronomer Edmond Halley; the first Duke of Marlborough, John Churchill, who supposedly learned the rudiments of military strategy from a school library book; and the diarist Samuel Pepys, who played hooky to watch the beheading of Charles I in 1649.

Top secret charts and maps now lined the Model Room. Since January, the school had served as headquarters for the British 21st Army Group, and here the detailed planning for Operation OVERLORD, the Allied invasion of France, had gelled. As more senior officers found their benches in rows B through J, some spread blankets across their laps or cinched their greatcoats against the chill. Row A, fourteen armchairs arranged elbow to elbow, was reserved for the highest of the mighty, and now these men began to take their seats. The prime minister, Winston Churchill, dressed in a black frock coat and wielding his usual Havana cigar, entered with the supreme Allied commander, General Dwight D. Eisenhower. Neither cheers nor applause greeted them, but the assembly stood as one when King George VI strolled down the aisle to sit on Eisenhower's right. Churchill bowed to his monarch, then resumed puffing his cigar.

As they waited to begin at the stroke of ten A.M., these big men with their air of eminence had reason to rejoice in their joint victories and to hope for greater victories still to come. Nearly all the senior commanders had served together in the Mediterranean—they called themselves "Mediterraneanites"—and they shared Eisenhower's sentiment that "the Mediterranean theater will always be in my blood." There they had indeed been blooded, beginning with the invasion of North Africa in November 1942, when Anglo-American forces had swept aside feeble Vichy French defenders, then pivoted east through the wintry Atlas Mountains into Tunisia. Joined by the British Eighth Army, which had pushed west from Egypt after a signal victory at El Alamein, together they battled German and Italian legions for five months before a quarter million Axis prisoners surrendered in mid-May 1943.

The Anglo-Americans pounced on Sicily two months later, overrunning the island in six weeks before invading the Italian mainland in early September. The Fascist regime of Benito Mussolini collapsed, and the new government in Rome renounced the Axis Pact of Steel to make common cause with the Allies. But a death struggle at Salerno, south of Naples, foreshadowed another awful winter campaign as Allied troops struggled up the Italian boot for two hundred miles in one sanguinary brawl after another with entrenched, recalcitrant Germans at places like San Pietro, Ortona, the Rapido River, Cassino, and Anzio. Led by Eisenhower, many of the Mediterraneanites had left for England in mid-campaign to begin planning OVERLORD, and they could only hope that the spring offensive—launched on May 11 and code-named DIADEM—would break the stalemate along the Gustav Line in central Italy and carry the long-suffering Allied ranks into Rome and beyond.

Elsewhere in this global conflagration, Allied ascendancy in 1944 gave confidence of eventual victory, although no one doubted that future battles would be even more horrific than those now finished. Command of the seas had been largely secured by Allied navies and air forces. A double American thrust across the central and southwest Pacific had steadily reversed Japanese gains; with the Gilbert and Marshall Islands recouped, summer would bring assaults on the Marianas—Saipan, Tinian, Guam—as the American lines of advance converged on the Philippines, and captured airfields provided bases for the new long-range B-29 Superfortress to bomb Japan's home islands. A successful Japanese offensive in China had been offset by a failed thrust from Burma across the Indian border into southern Assam. With most of the U.S. Navy committed to the Pacific, along with almost one-quarter of the Army's divisions and all six Marine Corps divisions, the collapse of Tokyo's vast empire had begun.

The collapse of Berlin's vast empire in eastern Europe was well advanced. Germany had invaded the Soviet Union in 1941 with more than 3 million men, but by the beginning of 1944, German casualties exceeded 3.5 million even as Soviet losses quadrupled that figure. The tide had turned, red in all senses, and Soviet campaigns to recapture the Crimea, the western Ukraine, and the territory between Leningrad and Estonia chewed up German strength. The Third Reich now had 193 divisions on the Eastern Front and in southeastern Europe, compared to 28 in Italy, 18 in Norway and Denmark, and 59 in France and the Low Countries. Nearly

two-thirds of German combat strength remained tied up in the east, although the Wehrmacht still mustered almost two thousand tanks and other armored vehicles in northwestern Europe. Yet the Reich was ever more vulnerable to air assault: Allied planes flying from Britain in May 1944 would drop seventy thousand tons of high explosives on Axis targets, more than four times the monthly tonnage of a year earlier. Though they paid a staggering cost in airplanes and aircrews, the Royal Air Force and U.S. Army Air Forces had won mastery of the European skies. At last, after wresting air and naval superiority from the Germans, the Allies could make a plausible case for a successful invasion of the Continent by the ground forces currently gathering in England.

In 1941, when Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union first formed their grand alliance against the Axis, "the only plan was to persevere," as Churchill put it. Perseverance had brought them to this brink: a chance to close with the enemy and destroy him in his European citadel, four years after Germany overran France and the Low Countries. The Americans had long advocated confronting the main German armies as soon as possible, a muscle-bound pugnacity decried as "iron-mongering" by British strategists, whose preference for reducing the enemy gradually by attacking the Axis periphery had led to eighteen months of Mediterranean fighting. Now, as the great hour approached, the arena would shift north, and the British and Americans would monger iron together.

* * *

Cometh the hour, cometh the man: at ten A.M. that Monday, Eisenhower rose to greet the 145 comrades who would lead the assault on Fortress Europe. Behind him in the cockpit of the Model Room lay an immense plaster relief map of the Normandy coast where the river Seine spilled into the Atlantic. Thirty feet wide and set on a tilted platform visible from the back benches, this apparition depicted, in bright colors and on a scale of six inches to the mile, the rivers, villages, beaches, and uplands of what would become the world's most famous battlefield. A brigadier wearing skid-proof socks and armed with a pointer stood at port arms, ready to indicate locales soon to achieve household notoriety: Cherbourg, St.-Lô, Caen, Omaha Beach.

With only a hint of the famous grin, Eisenhower spoke briefly, a man "at peace with his soul," in the estimate of an American admiral. He hailed king and comrades alike "on the eve of a great battle," welcoming them to the final vetting of an invasion blueprint two years in the making. A week earlier he had chosen June 5 as D-Day. "I consider it to be the duty of anyone who sees a flaw in the plan *not* to hesitate to say so," Eisenhower said, his voice booming. "I have no sympathy with anyone, whatever his station, who will not brook criticism. We are here to get the best possible results." The supreme commander would remain preoccupied for some weeks with the sea and air demands of OVERLORD, as well as with sundry political distractions, so he had delegated the planning and conduct of this titanic land battle in Normandy to the soldier who would now review his battle scheme.

A wiry, elfin figure in immaculate battle dress and padded shoes popped to his feet, pointer in hand. The narrow vulpine face was among the empire's most recognizable, a visage to be gawked at in Claridge's or huzzahed on the Strand. But before General Bernard L. Montgomery could utter a syllable, a sharp rap sounded. The rap grew bolder; a Snowdrop flung open the Model Room door, and in swaggered Lieutenant General George S. Patton, Jr., a ruddy, truculent American Mars, newly outfitted by those Savile Row artisans in bespoke overcoat, bespoke trousers, and bespoke boots. Never reluctant to stage an entrance, Patton had swept through London in a huge black Packard, bedizened with three-star insignia and sporting dual Greyhound bus horns. Ignoring Montgomery's scowl, he found his bench in the second row and sat down, eager to take part in a war he condemned, without conviction, as "goddamned son-of-bitchery." "It is quite pleasant to be famous," Patton had written his wife, Beatrice. "Probably bad for the soul."

With a curt swish of his pointer, Montgomery stepped to the great floor map. He had just returned from a hiking and fishing holiday in the Highlands, sleeping each night on his personal train, the *Rapier*, then angling for salmon in the Spey without catching a single fish. Even so, he was said by one admirer to be "as sharpened and as ready for combat as a pointed flint." Like Milton and Marlborough, he had been schooled here at St. Paul's, albeit without distinction other than as a soccer and rugby player, and without ascending above the rank of private in the cadet corps. Every morning for four years he had come to this hall to hear prayers in Latin; his office now occupied the High Master's suite, to which he claimed never to have been invited as a boy.

Glancing at his notes—twenty brief items, written in his tidy cursive on unlined stationery—Montgomery began in his reedy voice, each syllable as sharply creased as his trousers. "There are four armies under my command," he said, two comprising the assault force into Normandy and two more to follow in exploiting the beachhead.

> We must blast our way on shore and get a good lodgement before the enemy can bring sufficient reserves to turn us out. Armored columns must penetrate deep inland, and quickly, on D-Day. This will upset the enemy plans and tend to hold him off while we build up strength. We must gain space rapidly, and peg out claims well inland.

The Bay of the Seine, which lay within range of almost two hundred fighter airfields in England, had been designated as the invasion site more than a year earlier for both its flat, sandy beaches and its proximity to Cherbourg, a critical port needed to supply the invading hordes. True, the Pas de Calais coastline was closer, but it had been deemed "strategically unsound" because the small beaches there were not only exposed to Channel storms but also had become the most heavily defended strands in France. Planners under the capable British lieutenant general Frederick E. Morgan scrutinized other possible landing sites from Brittany to Holland and found them wanting. Secret missions to inspect the OVERLORD beaches, launched from tiny submarines during the dark of the moon in what the Royal Navy called "impudent reconnaissance," dispelled anxieties about quicksand bogs and other perils. As proof, commandos brought back Norman sand samples in buckets, test tubes, and Durex condoms.

Upon returning from Italy five months earlier, Montgomery had widened the OVERLORD assault zone from the twenty-five miles

proposed in an earlier plan to fifty miles. Instead of three seaborne divisions, five would lead the assault—two American divisions in the west, two British and one Canadian in the east—preceded seven hours earlier by three airborne divisions to secure the beachhead flanks and help the mechanized forces thrust inland. This grander OVERLORD required 230 additional support ships and landing vessels such as the big LSTs—"landing ship, tank"—that had proved invaluable during the assaults at Sicily, Salerno, and Anzio. Assembling that larger fleet had in turn meant postponing the Normandy invasion from May until early June, and delaying indefinitely an invasion of southern France originally scheduled to occur at the same moment.

As he unfolded his plan, Montgomery meandered across the plaster beaches and the tiny Norman villages, head bowed, eyes darting, hands clasped behind his back except when he pinched his left cheek in a characteristic gesture of contemplation, or when he stressed a particular point with a flat stroke of his palm. Often he repeated himself for emphasis, voice rising in the second iteration. He was, one staff officer observed, "essentially didactic by temperament and liked a captive audience." No audience had ever been more rapt, the officers perched on those unforgiving benches, bundled in their blankets and craning their necks. Only Churchill interrupted with mutterings about too many vehicles in the invasion brigades at the expense of too few cutthroat foot soldiers. And was it true, he subsequently demanded, that the great force would include two thousand clerks to keep records?

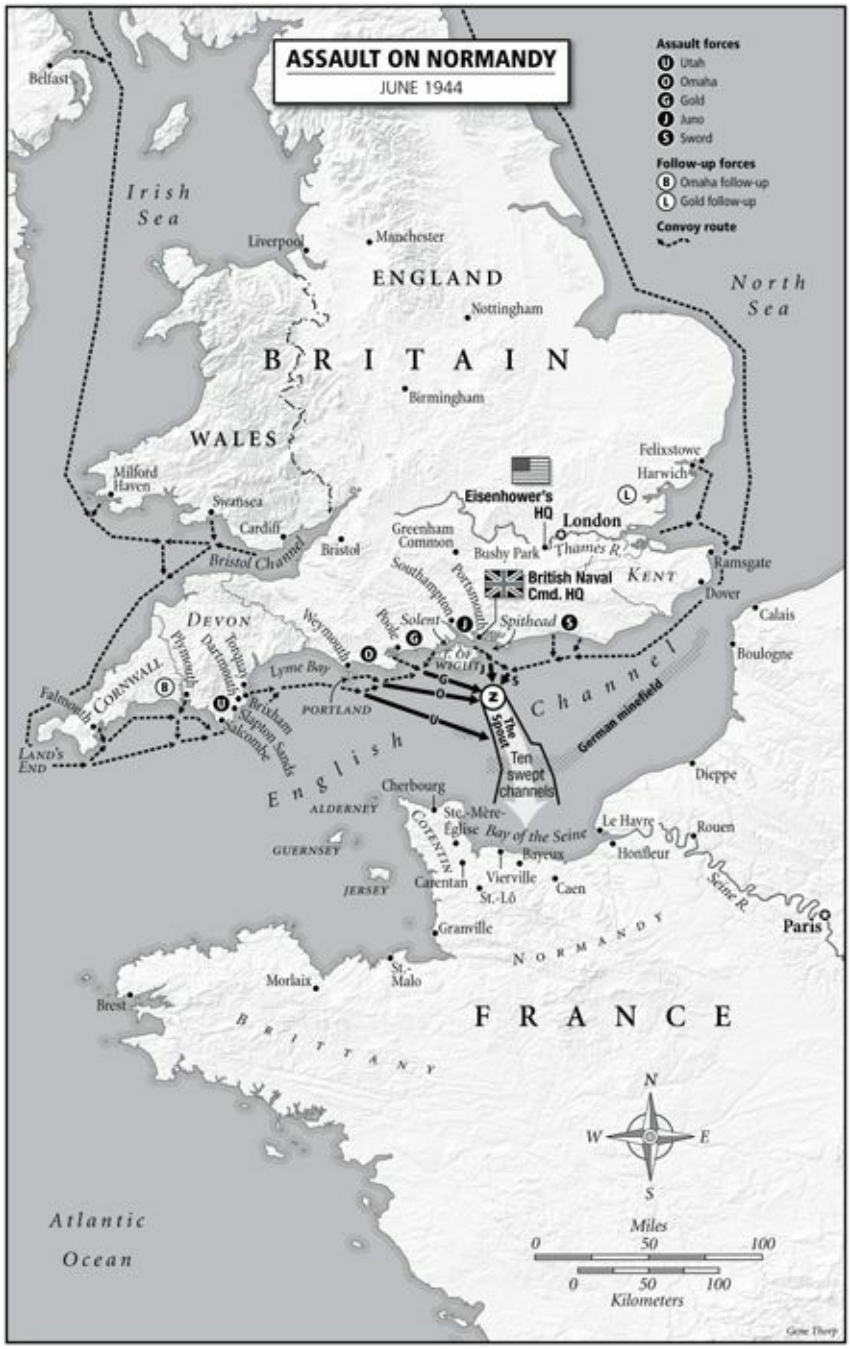
Montgomery pressed ahead. Hitler's so-called Atlantic Wall now fell under the command of an old adversary, Field Marshal Erwin Rommel. German divisions in western Europe had nearly doubled since October, from thirty-seven to almost sixty, one reason that Montgomery had insisted on a heftier invasion force. He continued:

> Last February, Rommel took command from Holland to the Loire. It is now clear that his intention is to deny any penetration. OVERLORD is to be defeated on the beaches.… Rommel is an energetic and determined commander. He has made a world of difference since he took over. He is best at the spoiling attack; his forte is disruption.… He will do his level best to "Dunkirk" us—*not* to fight the armored battle on ground of his own choosing, but to avoid it altogether by preventing our tanks landing, by using his own tanks well forward.

Some officers in SHAEF—Eisenhower's Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force—believed that German resistance might collapse from internal weaknesses, with the result that OVERLORD would quickly become an occupation force. Montgomery disagreed, and he ticked off the expected enemy counterpunch. Five German divisions, including the 21st Panzer Division, would oppose the invaders on D-Day; by dusk, two other panzer divisions could join the fight, reinforced by two more at the end of D+1, the second day of the invasion, for a total of nine German divisions battling eight Allied divisions ashore. "After a sea voyage and a landing on a strange coast, there is always some loss of cohesion," Montgomery said, swatting away the understatement with his palm. A death struggle to amass combat power would determine the battle: OVERLORD's plan called for Allied reinforcements to land at the rate of one and one-third divisions each day, but a bit more than a week into the fight, two dozen German divisions could well try to fling eighteen Allied divisions back into the sea.

Montgomery envisioned a battle beyond the beaches in which the British and Canadian Second Army on the left grappled with the main force of German defenders, while the American First Army on the right invested Cherbourg. Three weeks or so after the initial landings, Patton's Third Army would thunder into France, swing through Brittany to capture more ports, and then wheel to the river Seine around D+90, three months into the operation. Paris likely would be liberated in mid-fall, giving the Allies a lodgement between the Seine and the river Loire to stage for the fateful drive on Germany.

Precisely how that titanic final battle would unfold was difficult to predict even for the clairvoyants at SHAEF. The Combined Chiefs of Staff—Eisenhower's superiors in Washington and London, whom he privately called the Charlie-Charlies—had instructed him to aim northeast from Normandy toward the Ruhr valley, the German industrial heartland. SHAEF believed that loss of the Ruhr "would be fatal to Germany"; thus, an assault directed there would set up a decisive battle of annihilation by forcing the enemy to defend the region. Eisenhower also favored an Allied thrust toward the Saar valley, a subsidiary industrial zone farther south; as he had cabled the War Department in early May, a two-pronged attack "would oblige the enemy to extend his forces." To agglomerate power for that ultimate war-winning drive into central Germany, some forty-five Allied divisions and eleven major supply depots would marshal along a front south of Antwerp through Belgium and eastern France by D+270, or roughly early March 1945.



But that lay in the distant future; the immediate task required reaching the far shore. If OVERLORD succeeded, the Normandy assault would dwindle to a mere episode in the larger saga of Europe's liberation. If OVERLORD failed, the entire Allied enterprise faced abject collapse. It must begin with "an ugly piece of water called the Channel," as the official U.S. Army history would describe it. Known to Ptolemy as Oceanus Britannicus and to sixteenth-century Dutch cartographers as the Engelse Kanaal, this watery sleeve—only twenty-one miles wide at its narrowest—had first been crossed by balloon in 1785, by passenger paddle steamer in 1821, and by swimmer in 1875. Yet for nearly a thousand years invading armies facing a hostile shore across the English Channel had found more grief than glory. "The only solution," one British planner had quipped, "is to tow the beaches over already assaulted." The U.S. War Department had even pondered tunneling beneath the seabed: a detailed study deemed the project "feasible," requiring one year and 15,000 men to excavate 55,000 tons of spoil. Wiser heads questioned "the strategic and functional" complexities, such as the inconvenience of the entire German Seventh Army waiting for the first tunneler to emerge. The study was shelved.

Montgomery closed with his twentieth and final point, eyes aglint. "We shall have to send the soldiers in to this party seeing red," he declared. "Nothing must stop them. If we send them in to battle this way, then we shall succeed." The bravado reminded Churchill's chief of staff, Lieutenant General Hastings Ismay, of the eve of Agincourt as depicted in *Henry V*: "He which hath no stomach to this fight, / Let him depart."

None departed. In quick succession other senior commanders laid out the naval plan for the invasion; the air plans in both the battle zone and across the Reich; the logistics plan; and the civil affairs scheme for governing Normandy. Staff officers scurried about after each presentation, unfurling new maps and swapping out charts. At 1:30 P.M. the assembly broke for lunch in the St. Paul's mess. Patton sat across from Churchill, who asked if he remembered their last meeting in the Mediterranean. When Patton nodded, the prime minister ordered him a tumbler of whiskey to commemorate their reunion. Of Patton a comrade noted, "He gives the

impression of a man biding his time." In fact, he had revealed his anxiety in a recent note to his wife: "I fear the war will be over before I get loose, but who can say? Fate and the hand of God still run most shows."

At 2:30 the warlords reconvened in the Model Room for more briefings, more charts, more striding across the painted Norman terrain, this time by the commanders who would oversee the landings, including the senior tactical U.S. Army officer in OVERLORD, Lieutenant General Omar N. Bradley. Then they were done. Eisenhower stood for a few words of thanks, noting that Hitler had "missed his one and only chance of destroying with a single well-aimed bomb the entire high command of the Allied forces." Churchill gave a brief valedictory, grasping his coat lapels in both hands. "Let us not expect all to go according to plan. Flexibility of mind will be one of the decisive factors," he said. "Risks must be taken." He bade them all Godspeed. "I am hardening on this enterprise. I repeat, I am now hardening toward this enterprise."

Never would they be more unified, never more resolved. They came to their feet, shoulders squared, tramping from the hall to the limousines waiting on Hammersmith Road to carry them to command posts across England. Ahead lay the most prodigious undertaking in the history of warfare.

* * *

Shortly after six P.M., Eisenhower sped southwest through London in his chauffeured Cadillac, drawing deeply on a cigarette. In these fraught times he often smoked eighty Camels a day, aggravating the throat and respiratory infections that plagued him all spring. He also suffered from high blood pressure, headaches, and ringing in one ear; he had even begun placing hot compresses on his inflamed eyes. "Ike looks worn and tired," his naval aide, Commander Harry C. Butcher, noted in mid-May. "The strain is telling on him. He looks older now than at any time since I have been with him." The supreme commander was fifty-three.

As the drear suburbs rolled past, the prime minister's final confession at St. Paul's gnawed at Eisenhower. *I am now hardening toward this enterprise*. The tentative commitment and implicit doubt seemed vexing, although Churchill had never concealed either his reluctance to risk calamity in a cross-Channel attack or his dismay at the cautionary experience of Anzio, where four months after that invasion a large Anglo-American force remained bottled up and shelled daily in a pinched beachhead. Yet for OVERLORD the die was cast, spelled out in a thirty-word order to Eisenhower from the Charlie-Charlies: "You will enter the continent of Europe and, in conjunction with the other united nations, undertake operations aimed at the heart of Germany and the destruction of her armed forces." Now was the time, as Eisenhower put it, for "ramming our feet in the stirrups."

For years he had pondered just how to successfully enter the continent of Europe—first as a War Department planner, next as the senior American soldier in London in the spring and summer of 1942, then as the general superintending those other invasions in North Africa, Sicily, and mainland Italy, and now as SHAEF commander. No one knew the risks better. No one was more keenly aware that three times the Germans had nearly driven Allied landings back into the sea—on Sicily, at Salerno, and at Anzio.

Planners had even coined an acronym for the task at hand: PINWE, "Problems of the Invasion of Northwest Europe." Many PINWE issues had been aired at St. Paul's, but countless others required resolution. Some were petty—"folderol," Eisenhower said—yet still demanded the supreme commander's attention: for instance, a recent complaint from the U.S. Army chief of staff, General George C. Marshall, that motion picture coverage of the invasion could unfairly favor the British under a proposed "Joint Anglo-American Film Planning Commission." Of greater weight on the long PINWE list: a plan code-named CIRCON that ordered military and civilian police to arrest hundreds of absent-without-leave troops wandering across Britain. Also: a "fog dispeller," inspected by Eisenhower personally, that blew flames into the air to burn off mist from British airstrips, though it required sixty thousand gallons of gasoline an hour. Also: military replacements for civilian workers hired to assemble military gliders, which were critical to the invasion plan. The civilians had so botched the job that fifty-one of the first sixty-two gliders were deemed "unflyable"; another hundred, improperly lashed down, had been badly damaged by high winds.

For every PINWE item resolved, another arose. At Oxford, officers now studied Norman town construction to determine "what parts would burn best," a knowledge useful in dispensing scarce firefighting equipment. Intelligence officers were compiling a list of eighteen "leading German military personalities now in France [and] particularly ripe for assassination," Rommel among them. Given the stout security protecting such eminences, a top secret SHAEF edict instead gave priority to disrupting enemy transportation networks through the "liquidation of senior German civilian railway officials." A suitable target list, with addresses and phone numbers, would be smuggled to Resistance groups, with instructions "to concentrate on this particular class of person."

As the invasion drew nearer, anxieties multiplied. One intelligence source warned that German pilots planned to drop thousands of rats infected with bubonic plague on English cities; Allied authorities now offered a bounty on rat carcasses to test for signs of infection. Another agent, in France, claimed that German scientists were producing botulinum toxin in a converted Norman sugar-beet plant, as part of a biological warfare plot. An officer recently sent to London by General Marshall informed Eisenhower of both the top secret Manhattan Project to build an atomic bomb and of new fears that Germany could use "radioactive poisons" against OVERLORD. SHAEF consequently stockpiled Geiger counters in London; earlier in May, military doctors were told to report "photographic or X-ray film fogged or blackened without apparent cause" and to watch for "an epidemic disease … of unknown etiology," with symptoms that included nausea and a sharp drop in white blood cell counts.

Perhaps less far-fetched were concerns that Hitler might use poison gas when Allied troops were most vulnerable: in embarkation ports or on the Normandy beaches. Although a SHAEF consensus held that "Germany is unlikely to begin chemical warfare," never far from mind was the grim experience of World War I, when the warring powers—beginning with a German chlorine attack at Ypres in April 1915—used more than two dozen kinds of gas to inflict more than a million casualties.

Fifteen hundred British civilians had been trained in decontamination procedures. The United States alone stockpiled 160,000 tons of chemical munitions for potential use in Europe and the Mediterranean. A secret SHAEF plan, to be enacted only with Eisenhower's

approval, called for retaliatory air strikes by Allied planes that would drop phosgene and mustard gas bombs. One target list, described as "involving risk to civilians," included telephone exchanges from St.-Lô to Le Mans, as well as fortified French villages used as German garrisons and rail junctions at Versailles, Avranches, and elsewhere. A second list, intended to minimize civilian casualties, targeted half a dozen German headquarters and many bridges across northwest Europe. Storage bunkers at two British airfields now held a thousand mustard bombs and five hundred more filled with phosgene.

"Everybody gets more and more on edge," Eisenhower had recently written a friend in Washington. "A sense of humor and a great faith, or else a complete lack of imagination, are essential to the project." He could only ram his feet deeper into the stirrups.

* * *

Thirty minutes after leaving St. Paul's, the supreme commander's Cadillac eased past a sentry box and through a gate in the ten-foot stone wall girdling Bushy Park, an ancient royal preserve tucked into a Thames oxbow. Majestic chestnut trees swept toward nearby Hampton Court Palace in a landscape designed by Christopher Wren, with rule-Britannia charms that included the Deer Pen, the Pheasantry, and Leg-of-Mutton Pond. An entire camouflage battalion ministered to this site with garnished nets and green paint, but the shabby, tin-roof hutments on brick piers and a warren of slit-trench air raid shelters proved difficult to hide. Code-named WIDEWING, the compound served as SHAEF's central headquarters.

Here hundreds of staff officers, including countless colonels wearing World War I service ribbons and described by one observer as "fat, gray, and oldish," puzzled over PINWE issues great and small. Plastic window sheeting, cracked linoleum, and potbelly stoves proved no match for the river-bottom damp; most officers wore long underwear and double socks. A general officers' mess in Block C provided amenities to major generals and above. For others, French language classes at a nearby night school offered hope for a better day in a warmer clime.

Eisenhower's office, designated C-1 and guarded by more Snowdrops, featured a fireplace, a pair of leather easy chairs on a brown carpet, and a walnut desk with framed photos of his mother, his wife, Mamie, and his son, John. His four-star flag stood against one wall, along with a Union Jack and the Stars and Stripes. Visitors sometimes found him putting an imaginary golf ball across the floor, but now he sat in his swivel chair at the desk. A brimming in-basket and the maroon leather logbook of cables and intelligence digests occupied him into the evening as the furrows deepened on his brow and the mound of butts grew higher in the ashtray.

Vernal twilight lingered in the west when at last he let himself be driven down Kingston Road to a slate-roofed five-room Tudor bungalow. The ten-acre property came with a bomb shelter near the front gate, where a one-armed Great War veteran stood vigil. This, Telegraph Cottage, was the only place in the United Kingdom where Ike Eisenhower could relax, slipping on the straw sandals he had worn as a young officer in Manila under Douglas MacArthur. Here he played bridge and badminton, or thumbed through his Abilene High School yearbook, class of 1909. In nearby Richmond Park, amid purple rhododendrons and the cuckoo's cry, he occasionally rode horseback with Kay Summersby, his beautiful Irish driver and correspondence clerk. Such outings fueled so much salacious gossip about them that she sardonically referred to herself as "a Bad Woman." In the cottage this evening a stack of cowboy pulp novels awaited Eisenhower; stories of gunslinging desperadoes entranced him, he told Summersby, because "I don't have to think."

But how hard *not* to think, particularly in the late hours after a very long day. "How many youngsters are gone forever," Eisenhower had written Mamie in April. "A man must develop a veneer of callousness." British Empire casualties in the war now exceeded half a million; the sixteen divisions to be committed under Montgomery, including Canadians and Poles, amounted to Churchill's last troop reserves. British casualty forecasts, calculated under a formula known as Evetts' Rates, projected three levels of combat: Quiet, Normal, and Intense. But the anticipated carnage in Normandy had led planners to add a new level: Double Intense. According to a British study, enemy fire sweeping a two hundred–by–four hundred–yard swatch of beach for two minutes would inflict casualties above 40 percent on an assault battalion, a bloodletting comparable to the Somme in 1916.

American casualties, projected with an elaborate formula called Love's Tables, would likely reach 12 percent of the assault force on D-Day, or higher if gas warfare erupted. The 1st Infantry Division, the point of the spear on Omaha Beach, estimated that under "maximum" conditions, casualties would reach 25 percent, of whom almost a third would be killed, captured, or missing. The admiral commanding bombardment forces at Utah Beach told his captains that "we might expect to lose one-third to one-half of our ships." Projected U.S. combat drownings in June, exclusive of paratroopers, had been calculated at a grimly precise 16,726. To track the dead, wounded, and missing, the casualty section under SHAEF's adjutant general would grow to three hundred strong; so complex were the calculations that an early incarnation of the computer, using punch cards, would be put to the task.

Recent exercises and rehearsals hardly gave Eisenhower cause for optimism. Since January, in coves and firths around Britain, troops were decanted into the shallows, "hopping about trying to keep our more vulnerable parts out of the water," one captain explained. A British officer named Evelyn Waugh later wrote, "Sometimes they stood on the beach and biffed imaginary defenders into the hills; sometimes they biffed imaginary invaders from the hills into the sea.… Sometimes they merely collided with imaginary rivals for the use of the main road and biffed them out of the way." Too often, in exercises with names like DUCK, OTTER, and MALLARD, the biffing proved clumsy and inept. "Exercise BEAVER was a disappointment to all who participated," a secret assessment noted. "The navy and the army and the airborne all got confused." When 529 paratroopers in 28 planes returned to their airfields without jumping during one rehearsal, courts-martial were threatened for "misbehavior in the presence of the enemy," even though the enemy had yet to be met.

The imaginary biffing turned all too real in Exercise TIGER on April 28. Through a "series of mistakes and misunderstandings," as investigators later concluded, troop convoy T-4 was left virtually unprotected as it steamed toward Slapton Sands on the south coast

of Devon, chosen for its resemblance to Normandy. At two A.M., nine German E-boats eluded a British escort twelve miles offshore and torpedoed three U.S. Navy LSTs with such violence that sailors on undamaged vessels nearby believed they had been hit. Fire "spread instantly from stem to stern," a witness reported. Two ships sank, one in seven minutes, disproving latrine scuttlebutt that torpedoes would pass beneath a shallow-draft LST.

Survivors on rafts sang "Oh, What a Beautiful Mornin'" at first light, but sunrise belied that too. Hundreds of corpses in GI battle gear drifted on the tide until salvage crews with boat hooks could hoist them from the sea. Forty trucks hauled the dead to a cemetery near London, where all twenty-three licensed British embalmers—their practice was not widespread in the United Kingdom—agreed to help prepare the bodies for burial behind a tarpaulin curtain in a cedar grove. Drowned men continued to wash ashore for weeks; the final death toll approached seven hundred, and divers searched the wrecks until they could confirm the deaths of a dozen missing officers deemed "bigoted," which meant they had been privy to OVERLORD's top secret destination. For now the Slapton Sands calamity also remained secret.

Eisenhower grieved for the lost men, and no less for the lost LSTs: his reserve of the vital transports now stood at zero. "Not a restful thought," he wrote Marshall.

The supreme commander often quoted Napoléon's definition of a military genius as "the man who can do the average thing when all those around him are going crazy." Less than eighteen months earlier, even before the debacle at Kasserine Pass in Tunisia, Eisenhower had expected to be relieved of command, perhaps even reduced to his permanent rank of lieutenant colonel. Equanimity had helped preserve him then and since. Growing in stature and confidence, he had become the indispensable man, so renowned that a Hollywood agent had recently offered $150,000 for the rights to his life (plus $7,500 each to Mamie, his mother, and his in-laws). "He has a generous and lovable character," Montgomery would tell his diary before the invasion, "and I would trust him to the last gasp." Other comrades considered him clubbable, articulate, and profoundly fair; his senior naval subordinate, Admiral Sir Bertram H. Ramsay, asserted simply, "He is a very great man." Franklin D. Roosevelt had chosen him to command OVERLORD as "the best politician among the military men. He is a natural leader who can convince other men to follow him."

Yet he had not convinced everyone that he was a Great Captain, a commander with the ability to see the field both spatially and temporally, intuiting the enemy's intent and subordinating all resistance to an iron will. Montgomery, whose sense of personal infallibility and ambivalence toward Eisenhower's generalship would only intensify, offered private complaints as well as praise: "When it comes to war, Ike doesn't know the difference between Christmas and Easter." And on the same evening that Eisenhower thumbed absently through his pulp westerns at Telegraph Cottage, Field Marshal Sir Alan Brooke, chief of the Imperial General Staff, confided to his diary an assessment of the supreme commander's role at St. Paul's:

> No real director of thought, plans, energy or direction! Just a coordinator—a good mixer, a champion of inter-allied cooperation, and in those respects few can hold a candle to him. But is that enough? Or can we not find all the qualities of a commander in one man?

Eisenhower sensed such doubts, and perhaps harbored a few himself. In his own diary he lamented the depiction of him in British newspapers as an administrator rather than a battlefield commander. "They dislike to believe that I had anything particularly to do with campaigns. They don't use the words 'initiative' and 'boldness' in talking of me," he wrote. "It wearies me to be thought of as timid, when I've had to do things that were so risky as to be almost crazy. Oh, hum."

He needed sleep. Tomorrow would be hectic, beginning with morning meetings at Bushy Park; later he would decamp for another inspection trip aboard *Bayonet,* the armored rail coach he used for extended journeys. (Two adjoining boxcars, known as Monsters, carried five sedans, two jeeps, and a small arsenal of tommy and Bren guns, while the dining car could seat thirty-two.) By the end of the month he intended to visit more than two dozen divisions, a like number of airfields, and countless warships, depots, and hospitals. With luck, he would encounter another soldier from Kansas—such meetings always made him smile.

He had indeed taken risks, crazy risks, but more lay dead ahead. Eisenhower was neither philosopher nor military theorist. But he believed that too few commanders grappled with what he called "subjects that touch the human soul—aspirations, ideals, inner beliefs, affection, hatreds." On such broken ground during the coming weeks and months his captaincy and his cause would be assayed. For more than any other human enterprise, war revealed the mettle of men's souls.

* * *

By the tens of thousands, souls in olive drab continued to pour into Britain. Since January the number of GIs had doubled, to 1.5 million, a far cry from the first paltry tranche of four thousand in early 1942. Of the U.S. Army's eighty-nine divisions, twenty now could be found in the United Kingdom, with thirty-seven more either en route or earmarked for the European theater. Through Liverpool they arrived, and through Swansea, Cardiff, Belfast, Avonmouth, Newport. But most came into Glasgow and adjacent Greenock, more than 100,000 in April alone, 15,000 at a time on the two *Queens—Elizabeth* and *Mary*—each of which could haul an entire division and outrun German U-boats to make the crossing from New York in five days.

Down the gangplanks they tromped, names checked from a clipboard, each soldier wearing his helmet, his field jacket, and a large celluloid button color-coded by the section of the ship to which he had been confined during the passage. Troops carried four blankets apiece to save cargo space, while deluded officers could be seen lugging folding chairs, pillowcases, and tennis rackets. A brass band and Highland pipers greeted them on the dock; Scottish children raised their arms in a V for Victory. Combat pilots who had fulfilled their mission quotas, and were waiting to board ship for the return voyage, bellowed, "Go back before it's too late!" or

"What's your wife's telephone number?" Each arriving unit was listed in a master log called the Iron Book, and another manifest, the Forecast of Destination, showed where every company would bivouac, momentarily, in Britain. As the men fell four abreast into columns and marched from the dock to nearby troop trains, no one needed a forecast to know that they were headed for trouble.

"You are something there are millions of," the poet Randall Jarrell had written without exaggeration. Just over eight million men had been inducted into the U.S. Army and Navy during the past two years—eleven thousand every day. The average GI was twenty-six, born the year that the war to end all wars ended, but manpower demands in this global struggle meant the force was growing younger: henceforth nearly half of all American troops arriving to fight in Europe in 1944 would be teenagers. One in three GIs had only a grade school education, one in four held a high school diploma, and slightly more than one in ten had attended college for at least a semester. War Department Pamphlet 21-13 would assure them that they were "the world's best paid soldiers." A private earned $50 a month, a staff sergeant $96. Any valiant GI awarded the Medal of Honor would receive an extra $2 each month.

The typical soldier stood five feet eight inches tall and weighed 144 pounds, but physical standards had been lowered to accept defects that once would have kept many young men out of uniform. A man with 20/400 vision could now be conscripted if his sight was correctable to at least 20/40 in one eye; toward that end, the armed forces would make 2.3 million pairs of eyeglasses for the troops. The old jest that the Army no longer examined eyes but instead just counted them had come true. A man could be drafted if he had only one eye, or was completely deaf in one ear, or had lost both external ears, or was missing a thumb or three fingers on either hand, including a trigger finger. Earlier in the war, a draftee had had to possess at least twelve of his original thirty-two teeth, but now he could be utterly toothless. After all, the government had drafted a third of all the civilian dentists in the United States; collectively they would extract 15 million teeth, fill 68 million more, and make 2.5 million sets of dentures, enabling each GI to meet the minimum requirement of "masticating the Army ration."

A revision of mental and personality standards also was under way. In April 1944, the War Department decreed that inductees need have only a "reasonable chance" of adjusting to military life, although psychiatric examiners were advised to watch for two dozen "personality deviations," including silly laughter, sulkiness, resentfulness of discipline, and other traits that would seemingly disqualify every teenager in the United States. In addition, the Army began drafting "moderate" obsessive-compulsives, as well as stutterers. Men with malignant tumors, leprosy, or certifiable psychosis still were deemed "nonacceptable," but by early 1944, twelve thousand venereal disease patients, most of them syphilitic, were inducted each month and rendered fit for service with a new miracle drug called penicillin.

But what of their souls? What of those ideals and inner beliefs that intrigued Eisenhower? Few professed to be warriors, or even natural soldiers. Most were "amateurs whose approach to soldiering was aggressively temporary," one officer observed. An April survey in Britain polled enlisted men about what they would ask Eisenhower if given the chance; at least half wanted to know what even the supreme commander could not tell them: When can we go home? A paratrooper in the 101st Airborne Division wrote, "I never will get used to having some other person do my thinking for me. All of these months and I am still a civilian at heart." And thus would he die, a few months hence, in Holland.

Skepticism and irony, those twin lenses of modern consciousness, helped to parse military life. A GI who saw *As You Like It* at Stratford-on-Avon pasted a quotation from Act II into his scrapbook—"Sweet are the uses of adversity, / Which, like the toad … / Wears yet a precious jewel in his head"—along with an annotation: "Sums up my attitude to the Army." Soldier slang, always revealing, grew richer and more profane by the week. "SOL" meant "shit out of luck"; the U.S. military had become "Sam's circus"; infantrymen were simply "feet"; and "SFA"—borrowed from the Australians—stood for "sweet fuck-all." The amphibious force was the "ambiguous farce." As one officer wrote, "If it's not ironic, it's not war." Most tried to keep their cynicism in check. "I expected the Army to be corrupt, inefficient, cruel, wasteful, and it turned out to be all those things, just like all armies, only much less so than I thought before I got into it," wrote a Signal Corps soldier and novelist named Irwin Shaw. Another novelist-soldier, Vernon Scannell, found that among those who had fought in North Africa or Sicily, "a kind of wild hilarity would explode in the ranks of the veterans … so irrational as to verge on madness."

"War is all foreground when you're in it," the fighter pilot Samuel Hynes observed. Even soldiers who sensed that "history grew near and large," in the phrase of the glider infantryman and poet Louis Simpson, would undoubtedly share Simpson's feeling that "no more than a hod-carrying Egyptian slave do I see the pyramids of which my bricks will be part." Few voiced enthusiasm for yet another American intervention in northwestern Europe—"that quarrelsome continent," as one GI called it in a letter home. A recent Army survey in Britain found that more than one-third of all troops doubted at times whether the war was worth fighting, a figure that had doubled since July 1943 but would rise no higher.

Certainly they believed in one another. Camaraderie offered a bulwark against what Scannell called "this drab khaki world" with its "boredom, cold, exhaustion, squalor, lack of privacy, monotony, ugliness and a constant teasing anxiety about the future." Like those at Kasserine and Cassino—or, for that matter, at Gettysburg and the Meuse-Argonne—they would risk all to be considered worthy of their comrades. A Japanese-American soldier who had fought in Italy and would fight again in France told his brother, "I have been greatly affected by the forces of love, hate, prejudice, death, life, destruction, reconstruction, treachery, bravery, comradeship, kindness, and by the unseen powers of God." Here indeed was the stuff of the soul.

And so four by four by four they boarded those troop trains on the docks to be hauled to 1,200 camps and 133 airfields across the British Isles. "This country reminds one constantly of Thomas Hardy," an overeducated lieutenant wrote his mother, but in truth it *was* a land of white swans and country folk who bicycled to ancient churches "in the old steady manner and unsmilingly touched their caps," as the journalist Eric Sevareid reported. Prayers tacked to parish doors in 1940 still pleaded, "Save our beloved land from invasion, O God," but no longer did the Home Guard expect to battle the Hun at Dover with decrepit rifles or with the pikes issued to those without firearms. Even some road signs, removed early in the war to confound enemy parachutists, had been put back after

complaints that lost American truck drivers were using too much gasoline.

Nearly 400,000 prefabricated huts and 279,000 tents had been erected to accommodate the Yank horde, supplementing 112,000 borrowed British buildings and 20 million square feet of storage space. GIs called this new world "Spamland," but the prevailing odor came from burning feces in U.S. Army School of Hygiene coal-fired incinerators. Despite improving logistics, confusion and error abounded: the American juggernaut included 23 million tons of matériel, most of it carried across the Atlantic in cargo ships that arrived days if not months after the troops on their fast *Queen*s. Truck drivers were separated from their trucks, drummers from their drums, chaplains from their chalices. Thousands of items arrived with indecipherable bills of lading or without shipping addresses other than GLUE (the code for southern England), or BANG (Northern Ireland), or UGLY (unknown). The Ministry of Transport allocated 120 berths for U.S. Army ships in May, but an extra 38 had arrived. Despite negotiations that reached the White House and Whitehall, almost half the cargo from these orphan vessels eventually was dumped outside various ports—including five thousand tons of peanuts and fifty thousand portable radios—and was subsequently lost "due to exposure to weather." Wags asserted that the Army was cutting red tape, lengthwise.

No alliance in the war proved more vital or enduring than that of the English-speaking peoples, but this vast American encampment strained the fraternal bond. "You may think of them as enemy Redcoats," each arriving GI was advised in a War Department brochure, "but there is no time today to fight old wars over again or bring up old grievances." Detailed glossaries translated English into English: chemist/druggist, geyser/hot water heater, tyre/tire. Disparities in pay caused resentment; a GI private earned triple what his Tommy counterpart drew, and the American staff sergeant's $96 was equivalent to a British captain's monthly salary. The Army tried to blur the difference by paying GIs twice a month. But British penury was as obvious as the pubs that required patrons to bring their own beer glasses, or the soap shortage that caused GIs to call unwashed Britain Goatland, or the fact that British quartermasters stocked only 18 shoe sizes compared to 105 provided by the U.S. Army. American authorities urged tolerance and gratitude. "It is always impolite to criticize your hosts," *A Short Guide to Great Britain* advised. "It is militarily stupid to insult your allies." Not least important, British producers stocked the American larder and supply depot with 240 million pounds of potatoes, 1,000 cake pans, 2.4 million tent pegs, 15 million condoms, 260,000 grave markers, 80 million packets of cookies, and 54 million gallons of beer.

The British displayed forbearance despite surveys revealing that less than half viewed the Americans favorably. "They irritate me beyond words," one housewife complained. "Loud, bombastic, bragging, self-righteous, morals of the barnyard, hypocrites." *Meet the Americans,* a manual published in London, included chapters titled "Drink, Sex and Swearing" and "Are They Our Cousins?" An essay written for the British Army by the anthropologist Margaret Mead sought to explain "Why Americans Seem Childish." George Orwell groused in a newspaper column that "Britain is now Occupied Territory."

Occasional bad behavior reinforced the stereotype of boorish Yanks. GIs near Newcastle ate the royal swans at the king's summer palace, Thomas Hardy be damned. Paratroopers from the 101st Airborne used grenades to fish in a private pond, and bored soldiers sometimes set haystacks ablaze with tracer bullets. Despite War Department assurances that "men who refrain from sexual acts are frequently stronger, owing to their conservation of energy," so many GIs impregnated British women that the U.S. government agreed to give local courts jurisdiction in "bastardy proceedings"; child support was fixed at £1 per week until the little Anglo-American turned thirteen, and 5 to 20 shillings weekly for teenagers. Road signs cautioned, "To all GIs: please drive carefully, that child may be yours."

Both on the battlefield and in the rear, the transatlantic relationship would remain, in one British general's description, "a delicate hothouse growth that must be carefully tended lest it wither away." Nothing less than Western civilization depended on it. As American soldiers by the boatload continued to swarm into their Spamland camps, a British major spoke for many of his countrymen: "They were the chaps that mattered.… We couldn't possibly win the war without them."

* * *

The loading of invasion vessels bound for the Far Shore had begun on May 4 and intensified as the month wore away. Seven thousand kinds of combat necessities had to reach the Norman beaches in the first four hours, from surgical scissors to bazooka rockets, followed by tens of thousands of tons in the days following. Responsibility for embarkation fell to three military bureaucracies with acronyms evocative of the Marx Brothers: MOVCO, TURCO, and EMBARCO. Merchant marine captains sequestered in a London basement near Selfridges department store prepared loading plans with the blueprints of deck and cargo spaces spread on huge tables; wooden blocks scaled to every jeep, howitzer, and shipping container were pushed around like chess pieces to ensure a fit. Soldiers in their camps laid out full-sized deck replicas on the ground and practiced wheeling trucks and guns in and out.

In twenty-two British ports, stevedores slung pallets and cargo nets into holds and onto decks, loading radios from Pennsylvania, grease from Texas, rifles from Massachusetts. For OVERLORD, the U.S. Army had accumulated 301,000 vehicles, 1,800 train locomotives, 20,000 rail cars, 2.6 million small arms, 2,700 artillery pieces, 300,000 telephone poles, and 7 million tons of gasoline, oil, and lubricants. SHAEF had calculated daily combat consumption, from fuel to bullets to chewing gum, at 41.298 pounds per soldier. Sixty million K rations, enough to feed the invaders for a month, were packed in 500-ton bales. Huge U.S. Army railcars known as war flats hauled tanks and bulldozers to the docks, while mountains of ammunition were stacked on car ferries requisitioned from Boston, New York, and Baltimore. The photographer Robert Capa, who would land with the second wave at Omaha Beach, watched as the "giant toys" were hoisted aboard. "Everything looked like a new secret weapon," he wrote, "especially from a distance."

Armed guards from ten cartography depots escorted 3,000 tons of maps for D-Day alone, the first of 210 million maps that would be distributed in Europe, most of them printed in five colors. Also into the holds went 280,000 hydrographic charts; town plats for the

likes of Cherbourg and St.-Lô; many of the one million aerial photos of German defenses, snapped from reconnaissance planes flying at twenty-five feet; and watercolors depicting the view that landing-craft coxswains would have of their beaches. Copies of a French atlas pinpointed monuments and cultural treasures, with an attached order from Eisenhower calling for "restraint and discipline" in wreaking havoc. The U.S. First Army battle plan for OVERLORD contained more words than *Gone with the Wind*. For the 1st Infantry Division alone, Field Order No. 35 had fifteen annexes and eighteen appendices, including a reminder to "drive on right side of road." Thick sheaves of code words began with the Pink List, valid from H-hour to two A.M. on D+1, when the Blue List would succeed it. Should the Blue List be compromised, the White List would be used, but only if the word "swallow" was broadcast on the radio. A soldier could only sigh.

Day after night after day, war matériel cascaded onto the wharves and quays, a catalogue Homeric in magnitude and variety: radio crystals by the thousands, carrier pigeons by the hundreds, one hundred Silver Stars and three hundred Purple Hearts—dubbed "the German marksmanship medal"—for each major general to award as warranted, and ten thousand "Hagensen packs," canvas bags sewn by sailmakers in lofts across England and stuffed with plastic explosive. A company contracted to deliver ten thousand metal crosses had missed its deadline; instead, Graves Registration units would improvise with wooden markers. Cotton mattress covers used as shrouds had been purchased on the basis of one for every 375 man-days in France, a formula that proved far too optimistic. In July, with supplies dwindling, quartermasters would be forced to ship another fifty thousand.

Four hospital ships made ready, "snowy white … with many bright new red crosses painted on the hull and painted flat on the boat deck," the reporter Martha Gellhorn noted. Each LST also would carry at least two physicians and twenty Navy corpsmen to evacuate casualties, with operating rooms built on the open tank decks—a "cold, dirty trap," in one officer's estimation—and steam tables used to heat twenty-gallon sterilization cans. All told, OVERLORD would muster 8,000 doctors, 600,000 doses of penicillin, fifty tons of sulfa, and 800,000 pints of plasma meticulously segregated by black and white donors. Sixteen hundred pallets weighing half a ton each and designed to be dragged across the beaches were packed with enough medical supplies to last a fortnight.

A new *Manual of Therapy* incorporated hard-won lessons about combat medicine learned in the Mediterranean. Other lessons had still to be absorbed, such as how to avoid both the morphine poisoning too common in Italy and the fatal confusion by anesthesiologists of British carbon dioxide tanks with American oxygen tanks—both painted green—which had killed at least eight patients. Especially salutary was the recognition that whole blood complemented plasma in reviving the grievously wounded; medical planners intended to stockpile three thousand pints for OVERLORD's initial phase, one pint for every 2.2 wounded soldiers, almost a fourfold increase over the ratio used in Italy.

But whole blood would keep for two weeks at most. As the last week of May arrived, there could be little doubt that D-Day was near. The blood—in large, clearly marked canisters—had landed.

* * *

On Tuesday, May 23, a great migration of assault troops swept toward the English seaside and into a dozen marshaling areas—Americans on the southwest coast, British and Canadians in the south—where the final staging began. March rates called for each convoy to travel twenty-five miles in two hours, vehicles sixty yards apart, with a ten-minute halt before every even hour. Military policemen wearing brassards specially treated to detect poison gas waved traffic through intersections and thatched-roof villages. Soldiers snickered nervously at the new road signs reading "One Way." "We sat on a hilltop and saw a dozen roads in the valleys below jammed with thousands of vehicles, men, and equipment moving toward the south," wrote Sergeant Forrest C. Pogue, an Army historian. Pogue was reminded of Arthur Conan Doyle's description of soldiers bound for battle: a "throng which set the old road smoking in the haze of white dust from Winchester to the narrow sea."

Mothers held their children aloft from the curb to watch the armies pass. An old man "bent like a boomerang" and pushing a cart outside London yelled, "Good luck to yer all, me lads," a British captain reported. On tanks and trucks, the captain added, men chalked the names of sweethearts left behind so that nearly every vehicle had a "patron girl-saint," or perhaps a patron girl-sinner. Almost overnight the bright plumage of military uniforms in London dimmed as the capital thinned out. "Restaurants and night clubs were half empty, taxis became miraculously easier to find," one account noted. A pub previously used by American officers for assignations was rechristened the Whore's Lament.

By late in the week all marshaling camps were sealed, with sentries ordered to shoot absconders. "Do not loiter," signs on perimeter fences warned. "Civilians must not talk to army personnel." GIs wearing captured German uniforms and carrying enemy weapons wandered through the bivouacs so troops grew familiar with the enemy's aspect. The invasion had begun to resemble "an overrehearsed play," complained the correspondent Alan Moorehead. Fantastic rumors swirled: that British Commandos had taken Cherbourg; that Berlin intended to sue for peace; that a particular unit would be sacrificed in a diversionary attack; that the German Wehrmacht possessed both a death beam capable of incinerating many acres instantly and a vast refrigerating apparatus to create big icebergs in the English Channel. The military newspaper *Stars and Stripes* tried to calm jumpy soldiers with an article promising that "shock kept the wounded from feeling much pain." Another column advised, "Don't be surprised if a Frenchman steps up to you and kisses you. That doesn't mean he's queer. It just means he's emotional."

Security remained paramount. SHAEF concluded that OVERLORD had scant chance of success if the enemy received even forty-eight hours' advance notice, and "any longer warning spells certain defeat." As part of Churchill's demand that security measures be "high, wide, and handsome," the British government in early April imposed a ban that kept the usual 600,000 monthly visitors from approaching coastal stretches along the North Sea, Bristol Channel, and English Channel. Two thousand Army counterintelligence agents sniffed about for leaks. Censors fluent in twenty-two languages, including Ukrainian and Slovak, and armed with X-acto knives scrutinized soldier letters for indiscretions until, on May 25, all outgoing mail was impounded for ten days as an extra

precaution.

Camouflage inspectors roamed through southern England to ensure that the invasion assembly remained invisible to German surveillance planes. Thousands of tons of cinders and sludge oil darkened new road cuts. Garnished nets concealed tents and huts—the British alone used one million square yards—while even medical stretchers and surgical hampers were slathered with "tone-down paint," either Standard Camouflage Color 1A (dark brown) or SCC 15 (olive drab). Any vehicle stopped for more than ten minutes was to be draped with a net "propped away from the contours of the vehicle."

Deception complemented the camouflage. The greatest prevarication of the war, originally known as "Appendix Y" until given the code name FORTITUDE, tried "to induce the enemy to make faulty strategic dispositions of forces," as the Combined Chiefs requested. Fifteen hundred Allied deceivers used phony radio traffic to suggest that a fictional army with eight divisions in Scotland would attack Norway in league with the Soviets, followed by a larger invasion of France in mid-July through the Pas de Calais, 150 miles northeast of the actual OVERLORD beaches. More than two hundred eight-ton "Bigbobs"—decoy landing craft fashioned from canvas and oil drums—had been conspicuously deployed beginning May 20 around the Thames estuary. Dummy transmitters now broadcast the radio hubbub of a spectral, 150,000-man U.S. 1st Army Group, notionally poised to pounce on the wrong coast in the wrong month.

The British genius for cozenage furthered the ruse by passing misinformation through more than a dozen German agents, all discovered, all arrested, and all flipped by British intelligence officers. A network of British double agents with code names like GARBO and TRICYCLE embellished the deception, and some five hundred deceitful radio reports were sent from London to enemy spymasters in Madrid and thence to Berlin. The FORTITUDE deception had spawned a German hallucination: enemy analysts now detected seventy-nine Allied divisions staging in Britain, when in fact there were but fifty-two. By late May, Allied intelligence, including Ultra, the British ability to intercept and decipher most coded German radio traffic, had uncovered no evidence suggesting "that the enemy has accurately assessed the area in which our main assault is to be made," as Eisenhower learned to his relief. In a final preinvasion fraud, Lieutenant Clifton James of the Royal Army Pay Corps—after spending time studying the many tics of General Montgomery, whom he strikingly resembled—flew to Gibraltar on May 26 and then to Algiers. Fitted with a black beret, he strutted about in public for days in hopes that Berlin would conclude that no attack across the Channel was imminent if Monty was swanning through the Mediterranean.

As May slid toward June, invasion preparations grew febrile. Every vehicle to be shoved onto the French coast required waterproofing to a depth of fifty-four inches with a gooey compound of grease, lime, and asbestos fibers; a vertical funnel from the exhaust pipe "stuck up like a wren's tail" to keep the engine from flooding. A single Sherman tank took three hundred man-hours to waterproof, occupying the five-man crew for a week. SHAEF on May 29 also ordered all eleven thousand Allied planes to display three broad white stripes on each wing as recognition symbols. A frantic search for 100,000 gallons of whitewash and 20,000 brushes required mobilizing the British paint industry, and workers toiled through Whitsun weekend. Some aircrews slathered on the white stripes with push brooms.

Soldiers drew seasickness pills, vomit bags, and life belts, incidentals that brought the average rifleman's combat load to 68.4 pounds, far beyond the 43 pounds recommended for assault troops. A company commander in Dorset with the 116th Infantry, bound for Omaha Beach, reported that his men were "loping and braying about the camp under their packs, saying that as long as they were loaded like jackasses they may as well sound like them." On June 2, the men donned "skunk suits," stiff and malodorous uniforms heavily impregnated against poison gas.

"We're ready now—as ready as we'll ever be," Brigadier General Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., of the 4th Infantry Division, wrote on May 30 to his wife, Eleanor. "The black bird says to his brother, if this be the last song ye shall sing, sing well, for you may not sing another." Each soldier placed his personal effects into a quartermaster box twelve inches long, eight inches wide, and four inches deep, for storage at a depot in Liverpool. Like shedding an old skin or a past life, troops bound for France would fill five hundred rail boxcars with such accoutrements of peace every week for the rest of the summer.

"I am a free man, so I pull no punches," a British gunner in a Sherman tank crew told his diary. "I've earned my place." The warriors began to sing, and they sang well: one soldier whose song would cease in Normandy wrote his family, "If I don't come out of this thing, I want my people (especially my father) to know I gave every ounce of my strength and energy for what I believe I am fighting for." Another young captain, who would instead survive to reach old age, told his parents back in Waco: "The destiny of life is an elusive thing."

* * *

Eisenhower left Bushy Park on Friday, June 2, for his war camp, code-named SHARPENER. Trailers and tents filled Sawyer's Wood, a sylvan tract of partridge brakes, dog roses, and foxglove five miles northwest of Portsmouth harbor. Eisenhower's personal "circus wagon" featured a bunk and a desk, with the usual stack of pulp westerns and three telephones, including a red one to Washington and a green one to Churchill's underground Map Room in Whitehall. A mile distant down a cinder path stood a three-story Georgian mansion with a bowed façade and Ionic columns. Originally requisitioned by the Royal Navy for a navigation school—nautical almanacs still stood in the bookcases—Southwick House now served as Admiral Ramsay's headquarters and a convenient redoubt from which the supreme commander could watch OVERLORD unspool.

"The intensity of the burdens," as Eisenhower conceded in his diary, had only grown in the past week. Harry Butcher on June 3 noted that his boss had "the pre-D-Day jitters." There was much to be jittery about. Each morning, intelligence officers scrutinized new reconnaissance photos and sent to Southwick House revised assessments of the beach obstacles sprouting along the Norman

littoral, with every bunker and minefield plotted on a large-scale map. More alarming was intelligence from Ultra that another enemy division had reinforced the western rim of the invasion zone. A May 26 memo from the SHAEF operations staff noted that three German divisions now occupied this vital Cotentin Peninsula, plus sixty tanks and a parachute regiment, with perhaps a full additional division entrenched at Cherbourg.

Such a robust force, positioned to ambush the two lightly armed American airborne divisions planning to float into the peninsula, in turn spooked the senior air commander for OVERLORD, Air Chief Marshal Sir Trafford Leigh-Mallory. Described by one British officer as "a pompous nincompoop" and by another as a man with "a peculiar knack for rubbing everybody up the wrong way," Leigh-Mallory petitioned Eisenhower on May 29 to cancel the combat jumps of the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions or risk losing at least half the paratroopers and one-third of the accompanying gliders. A day later, in an appeal tête-à-tête, the air marshal upped the ante by warning the supreme commander that "this very speculative operation" could cost 70 percent of the glider force in a "futile slaughter." Leigh-Mallory added, "If you do this operation, you are throwing away two airborne divisions."

Here was the sort of crazy risk for which Eisenhower felt unappreciated. Alone he retired to chain-smoke in a tent and ponder what he called a "soul-racking problem." Canceling the airborne drop would require either scrubbing the seaborne landings at Utah Beach as well, or condemning that assault force to possible evisceration, since the paratroopers were intended to disrupt German counterattacks against the beaches of the eastern Cotentin on D-Day. Airborne calamities in North Africa and Sicily had left some officers skeptical of war by parachute, but Eisenhower still believed in the shock power of vertical envelopment, particularly if the troopers could be better concentrated. In recent days the 82nd Airborne drop zones had been shifted a dozen miles eastward, cheek-by-jowl with the sector to be occupied by the 101st. This consolidation would amass thirteen thousand men in six parachute regiments closer to Utah Beach.

Emerging from his canvas hideaway, Eisenhower issued orders worthy of a battle captain. After phoning Leigh-Mallory, he dictated his decision: there was "nothing for it" but to proceed with a plan two years in the making, even as commanders were told to review "to the last detail every single thing that may diminish the hazards.

"A strong airborne attack in the region indicated is essential to the whole operation," Eisenhower added. "It must go on."

* * *

A leafy hilltop near Southwick House offered a stunning panorama of the thousand-ship fleet now ready for launching from Spithead and the Solent, a sheltered strait separating the Isle of Wight from the English mainland. Thousands more—the OVERLORD armada numbered nearly seven thousand, including landing craft and barges—filled every berth in every port from Felixstowe on the North Sea to Milford Haven in Wales, with others moored in the Humber, the Clyde, and Belfast Lough. Late spring warmth had returned, and fleecy clouds drifted above the gray seawalls and church steeples. The scent of brine and timber creosote carried on a brisk breeze that straightened naval pennants and tossed quayside poppies, reminding the veterans of Tunisia. Semaphore lights winked from ship to shore and back to ship. Silver barrage balloons floated over the anchorages, sixty-five in Falmouth alone, and destroyers knifed hither and yon across the placid sea in an ecstatic rush of white water.

Soldiers still braying and bleating under their combat loads tramped up gangplanks or through the yawning bow doors of LSTs grounded on concrete pads at the water's edge. "Have a good go at it, mates," the leathery stevedores called. Others crammed into lighters for a short, wet ride out to troopships turning on their chains. "If any of you fellows get any closer," one soldier warned, "you will have to marry me." Tommies heated cocoa and oxtail soup on the decks; a British platoon commander marveled at being served "real white bread, which we hadn't seen in years." In Plymouth, where Drake played bowls before embarking to fight the Spanish Grande y Felicísima Armada and whence the *Mayflower* beat for the New World, so many vessels stood lashed gunwale to gunwale that "a man could have jumped from one deck to another and walked a half-mile up the Tamar River," an American lieutenant reported. Aboard the S.S. *Clara Barton*, swabs finished painting several buxom figureheads on the prow; an artillery officer scribbled in his diary, "I didn't ask which was Clara."

As always where land met sea, the U.S. Army and the U.S. Navy found reason to bicker. Each service had different numbers for the LSTs, so a perplexed GI could board both *LST 516* and *LST 487*, which were one and the same. A sixty-one-page booklet, "Preparation for Overseas Movement: Short Sea Voyage," instructed every unit to furnish forty copies of embarkation rosters, a requirement honored more in the breach than in the observance. Eighteen LCTs—landing craft, tank—were so overloaded that at the eleventh hour Navy officers demanded cargo be shifted. Sailors laboriously explained to soldiers that an LST had an immersion rate of one inch per thirty-three tons of weight; to load eight hundred tons rather than the maximum five hundred would force the crews to off-load vehicles in the surf through ten extra inches of water, drowning engines if not men. The ships were overloaded anyway. VII Corps, bound for Utah Beach, tried to board six hundred men on LSTs built to carry four hundred.

The deadweight included forty war correspondents, "an annoying and mysterious band of roving gypsies," as the reporter Don Whitehead described his tribe, summoned in great secrecy from various London alehouses. The most celebrated among them was Ernie Pyle, "sparse and gray of hair, kind and tired of face, dressed in coveralls that threatened to engulf him," in Forrest Pogue's description, "a short scarecrow with too much feet." His kit bag carried eleven liquor bottles, assorted good-luck trinkets, a Remington portable, and notice of the Pulitzer Prize he had won a month earlier for brilliant reporting in the Mediterranean. "All I do is drink and work and wait," he had written a friend. Now the wait was almost over. Omar Bradley, whom Pyle had made famous in Sicily, had offered him a berth on the headquarters ship U.S.S. *Augusta*; Pyle, wary of "too much brass," chose instead to wade onto *LST 353* in Falmouth harbor, endearing himself to the aft gun crew by autographing an antiaircraft barrel with a paintbrush.

"I'm no longer content unless I am with soldiers in the field," he confessed, but added, "If I hear another fucking GI say 'fucking' once more, I'll cut my fucking throat." Already plagued by hideous nightmares and given to signing his letters "the Unhappy

Warrior," Pyle listened to a briefing on the OVERLORD attack plan and then lay awake, wide-eyed, until four A.M. "Now you were committed," he later wrote. "It was too late to back out now, even if your heart failed you."

In claustrophobic holds and on weather decks the troops made do, wedged like sprats in a tin. "I love my fellow man," one miserable soldier informed his diary, "but not in the mass." The click of dice and the slap of playing cards could be heard across the fleet, including "a long session of a wild, distant derivative of poker called 'high low rollem' using five-franc invasion scrip for chips," the correspondent A. J. Liebling reported. On *Augusta,* sailors sang "When Irish Eyes Are Smiling" around a piano, while the junior officers' mess watched, improbably, Alfred Hitchcock's *Lifeboat.* Without fanfare beyond an extra twinkling stutter of semaphore signals, convoys that had farthest to travel cast off and made for the open sea. For those who had sailed to Africa, or Salerno, or Anzio, the deep gnaw of ships' screws stirred what one veteran called "the old uneasiness."

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More than five hundred weather stations were scattered across the United Kingdom, most reporting hourly. Eight U.S. Navy ships also took meteorological readings in the western Atlantic, and reconnaissance planes packed with instruments flew every day from Scotland, Cornwall, and Gibraltar. British beach watchers at fifty-eight wave observation stations thrice daily noted the height of every breaker during a three-minute interval, then sent their reports to a Swell Forecast Section. Six esteemed forecasters in England conferred twice each day by phone to discuss, often fractiously, the mysteries of wind, cloud, surf, and swell.

Each Allied invasion constituent had particular weather demands. Amphibious forces needed offshore surface winds not greater than Force 4—thirteen to eighteen miles per hour—for three consecutive days, as well as apposite tides. Pilots wanted a cloud ceiling of at least 2,500 feet for transport planes, with visibility of no less than three miles, and, for heavy bombers, no overcast thicker than the partly cloudy condition designated 5/10. Paratroopers required surface winds below twenty miles an hour, without gusts, and illumination of not less than a half moon at a thirty-degree altitude. The odds against such conditions aligning on the Norman coast for seventy-two hours in June were placed at thirteen to one.

Eisenhower had never been fortunate with his weather, despite ardently rubbing the seven lucky coins he had long kept in his pocket. Storms bedeviled the invasions of both Morocco and Sicily, and another now threatened OVERLORD. Cyclonic disturbances stretched as far back as the Rocky Mountains. Four low-pressure centers—roughly fourteen hundred miles apart and said by forecasters to be "full of menace"—had begun to drift east across the Atlantic. A great high-pressure collar around the Arctic Circle extruded cold air from the north. "The weather forecast is bad," Kay Summersby wrote in her diary on Saturday, June 3. "E. is very depressed."

At 4:30 A.M. on Sunday, June 4, in the high-ceilinged Southwick House library, a somber E. sat with Montgomery, Ramsay, Leigh-Mallory, and half a dozen other senior officers on two couches and a clutch of easy chairs. Beyond a set of French doors blanketed in blackout drapes, an immense map of southern England and Normandy covered one wall, with convoys and divisions depicted by pushpins and cabalistic symbols, which two uniformed clerks periodically adjusted from a stepladder. Standing ill at ease before the supreme commander was a tall, pigeon-breasted officer with a long face descending from his widow's peak to his cleft chin. Group Captain J. M. Stagg, a specialist in terrestrial magnetism and solar radiation, regretted to say that as SHAEF's chief meteorologist he was altering his grim forecast for the worse.

"A series of depressions across the Atlantic is moving rapidly eastward," Stagg reported. "These depressions will produce disturbed conditions in the Channel and assault area." Weather charts resembled conditions typical of midwinter rather than early summer; depression L5, now skulking toward the Shetland Islands, would produce the lowest atmospheric pressure recorded in the British Isles during June in the twentieth century. In a few hours complete overcast would blanket southern England, with a ceiling as low as five hundred feet and westerly winds up to thirty miles an hour at Force 6. Conditions for D-Day on June 5 had deteriorated from "most unpromising" to "quite impossible."

Eisenhower polled his lieutenants. "No part of the air support plan would be practicable," Leigh-Mallory told him. Even Ramsay, his mariner's face carved by gales, concurred; at Force 6, waves could be six feet or higher. Eisenhower nodded. "We need every help our air superiority can give us," he said. "If the air cannot operate, we must postpone." Only Montgomery disagreed. Conditions would be severe, but *not* impossible. He for one was willing to gamble.

At that moment the lights failed. Aides hurried in with guttering candles that limned the exasperation in Eisenhower's face. "Jesus!" he snapped at Montgomery, according to a subsequent account by Air Vice Marshal E. J. Kingston McCloughry. "Here you have been telling us for the past three or four months that you must have adequate air cover and that the airborne operations are essential to the assault, and now you say you will do without them. No, we will postpone OVERLORD twenty-four hours." The conference dissolved. Eisenhower stalked back to his caravan to read the Sunday papers between fitful naps.

Banks of gray cloud blustered in by midmorning, with pelting rain and gusts that tossed treetops and barrage balloons alike. At Southampton "the spindrift was flying scuds across the roadstead," a medical officer on the *Princess Astrid* reported, and the Portland Race was described as "a chaos of pyramidical waters leaping up suddenly." The coded radio message for a one-day postponement —HORNPIPE BOWSPRIT—reached many British troop convoys before they weighed anchor. Forces out of Falmouth had traveled only half a mile beyond the antisubmarine nets when frantic blinkering from shore brought them back.

But bombardment squadrons from Belfast and the Clyde were forced to countermarch up the black, squally Irish Sea. Worse off yet were the ships from Force U—Utah—that had put out from Cornwall and Devon the previous night to sail east down the Channel. Word passed from deck to deck that a "three-quarter gale" was blowing, a term foreign to landlubbers but quickly elucidated when the convoys came about into the teeth of a short, steep sea on the port bow. Miserable as men felt on the cold weather decks, they were fortunate compared to those below, who suffered in a green miasma of vomit and clogged toilets. Convoy U-2A, steaming at six

knots with 247 vessels, failed to hear the recall signal and turned back only when apprehended halfway to France by two destroyers dispatched from Plymouth. Not until nine P.M. would the last stragglers punch through the head sea to find shelter in Weymouth Bay. Force U, the Navy reported, was "scattered and somewhat out of hand."

As anchors dropped and engines died, taut nerves led to bickering and a few fistfights. Officers tried to keep their men occupied by distributing *A Pocket Guide to France*, a War Department tract that explained the worthiness of the nation to be liberated. Soldiers also learned that "Normandy looks rather like Ohio," that a hectoliter equaled twenty-two gallons, and that the French were "good talkers and magnificent cooks." Troops studying an Army phrase book murmured the hopeful *"Encore une verre du vin rouge, s'il vous plaît, mademoiselle,"* that last often being pronounced *"mama-oiselle."* Many GIs attended Sunday church services belowdecks. In the main mess aboard U.S.S. *Bayfield*, soldiers and sailors bellowed out "Holy God, We Praise Thy Name," while a chaplain in Weymouth took his text from Romans 8: "If God be for us, who can be against us?"—an unsettling theological presumption at the moment. Dice and cards reappeared. A combat surgeon described playing "blackjack for twenty dollars a card with officers from headquarters company. I either go into this fight loaded or broke. What's the difference?" A 1st Division soldier reading *Candide* complained, "Voltaire used the same gag too often. The characters are always getting killed and then turning out not to have been killed at all." British paratroopers watched *Stormy Weather,* with Lena Horne and Fats Waller, while an American airborne artillery unit saw the bandleader Ted Lewis in *Is Everybody Happy?* Combat engineers debated whether the "D" in D-Day stood for "death."

* * *

The strange, tempestuous Sunday grew stranger and stormier. At 4:30 P.M., the Royal Marine sentry at the Southwick House gate snapped to attention upon being confronted by the prime minister, who stomped into the mansion flushed with rage at General Charles A. J. M. de Gaulle, whom he denounced as an "obstructionist saboteur." Churchill's color was also deepened by the "large number of whiskeys" he had tossed down in a bootless effort to calm himself.

The sad story was this: De Gaulle, head of the self-proclaimed provisional French government-in-exile, had recently arrived in London from Algiers and this morning had been driven to Droxford, north of Portsmouth, where Churchill had parked his personal train on a siding to be close to the great events unfolding. Although he greeted De Gaulle on the tracks with open arms and then offered him an elegant lunch in his coach, the prime minister found the Frenchman resentful at various snubs from the Anglo-Americans, notably his exclusion from the invasion planning and the refusal by Washington to recognize De Gaulle's regime. The conversation took a choleric turn: Churchill, who was said to speak French "remarkably well, but understands very little," subsequently proposed sending De Gaulle "back to Algiers, in chains if necessary." De Gaulle, who at six feet, six inches towered over the prime minister even when they were sitting, pronounced his host a "gangster."

No sooner had Churchill stormed across the Southwick House foyer than he was followed by De Gaulle himself. Deux Mètres, as the Americans called him for his metric height, was "balancing a chip like an epaulette on each martial shoulder." Only vaguely aware of their contretemps, Eisenhower received his visitors in the war room, where he revealed to De Gaulle for the first time the OVERLORD locale, battle plan, and date, now postponed for at least twenty-four hours. De Gaulle grew even huffier upon recognizing that most Gallic phenomenon, the fait accompli. He objected to "your forged notes"—the Allied invasion scrip, now being gambled away on many a troop deck—which he decried as "counterfeit money" and "a violation of national sovereignty, a humiliation to which not even the Germans had subjected France." He also declined to allow several hundred French liaison officers to embark with the Allied invaders until their duties and a chain of command were clarified. Nor did he care to record a radio broadcast urging Frenchmen to obey their liberators, particularly upon learning that Eisenhower had already recorded his liberation message—in Dutch, Flemish, Norwegian, and Danish as well as in French and English—without acknowledging De Gaulle's sovereign legitimacy. After declaring, "I cannot follow Eisenhower," he stamped from the mansion to motor back to London, *deux mètres* of umbrage folded into the backseat.

Churchill, ignoring his own maxim that "there is no room in war for pique, spite, or rancor," returned to his train outraged by such "treason at the height of battle" and mentally composing black notes for what he called his "Frog File." One British wit observed that a staple of De Gaulle's diet had long been the hand that fed him. "Remember that there is not a scrap of generosity about this man," the prime minister would write to his Foreign Office. Eisenhower in his diary lamented the "rather sorry mess." He had hoped De Gaulle would shed his "Joan of Arc complex," but now he told his staff, "To hell with him and if he doesn't come through, we'll deal with someone else."

At 9:30 P.M., the supreme commander again repaired with his lieutenants to the library, where a fire crackled in the hearth and momentous news from Stagg brightened the day's gloom. "There have been some rapid and unexpected developments," the meteorologist reported. H.M.S. *Hoste*, a weather frigate cruising seven hundred miles west of Ireland, reported in secret dispatches that atmospheric surface pressure was rising steadily. The offending Atlantic depressions, including the lugubrious L5, had moved quicker than expected, suggesting that a brief spell of better weather would arrive the following day and last into Tuesday. "I am quite confident that a fair interval will follow tonight's front," Stagg added.

Eisenhower polled his subordinates once more. Further postponement would likely delay the invasion for nearly two weeks, when the tides next aligned properly. Leigh-Mallory remained skeptical. Bombing would be "chancy," and spotting for naval gunfire difficult. Ramsay reported "no misgivings at all." The SHAEF chief of staff, Lieutenant General Walter Bedell "Beetle" Smith, said, "It's a helluva gamble, but it's the best possible gamble." Eisenhower turned to Montgomery, alert and lean in corduroy trousers and thick sweater.

"Do you see any reason for not going Tuesday?"

Montgomery answered instantly. "I would say go."

For a long minute the room fell silent but for rain lashing the French doors. Eisenhower stared vacantly, rubbing his head. “The question is, how long can you hang this operation on the end of a limb and let it hang there?” The tension seemed to drain from his face. “I’m quite positive we must give the order,” he said. “I don’t like it, but there it is. I don’t see how we can possibly do anything else.” They would reconvene before dawn on Monday, June 5, to hear Stagg’s latest forecast, but the order would stand. “Okay,” Eisenhower declared. “We’ll go.”

Outside the library, he turned to Stagg and said with a broad smile, “Don’t bring any more bad news.”

* * *

Across the fleet majestical the war cry sounded: “Up anchor!” In the murky, fretful dawn, from every English harbor and estuary spilled the great effluent of liberation, from Salcombe and Poole, Dartmouth and Weymouth, in tangled wakes from the Thames past the Black Deep and the Whalebone Marshes, all converging on the white-capped Channel: nearly 200,000 seamen and merchant mariners crewing 59 convoys carrying 130,000 soldiers, 2,000 tanks, and 12,000 vehicles. “Ships were heaving in the gray waves,” wrote Alan Moorehead. Monday’s early light revealed cutters, corvettes, frigates, freighters, ferries, trawlers, tankers, subchasers; ships for channel-marking, for cable-laying, for smoke-making; ships for refrigerating, towing, victualing. From the Irish Sea the bombardment squadrons rounded Land’s End in pugnacious columns of cruisers, battleships, destroyers, and even some dreadnoughts given a second life, like the U.S.S. *Nevada*, raised and remade after Pearl Harbor, and the ancient monitor H.M.S. *Erebus*, built to shell German fortifications in the Great War with two 15-inch guns of dubious reliability. From the *Erebus* mast flew the signal Nelson had hoisted at Trafalgar: “England expects every man to do his duty.” The heavy cruiser U.S.S. *Tuscaloosa* replied, “We are full of ginger,” and swabs on *Bayfield* huzzahed Royal Navy tars on *Hawkins* and *Enterprise*, passing close aboard near Eddystone Light.

By midmorning the heavy skies lightened and the wind ebbed, recoloring the sea from pewter to sapphire. A luminous rainbow, said to be “tropical in its colors,” arced above the wet green English fields, and dappled sun lit the chalk cliffs of Kent, turning them into white curtains. A naval officer on U.S.S. *Quincy* wrote, “War, I think, would tend to increase one’s eye for beauty, just as it should tend to make peace more endurable.” Braced against a bowsprit, a piper skirled “The Road to the Isles” down the river Hamble as soldiers lining ship rails in the Solent cheered him on. Nothing brightened the mood more than reports from the BBC, broadcast throughout the armada, that Rome had fallen at last, at long last.

Leading the fleet was the largest minesweeping operation in naval history. Some 255 vessels began by clearing Area Z, a circular swatch of sea below the Isle of Wight that was ten miles in diameter and soon dubbed Piccadilly Circus. From here the minesweepers sailed through eight corridors that angled to a German minefield in mid-Channel, where a week earlier Royal Navy launches had secretly planted underwater sonic beacons in thirty fathoms. Electronically dormant until Sunday, the beacons now summoned the sweepers to the entrances of ten channels, each of which was four hundred to twelve hundred yards wide; these channels would be cleared for thirty-five miles to five beaches on the Bay of the Seine in Normandy. Seven-foot waves and a cross-tidal current of nearly three knots bedeviled helmsmen who fought their wheels, the wind, and the sea to keep station. As the sweepers swept, more boats followed to lay a lighted dan buoy every mile on either side of each channel, red to starboard, white to port. The effect, one reporter observed, was “like street lamps across to France.”

As the invasion convoys swung toward Area Z, the churlish open Channel tested the seaworthiness of every landing vessel. Flat-bottomed LSTs showed “a capacity for rolling all ways at once,” and the smaller LCI—landing craft, infantry—revealed why it was widely derided as a Lousy Civilian Idea. Worse yet was the LCT, capable of only six knots in a millpond and half that into a head sea. Even the Navy acknowledged that “the LCT is not an ocean-going craft due to poor sea-keeping facilities, low speed, and structural weakness”; the latter quality included being bolted together in three sections so that the vessel “gave an ominous impression of being liable to buckle in the middle.” Miserable passengers traded seasickness nostrums, such as one sailor’s advice to “swallow a pork chop with a string, then pull it up again.”

For those who could eat, pork chops were in fact served to the 16th Infantry, with ice cream. Aboard the *Thomas Jefferson*, 116th Infantry troops—also headed for Omaha Beach—ate what one officer described as “bacon and eggs on the edge of eternity.” Soldiers primed grenades, sharpened blades, and field-stripped their rifles, again; a Navy physician recommended a good washing to sponge away skin bacteria, “in case you stop one.” Some Yanks sang “Happy D-Day, dear Adolf, happy D-Day to you,” but Tommies preferred “Jerusalem,” based on William Blake’s bitter poem set to music: “Bring me my bow of burning gold.” Sailors broke out their battle ensigns, stripped each bridge to fighting trim, and converted mess tables into operating theaters. In watertight compartments belowdecks, crewmen aboard the resurrected *Nevada* stowed “dress blues, china, glassware, library books, tablecloths, office files, brooms, mirrors.” A Coast Guard lieutenant noted in his diary, “Orders screeched over the PA system for Mr. Whozits to report to Mr. Whatzits in Mr. Wherezits’ stateroom.” Rear Admiral Morton L. Deyo, aboard U.S.S. *Tuscaloosa* as commander of the Utah bombardment squadron, hammered a punching bag in his cabin.

To inspirit the men, officers read stand-tall messages from Eisenhower and Montgomery, then offered their own prognostications and advice. “The first six hours will be the toughest,” Colonel George A. Taylor of the 16th Infantry told reporters on the *Samuel Chase*. “They’ll just keep throwing stuff onto the beaches until something breaks. That is the plan.” Brigadier General Norman D. Cota, who would be the senior officer on Omaha Tuesday morning, told officers aboard the U.S.S. *Charles Carroll*:

> You’re going to find confusion. The landing craft aren’t going in on schedule and people are going to be landed in the wrong place. Some won’t be landed at all.… We must improvise, carry on, not lose our heads. Nor must we add to the confusion.

A tank battalion commander was more succinct: “The government paid $5 billion for this hour. Get to hell in there and start fighting.” Standing on the forecastle of *Augusta,* Omar Bradley, described by one colonel as “alone and conspicuous,” flashed a V-for-victory to each wallowing LST before retiring to an armchair in his cabin to read *A Bell for Adano*.

“We are starting on the great venture of this war,” Ted Roosevelt wrote Eleanor from the U.S.S. *Barnett.* “The men are crowded below or lounging on deck. Very few have seen action.” Roosevelt, who at fifty-six would be the senior officer on Utah Beach for the first hours in both age and rank, had seen enough—in France during the last war, and in the landings at Oran and Gela during this one—to have premonitions:

> We’ve had a grand life and I hope there’ll be more. Should it chance that there’s not, at least we can say that in our years together we’ve packed enough for ten ordinary lives. We’ve known joy and sorrow, triumph and disaster, all that goes to fill the pattern of human existence.… Our feet were placed in a large room, and we did not bury our talent in a napkin.

Back on deck he told men from the 8th Infantry, “I’ll see you tomorrow morning, 6:30, on the beach.”

* * *

Far inland, at more than a dozen airfields scattered across England, some twenty thousand parachutists and glider troops also made ready. Soldiers from the British 6th Airborne Division blackened their faces with teakettle soot, then chalked bosomy girls and other graffiti on aircraft fuselages while awaiting the order to emplane. “I gave the earth by the runway a good stamp,” one private reported.

American paratroopers smeared their skin with cocoa and linseed oil or with charcoal raked from campfires along the taxiways. A few company clowns imitated Al Jolson’s minstrel act and joked about the imminent “$10,000 jump”—the maximum death benefit paid by government insurance policies. When a chaplain in the 101st Airborne began to pray aloud, one GI snapped, “I’m not going to die. Cut that crap out.” Every man was overburdened, from the burlap strips woven in the helmet net to the knife with a brass-knuckle grip tucked into the jump boots. Also: parachute, reserve chute, Mae West, entrenching tool, rations, fragmentation and smoke grenades, blasting caps, TNT blocks, brass pocket compass, dime-store cricket, raincoat, blanket, bandoliers, rifle, cigarette carton, and morphine syrettes (“one for pain and two for eternity”). Carrier pigeons were stuffed into extra GI socks—their heads poking out of little holes cut in the toe—and fastened to jump smocks with blanket pins. Some officers trimmed the margins from their maps in order to carry a few more rounds of ammunition.

“We look all pockets, pockets and baggy pants. The only visible human parts are two hands,” wrote Louis Simpson, the poet-gliderman. “The letter writers are at it again,” he continued, “heads bowed over their pens and sheets of paper.” Among the scribblers and the map trimmers was the thirty-seven-year-old assistant commander of the 82nd Airborne, Brigadier General James M. Gavin, who confessed in a note to his young daughter, “I have tried to get some sleep this afternoon but to no avail.” The impending jump likely would be “about the toughest thing we have tackled,” added Gavin, whose exploits on Sicily were among the most storied in the Mediterranean. In his diary, he was more explicit: “Either this 82nd Division job will be the most glorious and spectacular episode in our history or it will be another Little Big Horn. There is no way to tell now.… It will be a very mean and nasty fight.”

The prospect of “another Little Big Horn,” particularly for the two American airborne divisions ordered to France despite Leigh-Mallory’s dire warning, gnawed at Eisenhower in these final hours. After watching British troops board their LCIs from South Parade Pier in Portsmouth, he had returned to SHARPENER to pass the time playing fox-and-hounds on a checkerboard with Butcher, then sat down to compose a contrite note of responsibility, just in case. “Our landings in the Cherbourg-Havre area have failed to gain a satisfactory foothold and I have withdrawn the troops,” he wrote. “If any blame or fault attaches to the attempt it is mine alone.” Misdating the paper “July 5”—symptomatic of exhaustion and anxiety—he slipped it into his wallet, for use as needed.

Just after six P.M., Eisenhower climbed into his Cadillac with Kay Summersby behind the wheel and the four-star bumper insignia hooded. Leading a three-car convoy, the supreme commander rolled north for ninety minutes on narrow roads clogged with military trucks. “It’s very hard really to look a soldier in the eye when you fear that you are sending him to his death,” he told Summersby. At Greenham Common airfield in the Berkshire Downs, outside the eleventh-century town of Newbury, he bolted down a quick supper in the headquarters mess of the 101st Airborne, then drove to the flight line. Hands in his pockets, he strolled among the C-47s, newly striped with white paint. Troopers with blackened faces and heads shaved or clipped Mohawk-style wiggled into their parachute harnesses and sipped a final cup of coffee. “The trick is to keep moving. If you stop, if you start thinking, you lose your focus,” Eisenhower told a young soldier from Kansas. “The idea, the perfect idea, is to keep moving.”

At aircraft number 2716, he shook hands with the division commander, Major General Maxwell D. Taylor, who was careful to conceal a bad limp from the tendon he had injured playing squash the previous day. Eisenhower wished him Godspeed, then returned to the headquarters manor house and climbed to the roof for a final glimpse of his men. “The light of battle,” he would write George Marshall, “was in their eyes.” To Summersby he confessed, “I hope to God I know what I’m doing.”

Red and green navigation lights twinkled across the downs as the sun set at 10:06 P.M. Singing voices drifted in the gloaming—“Give me some men who are stout-hearted men / Who will fight for the right they adore”—punctuated by a guttural roar from paratroopers holding their knives aloft in homicidal resolve. Into the airplane bays they heaved themselves, with a helpful shove from behind. Many knelt on the floor to rest their cumbersome gear and chutes on a seat, faces bathed by the soft glow of cigarette embers and red cabin lights. “Give me guts,” one trooper prayed. “Give me guts.” Engines coughed and caught, the feathered propellers popping as crew chiefs slammed the doors. “Flap your wings, you big-assed bird,” a soldier yelled.

From the west the last gleam of a dying day glinted off the aluminum fuselages. “Stay, light,” a young soldier murmured, “stay on forever, and we’ll never get to Normandy.”

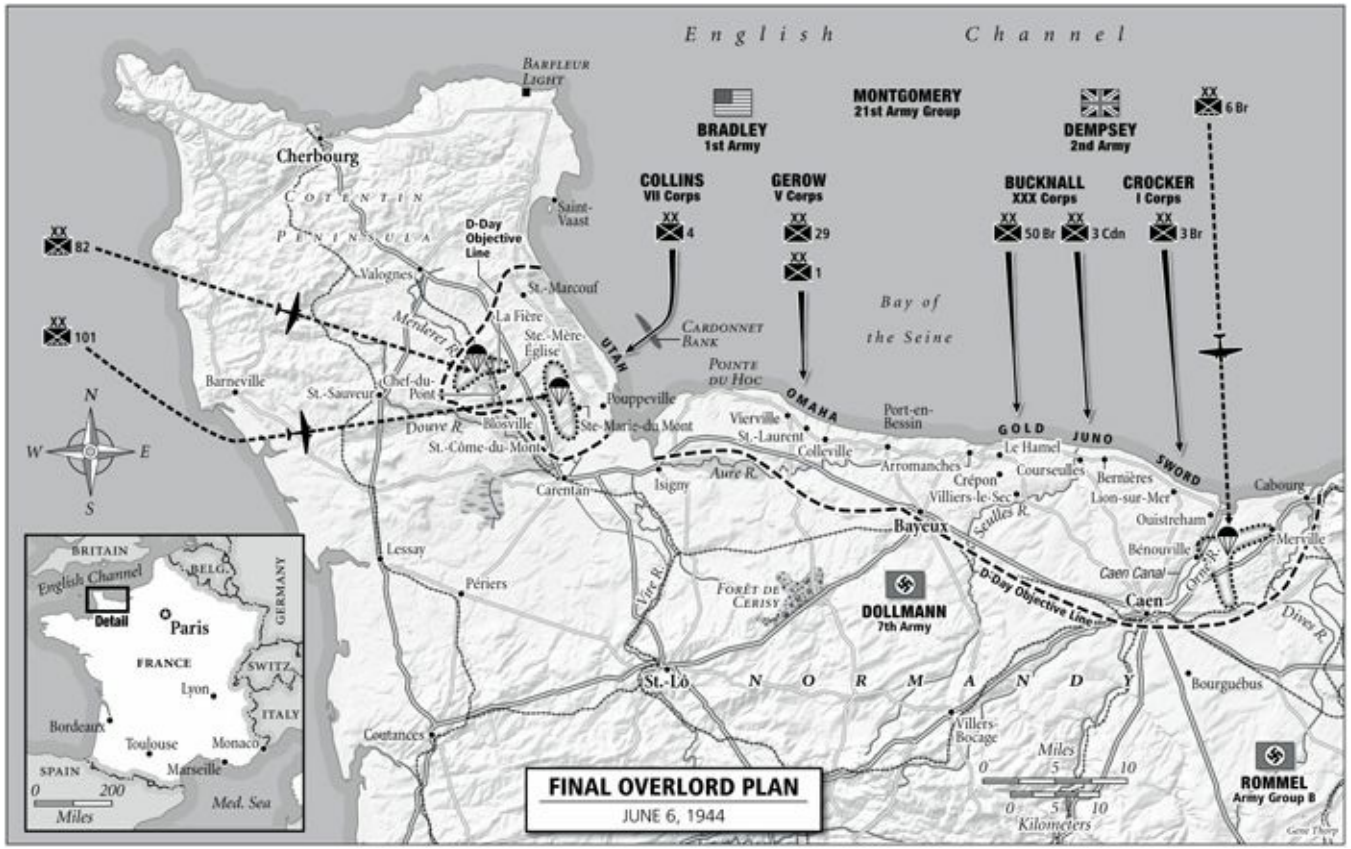
* * *

The light faded and was gone. Deep into the Channel, fifty-nine darkened convoys went to battle stations as they pushed past the parallel rows of dim buoys, red to starboard, white to port. “Our flag bridge is dead quiet,” Admiral Deyo wrote on *Tuscaloosa*. An officer on *Quincy* noted, “This is like trying to slip into a room where everyone is asleep.”

Small craft struggled in the wind and lop. “Men sick, waves washed over deck,” an LCT log recorded. “Stove went out, nothing to eat, explosives wet and could not be dried out.” Short seas snapped tow ropes, flooded engine rooms, and sloshed through troop compartments. Some helmsmen held their wheels thirty degrees off true to keep course. Several heaving vessels blinkered a one-word message: “Seasick. Seasick. Seasick.”

Down the ten channels they plunged, two designated for each of the five forces steaming toward five beaches: Utah, Omaha, Gold, Juno, Sword. Wakes braided and rebraided. The amber orb of a full moon rose through a thinning overcast off the port bow, and the sea sang as swells slipped along every hull bound for a better world. Hallelujah, sang the sea. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

Part One


English Channel
Barfleur Light
Cherbourg
Cotentin Peninsula
Saint-Vaast
D-Day Objective Line
Valognes
St.-Marcouf
La Fière
Merderet R.
Ste.-Mère-Église
Barneville
St.-Sauveur
Chef-du-Pont
Douve R.
Pouppeville
Ste.-Marie-du-Mont
Basseville
St.-Côme-du-Mont
Carentan
Lessay
Périers
Coutances
St.-Lô
Bayeux
Isigny
Aure R.
Vire R.
Forêt de Cerisy
Caen
Caen Canal
Orne R.
Bénouville
Ouistreham
Merville
Cabourg
Dives R.
Bourguébus
Villers-Bocage
Arromanches
Port-en-Bessin
Vierville
St.-Laurent
Colleville
Le Hamel
Courseulles
Crépon
Villiers-le-Sec
Bernières
Lion-sur-Mer
Seulles R.
Cardonnet Bank
Pointe du Hoc
Bay of the Seine
UTAH
OMAHA
GOLD
JUNO
SWORD
MONTGOMERY
21st Army Group
BRADLEY
1st Army
DEMPSEY
2nd Army
COLLINS
VII Corps
GEROW
V Corps
BUCKNALL
XXX Corps
CROCKER
I Corps
82
101
4
29
1
50 Br
3 Cdn
3 Br
6 Br
DOLLMANN
7th Army
ROMMEL
Army Group B
D-Day Objective Line
Normandy
Miles
Kilometers
FINAL OVERLORD PLAN
JUNE 6, 1944
BRITAIN
English Channel
BELG.
GERMANY
Detail
Paris
FRANCE
SWITZ.
Lyon
ITALY
Bordeaux
Toulouse
Monaco
Marseille
SPAIN
Med. Sea
0 200
Miles

1. INVASION

The Far Shore

THE singing stopped as the Norman coast drew near. Stars threw down their silver spears on a long column of eight hundred airplanes ferrying thirteen thousand American paratroopers to battle. South they flew and low, skimming the inky Channel, then turning sharply east to climb between the islands of Guernsey and Alderney. Dead ahead in the moonlight lay the Cotentin Peninsula, famed for cattle and stiff with Germans. Jumpmasters barked above the engine drone, ordering the men to their feet. With a portentous *click* the sixteen or seventeen jumpers in each bay snapped their parachutes to static lines running overhead. Shortly after one A.M. on Tuesday, June 6, 1944, a captain standing in the slipstream of an open doorway peered down at the white surf beating against a beach. "Say hello to France!" he shouted. Red lights flashed to warn that four minutes ahead lay the drop zones—three tight ovals for the 101st Airborne Division in the lead, three more for the 82nd Airborne close behind.

Then France vanished. A gray cloud bank, unsuspected and so thick that pilots could barely see their own wingtips, swallowed planes, then groups of planes. Formations disintegrated as the C-47 Dakotas climbed and dove to avoid colliding. Dark patches of earth swam up through the murk only to disappear, and now German antiaircraft fire—like "so many lighted tennis balls," in one witness's description—began to rip into the clouds. Searchlight beams and magnesium flares drenched the cockpits in molten light, dazzling callow pilots who lurched left and right despite orders forbidding evasive jinking. Enemy tracers "thick enough to walk on" stitched the flak-spangled sky, one paratrooper reported, and shells blew through aluminum skins as if "someone threw a keg of nails against the side of the airplane." Three GIs died when a smoking two-foot hole opened in a fuselage; a dozen others became so entangled after slipping on the vomit-slick floor that they would return to England without jumping.

Even as the cloud bank thinned to the east, bewildered crewmen mistook one French village for another. Some of the pathfinders who had parachuted an hour earlier either missed the drop zones they were supposed to illuminate—using electronic transmitters and seven signal lamps arranged in a beckoning T—or else found enemy troops infesting the ground. Green jump lights began to flash in the aircraft bays anyway. Some flashed too soon or too late, dumping howling paratroopers into the sea. Cargo bundles got stuck in aircraft doors, delaying the queued troopers for two miles or more. Other planes failed to descend to the specified jump height of 500 feet, or to slow to 110 miles an hour; chutes ripped open with such G-force violence that "anything in my jump pants pockets simply burst through the reinforced bottom seams," a trooper recalled. Rations, grenades, underwear, and cooing pigeons spilled into the night. Gunfire thickened "like a wall of flame." Rather than half a minute, "the trip down took a thousand years," a private later told his family. One chute snagged on a vertical stabilizer, dragging the flailing jumper into the night; another soldier hurtled earthward beneath burning shreds of silk. Men in parachutes that failed to open hit the ground with a sound likened by one soldier to "watermelons falling off the back of a truck."

"I pulled up my knees to make myself as small a target as possible," a trooper in the 507th Parachute Infantry wrote. "I pulled on my risers to try to slip away from the fire." Flames licked through the cabin of a gutshot C-47 as frantic soldiers dove out the door before the plane heeled onto its left wing, then stalled and crashed. Most of the jumpers survived; the crew did not. A burning building near St.-Côme-du-Mont gave German defenders enough illumination to fatally shoot a battalion commander, his executive officer, and a company commander before they touched France. Three other company commanders were captured.

Operation ALBANY, the 101st Airborne mission, was intended to seize four elevated causeways, each roughly a mile apart, leading from Utah Beach to the Cotentin interior. American planners knew that marshlands behind the sea dunes had been flooded with two to four feet of water by German engineers, who dammed eight small streams with boulders and tree branches to isolate any invaders arriving on the coastline. Planners did *not* know that the enemy inundations were in fact far more ambitious. Canals, dams, and locks in the southeast Cotentin, some dating to Napoléon's day, drained the watershed of the Douve and Merderet Rivers, creating pasture for those famous cows. Beginning in late 1942, German occupiers closed some floodgates and opened others, allowing tidal surges to create an inland sea ten miles long and up to ten feet deep. Reeds and marsh grass now grew so dense that not even the one million aerial photographs snapped by Allied reconnaissance planes had revealed the extensive flooding. No one was more surprised than the many flailing paratroopers who upon arriving over the coast of France had removed their life vests in the airplane bays only to be pulled to brackish graves by their heavy kit.

At four A.M., as thousands of lost and scattered parachutists blundered about in the dark, the first fifty-two gliders arrived "like a swarm of ravens," in one German description. Most were fifty-foot Wacos, each so flimsy "you could shoot an arrow through it," as a captain admitted, and without the hardened nose caps ordered in February but yet to arrive. Cut loose from their tow planes, they

drifted to earth; pilots who had rarely if ever flown at night felt for the unseen ground while bullets punctured the gliders' fabric skins with a sound likened by a flight officer to "typewriter keys banging on loose paper." Some found the landing zone near Blosville, others found stone walls, tree trunks, dozing livestock, or the pernicious antiglider stakes known as Rommel's asparagus. All eight men in a 101st Airborne surgical team were injured in a crash. A Waco with a large "1" painted on the nose skipped downhill on wet grass for eight hundred feet before smashing into a stout sycamore, breaking both legs of the pilot and killing the copilot; in the cargo bay, as if napping in his jeep, sat the 101st assistant division commander, Brigadier General Don F. Pratt, dead from a broken neck. Survivors kicked through the glider fabric—"like bees out of a hive they came from that hole," a witness reported—and began to salvage the small bulldozer, antitank guns, and medical supplies now on Norman soil.

Of more than six thousand jumpers from the 101st Airborne, barely one thousand had landed on or near the H-hour objectives on this Tuesday morning. Most of the fifteen hundred–odd who had drifted far beyond the eight-mile square enclosing the division drop zones would be killed or captured; a few made their way to safety with maps torn from local telephone books by French farmers. More than half of all supply bundles lay beyond retrieval at the bottom of various water meadows, with a devastating loss of radios, mortars, and eleven of twelve 75mm pack howitzers. A sergeant peering into a barn found "men lying in the straw, wrapped in bloody soiled parachutes, their faces darkened and bandages stained."

Yet stalwart men, those stout-hearts celebrated in song, gathered themselves to press on. An officer pounding on a farmhouse door to ask directions announced in his best French, *"L'invasion est arrivé"*; a voice from the second-floor window replied, *"Très bien."* The 101st's commander, Major General Taylor, wandered in the dark on his gimpy leg with a drawn pistol and a dime-store cricket, collecting lost paratroopers and politely declining the ancient rifle offered by a French farmer who said, *"Allez me tuer un Boche."* Go kill me a German. In the first apricot glow of dawn, Taylor recognized the silhouette of Ste.-Marie-du-Mont's eleventh-century church with gargoyle drainpipes protruding from the soaring stone tower. While paratroopers and Germans exchanged gunfire in the belfry and around the confessional, Taylor sent a small force east to Pouppeville to rout the enemy garrison house by house and seize the southernmost causeway exit from Utah Beach. Three miles north, the 3rd Battalion of the 502nd Parachute Infantry did the same with the two northern causeways.

Five hours after leaping into Normandy, paratroopers lined the sandy ridge overlooking the flooded marshes behind the dunes, waiting for Force U to emerge from the sea.

* * *

In June 1940, led by officers on horseback, the first German troops had arrived in the village of Ste.-Mère-Église singing *"Wir fahren gegen England."* If they had never quite journeyed on to England, life as a Norman occupier proved pleasant enough. Clocks were set to Berlin time and ration cards issued to the locals, guaranteeing ample butter and cream for the master race. A huge swastika flag flew outside the town hall, near a spring once believed by pilgrims to have healing powers. Four years after the invasion, farmers still arrived on market day to weigh their wool and grain beneath chestnut and lime trees across from the ancient church, with its paired Gothic windows and its handrail of sculpted four-leaf clovers. A small garrison of Austrian antiaircraft gunners bivouacked nearby. They drove wood-burning trucks, and it was said that their elderly commander had once been the music critic for a Vienna newspaper; now his greatest interest seemed to lie in the bottom of a wineglass. Yet growing German anxiety about an impending invasion could be seen in the feverish construction this spring of Rommel's asparagus, and in the severe penalties levied for listening to the BBC.

No objective was more important than Ste.-Mère-Église for the 82nd Airborne as the division's six thousand men swooped over Normandy an hour behind the 101st. Roads from all compass points converged here, and the trunk cable linking Cherbourg in the north with Carentan in the south passed through Ste.-Mère. Unless it held the town, the 82nd had "almost no chance to sustain offensive operations across the Merderet River and to the westward," a regimental study concluded. Thus, when the division drop zones were abruptly shifted in late May, they tended to cluster around this drowsy medieval crossroads of a thousand souls.

Alas, the drops in Operation BOSTON proved even more deranged than those of ALBANY. Paratroopers sifted to earth as far as fifteen miles north of their intended zones, and twenty-five miles south; those too far afield east and west plunged into the Atlantic and vanished. Less than half of the following gliders landed within a mile of the landing zone, and many were demolished, with dire losses of antitank guns and other heavy gear. Brigadier General Jim Gavin, who had fretted over another Little Bighorn, floated into an apple orchard and spent the small hours of June 6 with M-1 rifle in hand, shoving scratch forces toward the critical Merderet bridges at La Fière and Chef-du-Pont. Soldiers stripped naked in the moonlight to dive for equipment bundles in the fens. A German train bushwhacked in the Chef-du-Pont station yielded only Norman cheese and empty bottles. One gunfight along the Merderet grew so frenzied that paratroopers not only shot down enemy soldiers but also slaughtered livestock in a barn. A lieutenant leading a patrol bayoneted three wounded Germans on a dirt road; he "felt that he could not take any prisoners," a unit report explained, "so he dispatched them." The wolf had risen in the heart, already.

Of the division's three parachute infantry regiments, only the 505th made a credible drop northwest of Ste.-Mère. A fire, perhaps ignited by a hissing flare, had awakened both the town and its German garrison. As a sexton hauled on the bell-tower ropes, villagers passed canvas buckets hand over hand from the cattle-market pump to a blazing villa across the church square. Then without warning C-47s roared just overhead, wingtip to wingtip, spitting out paratroopers who frantically tugged on their risers to sheer away from both the flames and aroused German gunners.

A few GIs were butchered in their harnesses, including one young trooper who dangled from a tree bough "with eyes open, as though looking down at his own bullet holes," as the Ste.-Mère mayor recorded. But hundreds more landed unmolested after pilots circled back through the gunfire to find the correct drop zone. The 3rd Battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel Edward C. Krause,

known as Cannonball, managed to round up a quarter of his men. Led through hedgerow shadows by a drunk Frenchman impressed as a guide, they crept into Ste.-Mère from the northwest, bounding between doorways with orders to avoid telltale muzzle flashes by using only knives, bayonets, and grenades. Ten Germans died defending the town they had held for four years, but most fled and a few hard sleepers were captured in their bunks. Four hundred yards from the church square, Krause personally severed the cable to Cherbourg. Patrols built roadblocks outside town with antitank mines and plastic explosive Gammon grenades. A burial detail cut down a half-dozen dead paratroopers still dangling from the chestnut trees.

In front of the town hall, Krause from his haversack pulled the same American flag raised over Naples when the battalion first entered that city on October 1, 1943. He hoisted it on a wobbly pole, then at five A.M. sent a runner—few radios had survived the drop—with a message that reached the division commander, Major General Matthew B. Ridgway: "I am in Ste. Mère Église." An hour later a second runner carried a postscript: "I have secured Ste. Mère Église." The Americans had liberated their first town in France.

By dawn, 816 planes and 100 gliders had inserted more than 13,000 GIs onto the Continent; only 21 planes had been shot down, far less than the carnage predicted by Air Marshal Leigh-Mallory. Yet only one of six regiments had been delivered where intended, and it was the sole regiment able to fight as a cohesive, three-battalion force, albeit at only half strength. Air commanders had not sent an advance weather plane to warn of the low cloud banks so common over Normandy in June; in this failure, they were remiss if not derelict. Dispersion thinned the combat power of a force armed with little more than rifles and grenades. But, as in Sicily, the haphazard scattering was "not an unmixed evil," as the official Army history would put it: dispersion confused the enemy as well as the dispersed. Across the Cotentin could be heard the metallic *thwang* of phone and telegraph wires snipped by paratroopers. Captured Germans were ordered to lie on their backs in a radial pattern, feet touching, awaiting evacuation to prisoner cages. Many others, gunned down in ambushes, simply lay dead.

Shortly before dawn, an American light bomber flew the first night photo-reconnaissance mission over Europe, illuminating the Norman landscape from 8,000 feet with a 200-million-candlepower electric lamp carried in the open bomb bay like a tiny sun. After shooting 180 exposures, the plane circled back to England, where analysts would study the film, frame by frame, looking for panzers trundling toward the Cotentin in the inevitable German counterattack.

* * *

Fifty miles to the east, the British 6th Airborne Division had crossed the coast of France, keen to settle scores after half a decade of war. Tommies hoping to bop a sleeping German heaved miscellaneous objects out the open doors of their transport planes: bricks inscribed with vulgarisms, a soccer ball painted to resemble Hitler's face, and a stuffed moose head purloined from an Exeter pub. Almost five thousand paratroopers and glidermen followed.

Two parachute brigades were to secure OVERLORD's left flank by seizing bridges over the river Orne and its attendant canal northeast of Caen while blowing up spans across the river Dives, which flowed roughly parallel five miles farther east. Many of the vicissitudes plaguing their American comrades in the Cotentin Peninsula bedeviled the British too: more than half the pathfinders landed in the wrong place, their electronic beacons and signal lamps damaged, missing, or invisible from the air after being ill-sited amid tall wheat. Evasive maneuvering knocked some paratroopers off balance and delayed their jumps; in one flock of ninety-one planes, only seventeen dropped in the correct spot. An antiaircraft shell blew a major from the 3rd Brigade through a hole in his plane's fuselage. With a static line wrapped around his legs, he dangled beneath the aircraft for half an hour until he was reeled back into the bay. He returned to England and then, later on June 6, made France by glider, mussed but unharmed.

Less fortunate were the men dumped into the Atlantic or the flooded Dives valley. One sodden brigadier took four hours to wade to the riverbank near Cabourg, steeping in the sixty tea bags he had sewn into his battle dress. "We could see where parachute canopies had collapsed in silken circles on the water," an officer reported. Bodies would be discovered in the Dives muck for the next half century.

Amid calamity came a celebrated success. Half a dozen large Horsa gliders, a craft named for the wife of a Saxon king but known as the "Flying Morgue" for its tendency to disintegrate in hard landings, carried 181 men under Major John Howard, a former Oxford policeman. Cheered by urns of tea spiked with rum, they too had sung—"Cow Cow Boogie" and "It's a Long Way to Tipperary"—until the pilots shouted, "Casting off!," and tow ropes parted from the Halifax bombers ahead. For three minutes Howard and his men sat in silence but for wind shrieking over the barn-door flaps, their arms linked and fingers locked in a butcher's grip. Three Horsas led by *Lady Irene* corkscrewed to the west until a pilot spotted their target and abruptly yelped, "Christ, there's the bridge!" Then: "Brace for impact!" With a sound likened by one private to "a giant sheet being ripped apart," the gliders clipped France at one hundred miles an hour, the wheels torn away as the Horsas bounded into the air, then settled on their skids in an orange spray of sparks so intense the glidermen mistook them for German tracers. Stunned but uninjured, Howard and his men wiggled headfirst through jagged holes in the glider fabric, lugging their Sten guns and canvas buckets brimming with grenades.

There, hardly fifty yards from *Lady Irene*'s battered nose, stood the squat Bénouville bridge over the Caen canal. An astonished sentry turned and fled, bellowing in alarm. A Very flare floated overhead, silvering the dark water, and fifty enemy soldiers—mostly *Osttruppen* conscripts from eastern Europe—stumbled toward the western bridge ramp as gunfire pinged from girders and rails. Too late: Howard's men shot and grenaded their way across, shouting "Able," "Baker," and "Charlie" to keep the three platoons intact. "Anything that moved," a British soldier later acknowledged, "we shot."

One platoon commander fell dead from enemy fire, but within a quarter hour the span belonged to the British. The German bridge commander was captured when his car, laden with lingerie and perfume, skittered into a ditch; to atone for the loss of his honor, he asked in vain to be shot. Three rickety French tanks crewed by Germans lumbered toward the bridge only to be smacked with Piat

antiarmor fire. Two fled and the third burned for an hour after a crewman crawled from his hatch with both legs missing. Major Howard soon got word that the other half of his command had captured the nearby Orne River bridge at Ranville. He ordered the heartening news to be broadcast in a coded radio message, then dug in to await both reinforcement and a more resolute enemy counterstroke.

Across the Orne and Dives floodplains additional gliders plummeted after midair collisions caused by treacherous crosswinds, or crash-landed with the usual mangled undercarriages. One Horsa skidded through a cottage and emerged, it was said, bearing a double bed with a French couple still under the duvet. Hunting horns and bugles tooted in the night as officers rallied their scattered companies. After one vicious burst of gunfire, an unhinged young paratrooper cried, "They got my mate! They got my mate!" Mates fell, but so did bridges: those over the Orne were captured, and four across the Dives were blown.

Perhaps the most perilous mission fell to the 9th Battalion of the Parachute Regiment, ordered to destroy a coastal battery at Merville believed capable of ranging Sword Beach, easternmost of the OVERLORD quintet. Surrounded by a cattle fence, minefields, barbed-wire thickets, and machine-gun pits, the big guns and two hundred gunners were protected by steel doors and concrete six feet thick, with twelve feet of dirt overhead. Of 750 paratroopers dropped to do the deed, only 150 landed near the assembly area. Instead of sixty lengths of bangalore torpedo—metal tubes packed with explosive to breach barbed wire—just sixteen could be found by three A.M.

No matter. The bangalores blew two gaps rather than the planned four. Creeping paratroopers defused mines and trip-wire booby traps with their fingers. While a diversionary attack forced the main gate, assault teams slaughtered Germans by the score and spiked the guns by removing their breechblocks. A signal officer dispatched the news to England by banded pigeon. Though the guns proved both smaller and fewer than expected—only 75mm, and two rather than four—the menacing Merville battery had fallen. The price had been high: "I went in with 150," the battalion commander reported, "and came out with only 65 on their feet."

The butcher's bill had indeed been high for airborne forces on both flanks of the invasion crescent. Fewer than half of the 4,800 British troops now in France were either sufficiently near or sufficiently alive to join the fight in coherent units on June 6; still, the fraction exceeded that of American forces to the west. Yet this day would be famous even before it dawned, in no small measure because of the gutful men who had come to war by air. Beset by mischance, confounded by disorder, they had mostly done what they were asked to do. Now the battle would hang on those who came by sea.

First Tide

SHIP by ship, convoy by convoy, the OVERLORD fleets slid into the broad, black Bay of the Seine. A vanguard of minesweepers carved an intricate maze of swept channels, demarcated by dan buoys agleam in the phosphorescent sea. Sailors and soldiers alike were astonished to find the Barfleur lighthouse still burning east of Cherbourg; among the world's tallest and most conspicuous beacons, the rotating double flash was visible for thirty miles. Ahead lay the dark coastline where it was said that Norman pirates once paraded lanterns on the horns of oxen to imitate ships' lights, pulling rings from the fingers of drowned passengers on vessels lured onto the reefs. Glints of gold and crimson could be seen far to starboard over the Cotentin and far to port above the Orne—airborne troops had apparently found the fight they were seeking. A pilot in a P-51 Mustang, peering down at the armada spread across the teeming sea, would recognize an ancient, filthy secret: "War in these conditions is, for a short span, magnificent."

On the pitching decks below, grandeur remained elusive. Riflemen on the bridge wings of two old Channel steamers, H.M.S. *Prince Baudouin* and H.M.S. *Prince Leopold*, watched for mines beyond the bow waves. "Fear," a Coast Guardsman on *LCI-88* mused, "is a passion like any other passion." A ship's doctor on *Bayfield* confessed to drinking "so much coffee that I was having extra systoles every fourth or fifth beat." A veteran sergeant from Virginia aboard the *Samuel Chase* recorded, "The waiting is always the worst. The mind can wander." Waiting for battle induced the philosopher in every man. "Mac," a young soldier in the 16th Infantry asked a comrade, "when a bullet hits you, does it go all the way through?" A chaplain peering over the shoulder of a Royal Navy officer found him reading Horace's *Satires*: "*Si quid forte jocosius hoc mihi juris cum venia dabis dixero.*" If I perchance have spoken too facetiously, indulge me.

At two A.M. the ship's loudspeaker on U.S.S. *Samuel Chase* broke up a poker game and summoned GIs to breakfast, where mess boys in white jackets served pancakes and sausage. In lesser messes, troops picked at cold sandwiches or tinned beef from Uruguay. On the bridge of H.M.S. *Danae*, an officer shared out drams of "the most superb 1812 brandy from a bottle laid down by my great-grandfather in 1821." A British Army officer aboard the *Empire Broadsword* told Royal Naval Commandos: "Do not worry if you do not survive the assault, as we have plenty of backup troops who will just go in over you."

Precisely what the enemy knew about the approaching flotillas remained uncertain. The German radar network—it stretched from Norway to Spain, with a major site every ten miles on the North Sea and Channel coasts—had been bombed for the past month. In recent days, 120 installations at forty-seven sites between Calais and Cherbourg had received particular attention from fighter-bombers and the most intense electronic jamming ever unleashed; the German early warning system had now been whittled to an estimated 5 percent of capacity. Various deceptions also played out, including the deployment of three dozen balloons with radar reflectors to simulate invasion ships where none sailed. Near Calais, where a German radar site had deliberately been left functioning, Allied planes dumped metal confetti, known as Window, into the airstream to mimic the electronic signature of bomber formations sweeping toward northern France. West of Le Havre and Boulogne, planes flying meticulously calibrated oblong courses also scattered enough Window to simulate two large naval fleets, each covering two hundred square miles, steaming toward the coast at

eight knots.

The actual OVERLORD fleets deployed an unprecedented level of electronic sophistication that foreshadowed twenty-first-century warfare. Six hundred and three jammers had been distributed to disrupt the search and fire-control radars in enemy shore batteries, including 240 transmitters carried aboard LCTs and other small craft headed for the beaches, and 120 high-powered jammers to protect large warships. Jamming had begun at 9:30 P.M., when the first ships drew within fifteen miles of that brilliant Barfleur light.

Of particular concern were glide bombs, dropped from aircraft and guided by German pilots using a joystick and a radio transmitter. First used by the Luftwaffe in August 1943, glide bombs—notably a model called the Fritz-X—had sunk the Italian battleship *Roma* and nearly sank the cruiser U.S.S. *Savannah* off Salerno. Hitler had stockpiled Fritz-Xs and the similar Hs-293 to attack any invasion; Ultra revealed that 145 radio-control bombers now flew from French airdromes. But Allied ships were no longer as defenseless as they had been in the Mediterranean, where skippers had ordered electric razors switched on in the desperate hope of disrupting Luftwaffe radio signals. Now the dozen different jammer variants humming in the Bay of the Seine included devices designed against glide bombs specifically. In cramped forecastles on U.S.S. *Bayfield* and other ships, oscilloscope operators stared at their screens for the telltale electronic signature of a glide bomb—"a fixed pip, one that will stick straight up like a man's erect penis," in one sailor's inimitable description. After pinpointing the precise enemy frequency, a good countermeasures team could begin jamming within ten seconds. Or so it was hoped.

Allied bombing had intensified at midnight. "Each time they woke us up in the night somebody would say, 'It's D-Day.' But it never was," wrote Bert Stiles, an American B-17 pilot. "And then on the sixth of June it was." More than a thousand British heavy bombers struck coastal batteries and inland targets in the small hours, gouging gaping craters along the Norman seaboard. Antiaircraft fire rose like a pearl curtain, and flame licked from damaged Allied planes laboring back toward the Channel. A Canadian pilot radioed that he was losing altitude, then sent a final transmission before plowing into France: "Order me a late tea." Transfixed men aboard *Augusta* watched a stricken bomber with all four engines streaming fire plunge directly at the ship before swerving to starboard to crash amid the waves a mile astern.

Behind the British came virtually the entire American bomber fleet of 1,635 planes. B-26 Marauder crews, aware that paratroopers in the Cotentin were pressing toward the causeways on the peninsula's eastern lip, flew parallel to the shoreline below six thousand feet to drop 4,414 bombs with commendable accuracy along Utah Beach.

Less precise was the main American force, the 1,350 B-17 Flying Fortresses and B-24 Liberators of the Eighth Air Force, funneled from England in a roaring corridor ten miles wide and led by pathfinder planes flipping out flares at one-mile intervals like burning bread crumbs. Their targets included forty-five coastal fortifications, mostly within rifle range of the high-water mark from Sword Beach in the east to Omaha in the west. Given the imprecision of heavy bombers at sixteen thousand feet—under perfect conditions, less than half their bombs were likely to fall within a quarter mile of an aim point—the primary intent was not to pulverize enemy defenses but to demoralize German defenders beneath the weight of metal.

Conditions were far from perfect. Overcast shrouded the coast as the formations made landfall, six squadrons abreast on a course perpendicular to the beaches. Eisenhower a week earlier had agreed to permit clumsy "blind bombing" if necessary, using H2X radar to pick out the shoreline and approximate target locations. On the night of June 5, he authorized another abrupt change requested by Eighth Air Force: to avoid accidentally hitting the approaching invasion flotillas, bombardiers would delay dumping their payloads for an additional five to thirty seconds beyond the normal release point.

For an hour and a half, three thousand tons of bombs gouged the Norman landscape in a paroxysm of hellfire and turned earth. Minefields, phone wires, and rocket pits inland were obliterated, but less than 2 percent of all bombs fell in the assault areas, and virtually none hit the shoreline or beach fortifications. Repeated warnings against fratricide "had the effect of producing an overcautious attitude in the minds of most of the bombardiers," an Eighth Air Force analysis later concluded; some added "many seconds" to the half-minute "bombs away" delay already imposed. Nearly all payloads tumbled a mile or two from the coast, and some fell farther. Many thousands of bombs were wasted: no defenders had been ejected from their concrete lairs. Whether they felt demoralized by the flame and apocalyptic noise behind them would only be discerned when the first invasion troops touched shore.

* * *

Heavy chains rattled through hawse pipes across the bay, followed by splash after mighty splash as anchors slapped the sea and sank from sight. An anguished voice cried from a darkened deck, "For Chrissake, why in the hell don't we send the Krauts a telegram and let them know we're here?" Another voice called out: "Anchor holding, sir, in seventeen fathoms."

Aboard *Princess Astrid*, six miles from Sword Beach, a loudspeaker summons—"Troops to parade, troops to parade"—brought assault platoons to the mess deck. On ships eleven miles off Omaha, GIs in the 116th Infantry pushed single file through double blackout curtains to climb to the weather decks. Landing craft, described as "oversized metal shoeboxes," swung from davits, waiting to be loaded with soldiers; others would be lowered empty, smacking against the steel hulls, to be boarded by GIs creeping down the cargo nets that sailors now spread over the sides. A Coast Guard lieutenant on *Bayfield* watched troops "adjusting their packs, fitting bayonets to their rifles and puffing on cigarettes as if that would be their last. There was complete silence." Scribbling in his diary he added, "One has the feeling of approaching a great abyss."

Nautical twilight arrived in Normandy on June 6 at 5:16 A.M., when the ascending sun was twelve degrees below the eastern horizon. For the next forty-two minutes, until sunrise at 5:58, the dawning day revealed what enemy radar had not. To a German soldier near Vierville, the fleet materialized "like a gigantic town" afloat, while a French boy peering from his window in Grandcamp saw "more ships than sea."

Minesweepers nosed close to shore, clearing bombardment lanes for 140 warships preparing to drench the coast with gunfire.

Blinkered messages from sweeps just two miles off the British beaches reported no hint of enemy stirrings, and Omaha too appeared placid. But at 5:30 A.M., on the approaches to Utah, black splashes abruptly leaped mast-high fore and aft of the cruisers H.M.S. *Black Prince* and U.S.S. *Quincy*, followed by the distant bark of shore guns. Two destroyers also took fire three miles from the shingle, and a minesweeper fled seaward, chased by large shells thrown from St.-Vaast. At 5:36 A.M., after allowing Mustang and Spitfire spotter planes time to pinpoint German muzzle flashes, Admiral Deyo ordered, "Commence counterbattery bombardment."

Soon enough eight hundred naval guns thundered along a fifty-mile firing line. Sailors packed cotton in their ears; concussion ghosts rippled their dungarees. "The air vibrated," wrote the reporter Don Whitehead. Ammunition cars sped upward from magazines with an ascending hum, followed by the heavy thump of shells dropped into loading trays before being rammed into the breech. Turrets slewed landward with theatrical menace. Two sharp buzzes signaled *Stand by*, then a single buzz for *Fire!* "Clouds of yellow cordite smoke billowed up," wrote A. J. Liebling as he watched the battleship *Arkansas* from *LCI-88*. "There was something leonine in their tint as well as in the roar that followed." The 12- and 14-inch shells from the murderous queens *Arkansas* and *Texas* sounded "like railway trains thrown skyward," wrote Ernest Hemingway, watching through Zeiss binoculars as a war correspondent aboard H.M.S. *Empire Anvil.* Paint peeled from *Nevada*'s scorched gun barrels, baring blue steel, and sailors swept cork shell casings and the burned silk from powder bags into the sea. David K. E. Bruce, an Office of Strategic Services operative who would later serve as U.S. ambassador in three European capitals, wrote in his diary aboard U.S.S. *Tuscaloosa:*

> There is cannonading on all sides as well as from the shore.… The air is acrid with powder, and a fine spray of disintegrated wadding comes down on us like lava ash.… The deck trembles under our feet, and the joints of the ship seem to creak and stretch.… Repeated concussions have driven the screws out of their sockets [and] shattered light bulbs.

German shells soared over the bay in crimson parabolas. "The arc at its zenith looks as if it would end up on the *Quincy*," wrote an officer eyeing an approaching round. "I am wrong, happily wrong." Ships zigged, zagged, and zigged some more, their battle ensigns snapping and their wakes boiling white. Seasoned tars could gauge the size of an enemy shell from the height of the splash, including the 210mm ship-killers thrown from the three-gun battery at St.-Marcouf. "It is a terrible and monstrous thing to have to fire on our homeland," an admiral on the French cruiser *Montcalm* advised his crew, "but I want you to do it this day." A French woman ashore wrote in her diary, "It is raining iron. The windows are exploding, the floor is shaking, we are choking in the smell of gunpowder." She piled her children and mattresses onto a horse cart and fled inland.

Allied planes swaddled the bombardment lanes with white smoke to blind German gunners. The destroyer U.S.S. *Corry,* which had fired four hundred rounds in an hour, slowed momentarily as sailors hosed down her sizzling 5-inch barrels. At that moment, the breeze tugged away the smoke screen long enough for St.-Marcouf to lay four shells in a neat line 150 yards to port. *Corry*'s skipper had just ordered twenty-five knots at hard right rudder when a stupefying explosion knocked the ship's company to the deck if not overboard.

"We seemed to jump clear of the water," a sailor later recalled. "A large fissure crossed the main deck and around through the hull." The blast cracked the destroyer like an eggshell, opening a foot-wide gap across the keel and between her stacks, flooding the engine and fire rooms, and scalding sailors to death with steam from a ruptured boiler. Crushed bulkheads and debris trapped other men belowdecks. With power and light gone, the rudder jammed. Both the fantail and bow levitated above *Corry*'s broken back. Crewmen hoisted a signal: "This ship needs help."

Most sailors on the destroyer believed that a salvo from German shore guns had struck the mortal blow, but subsequent reports blamed a sea mine. Eighty sweepers would trawl the Utah approaches, eventually finding two hundred mines; none, however, had yet discovered the enemy field across the boat lanes on Cardonnet Bank. An Ultra warning of the minefield had been sent to senior U.S. Navy commanders, "who appeared to have overlooked it," a British intelligence study later concluded.

Eight minutes after the first explosion, with the main deck awash knee-deep, *Corry*'s captain ordered her abandoned. Radio codes were slung overboard in weighted bags. For two hours, until rescue vessels pulled close, survivors thrashed about in fifty-four-degree water; an ensign dying of exposure tried to lash himself to a raft with his uniform necktie. German shells pummeled the wreckage, rupturing *Corry*'s smoke generator, detonating 40mm shells, and killing more men. She sank in six fathoms, with her prow and mainmast—an American flag still flying—visible at low water three miles from shore. The mishap killed twenty-two and injured thirty-three. Five more vessels were sunk and two dozen damaged near Cardonnet Bank in the next ten days.

Experience from the Pacific suggested that naval bombardment against stout coastal defenses should last days, even weeks. But profound differences existed between battering an isolated island and shelling, from the shallow, cramped English Channel, a long coastline with interior lines that permitted quick enemy reinforcement. The job was the tougher because German gun casemates had concrete walls and ceilings up to twelve feet thick. Consequently the preparatory bombardment for the American beaches in OVERLORD lasted barely half an hour in order to get on with the landings. Allied ships on June 6 fired 140,000 shells, but few enemy casemates were destroyed. Of 218 huge shells and almost 1,000 6-inch rounds flung at the Houlgate battery, for example, only one direct hit was recorded. Of 28 batteries capable of ranging Utah Beach with 111 guns, none were completely knocked out in the dawn barrage. And despite being hammered by three battleships, a heavy cruiser, and sundry lesser vessels, that pesky St.-Marcouf battery would hold out until June 12. As with the air bombardment, the extent to which German defenders were unmanned by the naval pummeling would be revealed only by making land.

* * *

Brigadier General Roosevelt intended to see with his own congenitally weak, vaguely crossed eyes just how stout the enemy

defenses remained.

The Channel's idiosyncratic tidal flow required staggering the five beach landings over the space of an hour; Utah, the westernmost, would be first, and Roosevelt would be first among the first, landing with the initial twenty assault boats of the 4th Infantry Division. After a peevish colloquy aboard U.S.S. *Barnett* over his missing life belt—"I've already given you three," an exasperated aide complained—he stumped to the ship's wet rail, patting his shoulder holster. "I've got my pistol, one clip of ammunition, and my walking cane," he announced in his foghorn bass. "That's all I expect to need." When a soldier leaned across from the dangling landing craft to offer a hand, Roosevelt swatted it aside. "Get the hell out of my way. I can jump in there by myself. You know I can take it as well as any of you." Springing five feet into the boat, he steadied himself with his cane as whirring windlasses lowered the craft into the heaving chop. Sailors cast off the shackles as Roosevelt bantered with the pale, wide-eyed men around him because, as he had written Eleanor, "there are shadows when they stop to think."

"Away all boats," a voice called from above. Icy water sloshed around the ankles of thirty soldiers, already shivering and vomiting, packed like herring in the thirty-six-foot hull. A coxswain gunned the diesel engine, swinging the blunt bow into the swell, and Ted Roosevelt headed back to the war.

He was an unlikely vanguard, even if he had stormed ashore with the assault waves at Oran and Gela, even if he had won Distinguished Service Crosses in the Great War and for heroics against German panzers at El Guettar, and even if, as A. J. Liebling warranted, he was "as nearly fearless as it is given to man to be." Short, gnarled, and bandy-legged, he reminded one GI of "some frazzle-assed old sergeant." Gassed in the eyes and lungs at Cantigny in 1918, then left with a permanent limp after being shot at Soissons, Roosevelt more recently had been hospitalized in England for three weeks after returning from the Mediterranean with pneumonia. He liked to quote from *The Pilgrim's Progress,* always tucked into his kit bag: "My marks and scars I carry with me." To no one had he disclosed the chest pains gnawing beneath his service ribbons.

His greatest ambition, according to his mother, was "to achieve the same heights as his father," the twenty-sixth president, whose famous crowded hour in combat—he had charged off to San Juan Hill in a Brooks Brothers cavalry uniform with a dozen spare pairs of steel-rimmed spectacles—seemed to haunt his son's own crowded hours. If Ted was unlikely to join Theodore on Mount Rushmore, his achievements were impressive enough given that he had nearly flunked out of Harvard before working as a mill hand in a Connecticut carpet factory. A wealthy investment banker by age thirty, he had served as assistant secretary of the Navy, chairman of American Express, governor-general of the Philippines, and governor of Puerto Rico, where he learned Spanish, attacked the island's health problems, and helped forestall a run on the banks by ponying up $100,000 of his own money. His many books included *Three Kingdoms of Indo-China,* and Hemingway included one of his World War I yarns in *Men at War: Best War Stories of All Time*. His correspondents ranged from Irving Berlin and Robert Frost to Orville Wright, Rudyard Kipling, and Babe Ruth. Roosevelt's political career stalled when he lost the 1924 New York gubernatorial election to Al Smith; the other Eleanor in the family, the wife of his distant cousin Franklin, had campaigned against him by touring the state in a truck shaped like a huge steaming teapot, implicating him in the Teapot Dome scandal. He was in fact guiltless.

"What man of spirit does not envy you?" Theodore had written to his son in France in 1917. Military life, then as now, proved Ted's "first, best destiny all along," one admirer wrote. Returning to uniform in 1941, he became assistant commander of the 1st Infantry Division, but his tolerance of rowdy indiscipline in a unit given to rampages ran afoul of Omar Bradley: Roosevelt and the division commander, Terry de la Mesa Allen, were sacked toward the end of the Sicilian campaign. Roosevelt wept at this "great grief," then promptly campaigned for another combat billet. "As long as I can fight in the front lines," he wrote, "I've still got manhood." After pestering Eisenhower's chief of staff, Beetle Smith, he asked his wife to petition George Marshall, reasoning that it was "all right to pull strings … if what you wanted was a more dangerous job than the one you had." Failing to move Marshall in a personal visit, Eleanor persisted with a note: "Is the matter considered so serious that he is not to be given another chance to command troops?"

The Army's chief capitulated. Roosevelt joined the 4th Division in early spring and immediately agitated to lead the Utah assault. Twice refused by the division commander, Major General Raymond O. "Tubby" Barton, Roosevelt on May 26 tried again with a six-point memorandum, arguing that "the behavior pattern of all is apt to be set by those first engaged." He added, "They'll figure that if a general is with them, it can't be that rough." Barton relented as well, and now, at 6:30 A.M., the boat ramp dropped one hundred yards from shore. Drenched, cold, and exhilarated, Roosevelt waded waist-deep through the surf and onto France.

He was on the wrong beach. Billowing dust from the air and naval bombardment hid what few landmarks existed on the flat coastline, and the two guide boats leading the cockleshell flotilla had fallen back, one with a fouled propeller, the other sunk with a hole in the port bow from a Cardonnet Bank mine. Rather than landing opposite beach Exit 3 and its adjacent causeway over the flooded marshlands, Roosevelt and his spearhead of six hundred men had come ashore almost two thousand yards south, near Exit 2. Worse still, eight LCTs carrying thirty-two Sherman tanks, outfitted with propellers and inflatable canvas bloomers allowing them to putter to shore, had been delayed when one vessel tripped another mine. "Higher than her length she rises," wrote Admiral Deyo on *Tuscaloosa,* "turns slowly, stern downward and crashes back into the bay." Four tanks went to the bottom and some twenty men to their graves. Rather than beaching just behind the assault infantry as intended, the remaining Shermans would arrive twenty minutes late.

Weak eyes or no, Roosevelt recognized his plight. Hobbling into the dunes, he spied a windmill and other structures far to the north. "We're not where we're supposed to be," he told the 8th Infantry commander, Colonel James A. Van Fleet, who arrived at seven A.M. "You see that brick building over there to our right front? It always showed up in those aerial photographs, and it was always on the left.… I'm sure we're about a mile or two miles farther south."

The accidental beach proved pleasingly benign, with few fortifications, fewer beach obstacles, and little enemy artillery; German

defenders did indeed seem dazed by the air and naval pummeling. Wave followed wave of landing craft, jammed with standing troops who reminded Hemingway of "medieval pikemen." Roosevelt worked the waterline "with a cane in one hand, a map in the other, walking around as if he was looking over some real estate," as one sergeant recalled. Occasional enemy shells detonated in the dunes with a concussion likened by Hemingway to "a punch with a heavy, dry glove." Few of the shells fell with precision.

"How do you boys like the beach?" Roosevelt roared at arriving 12th Infantry troops. "It's a great day for hunting. Glad you made it!" Engineers swarmed ashore, blowing beach obstacles and gaps in the masonry seawall with "Hell Box" charges and cries of "Fire in the hole!" Demolition teams had hoped to clear the beaches in twelve hours; instead, ninety minutes after Roosevelt first sloshed ashore the fleet was advised that all boats could land with "no fear of impaling themselves on the obstacles."

Through the dunes and across the beach road, several thousand GIs—the first of 32,000 in Force U—cleared resistance nests with grenades, tommy guns, and tank fire. A German corpse crushed beneath a Sherman's tracks lay "ironed flat like a figure in a comic book," according to a staff officer's description, with "the arms of its gray uniform at right angles to its pressed and flattened coat, [and] black boots and the legs that were in them just as flat and thin as if they had been cut from a sheet of dirty cardboard." Four causeways leading to the Cotentin interior would be seized and exploited on June 6, including one under a foot of water. To avoid clogging the narrow roads, swimmers and nonswimmers from the 12th Infantry paired off to cross the flooded fields. "I gave an arm signal," the regimental commander reported, "and three thousand heavily burdened infantrymen walked into the man-made lake."

The mutter of gunfire sounded along a three-mile front, scarlet tracers skipping like hot stones across the water. Soldiers waggled swatches of orange cloth, peering westward through the haze for answering waggles from the 101st Airborne. Near Exit 1, in the far south, a tank lieutenant hopped down from his Sherman to help a wounded paratrooper only to trip a mine, blowing off both feet; his crew dragged both damaged men to safety with ropes. A dead German soldier was found stripped to the waist, shaving cream still on his chin. Others were mowed down or captured, including fifty gunners with three horse-drawn 88mm guns. An enemy soldier burned by a flamethrower was evacuated to the beach, charred, blistered, but still breathing. "It sure takes a lot to kill a German," a Coast Guard lieutenant told his diary. GIs snipped the unit flashes from enemy sleeves and gave the patches to intelligence analysts.

East of Pouppeville, a 101st Airborne squad cautiously summoned scouts from the 4th Division across the causeway. "Where's the war?" an 8th Infantry soldier asked, rifle slung on his shoulder. A paratrooper gestured vaguely inland. "Anywhere from here on back." Soon enough Roosevelt raced up in his newly landed jeep, *Rough Rider*. Hearing the slap of artillery ahead he shouted to an officer, "Hey, boy, they're shooting up there," then cackled with laughter as he drove off to the sound of the guns.

* * *

Eleven miles offshore, aboard U.S.S. *Bayfield*, the naval commander of Force U, Rear Admiral Don P. Moon, sent a heartening battle report at 9:45 A.M.: fifteen of twenty-six waves landed; obstacles cleared; vehicles moving inland. Moon's buoyant dispatch belied a fretful anxiety: the loss of *Corry* and other vessels on the Cardonnet Bank had already led him to delay seven assault waves, and now he had all but decided to halt the landings completely until minesweepers could carefully comb the shallows.

At age fifty, Admiral Moon was given to perturbations. The son of an Indiana lawyer, he had graduated from Annapolis in 1916 at the top of his class in ordnance, gunnery, and engineering; his graduate studies of ballistics at the University of Chicago led to successful field tests aboard the battleships *Maryland* and *Nevada*. He wrote short stories, secured a patent for a "razor blade holder," and commanded a destroyer squadron during the invasion of Morocco with "exemplary conduct and leadership under fire." After a year as a staff officer in Washington and promotion to flag rank, he took command of Force U when OVERLORD expanded from three beaches to five. Subordinates considered him "hardworking, hard-driving, and humorless," sometimes demanding of junior officers, "What are you famous for? What do you do?" The deaths of seven hundred men on his watch during Exercise TIGER in late April nearly unhinged him—"Moon really broke down," a staff officer reported—and he was determined that no such calamity would occur in the Bay of the Seine.

In his spare office aboard *Bayfield*, Moon abruptly revealed his plan to halt the landings to the Army's VII Corps commander. This was Major General J. Lawton Collins, a boyish towhead and Guadalcanal veteran known as Lightning Joe; he would oversee all operations in the Cotentin once Force U reached shore. Collins was appalled if unsurprised, having detected in Moon "a tendency to be overly cautious"; to his wife, the general wrote in mid-May, "He is the first admiral I've ever met who wears rubbers on a mere rainy day." Both forceful and charming, Collins ticked off the reasons to continue to press ahead: light resistance on Utah, with fewer than two hundred casualties in the 4th Division; troops boring inland; naval losses painful but moderate. More to the point, the 101st Airborne needed urgent reinforcement, and nothing had been heard from the 82nd Airborne. "I had to put my foot down hard to persuade the admiral," Collins later said.

Persuade him he did. Moon relented, with misgivings, then assumed a brave face in a brief, stilted statement to reporters on his flagship. "It is our good fortune, which always goes with parties who plan well, that Force U has made a successful landing," he told them, then added, "The initial action has been won."

Hell's Beach

FIFTEEN miles southeast of Utah, the flat Norman littoral lifted briefly to form a sea-chewed plateau named La Côte du Calvados after a reef on which legend held the Spanish galleon *Salvador* came to grief in 1588 as part of the Armada's larger mischance. In various

Allied plans the crescent *plage* below the bluffs had been labeled Beach 46, Beach 313, and X Beach; now it was known, and would forever be known, as Omaha. Five miles long, composed of packed sand yielding to shingle sorted in size by a thousand storms, the beach offered but five exits up the hundred-foot escarpment, each following a narrow watercourse to four villages of thick-walled farmhouses a mile or so inland. June airs usually wafted out of the south, but on this fraught morning the wind whistled from the northwest at almost twenty knots, raising the offshore lop to six feet and accelerating the current from two knots to three, running easterly or westerly depending on the tide.

That Norman tide was a primordial force unseen in any previous amphibious landing. Rising twenty-three feet, twice daily it inundated the beach and everything on it at a rate of a vertical foot every eight minutes, then ebbed at almost an inch per second. Low tide typically revealed four hundred yards of open strand, but six hours later that low-tide mark would lie more than twenty feet deep. To finesse this phenomenon in landing the 30,000 assault troops of Task Force O, followed by 26,000 more in Force B, planners chose to attack on a rising tide the morning of June 6. This would permit landing craft to ferry the assault force as far up the exposed beach as possible, but without stranding the boats on falling water as the tide retreated. Ten thousand combat engineers would land with the infantry on June 6, as the historian Joseph Balkoski has written, yet the first sappers would have only half an hour to blow open lanes among the beach obstacles for landing craft before the rising sea swallowed them.

OVERLORD's plan called for nine infantry companies to attack simultaneously on a beach divided into segments: Dog, Easy, Charlie, and Fox. But three mistakes had already given Omaha an ineluctable tragic cast—one error attributable mostly to the Navy, two to the Army. To minimize the risk of German shore fire, naval captains had anchored their transport ships eleven miles distant, guaranteeing derangement of the landing echelons by wind, current, and confusion. In a bid for tactical surprise, Army commanders had insisted on truncating the naval bombardment to barely thirty-five minutes—enough to scare the defenders but not enough, given the clean miss by Allied air forces, to subdue them. The Army also had chosen to storm the narrow beach exits where fortifications were sturdiest, rather than stressing infiltration up the bluffs to outflank enemy strong points.

The German defenses were fearsome. Eighty-five machine-gun nests, soon known to GIs as "murder holes," covered Omaha, more than all three British beaches combined. Unlike the obstacles at Utah, many of the 3,700 wood pilings and iron barriers embedded in the tidal flat at Omaha were festooned with mines—"like huckleberries," as a Navy officer described them. Unique among the five beaches, the escarpment allowed plunging as well as grazing fire. Thirty-five pillboxes and eight massive bunkers—some "as big as a New England town hall," in one reporter's description—defended the beach's five exits, while eighteen antitank sites, six Nebelwerfer rocket-launcher pits, and four artillery positions covered the balance of the beach. Guns enfiladed nearly every grain of sand on Omaha, concealed from the sea by concrete and earthen blast shields that aerial photos had failed to find. Thanks to smokeless, flashless powder and a German ban on tracer bullets here, gun pits remained, as a Navy analysis conceded, "exceedingly difficult to detect."

Also undetected and unexpected by the assault troops were German reinforcements. Rommel in mid-March had shifted the 352nd Infantry Division to the coast from St.-Lô, twenty miles inland, placing two regiments behind Omaha and Gold Beaches alongside two regiments from the feebler 716th Infantry Division, while a third 352nd regiment bivouacked in reserve at Bayeux. Neither Ultra nor conventional intelligence sniffed out the move; belated suspicions of reinforcement reached Omar Bradley's First Army headquarters on June 4, too late to alert the scattered fleets under a radio blackout. The thirteen thousand troops from the 352nd—mobile, dangerous, and so young that Wehrmacht officers requisitioned milk from French farmers to build their bones—had spent much of their time in recent weeks hauling timber in dray carts from the Forêt de Cerisy to buttress the Atlantic Wall. Nearly half the division's infantry strength, including two battalions on bicycles, had been dispatched before dawn to the southern Cotentin with orders to confront reported paratroopers. Some of those invaders proved to be "exploding puppets," hundreds of airborne dummies with noisemakers, accompanied by a few British tricksters popping flares and playing gramophone recordings of gunfire.

If the Omaha defenses had been thinned to three weak battalions by such dupery, they remained far more lethal than the single immobile regiment scattered over a fifty-mile front that most GIs had expected to biff aside. Rather than the three-to-one ratio favored by attackers in storming an entrenched foe, some units now sweeping toward land would meet odds of three to five. The foreshore that had first warranted only a succession of code numbers, and then a homely code name, now would earn other enduring epithets, including Bloody Omaha and Hell's Beach.

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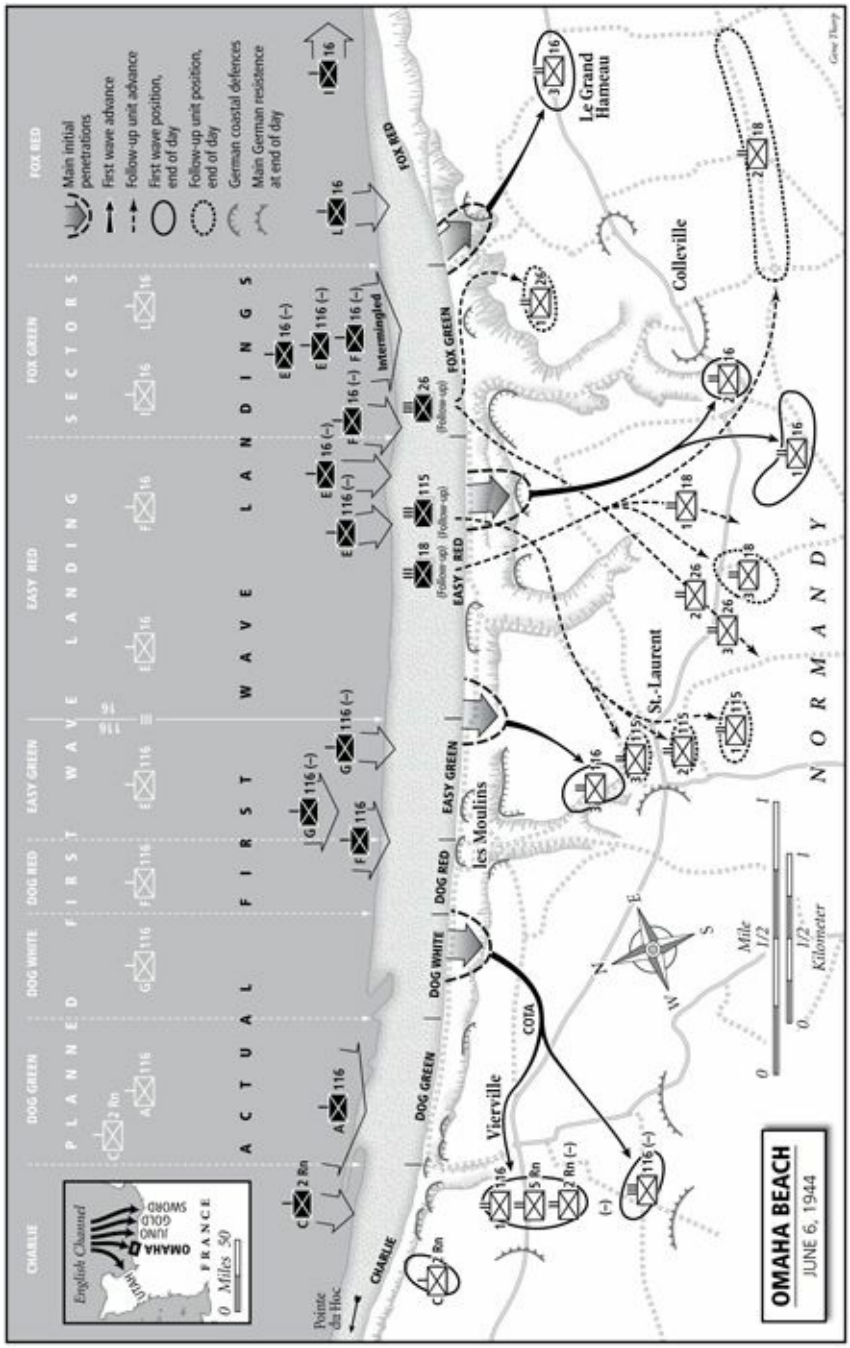
For those who outlived the day, who survived this high thing, this bright honor, this destiny, the memories would remain as shot-torn as the beach itself. They remembered waves slapping the steel hulls, and bilge pumps choked with vomit from seasick men making "utterly inhuman noises" into their gas capes. Green water curled over the gunwales as coxswains waited for a tidal surge to lift them past the bars before dropping the ramps with a heavy clank and a shouted benediction: "It's yours, take it away!"

They remembered the red splash of shell bursts plumping the shallows, and machine-gun bullets puckering the sea "like wind-driven hail" before tearing through the grounded boats so that, as one sergeant recalled, "men were tumbling out just like corn cobs off a conveyor belt." Mortar fragments said to be the size of shovel blades skimmed the shore, trimming away arms, legs, heads. The murder holes murdered. Steel-jacketed rounds kicked up sand "like wicked living things," as a reporter wrote, or swarmed overhead in what the novelist-soldier Vernon Scannell called an "insectile whine." Soldiers who had sung "Happy D-Day, dear Adolf" now cowered like frightened animals. They desperately gouged out shallow holes in the shingle with mess kit spoons and barked knuckles, mouths agape in a rictus of astonishment intended to prevent artillery concussions from rupturing their eardrums.

They remembered brave men advancing as if "walking in the face of a real strong wind," in Forrest Pogue's image, all affecting the same tight grimace until whipcrack bullets cut them down. Above the battle din they remembered the cries of comrades ripped

open, merging at moments into a single ululation described by the BBC reporter David Howarth as “a long terrible dying scream which seemed to express not only fear and pain, but amazement, consternation, and disbelief.” And they remembered the shapeless dead, sprawled on the strand like smears of divine clay, or as flotsam on the making tide, weltering, with their life belts still cinched. All this they would remember, from the beaten zone called Omaha.

Army and Navy engineers, lugging twenty-eight tons of explosives, were supposed to land three minutes behind the infantry spearhead to blow sixteen gaps, each fifty yards wide, through tidal-zone obstacles emplaced in three belts. Little went right: some engineers landed early and alone, some landed late, nearly all drifted left—east—of their assigned beaches by up to a mile because of the current and navigation error. An 88mm shell hit Team 14’s landing craft, blowing the coxswain overboard and slaughtering the vessel’s entire Navy demolition squad; one man’s lower trunk and severed legs were described by a seaman as “sticking up in the water like a pitiful V for victory.” Seven died in Team 11 when shellfire hit their rubber boat; of forty men in Team 15, only four eluded death or injury. A mortar round caught Team 12, tripping the TNT primacord and explosive charges, and killing or wounding nineteen engineers in an explosion so violent that three-legged steel hedgehogs rained down “like fence posts falling,” a survivor reported.



Demolitionists shinnied up pilings or stood on one another’s shoulders to pluck off mines and place their charges, popping violet smoke grenades to signal an imminent detonation. Gunfire shot away fuses as fast as engineers could rig them, including one burst that also carried off the fuse man’s fingers. Terrified infantrymen sheltered behind the German obstacles “like a cluster of bees,” even as engineers screamed, kicked, and threatened to blow their charges anyway. By seven A.M., as the floodtide began to swallow the obstacles, only six of sixteen gaps had been cleared through all three belts, and at a fell cost: more than half of the engineers would be dead, wounded, or missing by midmorning.

The fiascos multiplied. Sherman amphibious tanks, ostensibly seagoing with their inflatable canvas skirts and twin propellers, began plopping into the waves from LCT ramps "like toads from the lip of an ornamental pond," as the historian John Keegan later wrote. Yet the tanks had only nine inches of freeboard in a pond with six-foot seas; of thirty-two Shermans in one battalion, twenty-seven sank trying to cross six thousand yards of open water, with a loss of 9 officers and 137 men. "There was a certain gallantry," the BBC's Howarth noted. "Commanders of the second, third, and fourth tanks in each [LCT] could see the leaders founder; but the order had been given to launch, and they launched." Farther west, a Navy lieutenant sensibly recognized the rough sea as unfit for a thirty-three-ton swimming tank, and LCTs carrying most of another armor battalion made for shore instead. Eight Shermans went under when their vessels took direct hits, but twenty-four others clanked ashore.

Artillerymen also struggled to land their guns. A dozen 105mm howitzers from the 111th Field Artillery Battalion had been loaded onto DUKW amphibious trucks, each of which also carried fourteen men, fifty shells, and a protective rampart of eighteen sandbags, enough to make the DUKW "altogether unseaworthy," as the Army belatedly recognized. Eight quickly shipped water and capsized, and three others were lost to waves or shellfire before reaching shore. "I can still hear those men calling for help over the noise," a master sergeant later recalled.

Two infantry regiments washed onto Hell's Beach early that morning, from the two assault divisions that formed V Corps. To the west, the 116th Infantry—rural Virginians marinated in Confederate glory and descended from the Stonewall Brigade of 1861—had trained in Britain for twenty months as part of the 29th Infantry Division, long enough to earn a derisive nickname: "England's Own." Officers ordered men in landing craft approaching the shore to keep their heads down, as one lieutenant explained, "so they wouldn't see it and lose heart." They saw soon enough. On the right flank of the invasion zone, German gunners abruptly turned beach Dog Green into an abattoir. Without firing a shot, Company A was reportedly "inert and leaderless" in ten minutes; after half an hour, two-thirds of the company had been destroyed, including Sergeant Frank Draper, Jr., killed when an antitank round tore away his left shoulder to expose a heart that beat until he bled to death. Among twenty-two men from tiny Bedford, Virginia, who would die in Normandy, Draper "didn't get to kill anybody," his sister later lamented. A surviving officer reported that his men fell "like hay dropping before the scythe."

German machine guns—with a sound one GI compared to "a venetian blind being lifted up rapidly"—perforated the beach, killing the wounded and rekilling the dead. All thirty-two soldiers in one boat, *LCA-1015,* were slaughtered, including their captain. A lieutenant shot in the brain continued to direct his troops until, a survivor recounted, "he sat down and held his head in the palm of his hand before falling over dead." Wounded men jabbed themselves with morphine or shrieked for medics, one of whom used safety pins to close a gaping leg wound. "A guy in front of me got it through the throat. Another guy in front of me got it through the heart. I run on," a survivor later recalled. An unhinged soldier sat in the sand, weeping softly and tossing stones into the water. "This," an officer declared, "is a debacle."

More than a mile to the east, the 16th Infantry Regiment—veterans of landings in Africa and Sicily with the 1st Infantry Division—had its own debacle. The entire first wave carried east of its intended beaches. Simply reaching the waterline reduced Company L from 187 men to 123. Medics found that "the greater portion of the dead had died of bullet wounds through the head"; officers and sergeants alike began slapping wet sand over the rank insignia on their helmets to confound snipers. "Fire was coming from everywhere, big and little stuff," a soldier in Company E recalled. Moved to computation by the demented shooting, one sergeant calculated that the beach was swept with "at least twenty thousand bullets and shells per minute." Robert Capa, who had removed his Contax camera from its waterproof oilskin to snap the most memorable photographs of the Second World War, crouched behind a burned-out Sherman on Easy Red and murmured a phrase he recalled from the Spanish Civil War: *"Es una cosa muy seria."* This is a very serious business.

The four-hundred-ton *LCI 85,* grounding ashore on the seam between Easy Red and Fox Green, had begun dispensing men down the left ramp when enemy 47mm and 88mm shells blew through the front hold, killing fifteen and wounding forty-seven. The Coast Guard crew backed off and steamed west several hundred yards only to face scorching fire upon putting in again. More than two dozen shells ripped into the ship, igniting troop compartments and leaving the decks slick with blood. White bandages from a shot-up medical company fluttered down through the smoke. On the bridge, the skipper reported, "we could hear the screams of the men through the voice tube." Listing, burning, bleeding, *LCI 85* steamed for the horizon, where the wounded and the dead were extracted before she capsized and sank.

By 8:30 A.M. the Omaha assault had stalled. The rising tide quickly reclaimed the thin strip of liberated beach, drowning those immobilized by wounds or fear. With no room to land more vehicles, a Navy beachmaster halted further unloading on much of the shoreline. "Face downwards, as far as eyes could see in either direction," a 16th Infantry surgeon later wrote, "were the huddled bodies of men living, wounded, and dead, as tightly packed together as layers of cigars in a box."

Two large boats burned furiously in the shallows of Dog White. *LCI 91,* carrying two hundred soldiers, had caught a shell in her fuel tanks, engulfing the well deck in flames. At least two dozen men were incinerated as others leaped into the sea, including one bright torch who dove in with even the soles of his boots blazing. Moments later, *LCI 92,* seeking cover in her sister's smoke, struck a mine on the port bow. The explosion blew two soldiers from a hatch like champagne corks and trapped more than forty others belowdecks. "A sheet of flame shot up thirty feet in the air through the number one hold directly forward of the conning tower," a yeoman reported. "Terror seized me." German gunners then found the range to finish off the boat. A survivor dog-paddled to the beach not as an infantry officer ready for combat, as he later acknowledged, but as the "helpless unarmed survivor of a shipwreck."

Only where escarpment turned to cliff, four miles west of Omaha, did the early-morning assault show promise. Three companies from the 2nd Ranger Battalion scaled the headland at Pointe du Hoc, first climbing freehand despite a rain of grenades, then using grapnels and braided ropes fired from mortar tubes. Comrades gave covering fire from ladders loaned by the London fire department

and carried in DUKWs. As windswept as Troy, the promontory had been reduced to what one officer called "ripped-open dirt" by 250 shells from *Texas*'s 14-inch barrels. Rangers hauled themselves over the lip of the cliff, then used thermite grenades to wreck five shore guns that had been removed from their casemates and secreted in an apple orchard. The triumph was short-lived: they soon found themselves trapped by rallying Germans who spent the next thirty-six hours trying to sweep them from the scarp to the rocks below.

Back on Hell's Beach, several thousand shivering soldiers also found defilade where they could and waited for a counterattack from the bluffs to bowl them back into the sea. "They'll come swarming down on us," murmured Don Whitehead. A lieutenant, who watched sodden bodies advance on the creeping tide, later wrote, "After a couple of looks back, we decided we couldn't look back anymore." Among those huddled on the beach was Captain Joseph T. Dawson, a lanky, dark-eyed veteran of Company G in the 16th Infantry. An hour earlier, Dawson had leaped from his landing craft onto Easy Red just as an artillery shell struck the boat, exterminating the thirty-three men behind him. "The limitations of life come into sharp relief," he would write his family in Texas. "No one is indispensable in this world."

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From the gray deck of the command ship U.S.S. *Augusta* none of this was clear. A brown miasma of dust and smoke draped the French coast to the south, mysterious and impenetrable except by the cherry-red battleship shells soaring toward inland targets. A cramped First Army war room had been built on the cruiser's afterdeck, ten feet by twenty, with a tarpaulin door, a Michelin map of France fastened to a sheet-metal wall, and a clock whose glass face had been taped against concussion. Other maps displayed the suspected location of enemy units, marked in red, and the range of German shore guns, delineated with concentric circles. Signalmen wearing headphones listened for radio messages, which they pounded out on a bank of typewriters. From Omaha only incoherent fragments had been heard, of sinkings, swampings, heavy fire. One dispatch picked up by another ship nearby advised, "We are being butchered like a bunch of hogs."

At a plotting table in the center of the war room sat a tall, bespectacled man in a helmet, Mae West, and three-star field jacket. Again he asked—"What's going on?"—and again got little more than an apologetic shrug. On several occasions as a young officer, Omar Bradley had studied Gallipoli, the disastrous British effort to capture Constantinople in 1915, and more recently he had scrutinized reports from Anzio. The preeminent lesson from both amphibious attacks, he concluded, was "to get ground quickly." Was that happening at Omaha? Another shrug. He had expected the two assault regiments to be a mile inland by 8:30 A.M., but now he was unsure whether they had even reached France. Bradley had begun contemplating his course if the troops failed to get off the strand. He felt not only alarmed but also a bit ridiculous: this morning the army commander sported an immense bandage on his nose to cover a boil that had been lanced in the ship's dispensary. Photographers were forbidden to take his picture.

After successfully commanding a corps in Africa and Sicily, Bradley had benefitted from hagiographic press coverage, including a recent *Time* cover story that called him "Lincolnesque … a plain, homely, steady man with brains and character." Ernie Pyle wrote that "he spoke so gently a person couldn't hear him very far," while Liebling described "the high cranium, bare on top except for a lattice of gray hairs; the heavy, almost undershot jaw; and the deeply emplaced presbytic eyes, peering out from under the dark brows with an expression of omnivorous but benevolent curiosity." That he still wore a cap with "Lieut. Col. O. N. Bradley" inked in the lining was considered emblematic of his humility; in fact, lieutenant colonel was his permanent rank.

Few could resist the biography. Son of a schoolteaching Missouri farmer who made $40 a month, married one of his pupils, and died when Omar was thirteen, Bradley had played football on an undefeated Army team that earned unlikely headlines, such as "West Point Finds Notre Dame Easy." He also befriended a classmate who was now his boss and greatest admirer: "*Ice*-in-hower," as Bradley pronounced the name in his sodbuster twang. As a lieutenant, he had been sent to Montana to keep the copper mines open with fixed bayonets against labor agitators; later he taught mathematics at West Point while moonlighting as a construction worker, stringing cable for the Bear Mountain Bridge over the Hudson. He skipped the rank of colonel and was the first of fifty-nine men in the Military Academy class of 1915 to win a general's stars. A teetotaler until the age of thirty-three, Bradley rarely drank; he had added the pint of whiskey and two flasks of brandy issued when he boarded *Augusta* to his unopened allotment from Sicily. Vain about his marksmanship—"If there's a bird anywhere in shootin' distance, I won't miss it," he once told a reporter—he had also nursed a sense of divine anointment ever since, in Tunisia, he drove his jeep over a mine that failed to explode. "I think I had some guidance from God," he later said. "I felt that I must be destined to play an important part in the war.… I was saved by a miracle."

Perhaps. But a few wondered if he was out of his depth, if he had been promoted beyond his natural level of competence, if some part of him remained "Lieut. Col. O. N. Bradley." Patton, who had been his commander in the Mediterranean and would be his subordinate in France, had rated Bradley "superior" in all categories of generalship in September 1943, while privately calling him "a man of great mediocrity." In his diary Patton added, with typical ambivalence: "Has a strong jaw, talks profoundly and says little. I consider him among our better generals." The Omaha plan had been largely Bradley's design, including the limited fire support from the Navy, and he had dismissed predictions of stiff losses as "tommyrot."

Now he was not so sure. Messages from the beachhead remained fragmentary, including: "Obstacles mined, progress slow." An aide dispatched by PT boat returned drenched and discouraged an hour later to report that troops were pinned down; a naval officer came back with a more vivid assessment: "My God, this is carnage!" Told that Admiral Moon was jittery over ship losses, Bradley advised Collins, his VII Corps commander, "We've got to get the buildup ashore even if it means paving the whole damned Channel bottom with ships." Another 25,000 troops and 4,000 vehicles were scheduled to land at Omaha on the second tide. Should those waves be diverted to Utah or to the British beaches? Would that consign those now ashore to annihilation?

The man described in his high school yearbook as "calculative" pushed through the canvas war-room door and climbed to

Augusta's bridge, squinting at the opaque shore and mulling his odds.

* * *

Not for some hours would Bradley learn that by late morning his prospects on Omaha had brightened considerably, beginning at beach Dog White. There Brigadier General Norman Cota, known as Dutch and the son of a French-Canadian railroad telegrapher who emigrated to New England, had reached the five-foot timber seawall half a mile east of the beach exit leading to Vierville. Soldiers who could outcrawl the tide lay clustered like barnacles on the banked littoral, hugging wooden groins that jutted from the seawall.

We must improvise, carry on, not lose our heads, Cota had told officers from the 116th Infantry as they sailed for Normandy. Now he improvised. Chewing an unlit cigar, jut-jawed with pale eyes and a hooked nose, Cota scrabbled west along the groins. Pistol in hand, he sang tuneless, ad-libbed lyrics under his breath. Encountering a cluster of troops, he demanded, "What outfit is this? Goddamn it, if you're Rangers get up and lead the way.… I know you won't let me down.… We've got to get these men off this goddamned beach." A bangalore torpedo threaded through a double apron of barbed wire blew a gap across the beach road beyond the seawall. Machine-gun fire cut down the first GI into the breach—"Medico, I'm hit," he cried, then sobbed for his mother until he died—but others, including Cota, scampered across the blacktop and through the burning marsh grass beyond.

Up the bluff they climbed, single file, marking mines with white engineer tape, cigarettes, and scraps from a ration box. Smoke hid them from German marksmen but made them weep until they strapped on gas masks. Mortar rounds killed a trio of soldiers next to Cota and wounded his radioman; knocked flat but unscratched, the general regained his feet and followed the snaking column toward the hillcrest, past captured Germans spread-eagled on the ground. Then over the lip of the ridge they ran, past stunted pines and through uncut wheat as Cota yelled, "Now let's see what you're made of!" GIs hauling a captured MG-42 machine gun with ammunition belts draped around their necks poured fire into enemy trenches and at the broken ranks pelting inland.

By ten A.M. tiny Vierville had fallen but for snipers. Outside a cobbler's shop dead horses lay in their traces, still harnessed to a Wehrmacht supply wagon. Terrified civilians peeked from their window casements onto a road clogged with rubble. Another rifle company scuffing into the village found Cota twirling his pistol on his finger. "Where the hell have you been, boys?" he asked.

Elsewhere along Omaha, in what one witness called "a final stubborn reserve of human courage," more desperate men found additional seams up the escarpment. "I walked slowly," a 29th Division soldier recalled, "dragging my unwilling soul with me." Halfway up the slope, a soldier missing a lower leg sat smoking a cigarette and fiddling with the tourniquet tied at his knee. "Watch it," he warned. "There are some personnel mines here." Captain Joe Dawson's G Company used GI corpses as stepping stones through a minefield. "Fire everywhere it seems," a major scribbled on an envelope used as a diary. "Prayed several times." When a German feigned surrender and threw a grenade from his raised hand, disemboweling a Ranger lieutenant, the dead officer's enraged men not only killed the killer but each man reportedly "shot the corpse six or eight times" as they filed past.

A dozen destroyers—some so close to the beach that their keels scraped bottom—plied the inshore stations to fire onto targets marked by Army tracer and tank rounds. One soldier watching shells arc across the bluff reported that "a man standing there felt as if he could reach up and pick them out of the air." When a German artillery observer was spotted in the eleventh-century Colleville church tower, U.S.S. *Emmons* took a dozen rounds to find the range, then with the thirteenth knocked the tower into the nave and adjacent graveyard below. A similar call for fire against the church of St.-Laurent shattered the steeple with the first shell. After one shuddering broadside from *Texas,* an RAF pilot spotting for the battleship cried from his Spitfire cockpit, "Oh, simply champion!"

By noon the enemy line had been broken by half a dozen penetrations "coagulating haphazardly," as the official Army history later noted. Two fresh regiments, the 115th Infantry and the 18th Infantry, swarmed over Easy Red before the ebb tide despite the loss of many landing craft to mines and misadventure. Later the 26th Infantry also was ordered to shore, putting the entire infantry complement of the 1st Division back in France for the first time since 1918. By midafternoon, some five thousand infantrymen had scaled the bluff, finally free of plunging fire although still tormented by fires flanking and grazing, direct and indirect. Scraps of news reached the fleet, including a message dispatched from a colonel in a DUKW: "Men believed ours on skyline.… Things look better." But only after one P.M. did Omar Bradley, pacing on *Augusta*'s flag bridge, learn in a message from V Corps that the day was saved, if not won: "Troops formerly pinned down on beaches Easy Red, Easy Green, Fox Red advancing up heights behind beaches."

Cota continued his charmed day by hiking from Vierville down the narrow ravine toward Dog Green, forcing five prisoners yanked from foxholes to guide him through a minefield. "Come on down here, you sons of bitches," he yelled at snipers plinking away from the hillside. In a great geyser of masonry, engineers on the beach flats used a thousand pounds of dynamite to demolish a long antitank wall nine feet high and six feet thick. Armored bulldozers scraped debris from the Vierville draw, thus opening another portal for tanks, trucks, and the mechanized juggernaut that would be needed to liberate first Normandy, then France, then the continent beyond.

* * *

That left the British and Canadians, beating for three beaches to the east. Several tactical modifications aided the trio of assault divisions in Second Army: landing craft were launched seven miles from shore rather than the eleven typical in the American sector; the Royal Navy's bombardment lasted four times longer than that of the U.S. Navy; and half a dozen gadgets eschewed by the Yanks as either too newfangled or unsuited to the American beaches—such as an armored flamethrower and a mine flail bolted to the nose of a tank—proved useful at several points during the battle.

In other respects, "the bitches," as Tommies called Gold, Juno, and Sword, were of a piece with Utah and Omaha, if less benign than the former and less harrowing than the latter. Some amphibious Shermans, another British brainstorm, foundered in the chop,

and many LCT engine rooms flooded from leaks and the low freeboard. Landing craft ferrying Centaur tanks proved no more seaworthy than the DUKWs overloaded with American howitzers; scores capsized. OVERLORD's eastern flank was considered especially vulnerable, so two battleships and a monitor pounded the landscape with 15-inch guns from twenty thousand yards, buttressed by five cruisers and fifteen destroyers. Thousands of rockets launched from modified landing craft soared inland "like large packs of grouse going for the next parish with a strong wind under their tails," as one brigadier reported. This twenty-eight-mile stretch of coast was defended by ninety shore guns and eight German battalions whose ranks included many conscripted Poles, Czechs, and Ukrainians of doubtful fealty to the Reich. British naval and air bombardments later were found to have demolished one in ten enemy mortars, one in five machine guns, and one in three larger guns, in addition to those abandoned by their affrighted crews. Still, British assault infantrymen were said to be disappointed, having "expected to find the Germans dead and not just disorganized."

During the run to shore, inevitable recitations from *Henry V* were bellowed above the roar of diesel engines and booming guns. More than a few men felt themselves accursed for swilling proffered tots of rum, "thick as syrup and as dark," in a Royal Engineer's description; thousands of expended "spew bags" bobbed on the boat wakes. Heartfelt snatches of "Jerusalem" could be heard in wallowing landing craft, and "The Beer Barrel Polka" blared from a motor launch loudspeaker.

On, on, you noble English! Closest to Omaha lay Gold, barricaded with 2,500 obstacles along its 3.5-mile length. Engineers managed to clear only two boat lanes on the rising tide, and stout fortifications at Le Hamel would hold out until reduced by petard bombs and grenades later in the day. "Perhaps we're intruding," one soldier mused. "This seems to be a private beach." Royal Marines storming the fishing village of Port-en-Bessin, on the Omaha boundary, suffered over two hundred casualties during the forty-eight hours needed to finally rout enemy diehards there. But by early afternoon on June 6, all four brigades of the 50th Division made shore, scuttling inland and threatening to turn the German flank.

On the eastern lip of the Allied beachhead, the British 3rd Division hit Sword on a narrow front in hopes of quickly knifing through to Caen, nine miles inland. "Ramp down! All out!" the boat crews cried, echoed by sergeants barking, "Bash on! Bash on!" Enemy mortar and machine-gun fire bashed back, and Royal Engineers cleared no beach obstacles on the first tide. Tommies "with shoulders hunched like boxers ready for in-fighting" found themselves in the surf, as a *Daily Mail* reporter wrote, "treading on an invisible carpet of squirming men." A Commando sergeant reported that the crimson-tinted seawater "made it look as though men were drowning in their own blood," and a lieutenant in the King's Liverpool Regiment told his diary: "Beach a shambles. Bodies everywhere.… Phil killed." The northwest wind shoved the high-tide line to within thirty feet of the dunes, leaving the narrow beach utterly clogged and so disrupting landing schedules that a reserve brigade remained at sea until midafternoon. Even so a kilted piper with a dirk strapped to his leg, Sergeant Bill Millin, waded through the shallows playing "Highland Laddie" despite cries of "Get down, you mad bastard, you're attracting attention to us!" Skirling "Blue Bonnets over the Border," Millin then marched off with Commandos "in parade-ground style" to search for British glidermen holding the Orne bridges.

The wind-whipped tide and a bullying current also played hob with the Canadian 3rd Division on Juno, wedged between the two British beaches. Almost one-third of three hundred landing craft were lost or damaged, and only six of forty tanks made shore. Street fighting raged along the Courseulles harbor, and fortified houses behind the twelve-foot seawall at Bernières kept Canadian artillery and vehicles jammed on the beaches. Pigeons carrying Reuters dispatches from Juno flew south rather than across the Channel, provoking outraged cries of "Traitors! Damned traitors!"

Despite such setbacks and a thousand Canadian casualties—about half the number expected—the Royal Winnipeg Rifles and Regina Rifles by midmorning had pushed two miles inland. Across the Anglo-Canadian bridgehead, once troops punched through the coastal defenses few German units remained to block village crossroads. At two P.M., Piper Millin and the Commandos led by their brigadier, Lord Lovat—wearing a green beret and white sweater, and swinging his shillelagh—tramped across the Bénouville bridge held by Major John Howard and his glider force; now the seaborne and airborne forces were linked on both invasion flanks. Fifteen miles to the west, Allied fighter-bombers at noon pounced on a counterattacking regiment of 2,500 Germans with twenty-two assault guns near Villiers-le-Sec. British troops hieing from Gold finished the rout at three P.M., killing the German commander and shattering the enemy column.

Reporters were told to expect a briefing by British officers at four P.M. in Caen. No such briefing transpired: the 3rd Division spearhead, harassed by mines and heavy gunfire, stalled three miles north of the city. Troops from the Royal Warwickshire Regiment who were issued bicycles and told to "cycle like mad behind the Sherman tanks into Caen" found bikes "not at all the ideal accessory" for crawling under mortar fire. The city and the road linking it to Bayeux remained in German hands, an inconvenience both vexing and consequential.

Yet the day seemed undimmed. Canadian troops had pressed six miles or more into France, and British soldiers reported reaching Bayeux's outskirts. Despite sniper fire nagging from a copse nearby, engineers by day's end began building a refueling airstrip at Crépon with a twelve-hundred-foot packed-earth runway. Prisoners trudged to cages on the beach, holding up trousers from which the buttons had been snipped to discourage flight. French women who emerged from cellars to kiss their liberators found themselves happily smudged with camouflage kettle soot and linseed oil. Inquiries by officers in their public-school French—"*Ou sont les Boches?*"—often provoked wild pointing and an incomprehensible torrent of Norman dialect. But there was no misunderstanding the scratchy strains of "La Marseillaise" played over and over by a young girl outside her cottage on an antique gramophone with a tin horn. *Allons enfants de la Patrie, / Le jour de gloire est arrivé!*

A Conqueror's Paradise

AS if in pursuit of the sinking sun, a black Horch convertible raced west across France from the German frontier, threading the Marne valley from Reims, then swinging to the right bank of the Seine north of Paris. Since early May, Allied fighter-bombers had demolished all twenty-six bridges spanning the river from the French capital to the sea, converting the bucolic drive to Normandy into a circuitous annoyance. The sleek Horch, with its winged chrome ornament on the radiator grille and twin spare tires mounted behind the front fenders, provoked stares as the car sped through drowsy villages and farm communes. But it was the German officer in a leather coat in the front seat with a map spread across his knees who drew the eye: the familiar flat face with a narrow, sloping forehead and incipient jowls belonged to Hitler's youngest but most celebrated field marshal. Even French peasants recognized him, and as the convertible raced past they called aloud to one another: *"C'est Rommel!"*

Yes, Rommel. He had driven home to Herrlingen in southwest Germany the previous day with a pair of gray suede shoes from Paris as a surprise fiftieth-birthday present for his wife, Lucie-Maria. He had meant to confer afterward with the Führer in his Alpine retreat at Berchtesgaden and to complain about shortages of men and matériel for the Atlantic Wall, but had instead been summoned back to France by grave reports of Allied landings in Normandy on Tuesday morning. *"Tempo!"* he urged the driver. *"Tempo!"* Turning to an aide in the rear seat, he added, "If I was commander of the Allied forces right now, I could finish off the war in fourteen days."

At 9:30 P.M., with little left of the long summer day, sentries in camouflage capes waved the Horch into the red-roofed river village of La Roche–Guyon, forty miles west of Paris. Past the church of St.-Samson and sixteen square-cut linden trees, the car turned right through a spiked wrought-iron gate to stop with a screech in a stone courtyard. The Château de La Roche–Guyon had presided above this great loop of the Seine since the twelfth century and had served since early March as Rommel's Army Group B headquarters. Clutching his silver-capped baton, the field marshal climbed a flight of steps to the main door, determined to salvage what he could from the day's catastrophe.

"How peaceful the world seems," he had told his diary in late April, "yet what hatred there is against us." If France proved "a conqueror's paradise," as one German general claimed, La Roche–Guyon was Rommel's secluded corner of that heaven. Brilliant fields of poppies and irises hugged the Seine near the nineteenth-century suspension bridge, now sitting cockeyed on the river bottom. Cézanne and Renoir had painted here together in the summer of 1885, following Camille Pissarro and preceding Georges Braque, who in 1909 made angular studies of the castle in buff and blue. Two hundred and fifty steep steps led to a battlement atop the circular medieval keep, where Rommel, after a hare shoot or a stroll with his dachshunds, sometimes watched barges loaded with fuel and ammunition glide past in the evening.

On the chalk cliffs overhanging the river's north bank and the castle's peppermill roofs stood a bristling array of antiaircraft batteries; deep tunnels had been blasted to house German troops without damaging the ducal orangery or the crypt crowded with dead seigneurs. The current duke, a spindly Nazi sympathizer, remained in residence without evident discomfort, and the duchess had donated four bottles of a luscious 1900 claret to commemorate the Führer's birthday on April 20. The chateau's timber-ceilinged Hall of the Ancestors, hung with family oils, had been consigned to Rommel's staff as a table-tennis room. From the field marshal's bedroom, with its canopied four-poster, fifteen-foot windows gave onto a fragrant rose terrace and another river vista.

Clacking typewriters and snatches of Wagner from a phonograph could be heard as Rommel ascended the grand staircase and hurried through the billiards room to the salon that now served as his office. Pegged parquet floors creaked beneath his boots. Four magnificent tapestries depicting the Jewish queen Esther had recently been shunted into storage, but fleecy painted clouds still drifted across the twenty-five-foot ceiling, and the inlaid desk on which the revocation of the Edict of Nantes had been signed in 1685 remained for Rommel's personal use. He stood instead, hands clasped behind his back, listening as staff officers sought to make sense of the sixth of June. "He's very calm and collected," an artillery officer wrote. "Grim-faced, as is to be expected."

There was much to be grim about. Thanks to Allied jamming and downed phone lines, little was known with certainty. Somehow thousands of ships had crossed the Channel undetected. No Luftwaffe reconnaissance planes had flown for the first five days of June, and naval patrols on June 5 were scrubbed because of the nasty weather. A decoded radio message—intercepted about the time the 101st Airborne launched from England—suggested a possible invasion within forty-eight hours. But an advisory on Monday evening from OB West, the German headquarters for western Europe, declared, "There are no signs yet of an imminent invasion." Besides Rommel, two of the top four German commanders in the west had been away from their posts on Tuesday morning, and several senior field officers in Normandy had driven to Rennes, in Brittany, for a map exercise. The Fifteenth Army, near the Pas de Calais, was placed on full alert before midnight, but the other major component of Rommel's Army Group B, the Seventh Army occupying Normandy, sounded no general alarm until 1:30 A.M. despite reports of paratroopers near Caen and in the Cotentin. Even then, OB West insisted at 2:40 A.M.: "It is not a major action."

Not until that fantastic armada materialized from the mist had the truth struck home. In subsequent hours the German navy remained supine; so too the air force. Luftwaffe pilots were supposed to fly up to five daily sorties each to disrupt any invasion, but German aircraft losses in the past five months exceeded thirteen thousand planes, more than half from accidents and other noncombat causes. Air Fleet Three, responsible for western France, had just 319 serviceable planes facing nearly 13,000 Allied aircraft; on D-Day, they would fly one sortie for every thirty-seven flown by their adversaries. Of the mere dozen fighter-bombers that reached the invasion zone, ten dropped their bombs prematurely. German soldiers now bitterly joked that American planes were gray, British planes black, and Luftwaffe planes invisible.

Still, Seventh Army asserted through much of the day that at least part of the Allied landing had been halted at the water's edge.

"The enemy, penetrating our positions, was thrown back into the sea," the 352nd Infantry Division reported at 1:35 P.M. That soap-bubble delusion soon popped: at six P.M. the division acknowledged "unfavorable developments," including Allied troops infiltrating inland and armored spearheads nosing toward Bayeux.

Rommel's grim face grew grimmer. Here, in Normandy, he had first made his name as "the fighting animal," in one biographer's phrase, driving his 7th Panzer Division more than two hundred miles in four days to trap the French garrison at Cherbourg in June 1940. Soon after, in Africa, the fighting animal took vulpine form as the audacious Desert Fox, although even he could not forestall the Allied triumph in Tunisia. Now, he told a comrade, he hoped "to re-win great fame in the West."

Hitler's decision in November 1943 to reinforce the Atlantic Wall against "an Anglo-Saxon landing" offered him that chance. As commander of half a million men in Army Group B, with responsibility for the coast from Holland to the Loire, the field marshal had flung himself into building the "Rommel Belt." All told, 20,000 coastal fortifications had been constructed, 500,000 foreshore obstacles emplaced, and 6.5 million mines planted in what he called "the zone of death." To Lucie he wrote on May 19, "The enemy will have a rough time of it when he attacks, and ultimately achieve no success." Hitler agreed, declaring, "Once defeated, the enemy will never try to invade again."

If confident enough to travel home for his wife's birthday, Rommel harbored few illusions. He had never forgotten the endless acres of high-quality American war matériel he had inspected at Kasserine Pass; the battered U.S. Army was reeling then, but he knew it would be back in killing strength. Two years of campaigning in Africa gave him great faith in land mines, but he wanted 200 million of them, not 6 million. Some divisions were composed of overage troops, as well as many non-Germans—paybooks had been issued in eight different languages just for former Soviet citizens now serving the Wehrmacht. Army Group B relied on 67,000 horses for locomotion; across the entire front, fewer than 15,000 trucks could be found. A corps commander in Normandy complained, "Emplacements without guns, ammunition depots without ammunition, minefields without mines, and a large number of men in uniform with hardly a soldier among them."

Worse yet was the Anglo-American advantage in airpower and seapower, a frightful imbalance that Rommel knew firsthand from the Mediterranean. German officers with battle experience only against the Soviets misjudged the enemy edge in the west. "Our friends from the East cannot imagine what they're in for here," Rommel had warned in mid-May; battling a foe with air superiority was like "being nailed to the ground." Moreover, 71,000 tons of Allied bombs had already eviscerated the German transportation system in the west. Train traffic in France had declined 60 percent since March—a testimony to those spavined Seine bridges, almost half of which were rail spans—and even more in northern France. Allied fighter sweeps proved so murderous that German daytime rail movement in France was banned after May 26. Beyond the 45,000 armed railwaymen already transferred from Germany to forestall saboteurs, almost 30,000 workers were seconded from the Atlantic Wall to rail repair duties. Some field commanders, Rommel grumbled, "do not seem to have recognized the graveness of the hour." Six weeks earlier he had warned subordinates:

> The enemy will most likely try to land at night and by fog, after a tremendous shelling by artillery and bombers. They will employ hundreds of boats and ships unloading amphibious vehicles and waterproof submersible tanks. We must stop him in the water, not only delay him.… The enemy must be annihilated before he reaches our main battlefield.

In this injunction lay what one German general called "a cock-fight controversy." For months the high command had bickered over how best to thwart an Allied invasion. Rommel argued that "the main battle line must be the beach," with armored reserves poised near the coast. "If we can't throw the enemy into the sea within twenty-four hours," he told officers in Normandy, "then that will be the beginning of the end." In March he had proposed that all armored, mechanized, and artillery units in the west be bundled under his command, and that he assume some control over the First and Nineteenth Armies in southern France.

This impertinence found little favor in Berlin or Paris. The OB West commander, Field Marshal Gerd von Rundstedt, who called his brash subordinate "an unlicked cub" and "the Marshal Laddie," argued that to disperse counterattack forces along seventeen hundred miles of exposed Atlantic and Mediterranean coastline would be foolhardy. Better to concentrate a central mobile reserve near Paris, able to strike as a clenched fist whenever the invaders committed themselves. Better to follow Napoléon's dictum, as one panzer commander urged: *"S'engager, puis voir."* Engage the enemy, and then we shall see.

Hitler dithered, then ordered a compromise that pleased no one. Frontline forces on the coast were to fight "to the last man"—that phrase so easily uttered by those far from the trenches—and Army Group B would command three armored divisions among the ten on the Western Front. Three others went to southern France. The remaining four, controlled by Berlin, were clustered near Paris in a strategic ensemble called Panzer Group West. Neither Rundstedt nor Rommel could issue orders to air or naval forces, who were vaguely advised to cooperate with ground commanders. "In the East there is *one* enemy," an officer in Paris complained. "*Here* everything is so complicated." Just a few days earlier, Hitler had shifted troops from OB West to Italy and the Eastern Front. Perhaps predictably, when frantic pleas to release the armored reserves had arrived in Berlin and Berchtesgaden this morning, more than eight hours passed before the panzers were ordered to begin the long, tortuous journey toward Normandy. Rommel denounced the delay as "madness," adding, "Of course now they will arrive too late." *S'engager, puis voir.*

* * *

Dusk sifted over the Seine valley. Swallows trawled the river bottoms, and the day's last light faded from the chalk cliffs above the château, where antiaircraft gunners strained for the drone of approaching bombers. Telephones jangled in the salon war room, and orderlies bustled across the parquet with the latest scraps of news.

In Berlin it had been whispered that Rommel suffered from "African sickness"—pessimism—to which he answered, *"Der Führer*

vertraut mir, und das genügt mir auch." The Führer trusts me, and that's enough for me. He remained "the Führer's marshal," in one colleague's phrase, loyal in his own fashion and as beguiled by Hitler as steel filings by a magnet. War and the Nazis had been good to him: he was a stamp collector not above adding looted issues to his album, and the handsome villa in leafy Herrlingen where he delivered Lucie's shoes had been confiscated from Jews after the occupants were sent to Theresienstadt. Hitler was a bulwark against bolshevism, he had told staff officers; if the invasion was repelled, perhaps the West would "come round to the idea of fighting side by side with a new Germany in the East." The onslaught against the Atlantic Wall would be "the most decisive battle of the war," he had predicted a few weeks earlier. "The fate of the German people itself is at stake." His fate, too.

The struggle in Normandy would depend in large measure on the only armored unit within quick striking distance of the invasion beaches, the 21st Panzer Division. A stalwart from Africa, the division had been obliterated in Tunisia, then rebuilt with sixteen thousand men—some still wearing oddments of tropical uniforms—and 127 tanks. Even while racing back to France this afternoon, Rommel had stopped midway to confirm by phone that the unit was hurrying into action. Now the harsh truth came clear: orders, counterorders, and disorder had plagued the division almost as much as marauding Allied planes and scorching field-gun fire. Not least among the 21st's troubles was the temporary absence of the commanding general, who reportedly had spent the small hours of June 6 in a Parisian fleshpot. The division's antiaircraft battalion had been pulverized by naval gunfire north of Caen, and the tank regiment gutted from the air and by British gunners. This evening a panzer grenadier regiment knifing toward Sword Beach in the two-mile gap between Canadian and British troops had nearly reached the strand. Then, just before nine P.M., almost 250 more British gliders escorted by fighters swept into the Orne valley, doubling British airborne combat power in France and threatening to pin the grenadiers against the sea.

At 10:40 P.M., General Friedrich Dollmann, who had commanded Seventh Army since 1939, phoned La Roche–Guyon with baleful news. The "strong attack by the 21st Panzer Division has been smothered by new airborne landings," Dollmann reported. The counterattack had failed. Nearly two-thirds of the 21st Panzer's tanks were lost. Swarming enemy aircraft impeded movement, even at night. Grenadiers skulked back from the coast to blocking positions with two dozen 88mm guns in the hills around Caen.

Rommel returned the receiver to its cradle. Hands again clasped behind his back, he studied the wall map. The critical crossroads city of Caen remained in German hands, and nowhere did the Anglo-American penetration appear deeper than a few kilometers. The 12th SS Panzer and the Panzer Lehr Divisions were finally moving toward Normandy despite fighter-bombers flocking to the telltale dust clouds like raptors to prey. "We cannot hold everything," he would tell his chief of staff. The first critical twenty-four hours was nearly spent, yet perhaps the coastal battle could still be saved. He turned to an aide and said, as if reminding himself, "I've nearly always succeeded up to now." He was, as ever, the Führer's marshal.

* * *

A monstrous full moon rose over the beachhead, where 156,000 Allied soldiers burrowed in as best they could to snatch an hour of sleep. Rommel was right: the invader's grip on France was tenuous, ranging from six miles beyond Gold and Juno to barely two thousand yards beyond Omaha. A crude sod airstrip had opened alongside Utah at 9:15 P.M., the first of 241 airdromes the Americans would build across Western Europe in the next eleven months. Yet only 100 tons of supplies made shore by midnight, rather than the 2,400 tons planned for Omaha dumps. Paratroopers, particularly among the nineteen airborne battalions on the American western flank, fought as scattered gangs in a score or more of muddled, desperate gunfights. Every man who survived the day now knew in his bones, as one paratrooper wrote, that "we were there for one purpose, to kill each other."

If the 21st Panzer had failed to fulfill Rommel's imperative by cudgeling the enemy into the sea within twenty-four hours, the division *had* blocked the capture of Caen, gateway to the rolling terrain leading toward Paris. "I must have Caen," the British Second Army commander, Lieutenant General Miles Dempsey, had declared at St. Paul's School three weeks earlier. But he would not have it today, or any day soon, in part because his landing force was unprepared to fight enemy armor so quickly. Even so, a British captain wrote, "We were not unpleased with ourselves."

The failure of this truncated drive fell hardest on civilians in Caen. Gestapo killers hurried to the city jail and murdered eighty-seven Frenchmen in batches of six, including one victim who cried, "My wife, my children!" as he was gunned down in a courtyard. Caen was among seventeen Norman towns warned in leaflets dropped from Allied planes on June 6 that bomber fleets would follow, often in little more than an hour. Beginning at 1:30 P.M., high explosives and incendiaries, aimed at rail yards and other targets intended to impede German reinforcements, also shattered Caen's medieval heart, igniting fires that would burn for eleven days. Thousands sought refuge in the quarries south of town, whose stone had been used by Norman kings to build Westminster Abbey and the Tower of London. Amid the ruination, five hundred coffins stockpiled in a funeral home were reduced to ashes. "We won't have a single coffin to bury the dead," the deputy mayor told his diary.

All told, three thousand Normans would be killed on June 6 and 7 by bombs, naval shells, and other insults to mortality; they joined fifteen thousand French civilians already dead from months of bombardment before the invasion. Some injured citizens were reduced to disinfecting their wounds with calvados, the local brandy fermented from apples. "Liberation," wrote the journalist Alan Moorehead, "usually meant excessive hardship for the first few months."

As for the liberators, the eight assault divisions now ashore had suffered 12,000 killed, wounded, and missing, with thousands more unaccounted for, most of whom had simply gotten lost in the chaos. Allied aircraft losses in the invasion totaled 127. The 8,230 U.S. casualties on D-Day included the first of almost 400,000 men who would be wounded in the European theater, the first of 7,000 amputations, the first of 89,000 fractures. Many were felled by 9.6-gram bullets moving at 2,000 to 4,000 feet per second, or by shell fragments traveling even faster; such specks of steel could destroy a world, cell by cell. Aboard U.S.S. *Samuel Chase*, mess boys who that morning had served breakfast in white jackets were now as blood-smeared as slaughterhouse toughs from sewing corpses into

burial sacks. A British doctor who spent Tuesday evening on Sword Beach reported that for most of the wounded "nothing was being done for them as there was no plasma or blood, and they lay there being bombed and machine-gunned all night long." On Utah, handkerchiefs draped the faces of the dead because, as a Navy lieutenant said, "They do not seem to matter as much with faces covered."

Omaha was the worst, of course. Stretcher bearers with blistered hands carried broken boys down the bluff to Easy Red—now dubbed Dark Red—only to find that a medical battalion had come ashore with typewriters and office files but no surgical equipment or morphine. Blankets were stripped from the dead or salvaged in the tidal wrack between petulant outbursts of German artillery. Fearful of mines and rough surf, most landing craft refused to pick up casualties from the beach after dark. A single ambulance with cat's-eye headlights crept along the dunes, delivering the wounded to collection-point trenches where medics plucked scraps of GI boot leather from mine wounds. Listening for the telltale crackle of gas gangrene, they hushed sufferers who asked only for a bullet in the brain. A soldier returning to Omaha for ammunition found many comrades "out of their heads. There were men crying, men moaning, and there were men screaming."

Others were beyond screams. Dead men lay in windrows like "swollen grayish sacks," in one reporter's image. "I walked along slowly, counting bodies," wrote the correspondent Gordon Gaskill, who prowled the beach on Tuesday evening. "Within 400 paces I counted 221 of them." More than double that number—487—would be gathered on Omaha, toes sticking up in a line as if at parade drill. "One came up on them rather too suddenly and wanted to stare hard," a Navy lieutenant wrote, "but there was that feeling that staring was rude."

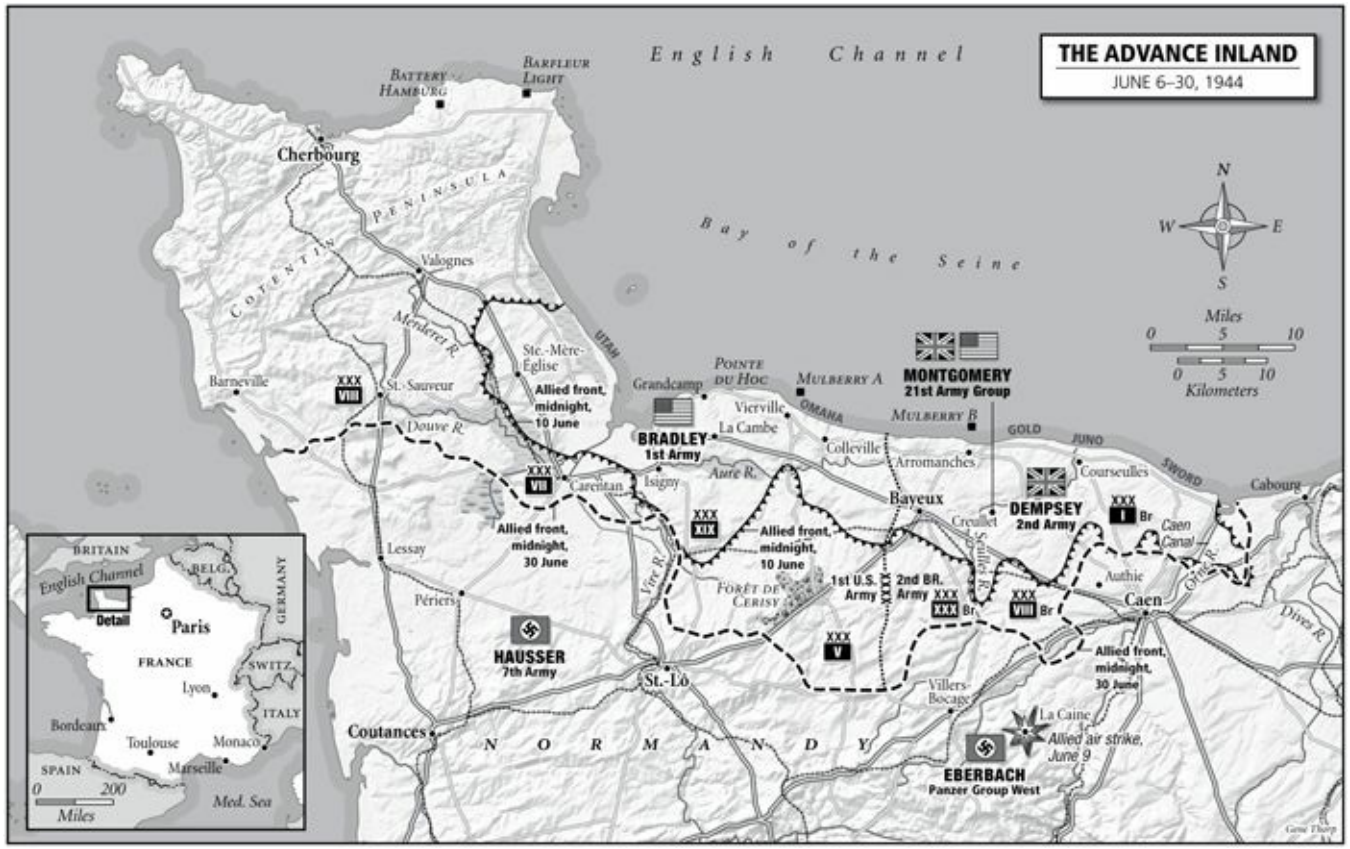
Graves Registration teams tied Emergency Medical Tag #52B to each corpse for identification, then shrouded them in mattress covers fastened with safety pins. Two inland sites had been chosen for cemeteries but both remained under fire, so temporary graves were scooped out below the escarpment. Shovel details fortified with brandy buried their comrades in haste.

* * *

So ended the day, epochal and soon legendary, and perhaps indeed, as in the judgment of a Royal Air Force history, "the most momentous in the history of war since Alexander set out from Macedon." In southern England, "the first of the Master Race" arrived as prisoners on an LST, Martha Gellhorn reported. She studied the "small shabby men in field gray … trying to see in those faces what had happened in the world." A badly wounded American lieutenant, evacuated on a surgical litter next to a German shot in the chest and legs, murmured, "I'd kill him if I could move."

Such sanguinary purpose would be needed in the weeks and months ahead. For the moment, the Allies savored their triumph. "We will never again have to land under fire," a Navy officer wrote his wife on June 7. "This is the end of Germany and Japan." If too optimistic—assault landings were still to come in southern France and on various god-awful Pacific islands—the core sentiment obtained. For four years Hitler had fortified this coast, most recently entrusting the task to his most charismatic general, yet Allied assault troops had needed less than three hours to crack the Atlantic Wall and burst into Fortress Europe. Though far from over, the battle was won.

"We have come to the hour for which we were born," a *New York Times* editorial declared on Wednesday morning. "We go forth to meet the supreme test of our arms and of our souls." Company clerks already had begun sorting stacks of mail, scribbling "deceased," "wounded," and "missing" on letters and packages. Those killed in action would appear on personnel lists as "dead stock." Yet even as they still lay on the Norman sand, silvered by the rising moon, toes pointing toward the stars, the living would carry them along. "I shall never forget that beach," Corporal William Preston, who had come ashore at dawn in an amphibious tank, wrote to his family in New York. Nor would he forget one dead soldier in particular who caught his eye. "I wonder about him," Preston added. "What were his plans never to be fulfilled, what fate brought him to that spot at that moment? Who was waiting for him at home?" Destiny had also sorted them, and would sort them again and again, until that hour for which they were born had passed.


THE ADVANCE INLAND
JUNE 6–30, 1944
English Channel
Bay of the Seine
Battery Hamburg
Barfleur Light
Cherbourg
Cotentin Peninsula
Valognes
Merderet R.
Barneville
St.-Sauveur
Douve R.
Ste.-Mère-Église
Allied front, midnight, 10 June
Allied front, midnight, 30 June
Utah
Pointe du Hoc
Grandcamp
Mulberry A
Mulberry B
Omaha
Gold
Juno
Sword
Vierville
La Cambe
Colleville
Arromanches
Courseulles
Cabourg
Bayeux
Caen
Caen Canal
Orne R.
Aure R.
Isigny
Carentan
Lessay
Périers
Vire R.
Forêt de Cerisy
Seulles R.
Authie
Dives R.
Villers-Bocage
La Caine
Allied air strike, June 9
St.-Lô
Coutances
NORMANDY
MONTGOMERY
21st Army Group
BRADLEY
1st Army
DEMPSEY
2nd Army
HAUSSER
7th Army
EBERBACH
Panzer Group West
1st U.S. Army
2nd BR. Army
N
W
E
S
Miles
0 5 10
Kilometers
0 5 10
BRITAIN
English Channel
BELG.
GERMANY
Detail
Paris
FRANCE
SWITZ.
Lyon
ITALY
Bordeaux
Toulouse
Monaco
Marseille
SPAIN
Med. Sea
0 200
Miles

2. LODGEMENT

"This Long Thin Line of Personal Anguish"

LIGHT rain fell in Portsmouth on Wednesday morning, June 7, as Eisenhower strode through a stone sally port to the dockyard below Broad Street. In the anchorage across from King's Stairs, where over the centuries many an English sea dog had sortied to battle, the fast minelayer H.M.S. *Apollo* awaited him, steam up in her triple stacks and a red pennant with four white stars already hoisted. No sooner had he boarded, at eight A.M., than the crew weighed anchor. The supreme commander knew little more about D-Day than did Corporal Preston in his tank, and he was keen to see for himself what D+1 would bring to the Norman coast.

Swinging east of the Isle of Wight, *Apollo* skipped across the Channel in three hours. The ship passed convoys returning, and convoys going out, and an alarming number of barges, boats, and landing craft, either foundering or abandoned, going nowhere. "A scene of great confusion met the eye," Admiral Ramsay, who accompanied Eisenhower, told his diary. "An anxious situation."

Mines continued to bedevil the roadstead. The lethal field on Cardonnet Bank claimed the sweeper U.S.S. *Tide* at midmorning, tossing her five feet into the air, killing the captain, and sending the vessel to the bottom in pieces. Not far away, the transport U.S.S. *Susan B. Anthony* had just arrived on station with 2,300 troops when a blast detonated beneath the number 4 hold. "The ship lifted and hogged, and then settled and sagged," a passenger reported. Troops were ordered to the port rails to counterballast an eight-degree starboard list, but nothing could check a snarling fire and ten feet of water in the engine room. By nine A.M., seas washed the main deck as rescue ships played hoses on the flames and took frightened men off the prow. An hour later, *Susan B.*'s skipper plunged into the water and swam from his dying ship. At 10:10 A.M., she "put her nose in the air and slipped backward calmly," wrote A. J. Liebling, "like a lady lowering herself into an armchair. In twenty minutes she was gone." Remarkably, all aboard were saved.

Dreadnoughts barked and bellowed, gray smoke rings drifting from their gun muzzles. Shortly before noon, *Apollo* pulled abreast of the *Augusta* off Omaha Beach as Eisenhower stood at the rail watching a Higgins boat wallow through the chop to a ladder lowered down the minelayer's hull. Omar Bradley, nose still bandaged, climbed to the deck and extended his hand, only to find the supreme commander in a red fury at the meager reporting from the beachhead. "Why in the devil didn't you let us know what was going on?" he snapped. "Nothing came through until late afternoon—not a damned word. I didn't know what had happened to you." Bradley sputtered in protest—"We radioed you every scrap of information we had"—then followed Eisenhower to Ramsay's flag cabin, seething at the rebuke. Only later did he learn that his hourly dispatches had piled up in Montgomery's radio room, where overwhelmed code clerks had fallen twelve hours behind in deciphering messages.

Swallowing his anger, Bradley tried to make amends by telling Eisenhower in detail what he knew. OVERLORD was "firmly rooted in France"—he had waded onto Dark Red earlier this morning to see for himself, even riding up the escarpment on a truck's running board. Fire on the beaches had dwindled. Captured enemy prisoners, particularly Poles and Russians, were helping to build their own cages. More than one-third of all shore obstacles would be cleared by low tide this evening, and nearly all would be gone in another day. Reinforcements continued to arrive: with the help of smoke screens and electronic jamming, nine troop transports sailing from the Thames late Tuesday were the first large Allied ships through the Straits of Dover in four years. A map found on a captured German artillery observer pinpointed not only enemy gun batteries near the invasion beaches but also every battalion, regimental, and division command post, all of which were now being pummeled by Allied fighter-bombers, naval guns, and artillery.

Yet First Army still had not reached most of its D-Day objectives. Only a quarter of the planned supplies and barely half of the fourteen thousand vehicles waiting offshore had been unloaded. V Corps's narrow purchase beyond Omaha expanded by the hour, but the 29th Division remained well short of the Aure River, six miles inland, which Bradley had hoped to reach on Tuesday. The 1st Division had not gotten much farther. On Pointe du Hoc, fewer than one hundred Rangers still fought in a perimeter hardly two hundred yards from the cliff's edge; only destroyer fire and Ranger pluck had kept the enemy at bay.

Beyond Utah Beach, confusion remained the order of the day. The 101st Airborne was churning south toward the Douve River and the vital crossroads town of Carentan. After going missing for twenty-four hours, the 82nd Airborne early on Wednesday morning sent an officer pumped full of Benzedrine to make contact with 4th Division commanders pushing inland; light tanks and tank destroyers had then been dispatched to stiffen the paratroopers. General Roosevelt subsequently rolled into the apple orchard that served as the 82nd's command post, helmet pushed back and waving his cane from *Rough Rider* "as if the bullet that could kill him had not been made," one witness reported. "Fellows," Roosevelt bellowed, "where's the picnic?"

The 82nd now occupied a triangular swatch of the Cotentin Peninsula, each embattled leg roughly six miles long. Two battalions

held Ste.-Mère-Église, fighting off piecemeal German counterattacks from north and south, but several thousand other paratroopers remained badly scattered, and no real bridgehead existed west of the Merderet River. General Collins, the VII Corps commander, had gone ashore in the morning to take charge of a beachhead seven miles deep. A ten-mile gap remained between his VII Corps and the V Corps troops at Omaha; another gap of five miles also persisted between American and British forces. Closing those seams before Rommel could rip through them would be paramount in the coming days.

Eisenhower said little in response to Bradley's report, apparently lost in thought as he studied a map. "Bradley came over & discussed situation & did nothing to relieve my anxiety," Ramsay noted in his diary. "Bridgehead still very shallow. No guns to speak of ashore." After a flurry of salutes on deck, Bradley scrambled down the sea ladder and puttered back to *Augusta*, smoldering over what he deemed "a pointless interruption and annoyance."

Skies faired in the afternoon and *Apollo* steamed to the east for a distant look at the British beaches—but not distant enough. A lurch, and Eisenhower and others were flung to the deck; the vessel had struck a sandbar. "With the mast swaying violently, the entire ship jerking, grinding, and even bouncing … we eventually swung off the bar and floated free," wrote Harry Butcher. But the damage was done, the propellers and drive shafts bent badly enough to put the minelayer into dry dock for four months. Ramsay, who had first gone to sea in 1898 at the age of fifteen and was said to exude "an aura of vinegar," was mortified at this display of Royal Navy seamanship, although Eisenhower took responsibility for urging haste over caution. *Apollo* limped across the bay at six knots until a British destroyer picked up the supreme commander and whisked him back to Portsmouth.

"We've started," he scribbled in a quick, fretful note to Mamie. "Only time will tell how great our success will be."

* * *

Even war could not dim the radiance of a June morning in Normandy. Two battalions from the British 50th Division pushed into Bayeux on Wednesday, led by French boys cadging cigarettes. White blossoms rioted in the orchards and geraniums spilled from window boxes. Roses climbed fence posts beneath painted wall advertisements for "Dubo … Dubonn … Dubonnet." Unmilked cows lowed in their stalls. Peasants in blue smocks and wooden clogs welcomed the Tommies, some with fascist salutes. Wine carts rolled down the Rue St. Jean, where shops offered goods long unseen in London: porcelain and plastic tableware, new furniture, forty thousand Camembert cheeses. (The priceless Bayeux tapestry, an embroidered eleventh-century record of that earlier invasion across the English Channel, had long been removed for safekeeping near Le Mans.) The last German in this town of seven thousand was said to have killed himself, and a widow living nearby recorded in her diary how others had fled through the rapeseed fields "without overcoats, without underwear, without razors."

Sherman tanks still wearing amphibious skirts clanked into town—"huge, dusty, belted with gigantic floats," a witness reported. Crews dismounted to brew the thick tea known as "gunfire." A civil affairs detachment arrived to impose a curfew and arrest collaborators. "At first sight," an exasperated officer lamented, "impossible to differentiate between pro-Nazis, Vichy, and patriot Frenchmen." Another report acknowledged, "Looting by troops pretty general." Journalists set up a press camp in the Lion d'Or, a ramshackle hotel with colored canvas awnings. The Lion served stewed lamb, gritty brown bread, and, Alan Moorehead reported, "a dry Sauterne, fifteen shillings a bottle.… The woman who ran the brothel above the hotel brought her girls down to eat." Thirty-six thousand French communes remained to be liberated, and few would enjoy as benign an emancipation as lovely Bayeux.

Devastation was but a mortar round away, of course. After seeing nearby villas and farmhouses reduced to "only shells with their insides blown out," Moorehead wrote, "one had the impression that the battle had been going on a long time, for weeks, even for months." Closer to Caen the gunplay was unremitting. A British major in the 50th Division recorded his daily prayer for June 7: "Oh, God, please stop the shells. If you stop them, I'll be good for always." A soldier cowering under German machine-gun fire complained, "What I can never understand is how those fuckers never run out of fucking ammunition." When artillery rounds began to fall, he added, "You curl up into the fetal position except that your hands go down to protect your genitalia. This instinct to defend the place of generation against the forces of annihilation [is] universal." For good measure he added: "Montgomery doesn't protect his privates, but by Christ, I protect mine." In Périers-sur-le-Dan, between Sword Beach and Caen, a French woman wrote, "Overhead the hisses and whines make you bend even lower.… Where is safety? Probably nowhere, or in the imponderables that save you."

Twenty-five miles to the west, the self-described "Unhappy Warrior" from Indiana also pondered the imponderables. Ernie Pyle had come ashore on Omaha early Wednesday, as Bradley's aide wrote, "looking helpless and insignificant … shading his emotions as he always does." For several hours he combed the high-water line, compiling an inventory:

> Socks and shoe polish, sewing kits, diaries, Bibles, hand grenades. Here are the latest letters from home, with the address on each one neatly razored out—one of the security precautions enforced before the boys embarked. Here are toothbrushes and razors, and snapshots of families staring up at you from the sand. Here are pocketbooks, metal mirrors, extra trousers, and bloody, abandoned shoes.… I picked up a pocket Bible with a soldier's name in it, and put it in my jacket. I carried it half a mile or so and then put it back down on the beach. I don't know why.

Pistol belts, canvas water buckets, stationery on which love letters would never be written, oranges, a tennis racket still clamped in its press with "not a string broken"—all formed what Pyle called "this long thin line of personal anguish." He returned to *LST-353* for the night and more nightmares, looking "very tired and very sad," an officer noted. To another reporter, Pyle confessed, "I become less used to it as the years go by."

A Gunman's World

ENEMY soldiers by the tens of thousands converged on Normandy, sweating through their field-gray blouses and black tunics, singing sentimental ballads of the kind beloved by German armies on the march since the Seven Years' War. By train and by truck they surged west and north, on foot and on bicycle and in ancient French buses upholstered with tree boughs. Dray carts, wagons, and horse-drawn caissons followed in snaking processions moving at a slow clop.

There was not a moment to lose, as Rommel repeatedly urged, yet moments, minutes, hours, and days were lost to disorder, indecision, and marauding Allied airplanes. Traveling by five dusty routes from Chartres, a hundred miles east of the invasion zone, the fifteen-thousand-man Panzer Lehr Division had been harassed from above since Tuesday evening. The burning town of Argentan was described by a German officer as a "fiery cage," with streets blocked by flaming debris and "bombers hovering above the roads." Ordered to travel by daylight on June 7 and averaging only six miles per hour—a third of the usual march speed—the division commander reported losses of forty fuel trucks, ninety other lorries, five tanks, and eighty-four half-tracks and self-propelled guns. Not until June 9 would Panzer Lehr join the battle in earnest, piecemeal and already wounded.

Half a dozen flak battalions moving toward the beachhead were mauled, suffering two hundred casualties before firing a shot. No anabasis would be more infamous than that of the 2nd SS Panzer Division, known as Das Reich, ordered north from Toulouse on June 7. To move a German tank division typically required at least sixty trains, but the only surviving rail bridge over the Loire proved so fragile that boxcars were nudged across one at a time. Das Reich matériel and troops traveling by rail would take seventeen days to cover 450 miles, normally a three-day journey.

Troops aboard the division's trucks moved somewhat faster, even as they were diverted for killing sprees against the maquis of the French Resistance. In Tulle, west of Lyon, ninety-nine men randomly chosen in reprisal for several SS deaths were told by the local abbé, "My friends, you are going to appear before God." They were hanged from lampposts and balconies, their bodies tossed into the town dump. On June 10 SS troops drove into Oradour-sur-Glane, a village bustling with farmworkers and children receiving vaccinations; the town crier beat his drum to summon one and all to a central square. Women and children were herded into a church, which was set ablaze with grenades and gunfire. Howling soldiers then shot dead the men in barns and garages before burning the town with straw, brush, and saddlery as kindling. More than 640 innocents died in Oradour. Das Reich, as an official British historian wrote, had "carved out for itself a private niche in the book of iniquity."

Evil also shadowed the 12th SS Panzer Division, crawling the seventy miles from Évreux to the coast at four miles per hour. Nicknamed Hitlerjugend—Hitler Youth—and composed of teenage fanatics led by Eastern Front veterans, the division's Panther tank battalion arrived near Caen on June 7 too low on fuel to give battle. That fell to the accompanying panzer grenadier regiment, led by Colonel Kurt Meyer, a broad-shouldered former miner and policeman who had joined the Nazi Party in 1930 at age nineteen. Highly decorated in Poland, Greece, and Russia, a motorcycle daredevil who had broken nineteen bones in various spills, "Panzermeyer" had been known to encourage timid troops to advance by tossing live hand grenades behind them. Climbing a spiral staircase in a corner turret of the twelfth-century Abbaye d'Ardenne, two miles northwest of Caen, Meyer on Wednesday afternoon spied Canadian troops from Juno Beach tramping south through the wheat fields and apple trees to nearby Authie.

Like hornets the grenadiers swarmed across almost a mile of open ground before naval guns and field artillery could range them; Canadian forward observers were trapped in traffic near the beach. Orange sheets of gunfire ripped through the North Nova Scotia Highlanders, and at 5:30 P.M. a white flare signaled German possession of Authie. Survivors scuttled away under a drifting loom of battle smoke while panzer crews rooted through twenty-one demolished Canadian tanks for chocolate, peanuts, and corned beef.

Belated salvos from the warships offshore and an armored counterattack took a toll on Meyer's men, who would lose more than thirty panzers on Wednesday. But the Canadians had been smacked back more than two miles, losing ground not to be recouped for a month. "Mortar and artillery fire almost continuous day and night. Noise so great we can only communicate with hand signals," a Cameron Highlander recorded. "No one dares to stand up, we crawl." Artillery spotters in trees or on roofs "last a couple days, couple hours, couple minutes." Platoons nipped from jugs of Jamaican rum while officers fortified themselves with gin or Teacher's Highland Cream. Caen burned, still in German hands.

Yet Panzermeyer lacked the strength to exploit his winnings. By nightfall, his troops remained six miles from the sea, and more than one hundred SS casualties in Authie made his regiment splenetic. The first murder may have been that of a wounded Canadian private, bayoneted by an SS trooper who shouted curses at his victim as he impaled him. Eight more prisoners were told to remove their helmets in Authie, then shot. Their bodies were dragged into the road and crushed beneath tank tracks; a French villager collected the remains with a shovel. Six others were frog-marched through a kitchen and shot in the head. The Sherbrooke Fusiliers chaplain was stabbed through the heart.

Other Canadian prisoners were herded to the Abbaye d'Ardenne. "Why do you bring prisoners to the rear? They only eat up our rations," Meyer was quoted as saying. "In the future no more prisoners are to be taken." Prisoners surrendered their paybooks, then were bludgeoned to death or dispatched by a bullet to the brain. On Thursday, June 8, the killings continued. Summoned one by one from a stable used as a jail, each condemned man shook hands with his mates before trudging up a flight of stairs and turning left into the pretty garden, where he was shot. Forty prisoners assembled in a field near the Caen–Bayeux road were ordered to sit facing east; SS troops brandishing Schmeisser machine pistols advanced in a skirmish line and opened fire, killing nearly three dozen. Several who bolted were soon recaptured and sent to prison camps. Now known as the Murder Division, the 12th SS Panzer would be accused of killing 156 defenseless men, nearly all Canadian, in little more than a week, igniting a cycle of atrocity and reprisal that persisted all summer. "Any German who tries to surrender nowadays is a brave man," said a Scottish soldier. "We just shoot them

there and then, with their hands up." A British platoon commander jotted down his daily orders with a closing notation, "NPT below rank major": no prisoners to be taken below the rank of major.

Canadian battle casualties approached three thousand during the first week of OVERLORD, with more than a thousand dead. A witticism inspired by hard experience in Italy held that if "fuck" and "frontal" were removed from the military vocabulary, the Canadian army would have been both speechless and unable to attack. In less than five years that expeditionary army had expanded to more than fiftyfold its prewar strength but still evidenced little professional depth.

Yet the Canadian 3rd Division, carrying more than double its usual artillery complement, now displayed mettle in a battle described by one corporal as "just a straight shootout, both sides blasting at each other day and night.… They went at it like hockey players." Beaten back by firepower, the Hitlerjugend found the success at Authie impossible to replicate, even when reinforced by the 21st Panzer and Panzer Lehr Divisions. Clumsy, improvised attacks by the Murder Division were repelled with great gusts of howitzer, tank, and antitank fire; at noon on June 9, a single Sherman Firefly destroyed five Panthers with five 17-pounder antitank rounds. "I could have screamed from rage and grief," an SS officer wrote. Demonstrating the enduring utility of the fricative, a Canadian artillery commander later commented, "The Germans thought we were fucking Russians. They did stupid things, and we killed those bastards in large numbers."

* * *

Among the bastards watching from Panzermeyer's perch in the Abbaye turret on June 9 was General Leo Freiherr Geyr von Schweppenburg, commander of the Führer's armored reserve, Panzer Group West. A tall, cosmopolitan cavalryman who had previously served as Germany's military attaché in London, Brussels, and the Hague, Geyr more than most had embraced the Napoleonic *S'engager, puis voir*. Having dutifully engaged and then seen as Allied planes and artillery chewed up SS formations, he muttered, "My dear Meyer, the war can only now be won through political means." The next evening, after conferring with Rommel, Geyr postponed an attack against British troops north of Caen and ordered his tanks to regroup.

A few minutes later, at 8:30 P.M., Geyr stepped outside his château command post in La Caine, twelve miles southwest of Caen. Trailers, tents, and four large radio trucks filled an adjacent orchard; the destruction of phone lines across Normandy had forced German commanders to rely increasingly on the radio, despite the vulnerability of transmissions to decryption or direction finding. British eavesdroppers alone now intercepted seventeen thousand messages a day, including detailed information on supply levels and troop movements. Twice that morning, in fact, Ultra decrypts had identified La Caine as the Panzer Group West headquarters. The second intercept pinpointed the location precisely.

Geyr now cocked an ear to the drone of approaching aircraft. Other officers joined their commander, raking the heavens with field glasses as the sound grew louder. Suddenly, forty Typhoons from the RAF Second Tactical Air Force roared over the treetops in three waves, spitting rockets. Moments later, seventy-one Mitchell bombers pummeled the orchard with 436 500-pound bombs, turning La Caine into an inferno.

Geyr escaped with minor wounds, but the headquarters had been disemboweled. His chief of staff and more than thirty others were dead, the entire operations staff wiped out, the signal equipment wrecked. Those killed were interred in a bomb crater beneath a huge cross of polished oak, adorned with a swastika and an eagle. Geyr and other survivors fled to Paris for a fortnight's recuperation, crippling the armored strike force in Normandy.

Similar decapitations further impaired German battle leadership. Several days later, a British battleship shell exploded in the branches of a shade tree in the Odon River valley, instantly killing the 12th SS Panzer Division commanding general with a steel splinter through the face; Kurt Meyer would succeed him as leader of the Murder Division. Three other division commanders and a corps commander, General Erich Marcks, also were killed by mid-June. Slender and ascetic—he had banned whipped cream from his mess "as long as our country is starving"—Marcks had been disfigured in World War I, losing an eye, a leg, and the use of his right hand. In this war he had lost two sons. Now he lost all. Cautioned against driving in daylight, Marcks told a staff officer, "You people are always worried about your little piece of life." His wooden leg kept him from scrambling into a ditch when the staff car was strafed near Carentan on June 12. Marcks and the others were among 675 World War II German generals to die, including 223 killed in action, 64 suicides, and 53 who were executed, either by the Reich or by the Allies postwar.

"The Seventh Army is everywhere forced on the defensive," the OB West war diary recorded on June 10. Field Marshal von Rundstedt the same day ordered the "thorough destruction of Cherbourg harbor to begin forthwith," a scorched-earth decree intercepted by Ultra. Before leaving for Paris, Geyr recommended converting one-third of all panzers to antiaircraft gun carriers. Rail traffic had grown so sclerotic that of the 2,300 tons of food, fuel, and ammunition needed daily for Seventh Army, only 400 reached the front. A quartermaster had to borrow fifteen machine guns from the military governor of France for Cherbourg's defense.

Rommel too was unnerved. In an assessment for Rundstedt written June 10, even before the calamity at Panzer Group West's headquarters, he described the "paralyzing and destructive effect" of Allied air dominance from an estimated 27,000 sorties each day. (This was nearly triple the actual number.) He also feared another, bigger Allied landing in the Pas de Calais, and warned that the "material equipment of the Americans … is far and away superior." During a two-hour stroll through the La Roche–Guyon gardens, he told a subordinate that the best solution would be "to stop the war while Germany still held some territory for bargaining." Hitler disagreed, demanding of Seventh Army that "every man shall fight or fall where he stands."

"The battle is not going at all well for us," Rommel wrote Lucie on June 13, "mainly because of the enemy's air superiority and heavy naval guns." Almost as an afterthought he added, "I often think of you at home."

* * *

Rommel's lament would have delighted General Montgomery had he been privy to it. The 21st Army Group commander often tried to infiltrate the minds of his adversaries, to see the fight as they saw it. On the walls of his personal caravan, confiscated from a captured Italian field marshal in Tunisia, Montgomery had tacked up not only an invocation from *Henry V*—"O God of battles! Steel my soldiers' hearts!"—but photos of prominent battle captains. A visitor to Montgomery's encampment later counted "three of Rommel, one of Rundstedt, and about thirty of Monty."

On D+2 he had come home to Normandy, ancestral seat of the Montgomerys, including one forebear who accidentally killed King Henri II with a lance through the eye during a joust in 1559. His command post was tucked into the grounds of an imposing manor house with a hip roof and six chimneys at Creullet, four miles inland of Gold Beach. A sign on the twenty-foot iron gate advised "All traffic keep left"—a bit of England imported to France. Montgomery had also brought his beloved "betting book," a leather-bound volume in which innumerable small-stakes wagers—when Rome would fall, or the war end—had been entered in his tidy hand over the years; those resolved were marked "settled." And his pets: "I now have 6 canaries, 1 love bird, 2 dogs," he subsequently wrote, the latter a fox terrier named Hitler and a cocker spaniel named Rommel, both of whom "get beaten when necessary." The menagerie soon included a cow, ten chickens, and four geese; the fowl gave omelet eggs for his mess. Church services from the Creullet garden were broadcast to Britain, with Montgomery—"slender, hard, hawk-like, energetic," in an RAF officer's description—reading scripture to officers sitting in the flower beds.

"The way to fame is a hard one," he would write soon after the war. "You must suffer and be the butt of jealousy and ill-informed criticism. It is a lonely matter." Lonely he was, but fame's fruits pleased him: the newborns named Bernard, the marriage proposals from strange women, the beret craze in New York, and the fact that his Eighth Army flag from the Mediterranean had brought 275 guineas at auction, proceeds to the Red Cross. He was "Master" to his aides, "this Cromwellian figure" to Churchill, "God Almonty" to the Canadians, "the little monkey" to Patton, and, to a fellow British general, "an efficient little shit." Churchill's wife considered him "a thrilling and interesting personage … with the same sort of conceit which we read Nelson had," while the prime minister's physician concluded that "Monty wants to be a king." Eisenhower came to believe that "Monty is a good man to serve under, a difficult man to serve with, and an impossible man to serve over." That maxim would tidily sum up the Allied high command in Europe.

He had arrived for the second time in this war to direct a battle that simply *had* to be won—Alamein was the first—and as leader of what one historian called "the last great field army imperial Britain would send into battle," a force officially anointed as the British Liberation Army. His command included an equal measure of Americans, but parity would soon yield to a threefold Yankee preponderance on the Continent; the imbalance was fraught with tension and grievance.

Few could gainsay his virtues: "the power of commanding affection while communicating energy," a quality also attributed to Marlborough; a conviction that gratuitous casualties were unpardonable; a sense that he knew the way home. Omar Bradley, who would later grow to detest him, believed Montgomery in Normandy to be "tolerant and judicious," a model of "wisdom, forbearance, and restraint." If "tense as a mousetrap," in Moorehead's image, he could be charming, generous, and buoyant. George Bernard Shaw admired how "he concentrates all space into a small spot like a burning glass."

"I keep clear of all details, indeed I must," Montgomery told his staff. "I see no papers, no files. I send for senior staff officers; they must tell me their problems in ten minutes." When pressing for a decision, he leaned in with jaws snapping: "Do you agree, do you agree, do you agree?" His shrewd intelligence officer, Brigadier Edgar T. Williams, later wrote, "One was impressed by his sheer competence, his economy, his clarity, above all his decisiveness." A man of habit and discipline, Montgomery had been awakened after his usual bedtime of 9:30 P.M. only twice during the war, both occasions in Africa, and he did not intend to be roused again. He had not come to France to lose the battle, to lose the war, or even to lose sleep. Certainly he had not come to lose a reputation earned at the cannon's mouth, a reputation to which he was now chained.

Alas, "too many of his best qualities were matched by folly or misjudgment," as his biographer Ronald Lewin would write. He was "a man made to be misunderstood," one of those "whose qualities intensify rather than expand during the course of their lives.… Like Bottom, he could play the ass while unaware of his metamorphosis." His bumptious, cocksure solipsism already had infuriated sundry generals in the Mediterranean, both American and British. If, as Churchill posited, a gentleman was "someone who is only rude intentionally," then Montgomery was disqualified. Knowing and unknowing, he could offend, rankle, enrage. Hardly a fatal flaw for a subaltern brawling in the trenches, this defect proved near mortal in coalition warfare, when political nuance and national sensitivities could be as combustible as gunpowder.

He remained "very small-boyish," in the phrase of the military historian B. H. Liddell Hart, scarred by the cold, shrewish mother who was forever saying, "Find out what Bernard is doing and tell him to stop." (He would refuse to attend her funeral.) A bully boy at St. Paul's and Sandhurst, he never quite outgrew the athlete who could be disruptive and fractious unless he was made team captain. "As long as 51 percent of your decisions are right," he had recently told Shaw, "you'll succeed." In truth his generalship reaped a far higher winning percentage, but by his account all too often the brilliant plan was his, the brilliant victory was his, the golden laurels were his, his, his. Brigadier Williams proposed a motto for Montgomery: "Alone I done it."

"Enjoying life greatly," he wrote to his rear headquarters in Portsmouth on June 13, "and it is great fun fighting battles again after five months in England." Several thousand men were dead, and thousands more had been maimed. Here was a man made to be misunderstood.

* * *

The OVERLORD plan *was* largely his, and now he sought to make it work. Since early May, Montgomery had intended to lure as much of the enemy's weight as possible to the British and Canadian divisions on his left wing, allowing the American right to capture

Cherbourg and then thrust south of the Cotentin Peninsula. He reiterated the scheme to Field Marshal Brooke in London on June 11: "My general policy is to pull the enemy on to Second Army so as to make it easier for First Army to expand and extend the quicker." To gain maneuver room in the beachhead, he had called for "powerful armored force thrusts" on both left and right, beginning on D-Day afternoon, and he had been ready to sacrifice four tank brigades in an exchange of metal and men for space.

Yet after a week the beachhead remained pinched and crowded. Thirty-four Allied armored battalions and more than 300,000 troops had landed, with two thousand tanks, but they had nowhere to go. On the left, Second Army had blunted the German counterattack without building momentum or gaining elbow room. The feeble direct assault on Caen had failed, and a proposal to drop British airborne troops behind the city found no favor with Eisenhower's air chief, Leigh-Mallory, who feared heavy aircraft losses. "He is a gutless bugger who refuses to take a chance," Montgomery fumed to his chief of staff on June 12. "I have no use for him."

A flanking attack from west of Caen began with promise on June 13 when the British 7th Armored Division—the famed Desert Rats from Africa—captured Villers-Bocage, guided through the village streets by gendarmes and baying civilians. Then calamity: on the far side of town, Tiger tank fire raked the lead column; within fifteen minutes, more than a dozen British tanks and as many trucks had been gutted, most by a single audacious panzer commander, SS captain Michael Wittmann. Winkled out of Villers-Bocage, with losses exceeding fifty armored vehicles, the clumsy British attack collapsed. The chastened Desert Rats drew back behind the massed fires of 160 Anglo-American guns and 1,700 tons of RAF bombs that turned the village into a smoking hole.

"The whole show on land is bogged up," Leigh-Mallory told his diary on June 14. "The Hun has kicked us out of Villers-Bocage and there is no sign of any forward movement, or a chance of it." With the front lines static—Tommies would not tramp the rubbled streets of Villers-Bocage again until August—the battle soon turned into an attritional struggle of snipers and artillery barrages in what Moorehead called "a gunman's world." "Bloody murder, people dropping dead," a company commander wrote. "One of my platoons ran away and was brought back at pistol-point.… The same platoon ran away again." A British corporal's diary entries for three consecutive days in mid-June:

June 18: Day of Hell. Counter-attack.
June 19: Day of Hell. Counter-attack.
June 20: Day of Hell. Advanced. Counter-attacked.

For the Americans in the west, progress was a bit more heartening. The V and VII Corps, heaving inland from Omaha and Utah respectively, merged into a single front after the capture of Carentan and the repulse of a ragged counterattack by the 17th SS Panzer Grenadier Division on June 13. "Lousy & undersized & scurvy & dirty," a combat engineer wrote in describing a gaggle of prisoners, "with greasy hair & flat mouths & short necks." A four-day struggle by the 82nd Airborne to secure a bridgehead over the Merderet finally won through, although more than one thousand paratroopers remained missing, and the 101st Airborne could not account for nearly three thousand more. Here too the landscape was wrecked—"When I first saw Isigny, with walls toppling and everything afire," an officer reported, "I thought of Carthage"—but most civilians seemed agreeable even amid the ruins. "The people are friendly & called us Libirators," a sergeant from the 18th Infantry wrote in his diary.

Bradley late on June 13 halted V Corps's drive toward St.-Lô; with the British stalled around Caen, he feared vulnerable flanks if the American salient grew too frisky. He also amended his original plan to simply bash on toward Cherbourg. Instead, he chose to first cut the Cotentin Peninsula by shoving three divisions west to the sea, blocking German reinforcements and sealing escape routes. The 4th Division, with Ted Roosevelt, would continue hammering northward toward the port.

"I'm sitting in a little gray stone Normandy château," Roosevelt wrote Eleanor from a grim encampment fifteen miles southeast of Cherbourg. *Rough Rider* stood outside beneath a camouflage net, a sunburst hole in the windshield from a shell fragment.

> I don't suppose there's a man here who's thirty but they look old.… Behind me lies a hard fought field.… The dead lie sprawled in every attitude. Their uniforms are dirty and torn, their faces are like yellow clay, and unshaven. Brown, dried blood stains them.… Today's been one of those days in battle when the heebie jeebies are in order.

No one took a greater proprietary interest in the Norman battlefield than the dour Frenchman known as Deux Mètres. At 5:40 A.M. on Wednesday, June 14, Charles de Gaulle and fifteen companions left London's Connaught Hotel in six automobiles, including a luggage car carrying 25 million francs. Escorted by two motorcycle policemen, the convoy drove to Kings Stairs in Portsmouth. Just before nine A.M. the French destroyer *La Combattante,* flying a tricolor embroidered with De Gaulle's initials—"not altogether in accordance with regulations," as a petty officer conceded—singled up her lines and made for France.

In his own fashion, De Gaulle had mended fences with Churchill after their railcar tiff ten days earlier. He rescinded his ban on placing French liaison officers in Allied units and, he reported, "I wrote to Mr. Churchill to salve the wounds he had inflicted on himself." Now, in his belted uniform, leather tunic, and two-star kepi, he scanned the horizon with field glasses for a first glimpse of the country he had fled in 1940 under a Vichy death sentence. "Has it occurred to you, General," an aide asked aboard *Combattante,* "that four years ago to the day the Germans marched into Paris?" With a lift of his great beak, De Gaulle replied, "They made a mistake."

Montgomery had authorized a visit by De Gaulle and two minions; instead, a platoon of nineteen came ashore by DUKW at Courseulles on Juno Beach just before two P.M. Declining an invitation to dine—"We have not come to France to have luncheon with Montgomery," De Gaulle told an emissary from 21st Army Group—he instead drove by jeep to Creullet for a brief, awkward

conference. The French general "clearly believed small talk to be a vice," a British diplomat observed, and conversation often "flowed like glue." A British officer in Creullet reported that De Gaulle, "forgetting no doubt General Montgomery's dislike of smoking … smoked cigarettes all over his famous caravan." Montgomery was reduced to discussing his wall photos of Rommel. "I missed him in Africa," he told De Gaulle, "but I hope to get him this time."

Then it was off to Bayeux, where a loudspeaker truck announced, "General de Gaulle will speak at four o'clock at the Place de Château." Down the Rue Saint-Jean he walked, "a stiff, lugubrious figure," in Moorehead's description, preceded by saluting gendarmes on wobbly bicycles, and greeted with tossed peonies and cries of "*Vive De Gaulle. À bas les boches, à bas les collaborateurs.*" Several thousand people awaited him beneath the regimented lime trees in the grassy square. "At the sight of General de Gaulle," he later wrote in his memoirs—as usual referring to himself in the third person—"the inhabitants stood in a kind of daze, then burst into bravos or else into tears.… The women smiled and sobbed." Beneath the blue Cross of Lorraine, he proclaimed the resurrection of the French Republic, here in what he would call "our glorious and mutilated Normandy." His delegates —and the steamer trunk containing 25 million in banknotes—would remain to rebuild a government, with Bayeux as capital until Paris was unshackled. "The path of war is also the road to liberty and to honor," he told the cheering throng. "This is the voice of the mother country."

After belting out "La Marseillaise," he pressed on to Isigny and Grandcamp. But when Montgomery learned that the Frenchman had reserved fourteen hotel rooms in Bayeux, he furiously ordered him back to England, threatening to arrest and deport him personally. At 8:30 P.M. De Gaulle reluctantly reboarded *La Combattante*, convinced that "France would live, for she was equal to her suffering," while privately wondering, "How can one be expected to govern a country that has two hundred and forty-six different kinds of cheese?"

Montgomery wrote Churchill that De Gaulle's reception "was definitely lukewarm and there was no real enthusiasm." That was false. In fact, De Gaulle had stolen a march on the Anglo-Americans, demonstrating both his popular legitimacy and his principle that liberated France could be governed by Frenchmen rather than by another military occupation. "Blessed be he," the author André Gide would write, "through whom our dignity was restored."

Terror Is Broken by Terror

IN happier days, when the Reich was ascendant and the conquest of Britain seemed inevitable, Hitler had ordered construction of an elaborate command post for the German invasion of England in 1940. Tucked into a sheltered valley outside Margival, seventy-five miles northeast of Paris, Wolfsschlucht II, or W-II, was among more than a dozen elaborate Führer headquarters built in occupied Europe by a force of 28,000 workers pouring a million cubic meters of concrete. W-II rambled across ten square kilometers, with hundreds of offices, garrison rooms, and guest quarters appointed with thick rugs and new maple furniture. Engravings looted from Parisian art shops hung on the walls, and a bootjack could be found in every wardrobe. Larders held tons of canned meat and cherries, sugar, and tinned asparagus. Camouflage netting by the acre concealed the complex; rails leading into a train tunnel were painted rust-red to simulate disuse. Potemkin farmhouses, barns, and pig pens, and a grove of fake trees hid gun batteries on an adjacent ridge. An inconspicuous teahouse atop the Führer's personal bunker offered a fine view of Soissons Cathedral, five miles south.

Although W-II had never been used, locals deemed it "the most forbidden place in France," and it was here that Hitler ordered Rundstedt and Rommel to meet him for a secret conference on Normandy. The Führer and his entourage flew from Berchtesgaden in four Focke-Wulf Condors to Metz, then drove 175 miles in armored cars to Margival. (Venturing farther west by air seemed foolhardy when even SS soldiers had begun referring to predatory Allied fighter-bombers as "meat flies.") At nine A.M. on Saturday, June 17, Hitler received the two field marshals in an entry hall with cyclopean walls and a green tile fireplace.

This was Hitler's first return to France since 1940, and he looked like a man who was losing a world war: eyes bloodshot and puffy from insomnia, skin sallow, the toothbrush mustache a bit bedraggled. Aides reported that even his passion for music had waned. "It is tragic that the Führer has so cut himself off from life and is leading an excessively unhealthy life," wrote his propaganda minister, Joseph Goebbels. Often he checked his own pulse, as if fingering mortality; a quack dubbed the Reich Injection Master frequently administered sedatives or shots of a glandular concoction. He shunned bright lights and wore a cap with an enlarged visor to shield his eyes. "I always have the feeling of tipping to the right," he complained. He spoke of retirement, of a life devoted to reading, or meditating, or running a museum. His battle captains disappointed him, and of eighteen German field marshals and forty full generals, he would quarrel with more than half before the calamity ended. In Berlin it was rumored that he intended to take personal command in the west.

Hitler sat hunched on a wooden stool, fiddling with his spectacles and a fistful of colored pencils as Rommel opened the session with a glum progress report. The Allies had landed at least twenty divisions in Normandy—half a million men with 77,000 vehicles. The German Seventh Army opposed them with the equivalent of fourteen divisions, and those depleted units averaged under 11,000 men, compared with almost 17,000 a few years earlier. German casualties had reached 26,000, including more than 50 senior commanders. Allied naval guns could hit panzers more than twenty-five kilometers inland, while the enemy's superiority in matériel was at least as profound as it had been in Africa.

Anglo-American warplanes harried the battlefield to a depth of 150 kilometers or more; day marches in fair weather were suicidal. Rail traffic could get no closer to the beachhead than two hundred kilometers. Air attacks now immobilized nearly three hundred

trains a day. German aircraft reinforcements were shot down at a rate of three dozen each day, while others lost their way, ran out of fuel, or were destroyed by their own antiaircraft guns; of fifty-seven fighters that left Wiesbaden for Évreux, only three arrived. At dusk on Wednesday, British planes had dropped twelve hundred tons of explosives on Le Havre port, including six-ton "Tallboy" bombs, and more attacks followed on Thursday. Seven hundred French houses had been destroyed in Le Havre, but so too sixty-three German vessels, including attack boats and minesweepers.

Rommel pointed to a large map. Just this morning American tanks had crossed the Cherbourg–Coutances road; soon the Cotentin Peninsula would be severed, trapping forty thousand troops and dooming Cherbourg. If the Anglo-Americans broke free of the beachhead, either south of Caen or below the Cotentin, the road to Paris lay open and Brittany could be cut off.

Hitler stirred on his stool. "Don't call it a beachhead, but the last piece of French soil held by the enemy," he said calmly, adding, "Cherbourg is to be held at all costs."

Rundstedt said little, taciturn as usual in his trim gray uniform with the carmine trouser stripe that marked a general staff officer. If Rommel was an unlicked cub, then Rundstedt—at sixty-eight, the oldest German field marshal, he had been a Prussian soldier for half a century—was known as both *der alte Herr*, the old gent, and *der schwarze Ritter*, the black knight. The scion of Junker gentry and eight centuries of soldiering ancestors, he had served as an army group commander and then military governor in Poland. After receiving his marshal's baton in 1940, Rundstedt arrived in France to help plan SEA LION, the aborted invasion of England. During the subsequent attack on the Soviet Union, he commanded six field armies, captured the Ukraine, and then retired in late 1941 after a spat with Hitler, only to return in uniform as commander-in-chief for the west.

Beset by rheumatism, an ailing heart, and what one general called "psychic resignation," Rundstedt lived in the Parisian suburb of St.-Germain-en-Laye, where he slept late, read Karl May westerns, and addressed visitors in credible French or English. He disdained both the telephone and the "brown dirt" of Nazi thuggery; although loyal to Hitler, he was not above deriding him as "the Bohemian corporal," or denouncing the Führer's orders with his favorite epithet, "*Quatsch!*" Nonsense! He "would have been most happy if Prussia had remained alone," his chief of staff later observed, "just as before 1866." Rarely did he visit the front, considering the Atlantic Wall "a bit of cheap bluff." He preferred to command from a one–to–one million scale map on which the beachhead—or rather, that last bit of France held by the enemy—was hardly bigger than a playing card. His pessimism ran deep, and the past ten days had only deepened his gloom.

Now Rundstedt stepped forward to support the Marshal Laddie. A rigid defense of the Cotentin was doomed, he warned. Better to pull exposed German forces back inside Cherbourg's bristling fortifications. Hitler nodded in agreement, but believed southern approaches to the port should also be defended. "The fortress is to hold out as long as possible," he said, "if possible until about mid-July." He had earlier drawn a line with a red pencil across the peninsula below Cherbourg, declaring, "They must hold here."

What about further Allied landings? the Führer asked. Rundstedt thought another invasion was likely. Intelligence from Britain suggested that fifty more divisions had coiled for a second, larger blow. For this reason the German Fifteenth Army had diverted but a single division to Normandy; twenty-one others remained in the Pas de Calais, peering seaward. Yet even if the Allied force in Normandy had been bottled up for the time being, Rundstedt agreed with Marshal Rommel that it was "impossible to hold everything." Both men advocated evacuating southern France to the Loire River, shortening German lines and forming a mobile reserve of some sixteen divisions to safeguard the line of the Seine.

Hitler waved away the proposal—"You must stay where you are"—then changed the subject. Great things were afoot, he said, magical things. New jet-propelled aircraft would soon dominate the skies. New sea mines, triggered by pressure waves from passing ships and almost impossible to sweep, had already holed a number of Allied ships. But the greatest secret weapon had just come into play. Until now, the Reich had no answer for the Anglo-American bombers devastating the Fatherland; a single German city might absorb more bombs in twenty-four hours than had fallen on Britain in all of 1943. That was about to change.

Hitler had once dismissed rocketry as "imagination run wild," but in September 1943 his scientists had begun production of a self-propelled bomb in a Volkswagen factory. Technical glitches and thirty-six thousand tons of Allied explosives dropped on suspected launch sites had delayed the program, but German engineers found that simple mobile equipment using little more than a flimsy metal ramp would suffice to get the bomb off the ground. The weapon was a flying torpedo, twenty-five feet long with stubby wings, a crude jet engine, and a one-ton warhead. It could cross the English coast twenty minutes after launch; when the fuel ran dry, the engine quit and the bomb fell. Hitler called them "cherry stones."

The first salvo, launched from western France early Tuesday morning, had flopped: in Operation RUMPELKAMMER—JUNKROOM—just four of the initial ten bombs even reached England, and only one caused any casualties. But subsequent volleys showed greater promise. By noon on June 16, of 244 launches, 73 cherry stones had reached "Target 42," also known as London. This very morning the nameless weapon had been anointed the *Vergeltungswaffe*—reprisal weapon—or V-1. "Terror is broken by terror," the Führer liked to say. "Everything else is nonsense."

Rundstedt suggested that the V-1 be used against those half million enemy soldiers now massed in the beachhead. Rommel agreed. Hitler summoned a military expert who explained that the flying bomb's inaccuracy made any target smaller than London difficult to hit: the V-1s were aimed at Tower Bridge on the Thames, but the margin of error might be fifteen kilometers or more. Relentless pummeling of Target 42, Hitler told the field marshals, would "make it easier for peace." Panic would paralyze Britain, with psychological and political chaos.

They broke for lunch, a joyless repast taken in silence. Two SS guards stood behind the Führer's chair as he wolfed down a plate of rice and vegetables—first sampled by a taster—garnished with pills and three liqueur glasses of colored medicines. A sudden warning of sixty Allied planes approaching sent Hitler and the field marshals scuttling into a cramped bomb shelter for another leaden hour until the all-clear sounded.

Hitler walked Rommel to his car at four P.M., promising to visit him at La Roche–Guyon the next morning. “What do you really think of our chances of continuing the war?” Rommel asked with his habitual effrontery. Was it not time to consider coming to terms with the West, perhaps in common cause against the Bolsheviks? “That is a question which is not your responsibility. You will have to leave that to me,” Hitler snapped. “Attend to your invasion front.”

A laconic Rundstedt later summarized the conference with concision: “The discussion had no success.” Rather than press on to Rommel’s headquarters, Hitler would abruptly bolt for Bavaria after an errant V-1 flew east rather than west and detonated near the Margival bunker; it did little damage but brought court-martial investigators sniffing for possible assassins. Back in Berchtesgaden, the Führer bemoaned Rommel’s gloom. Had the Desert Fox lost his strut? “Only optimists can pull anything off today,” Hitler told his courtiers.

In fact, Rommel felt buoyant, having been beguiled once again by the master he served. He “cannot escape the Führer’s influence,” an aide wrote home. After supper on Saturday he walked the château grounds with his chief naval adviser, Vice Admiral Friedrich Ruge, to discuss the day while admiring the mother-of-pearl vistas along the Seine. Movies often were projected on a cave wall behind the castle, and the sound of laughter from staff officers watching a light comedy carried on the evening air. Ruge was reading *Gone with the Wind*, and Rommel enjoyed hearing the latest plot twists. In Scarlett, Rhett, and the doomed Confederacy, the admiral detected “endless parallels with our time” and an affirmation that “rebuilding after a total defeat was possible.”

Rommel retired to his chambers, beyond the ancient portcullis slot and the curiosity room with its glass cases of mounted insects and its stuffed hawk. In the morning he would dash off a “dearest Lu” note about Margival and the new V-1 campaign. “The long-range action has brought us a lot of relief,” he told her. “The Führer was very cordial and in a good humor. He realizes the gravity of the situation.”

* * *

Even on the Sabbath morn, antiaircraft crews across Target 42 manned their guns and scanned the southeastern sky for the apparition soon called Doodlebug, Hell Hound, Buzz Bomb, Rocket Gun, Headless Horseman, or, simply, It. Earlier in the week some gunners had crowed in jubilation at shooting down what they believed were German bombers but were now known to be pilotless bombs designed to fall from the sky. This Sunday, June 18, was Waterloo Day, and worshippers packed London churches to commemorate the British Army’s victory over Napoléon in 1815, and to petition for divine help again.

In the Guards Chapel at Wellington Barracks on Birdcage Walk, across from the former pig meadow and leper colony currently known as St. James’s Park, a full-throated congregation belted out the “Te Deum” and prepared to take communion from the bishop of Maidstone. “To Thee all angels cry aloud,” they sang, “the heavens and all the powers therein.” At 11:10 A.M. an annoying growl from those same heavens grew louder. Ernest Hemingway heard it in his Dorchester Hotel suite, where he was making pancakes with buckwheat flour and bourbon; from the window he looked for the telltale “white-hot bunghole” of a jet engine. Pedestrians in Parliament Square heard it and fell flat, covering their heads. Clementine Churchill, the prime minister’s wife, heard it in Hyde Park, where she was visiting the gun battery in which her daughter Mary volunteered. The Guards Chapel congregation heard it and kept singing.

Then they heard nothing—that most terrifying of all sounds—as the engine quit, the bunghole winked out, and the black cruciform fell. Through the chapel’s reinforced concrete roof It plummeted before detonating in a white blast that blew out walls, blew down support pillars, and stripped the leaves from St. James’s plane trees. A funnel of smoke curled fifteen hundred feet above the wrecked nave; rubble ten feet deep buried the pews even as six candles still guttered on the altar and the bishop stood unharmed. One hundred and twenty-one others were dead and as many more injured. Two thousand memorial plaques accumulated by Guards regiments during eons of war lay pulverized, although a mosaic donated by Queen Victoria remained intact: “Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life.”

Clementine Churchill hastened home to alert the prime minister, who was still reviewing papers in his bed at 10 Downing Street. “The Guards Chapel,” she told him, “is destroyed.” He hurried to Birdcage Walk and watched salvage teams lift out the dead. Among others, several musicians from the Coldstream Guards band were found in a side gallery, still holding their instruments as if in a wax tableau, surely faithful unto death. Churchill wept.

That afternoon he motored to Bushy Park and asked Eisenhower to redouble efforts against the flying bomb. In a memo on Sunday evening, the supreme commander ordered that the targets code-named CROSSBOW, comprising V-1 launch areas, supply dumps, and related sites, “are to take first priority over everything except the urgent requirements of the battle.” Yet more than thirty thousand attack sorties already had flown in the past six months, dropping the tonnage equivalent of four Eiffel Towers on CROSSBOW in an effort to eviscerate a program Allied intelligence knew was in development. Some launch sites were hit forty or more times before analysts realized that the V-1 could be fired from elusive mobile launchers. Ideas for defeating the flying bombs poured in from the public: harpoons fired from tethered Zeppelins; huge butterfly nets; projectiles filled with carbolic acid. One patriot offered to put a curse on German launch crews.

CROSSBOW countermeasures in the coming weeks were more conventional but fitfully efficacious. Two thousand barrage balloons were deployed on approaches to London in hopes that their tethering cables would bring down the bombs in flight; German engineers responded by fitting V-1 wings with *Kuto-Nasen*, sharp blades to cut the cables. Fighter pilots grew adept at shooting down the bombs with 20mm cannons—at 380 miles per hour, the RAF Tempest could overtake the V-1—and some even learned to use their wings to create enough turbulence to send a bomb spiraling out of control. Although a V-1 was considered eight times more difficult to bring down with ground fire than a German bomber, more than a thousand antiaircraft guns were shifted from greater London to the southeast coast for better fields of fire, along with 23,000 gunners and 60,000 tons of ammunition and radar

equipment. Sussex and Kent in the southeast became known as Bomb Alley.

Eisenhower's "first priority" edict dismayed his air force chieftains, who favored the uninterrupted smashing of German cities, oil facilities, and other strategic targets. The order stood: one-quarter of all combat sorties in the next two months would be flown against CROSSBOW targets, and crews would drop 73,000 tons of bombs—another eight Eiffel Towers. This enormous diversion of bombers had little impact on German launches; typically, one hundred V-1s were still fired at Target 42 each day. Few could doubt that the best solution was for Allied armies to overrun what was now dubbed the Rocket Gun Coast of northwestern France. "We must give the enemy full credit for developing one of the finer weapons of the war," the war diary for the U.S. Strategic Air Forces acknowledged. "People are beginning to get a bit jittery and jump when a door slams."

A British study calculated that "the average Londoner" could expect to be within a half mile of a V-1 detonation once a month, odds that did "not appear unduly alarming." Few Londoners saw it that way. V-1 explosions sucked workers from office windows, incinerated mothers in grocery stores, and butchered pensioners on park benches. A lieutenant who was recuperating in a hospital hit by a flying bomb wrote his wife that the blast "pushed through the walls and surrounded us, gripped us, entered us, and tossed us aside." He confessed to being "more afraid than I have ever been of anything in my life."

Soon not a pane of glass remained in city buses. Tens of thousands of houses were smashed. "The most horrible thing was the sound of burning timber," a witness reported, "the crackling, malicious sound, like little devilish laughs." Eisenhower complained in a note to Mamie that he had been forced into a Bushy Park air raid shelter nineteen times one morning. When a V-1 was heard during a performance at the St. James Theatre, one patron muttered, "How squalid to be killed at this disgusting little farce."

Fewer and fewer were willing to accept the risks. By August, 1.5 million Londoners would evacuate the city, more than during the Blitz. Of 10,492 V-1s ultimately fired at Britain, about 4,000 were destroyed by fighters, balloons, and antiaircraft guns, while others veered off course or crashed prematurely. But about 2,400 hit greater London, killing 6,000 and badly injuring 18,000. (Not one struck Tower Bridge.) It was, an official British history concluded, "an ordeal perhaps as trying to Londoners as any they had endured throughout the war."

How Easy It Is to Make a Ghost

WEST of Bayeux, the Norman uplands displayed the gnarled visage that had been familiar to Celtic farmers even before the Romans marched across Gaul. Over the centuries ten thousand tiny pastures had emerged from the limestone and pre-Cambrian schist, girdled by sunken lanes the width of an oxcart and enclosed with man-high hedgerows of thatched hawthorn roots, raspberry bushes, lupine, violets, and greasy mud. The sylvan noun for this terrain—"bocage," defined as a grove, or "an agreeably shady wood"—belied the claustrophobic reality of what one infantryman would call "the Gethsemane of the hedgerows." To Pacific veterans like General Collins, this jungly corner of France resembled Guadalcanal.

"I couldn't imagine the bocage until I saw it," Omar Bradley would say after the war. That failure of imagination was in fact a failure of command: Allied generals had been amply forewarned, and even Caesar had written of hedgerows that "present a fortification like a wall through which it was not only impossible to enter but even to penetrate with the eye." More recently, an August 1943 military study on French topography included two dozen photographs of "Norman bocage"; in mid-April, a First Army report described "embanked fields interspersed with thickets" and advised that tactics for fighting "through bocage country should be given considerable study." Aerial photos of an eight-square-mile swatch revealed some four thousand hedged enclosures. Yet, as in the amphibious assaults on North Africa and Sicily, planners preoccupied with gaining the hostile shore devoted little thought to combat beyond the dunes. "We were rehearsed endlessly for attacking beach defenses," a battalion commander later wrote, "but not one day was given to the terrain behind the beaches, which was no less difficult and deadly."

Now that difficult, deadly terrain played hob with First Army's timetable. As Rommel had predicted, American troops cut the Cotentin Peninsula early on June 18, after two regiments from the 9th Infantry Division lunged west to the sea near Barneville. Three divisions abreast in Collins's VII Corps then began clawing north toward Cherbourg, thirteen miles distant. In the south, the 29th Division commander on June 17 reported, "I feel we'll be getting to St. Lô before long." Alas, no: although barely five miles from the American line, that linchpin town would remain out of reach for another month.

Tank companies now reported that to advance 2,500 yards typically required seventeen tons of explosives to blow holes through nearly three dozen hedgerows, each defended like a citadel parapet. "Each one of them was a wall of fire," a soldier in the 30th Infantry Division wrote, "and the open fields between were plains of fire." An officer noted that "the enemy can be ten feet away and be undetected. He can fight up to spitting range." That intimacy neutralized Allied air and artillery advantages. "There were snipers everywhere," Ernie Pyle reported, "in trees, in buildings, in piles of wreckage, in the grass. But mainly they were in the high, bushy hedgerows." A sliding scale of rewards awaited the proficient German sniper, according to a SHAEF document: "10 corpses—100 cigarettes; 20 corpses—20 days' leave; 50 corpses—Iron Cross 1st Class and wristwatch from Himmler."

Enemy panzers, artillery, and savage small-arms fire made western Normandy ever more lethal. The poet-infantryman Louis Simpson described the "short, velvet bursts" of German machine pistols, and added: "The purr of the bullets is wicked." A soldier hesitant to cross an open pasture to a farmhouse wrote, "I lie in the grass pondering whether to take the chance. Yes-no-yes-no." In this "land of great danger," as Pyle called it, no weapon was more feared than the mortar—described by one soldier as "a soft siffle, high in the air, like a distant lark, or a small penny whistle, faint and elf-like, falling." Mortar fragments caused 70 percent of the battle casualties among four U.S. infantry divisions in Normandy; radar that could backtrack the parabolic flight of rounds to the

firing tubes would not be battle-ready for months. Close combat heightened the animal senses; like many riflemen, Simpson sniffed for a smell "we have come to recognize as Germany—a compound of sausage and cheese, mildewed cloth, and ideas. Some ideas stink. Every German hole … exudes the smell of their philosophy."

French civilians waving white strips of don't-shoot cloth scurried to their chicken coops during lulls, gathering eggs that they sold to GIs for the equivalent of eight cents apiece. Soon even the henhouses were blown to smithereens, birds "plastered to the walls like pats of mud." Almost 400,000 buildings in Normandy would be demolished or badly damaged. Livestock casualties included 100,000 cows; bulldozers buried them by the herd, as stiff-legged as wooden toys. Many towns were beaten to death—"as if somebody had pulled them down with a gigantic rake," in one description; pilots reported smoke tinted red from pulverized brick. In St.-Sauveur "there was not a building standing whole," Don Whitehead reported. A medic told his family in Indiana of a smashed village "deserted and silent. Not the silence that you know, but a more profound and depressing silence."

Each contested town, like each hedgerow, added more dead, wounded, and missing to a tally that in OVERLORD's first fortnight exceeded eighteen hundred each day for the U.S. First Army alone, or one casualty every forty-seven seconds. A French nurse told her diary of wounded men "white as sheets, their nostrils tight, their eyes rolled back. Wide bleeding lacerations, shattered limbs, internal injuries, faces in shreds." Sharp spikes in combat exhaustion—a term coined in Tunisia to supplant the misnomer "shell shock"—reflected the stress of bocage combat; by mid-July, such neuropsychiatric cases would account for one of every four infantry casualties in 21st Army Group, with the worst of them "crouched down like hunted animals" in battalion aid stations. First Army by early August would also investigate more than five hundred cases of suspected "S.I.W."—self-inflicted wounds—typically a gunshot to the heel, toe, or finger. "A fine division was burned up taking the village of La Haye–du–Puits," one lieutenant colonel wrote. "There are 100 such villages between here and Paris. Have we 100 divisions to expend on them?"

There was nothing for it but to pound away. "Things are always confusing and mysterious in war," Pyle wrote. "I squatted there, just a bewildered guy in brown, part of a thin line of other bewildered guys." Captain Keith Douglas, a British veteran of North Africa and perhaps the most poignant poetic voice of the Second World War, had written of killing the enemy, "How easy it is to make a ghost."

And how easy to become one: Douglas died south of Bayeux, slain by a mortar splinter so fine that his body appeared unblemished. "I buried him close beside the hedge near where he was killed," a chaplain wrote. "Being quite alone and reading the brief Order of Service over the grave affected me deeply."

* * *

Only the sharpest weather eye could have noticed a faint tremor in the barometer glass on Sunday night, June 18. Despite a cold front descending from Iceland and a restless Mediterranean depression, SHAEF forecasters predicted fair skies and calm seas along the invasion coast for several days, in keeping with the benign season. *Channel Pilot,* a bible for mariners sailing the Norman coast, put the chance of a June gale near zero. Another analysis of storm records since the 1870s rated the odds at three hundred to one.

More than two hundred ships now plied the invasion anchorage each day. Though men and machines blackened the beaches, the 218,000 tons of supplies landed since D-Day amounted to 30 percent less than planned. Confusion reigned, both in jammed British ports and on the Far Shore, where ship captains often anchored off the wrong strand, manifests went missing, and petulant officers in small boats puttered from ship to ship demanding to know the contents of each bottom. Surfeits piled up: one quartermaster depot would report receiving 11,000 brooms, 13,000 mops, 5,000 garbage cans, and 33,000 reams of mimeograph paper. An officer was heard pleading, "Please, oh, please, stop sending me stuff I don't need."

But shortages were more common, ranging from compasses and helmet nets to shovels. Bradley's units desperately needed another six thousand M-7 grenade launchers. Thousands of tons of jumbled cargo was unloaded from nineteen ships in an urgent search for a few hundred bundles of maps. No need was more pressing in the bocage than 81mm mortar ammunition. The failure to find enough rounds in the anchorage led to a desperate requisition for nearly all of the ammo, of every sort, in the United Kingdom. Soon 145,000 tons lay offshore; troops rummaged through every hold for the right type, but strict firing limits would be imposed on eight divisions anyway. First Army on June 15 had also placed severe restrictions on artillery fire missions after some batteries, expected to shoot 125 rounds per gun daily, fired four times as much in only twelve hours.

Salvation appeared to be rising from the sea off beaches Omaha and Gold, where a pair of gigantic "synthetic harbors" took shape after two years of planning under excruciating secrecy. In one of the most ambitious construction projects ever essayed in Britain, twenty thousand workers at a cost of $100 million had labored on the components; another ten thousand now bullied the pieces across the Channel and into position with huge tow bridles, hawsers, and 160 tugs. Each artificial harbor, Mulberry A and Mulberry B —American and British, respectively—would have the port capacity of Gibraltar or Dover. Among other novelties, seventy-five derelict ships ballasted with sand had sortied from Scottish ports for Normandy in what was described as a "final journey of self-immolation"; they included superannuated merchantmen, antique side-wheelers, and ancient battleships like the British *Centurion* and the French *Courbet,* flying an enormous tricolor. Scuttled in three fathoms parallel to the shore, the vessels formed long breakwaters called Gooseberries.

To this suicide fleet were added 146 immense concrete caissons, each weighing up to six thousand tons. Towed like floating apartment buildings across the Channel, the caissons were then sunk near the Gooseberries to form additional breakwaters. Also shipped to the Norman coast were ten miles of floating piers and pierheads, with telescoping legs to rise and subside with the tide. In all, two million tons of construction materials went into the Mulberries, including seventeen times more concrete than had been poured for Yankee Stadium in the 1920s. Skeptics yawped—"One storm will wash them all away," warned Rear Admiral John L. Hall, the senior salt at Omaha—but unloading had begun at Mulberry A on the night of June 16. Liberty ships and the like could now

unburden more than half a mile from shore, and LSTs could be emptied in under an hour. At last, the OVERLORD beaches seemed rational and right.

And then, as if to rebuke those intent on taming the sea, the old gods objected. That trembling barometer abruptly plummeted, gray squalls and a rising wind piled seas against the lee shore, and one of the worst June gales in eighty years began to blow. By midmorning on Monday, June 19, unloading had halted; by noon, H.M.S. *Despatch* logged winds at Force 8—almost forty miles per hour—and seas exceeding five feet. Anchors dragged and fouled, tethers snapped, antiaircraft crews were evacuated from the Mulberry gun platforms after waves carried off handrails and catwalks. Tuesday was fiercer, with seas over nine feet racing down the Channel. Oil spread along the Gooseberries calmed neither sea nor nerves. "Storm continues if anything worse than before," a British lieutenant wrote. "In considerable danger of being swept away."

Swept away they were, pier by pier, and pierhead after pierhead, with the sound of steel grinding steel above the howling wind. Runaway vessels smashed into the pontoon piers despite shouted curses and even gunshots from sailors manning Mulberry A. Of three dozen steel floats—each two hundred feet long and twelve feet wide—twenty-five broke loose to rampage through the anchorage off Omaha. Pounding waves broke the backs of seven ships in the Omaha Gooseberry, including the venerable *Centurion*, and many concrete caissons fractured. Distress calls jammed all radio channels and the plaintive hooting of a hundred boat whistles added to the din. "This is a damnable spell we are going through," Admiral Ramsay told his diary on Wednesday, June 21.

After eighty hours, the spell broke. "The shriek dropped to a long-drawn sigh," a witness wrote. "In the west a rent in the sky revealed blue." Force 7 gusts continued through midafternoon Wednesday, but the Great Storm was spent, the havoc wreaked. "Not even a thousand-bomber raid could have done as much damage," a Navy salvage officer concluded. Eight hundred craft of all sizes had been tossed ashore, including a small tanker deep in the dunes, and dozens more were sunk. From Fox Red to Dog Green, every exit off Omaha was blocked by sea wrack. More than two miles of articulated steel pier, under tow from England when the blow began, were lost at sea.

Mulberry A was a total loss, washed ashore or bobbing as flotsam around the Bay of the Seine. Some scraps would be salvaged for Mulberry B, which had been less grievously injured because it was shielded by shoals and—the British believed—because the Gooseberries were positioned with greater care than the Yanks had exercised. Regardless, Ramsay decried the Mulberries as "an even more formidable abortion than I had anticipated," while Admiral Hall called them "the greatest waste of manpower and steel and equipment … for any operation in World War II."

Mulberry B ultimately did prove useful: by summer's end nearly half of Britain's supply tonnage was arriving in France through the artificial harbor, which was completed in mid-July and came to be known as Port Winston. But for the moment the calamity had prevented 140,000 tons of stores and 20,000 vehicles from reaching France. Montgomery estimated on the evening of June 22 that the Allied buildup was "at least six days behind," a deficit that would not be overcome until late July. Second Army had three divisions fewer ashore than planned, delaying a renewed attack on Caen, and Rommel had exploited the bad weather to reinforce the beachhead. So sharp was the cry for ammunition that hand grenades were flown across the Channel, and Bradley ordered eight coasters deliberately beached so that holes could be slashed in their hulls for quick unloading.

With the beaches again in disarray, the capture of Cherbourg loomed ever more urgent. A First Army study had warned that if the port was not seized quickly, no more than eighteen Allied divisions could be supported, a shortfall that would allow the enemy to "overwhelm us." Cherbourg alone was believed capable of supplying up to thirty divisions in combat. Small wonder that Eisenhower's headquarters now described it as "the most important port in the world."

* * *

Great misfortune had befallen Cherbourg over the centuries. Proximity to England brought pillage by the hereditary enemy in 1295, 1346, and 1418. In 1758, an English fleet burned every French ship in the harbor and demolished the fortifications. The town's stature and prosperity slowly rebounded. Bonaparte's mortal remains had arrived in Cherbourg en route to Paris from St. Helena in 1840, inspiring a movement to rename the town Napoléonville. Nothing came of it but an equestrian statue. Winter gales frustrated even the great military engineer Vauban in his efforts to enlarge the port with a breakwater; only on the third try did he succeed, using gigantic granite blocks fitted together with hydraulic cement. In April 1912, R.M.S. *Titanic* sailed from Cherbourg on her star-crossed maiden voyage. A further port expansion, financed with German reparations after World War I, had built the berths used by other great transatlantic liners between the wars. With vengeful pleasure, Rommel and his division seized these docks and the rest of the seaport in 1940.

Now Cherbourg was again besieged. By the night of June 21, three divisions of Collins's VII Corps were chewing at the concrete and field fortifications embedded in a collar of steep hills around the city. French farmers tossed roses at GIs wearing a two-week growth of beard and uniforms stiff with dirt. The troops "seemed terribly pathetic to me," wrote Ernie Pyle, "with guns in their hands, sneaking up a death-laden street in a strange and shattered city in a faraway country in a driving rain." U.S. Army sound trucks played Strauss waltzes to encourage nostalgia in enemy ranks while broadcasting surrender appeals, a tactic known as hog calling. Give-up leaflets called "bumf," for "bum fodder"—toilet paper—promised ample food and included pronunciation aides such as *"Ei sörrender," "Wen ken ai tek a bahs?," "Sam mor koffi, plies,"* and *"Senks for se siggarets."*

An American ultimatum expired without reply at nine A.M. on Thursday, June 22, just as the Great Storm ebbed. Shortly after noon, five hundred Allied fighter-bombers strafed and skip-bombed the town from three hundred feet, followed by an hour's pummeling by four hundred medium bombers. Sherman tanks crushed recalcitrant enemy riflemen, and by Friday all three U.S. divisions had penetrated the city from east, west, and south behind white phosphorus, satchel charges, and flame throwers. A horse was shooed into the city carrying a German corpse lashed across the saddle with a note: "All you sons-a-bitches are going to end up

this way."

In radio messages decrypted by Ultra, the garrison commanding general, a heel-clicker named Karl-Wilhelm von Schlieben, advised Rommel that his 21,000 defenders were burdened with two thousand wounded suffering from "bunker paralysis" and "greatly worn out." Although Cherbourg still had a two-month supply of food, including five thousand cows that had been rustled into the city, a scheme to ferry eighty tons of ammunition aboard four U-boats fell apart. Rommel's reply, at one P.M. on Sunday, June 25, offered no solace: "You will continue to fight until the last cartridge in accordance with the order from the Führer."

Schlieben's miseries multiplied. Just as Rommel's command arrived, three Allied battleships, four cruisers, and eleven destroyers led by a minesweeper flotilla appeared on the horizon. On a glassy sea under light airs, the bombardment force split into two squadrons. Then, for the first time since the battle of Casablanca in November 1942, the Allied fleet commenced what swabs called a fire-away-Flanagan against enemy guns of comparable weight and range. Approaching west to east with destroyers laying smoke, the cruiser *Quincy* steamed to within seven miles of shore in the misbegotten belief that most enemy batteries had already been silenced. The bright wink of a muzzle flash suggested otherwise, and thirty seconds later a 150mm shell plumped the sea close aboard to prove the point.

Great salvos soon arced back and forth, "more concentrated firing toward and from the beach than I had ever expected to see," one officer reported. Fifteen rounds or more straddled *Quincy,* splashing green water across the forecastle as she and her sisters violently zigged and zagged in a boil of white wakes and bow waves. Some twenty German shells also straddled *Nevada,* that angry specter from Pearl Harbor; two clipped her superstructure yet hardly scratched the paint. A Spitfire spotting for H.M.S. *Glasgow* had trouble finding an offending battery through clouds of dust and smoke, but German gunners saw the cruiser clearly enough to lob shells into her port hangar and upper works, causing her to retire for a brief licking of wounds. More sound and fury than destruction resulted from three hours of hard shooting, although both the skipper and the executive officer of H.M.S. *Enterprise* were wounded by shell fragments. Some three hundred 6-inch shells finally quieted the most pugnacious German battery west of the port, but without killing it.

Six miles east of Cherbourg, a quartet of 11-inch guns in Battery Hamburg comprised the most powerful enemy strongpoint on the Cotentin, with a range of twenty-five miles. The second bombardment squadron had steamed to within eleven miles of the coast when shells abruptly smacked the American destroyers *Barton* and *Laffey,* in the engine room and port bow, respectively; both projectiles were duds. Less fortunate was U.S.S. *O'Brien,* hit just before one P.M. by a Hamburg shell that detonated in her command center, killing or wounding thirty-two men. Firing became general, with the battleship *Texas* straddled across the bow, then straddled across the stern, then hit in the conning tower by an 11-inch killer that mortally wounded the helmsman and hurt eleven others. *Texas* spat back more than two hundred 14-inch shells, among the eight hundred rounds dumped on Battery Hamburg by three P.M.

Yet by the time the Allied fleet swaggered back across the Channel, only one of the four enemy guns had been disabled. Despite "a naval bombardment of a hitherto unequalled fierceness," as a German war diary described the shelling, Fortress Cherbourg could not be reduced from the sea. The port would have to be taken by a land assault.

In this General Collins was ready to oblige. With Ted Roosevelt at his elbow, he watched the naval action on Sunday afternoon from a captured redoubt east of town, four hundred feet above the church steeples and gray stone houses with red roofs. "The view of Cherbourg from this point is magnificent," Collins wrote his wife a day later:

> We could see smoke from fires being directed into Fort du Roule, which is the central bastion of the German defenses, on a high bluff overlooking the city. Over to the right were the inner and outer breakwaters with their old French forts guarding the entrance from the sea.… [Cherbourg] lay in a bowl from which billows of smoke poured up in spots where the Germans were demolishing stores of oil and ammunition.

Joe Collins was where he always wanted to be: on the high ground. From the heights, he often told subordinates, "you can make the other fellow conform." With a slicked-down cowlick, a gift for persuasion, and a nonchalance about casualties, he was at forty-eight the youngest of the thirty-four men who would command a U.S. Army corps in World War II. Gavin considered him "runty, cocky, confident, almost to the point of being a bore"; to First Army staff officers, he was "Hot Mustard." The tenth of eleven children born to an Irish émigré who peddled nails, buckshot, and animal feed from a New Orleans emporium, Collins had graduated as an infantryman from West Point in 1917, commanded a battalion in France after the Great War at age twenty-two, and made his name in the South Pacific, whence he still suffered malarial shakes. "All the tactics you will ever need," he insisted, could be learned by studying General Winfield Scott's campaign from Veracruz to Mexico City. Self-improvement remained a lifelong impulse, and in the coming months he would place orders with a Washington bookstore for *Moby-Dick, Moll Flanders,* William Faulkner's *Sanctuary,* Émile Zola's *Nana,* and a stack of other novels. He also collected a kit bag of aphorisms, notably "An order is but an aspiration, a hope that what has been directed will come true." The virtues attributed to him by the West Point yearbook a quarter century earlier aptly described his command style: "first, concentration and decision; second, rapid and hearty action."

Now Cherbourg was nearly his—the high ground, the low ground, and the ground in between. Fort du Roule fell as he watched, although engineers would spend another day coaxing bitter-enders from the basements with white phosphorus down ventilation shafts and TNT lowered by wire to blast gun embrasures. GIs fought to the docks with grenades, bayonets, and 155mm rounds fired point-blank down the Boulevard Maritime.

General von Schlieben had by now retreated into a subterranean warren cut from a rock quarry just west of Fort du Roule. More than eight hundred comrades jammed the fetid chambers, leaving "hardly room enough to swing a cat." At three P.M. on June 26 Schlieben radioed Rommel a final message: "Documents burned, codes destroyed." Less than two hours later, an Army tank

destroyer platoon fired twenty-two rounds at the tunnel entrance from three hundred yards. “It was good,” a gunner murmured after the last shot.

Within minutes a German soldier bearing a white flag the size of a bedsheet emerged, followed by a staggering column of troops with hands raised and a tall, gray-faced Schlieben, his greatcoat flecked with mud and powdered masonry. In his pocket was found a printed menu from a dinner honoring him in Cherbourg a few weeks earlier: lobster and hollandaise, pâté de foie gras, roast lamb, peaches, champagne. Now, at the 9th Division command post, he was offered K-ration cheese and brandy as Robert Capa and other photographers circled round. When Schlieben complained, *auf Deutsch,* “I am tired of this picture-taking,” Capa lowered his camera with a histrionic sigh and replied, also *auf Deutsch,* “I too am tired. I have to take pictures of so many captured German generals.”

* * *

Cherbourg, a SHAEF officer reported, proved a “looter’s heaven.” Vast stores of “everything from shaving cream to torpedoes” were found in Fort du Roule, along with silks, cigars, radios, and soap in unmailed packages to families in Germany. The Hôtel Atlantique held great stocks of carbon paper, envelopes, and shoes, both wooden and leather, while Schlieben’s cupboard in the Villa Meurice proffered beef tongue, bacon, artichokes, and canned octopus. Soldiers also found ten thousand barrels of cement—used for V-1 sites—a million board feet of lumber, and, most important, intact storage tanks for over 600,000 barrels of oil. MPs quickly secured warehouses stacked with thousands of cases of champagne, cognac, wine, and American whiskey. Bradley decreed that every soldier in Normandy would eventually receive two bottles of wine and three of liquor, but many chose not to wait for their allotment—VII Corps toasted the capture of Cherbourg with countless bottles of Hennessy and Benedictine. “The U.S. Army went on one big drunk,” a Navy captain recorded. “There were drunken voices singing, rifle shooting all night … with frequent detonation of hand grenades.”

Those who had inspected the port felt less celebratory. SHAEF planners initially hoped to capture Cherbourg on D+7 and to reopen the harbor three days later; in the event, the city fell on D+20, the first port operations took three weeks to begin, and Allied engineers would spend months repairing a facility proudly described by Berlin as “completely wrecked.” The German genius for destruction, honed with practice at Bizerte and Naples, produced what an American colonel called “a masterful job, beyond a doubt the most complete, intensive, and best-planned demolition in history.” Trainloads of explosives had wreaked damage far beyond even the darkest Allied expectations. Electrical and heating plants were demolished, along with the port rail station and every bridge, every building, every submarine pen. Each ship basin and dry dock was blocked with toppled cranes and more than a hundred scuttled vessels, ranging from fishing smacks to a 550-foot whaler. Twenty thousand cubic yards of masonry rubble choked the Darse Transatlantique, where once the *Queen Mary* and the *Normandie* had docked. One jetty was punctured with nine holes fifty feet in diameter, while craters measuring one hundred feet by seventy feet had been blown in the great quays.

Countless booby traps seeded the ruins, and more than four hundred mines of half a dozen varieties would be lifted or triggered in the roadstead. Some mines remained dormant for nearly three months before arming, so eight magnetic and eight acoustical sweeps of the port had to be completed each morning for the rest of the summer. A tedious, dangerous reconstruction began within hours of Schlieben’s surrender, despite delays in getting divers, tugs, and engineering gear from Britain. Eventually Cherbourg would shoulder over fifteen thousand tons of matériel a day, double an early SHAEF projection and more, but not until mid-July would the first barge enter the port, not until mid-August would the first Liberty ship dock, and not until mid-October would the deepwater basins be in good enough repair to berth big cargo carriers. “One cannot avoid noticing,” an Army study acknowledged, “that things did not go according to plan.” Cherbourg kept the Allied armies in France from wasting away, but the paramount task of enlarging and provisioning that host would bedevil Eisenhower for the rest of 1944.

For the moment the conquerors savored what Churchill called “this most pregnant victory”: the capture of OVERLORD’s first big objective, at the price of 22,000 VII Corps casualties. Before the Hôtel de Ville, near the statue of Bonaparte on his prancing charger, Collins on June 27 made a brief speech in ill-pronounced French and presented the mayor with a tricolor sewn from American parachutes. Civilians were instructed to surrender both firearms and pigeons—to prevent messages to the enemy—and to stay indoors after sunset. A band played various national anthems in dirge time before the Army brass strolled through the Place Napoléon to congratulate their filthy, hollow-eyed soldiers, one of whom muttered, “Make way for the fucking generals.”

Prisoners by the acre dumped their effects—knives, lighters, dispatch cases—and shuffled past jeering, spitting Frenchmen “thinking up new lines of invective” to bellow, as Alan Moorehead reported. From nearby cages they would be herded onto LSTs and any other floatable conveyance for transport to British camps, still singing ballads from the Seven Years’ War. Hitler was so enraged at the fall of Cherbourg that he threatened to court-martial the Seventh Army commander, who abruptly died on June 29, ostensibly from a heart attack, although many suspected poison, self-administered.

GIs also sorted through effects, including a low mountain of bedrolls stenciled with the names of soldiers killed in action and stacked along a stone wall near the Louis Pasteur Hospital. Quartermasters separated government gear from personal items, filling cardboard boxes with photos of smiling girls, harmonicas, and half-read paperbacks. A pocket Bible carried a flyleaf inscription: “To Alton C. Bright from Mother. Read it and be good.” Staff Sergeant Bright, from Tennessee, could no longer be good because he was dead.

In a nearby nineteenth-century French naval hospital, bereft of both water and electricity for the past week, doctors found a morgue jammed with decomposing German, French, and American corpses. Amputated limbs filled buckets and trash cans in the corridors and underground surgeries. “There were dirty instruments everywhere, dirty linens,” wrote a nurse from the 12th Field Hospital. Patients lay “stinking in their blood-soaked dressings and excreta.” A *Life* magazine reporter wrote, “Perhaps more men should know the expense of war, for it is neither a fit way to live nor to die.” He added, “The war in the West had barely begun.”

Two bordellos promptly opened in Cherbourg, both operating from two P.M. to nine P.M. and one designated “whites-only.” MPs kept order among long queues of soldiers. *Les tondues,* women shorn for *collaboration sentimentale* during the German occupation, were paraded on a truck labeled “The Collaborators’ Wagon.” They were the first of some twenty thousand who would be barbered in France this summer; their tresses burned in piles that could be smelled for miles.

Such stenches lingered in the nostril, to be carried beyond Cherbourg and beyond the war: the stink of diesel exhaust, of cordite, of broken plaster exposed to rain, of manure piles and the carcasses of the animals that shat them before being slaughtered by shellfire. An infantryman named John B. Babcock later catalogued the scents wafting around him: “cosmoline gun-metal preservative, oil used to clean weapons, chlorine in the drinking water, flea powder, pine pitch from freshly severed branches, fresh-dug earth.” Also: “GI yellow soap and the flour-grease fumes” from field kitchens, as well as those pungent German smells, of cabbage and sour rye, of “stale-sweat wool [and] harsh tobacco.” Even if the war in the west had barely begun, here was the precise odor of liberation.

3. LIBERATION

A Monstrous Blood-Mill

ONE million Allied soldiers had come ashore at Normandy by early July, yet the invasion increasingly resembled the deadlock at Anzio or, worse, the static trench warfare of World War I. Tentage vanished, replaced by labyrinthine burrows roofed with double layers of pine logs and sandbags. "They keep lobbing mortars at us," Lieutenant Orval E. Faubus informed his diary. "It is a world no civilian can ever know." Though Cherbourg had been taken, the beachhead on July 1 was only six miles deep in places. Caen and St.-Lô remained in German custody, and daily casualties in Normandy exceeded those of the 1917 British force in Flanders during the third battle of Ypres, which included the hellish struggle at Passchendaele. A German general who had fought in both world wars now described the Normandy struggle as "a monstrous blood-mill, the likes of which I have not seen in eleven years of war." Omar Bradley lamented, "I can't afford to stay here. I lose all my best boys. They're the ones who stick their heads through hedges and then have them blown off."

Eisenhower's planners had given little thought to the Allied recourse if OVERLORD led to stalemate. A few options were considered, including another airborne and amphibious assault outside the Normandy lodgement. But the only credible solution, a SHAEF study concluded, was to bash on: to "concentrate all available air and land forces for a breakout from within the captured area."

The supreme commander's jitters grew with each new casualty list. He switched cigarette brands to Chesterfields, but still smoked several score a day, contributing to an ominous blood pressure reading of 176/110. An Army doctor prescribed "slow-up medicine"; his ears rang anyway. He ate poorly and slept badly, not least because V-1 attacks often forced him into a renovated shelter at Bushy Park where paint fumes gave him headaches. A flying bomb on July 1 detonated two hundred yards from Eisenhower's office, sucking panes out of the windows and peeling off a swatch of WIDEWING's roof. In a red leather journal, the supreme commander jotted brief, unhappy notes: "Bradley's attack to south now postponed to July 3. How I suffer!… Tried to play bridge. Awful." During a visit to the beachhead in early July, he stayed at Bradley's command post, padding about at night in red pajamas and slippers; one afternoon he squeezed into the back of a P-51 Mustang from which the radio had been removed and for forty-five minutes flew west, then south, then east toward Paris for an aerial view of the battlefield. "Marshall would raise hell if he knew about this," he admitted. Upon being told that a German officer captured at Cherbourg refused to disclose where mines had been laid, Eisenhower said, "Shoot the bastard"—an order neither intended nor enforced.

Montgomery had long envisioned an attritional battle, which he called "the Dogfight," between the invasion assault and a breakout from the beachhead. Eisenhower chafed anyway. In a "dear Monty" note on July 7, he wrote:

> I am familiar with your plan for generally holding firmly with your left, attracting thereto all of the enemy armor, while your right pushes down the peninsula and threatens the rear and flank of the forces facing the Second British Army.… We must use all possible energy in a determined effort to prevent a stalemate.… I will back you up to the limit in any effort you may decide upon to prevent a deadlock.

Montgomery's reply a day later affected a bluff insouciance, despite 1,200 casualties that day in the Canadian 3rd Division alone, including 330 killed. "I am, myself, quite happy about the situation.… I now begin to see daylight," he wrote, adding:

> I think the battle is going very well. The enemy is being heavily attacked all along the line, and we are killing a lot of Germans. Of one thing you can be quite sure—there will be no stalemate.

So it had begun. This direct, professional exchange concealed an enmity that already infected the Allied high command and would grow more toxic. In his diary, Montgomery complained that Eisenhower "cannot stop 'butting in' and talking—always at the top of his voice!!… I like him very much but I could never live in the same house with him; he cannot talk calmly and quietly." Montgomery professed to spend one-third of his day "making sure I'm not sacked" and another third inspiriting the troops, which "leaves one-third of my time to defeat the enemy."

At SHAEF, the insistence by "Chief Big Wind"—as Montgomery was privately nicknamed—that the battle was unfolding as planned fed a seething disgruntlement, particularly among British air commanders. Montgomery had become "something of a dictator, something of a mystic," wrote one. "It was difficult to track him down and to get an audience with him." Eisenhower's deputy, Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur W. Tedder, told Churchill in late June that fewer than half of the planned eighty-one squadrons

were flying from Normandy because only thirteen airstrips had been built. “The problem is Monty, who can be neither removed nor moved to action,” Tedder advised his diary. Persistent rain added to the gloom. A scowling Leigh-Mallory compulsively tapped his portable barometer, which always seemed to be falling. “Things are now egg-bound,” he complained, “and they may become glacial.”

Churchill too grew waspish. Fearful that Britain’s contribution was undervalued even as the American preponderance grew, the prime minister demanded that Canadian dead and wounded be “included in the British publication of casualties, otherwise they will be very readily assumed to be part of the American casualties. The point is of Imperial consequence.” The V-1s pummeling London made him bloody-minded, and he seemed to consider countering either with biological weapons—anthrax looked promising—or with a more conventional campaign that publicly listed one hundred small, lightly defended German towns, which would be obliterated “one by one by bombing attack.”

Neither idea found favor with the British high command, mostly for pragmatic reasons, but Churchill on July 6 insisted that “a cold-blooded calculation” be made about whether Allied poison gas would shorten the war while also retaliating against CROSSBOW targets. “It would be absurd to consider morality on this topic when everybody used it in the last war without a word of complaint from the moralists or the church,” Churchill argued. He also noted that bombing cities had been proscribed in the Great War but “now everybody does it.… It is simply a question of fashion changing as she does between long and short skirts for women.” Strategic planners in London replied that gas “would not be likely to have more than a harassing effect” on the Third Reich, while it would provoke widespread chemical warfare, including attacks on London. When Eisenhower learned of the discussion he ended it—for the moment—with a tart note to Beetle Smith, his chief of staff: “I will *not* be party to so-called retaliation or use of gas. Let’s for God’s sake keep our eye on the ball and use some sense.”

* * *

Montgomery’s battle plan required a great lunge by the U.S. First Army to deepen the bridgehead, and in this he was disappointed. With high hopes but little imagination, Bradley ordered three corps abreast to attack south down three macadam roads beginning July 3. On the western edge of the Allied line, VIII Corps—with three divisions on a fifteen-mile front—took ten thousand casualties in twelve days while advancing only seven miles through swamp and bocage. Bitten witless by mosquitoes, “everyone was more or less confused,” one unit reported.

Beyond Omaha Beach, on the left flank of the American sector, XIX Corps managed to cross the steep-banked Vire River and an adjacent canal in rubber boats. But a push for the high ground west of St.-Lô was thwarted by congestion, fratricide, and panzers counterattacking with sirens screaming. In the American center, VII Corps fared no better—“That is exactly what I *don’t* want,” Joe Collins said after one ill-fated action. Casualties included fourteen hundred men from the 83rd Division during its first day in combat. One regiment ripped through five colonels in a week, and more Norman fields were upholstered with what Hemingway called “the deads.” An officer describing war in Normandy wrote simply, “The sadness of it is always with me.” Combat skills proved suspect across First Army, from map reading to armor-infantry collaboration. Senior leadership seemed especially thin: in the space of two months, Bradley would relieve nine generals, including two division commanders from the 90th Division alone.

The hapless 90th was about to be assigned a new commander, although he did not know it yet. During the Sicilian campaign, Bradley had deemed Ted Roosevelt “too softhearted to take a division,” but now he reconsidered and so recommended to Eisenhower. Roosevelt had been frantically busy as the military governor of Cherbourg; he had also been helping the 4th Division manage the five thousand casualties it had suffered since D-Day. The rifle company with which he had landed on Utah Beach had lost more than 80 percent of its men, he wrote Eleanor, and five of the original six officers. “Our best young men are being killed,” he told her. “Let us hope the sacrifice will be to some purpose.” With his fifty-seventh birthday approaching, he confessed to “a desperate weariness,” and in a July 10 letter home complained that it had been “raining for God knows how long. It still is, for that matter.” But, he added, “now I’ve got a little home in a truck. It was captured from the Germans … and I’ve got a desk and a bed in it. The inside is painted white.” As always, he drew solace from *The Pilgrim’s Progress:* “Maybe my feet hurt and the way is hard, but I must go on.… My soul’s peace depends on it.”

After a conference with Collins on Wednesday afternoon, July 12, Roosevelt was delighted by the arrival at 7:30 P.M. of his son, Quentin, an officer in the 1st Division. For more than two hours in the spiffed-up German lorry “we talked about everything,” Quentin wrote, “home, the family, my plans, the war.” Hardly an hour after his son left, Roosevelt suffered a severe coronary thrombosis. The 4th Division commander, Tubby Barton, was summoned at 11:30 P.M. “He was breathing but unconscious when I entered his truck,” he wrote Eleanor a few hours later. “I sat helpless and saw the most gallant soldier and finest gentleman I have ever known expire.… The show goes on. He would have it so and we shall make it so.”

An Army half-track bore Roosevelt to his grave on Friday, Bastille Day, past homemade American flags hanging from cottage sills and a sign declaring, “*Merci à Nos Libérateurs.*” The division band played “The Son of God Goes Forth to War” before two buglers, one echoing the other, followed with “Taps.” *Rough Rider* was returned to the motor pool for reissue with the name painted over. The show went on.

Roosevelt never knew of the division command assignment sitting on Eisenhower’s desk, nor did he know of the Medal of Honor that would be awarded for his valor on Utah Beach. Eisenhower and Bradley favored reducing Barton’s recommendation to a Distinguished Service Cross, but George Marshall made certain that his old World War I comrade received the higher honor. “He had the Elizabethan quality,” a family friend wrote Eleanor. “A range of mountains, a fine line of poetry, a nobility of act all caught an answering fire in his spirit. I don’t believe there are many people in the world like that.” And now, one less.

* * *

The German travel writer Karl Baedeker had once described St.-Lô as "a very ancient place," fortified by Charlemagne and "picturesquely situated on a slope on the right bank of the Vire." Although sacked by Vikings, by Plantagenet kings, and, in 1574, by Catholic reactionaries who put Calvinist apostates to the sword, St.-Lô had always recovered its charm—until June 6, 1944, when Allied planes turned the town to powder. By dawn of D+1, eight hundred citizens were dead, and the bombers returned every day for a week, further pulverizing chokepoints to discomfit enemy convoys bound for the beachhead. Entire families lay buried beneath the rubble; others fled, and now no more than ten living inhabitants remained where there had been eleven thousand.

Eight roads and a rail line still radiated from St.-Lô, making it the most vital terrain in First Army's zone and the most ardently defended segment on a fifty-mile front. Artillery and "big-stuff bombs," in one reporter's phrase, turned the encircling hills into a "moth-eaten white blanket." Smoke draping the stone-ribbed fields reminded an Army observer of woodcut illustrations of Civil War battlefields. For more than a week GIs struggled to advance five hundred yards a day, through splintered apple orchards and across charred ridgelines defended by German paratroopers in baggy gray smocks. Bradley on July 11 had posited that enemy defenders were "on their last legs," and a final killing blow was ordered across a ten-mile sector. The 29th Infantry Division, martyrs of Omaha Beach, would aim for St.-Lô itself under the command of a pugnacious, bullet-headed major general named Charles Hunter Gerhardt, Jr.

"Everything about him was explosive: speech, movements, temper," one major wrote. "He was a detector and eradicator of lethargy." A classmate of Collins and Ridgway's at West Point, Gerhardt was known both as "Loose Reins," for his riding style as a polo player, and as "General Chickenshit," for his fussbudget ways. Even senior officers were required in training to answer five questions, including "describe the resuscitation of a man from drowning." While commanding a division in the United States, Gerhardt had required a suntan for all soldiers through shirtless daily exposure (7.5 minutes each for chest and back), and he still offered a ten-shilling bounty to any deadeye who could outshoot him with pistol or carbine. One subordinate described him as "hard, exacting, aggressive, percolating in his own vitality," while another considered him "completely off the beam. He would make a dashing Indian fighter." He had coined the division motto—"Twenty-nine, let's go!"—but even admirers would later joke that Charlie Gerhardt really commanded a corps of three divisions: one in the field, one in the hospital, and one in the cemetery.

By late afternoon on July 15, attacking from north and east, the 29th spearheads closed to within two miles of St.-Lô. Fire teams snaked through the bocage, one infantry squad in each field with a single Sherman tank creeping in first gear as a gesture toward stealth. Engineers then blew gaps in the hedgerows with slabs of TNT and ammonium nitrate as riflemen rushed forward. Sudden bursts of German fire knocked men "backward as though jerked with a rope," an officer wrote, to be answered with artillery that chopped enemy paratroopers into pieces "difficult to reconcile" with a whole man. Tracers stabbed the woodlot thickets like hot needles, and the roar of gunfire built until it "seemed like the end of everything," a private first class wrote. "There was no memory of any time before being here, under fire." A trooper with three days in the line was now deemed a veteran.

Before dawn on Monday, July 17, Gerhardt ordered all nine rifle battalions to attack. The 3rd Battalion of the 116th Infantry—at less than half strength, with barely four hundred men, but still the strongest of the nine—slipped through the fog in a column of companies to the hamlet of La Madeleine, a mile east of St.-Lô. Just after eight A.M. the Germans lashed back with mortar fire, killing the new commander, Major Thomas D. Howie, and his two radiomen. Only artillery and dive-bombing P-47 Thunderbolts prevented panzers from overrunning the battalion; GIs marked the front line with undershirts and yellow smoke, then rummaged through hedges for plasma bags dropped from Piper Cubs. Replacement troops in new olive-drab uniforms hurried forward carrying rifles with quartermaster tags still fluttering from the trigger guards—"an unbearably sorry scene," a young officer later recalled.

But German defenses were melting away. General Dutch Cota, that stalwart of Omaha Beach, led a task force into St.-Lô from the northeast at six P.M. on July 18, storming through a cemetery where the Famille Blanchet crypt became a command post, with eighteen-inch marble walls and a stone sarcophagus suitable for a map table. "Here among the dead," wrote Don Whitehead, "was the safest place in all St. Lô." After weeks in the bocage, troops capered into town up the Rue de Bayeux "with all the joy of a band of claustrophobes released from a maze," A. J. Liebling added. German artillery still dropped from the southern heights—Cota's fingertips dripped blood after a shell fragment slashed his arm—but GIs soon secured seventeen strongpoints. On Gerhardt's order, Howie's body arrived by jeep at dusk. Draped with a flag, the corpse was laid on a rubble bier that once had been the abbey church of Ste.-Croix.

Hardly a trace of sidewalk or street pavement remained in St.-Lô. "You couldn't identify anything any more," the poet Jean Follain wrote. "The persistence of durable objects had been solidly defeated." Fragments of stone houses with painted shutters now dammed the Vire, the correspondent Iris Carpenter reported. "On this lake floated planks from floors, timber from roofs, furniture, mattresses … and an assortment of dead horses, cows, cats, and dogs. Everything was gray." A GI added, "We sure liberated the hell out of this place." The Irish writer Samuel Beckett, who would arrive as a Red Cross volunteer, estimated that 2,000 of 2,600 buildings had been "completely wiped out" in what he described as "the capital of ruins." An Army list of booby-trapped items included "fence posts, teacups, doorbells, jackknives, purses, drawers, light switches, automobile starters, window curtains, inkwells." Added to that were the first booby-trapped German bodies, often with a grenade pin tied to a souvenir Luger or a fountain pen. GIs were warned that "bodies being picked up on the battlefield should be jerked by a rope at least 200 feet long."

The capture of St.-Lô ended Bradley's mid-July offensive. All in all, it was a disappointment: at a cost of forty thousand casualties, a dozen divisions had advanced between three and seven miles. "If there was a world beyond this tangle of hedgerows," a survivor wrote, "you never expected to live to see it." Most discovered, as a battalion commander put it, "a sinking feeling that the German army would take much more destroying."

But St.-Lô was no Pyrrhic victory. The offensive, in Montgomery's phrase, had "eaten the guts out of the German defense" and

deprived Rommel of a road network critical to maneuvering east and west. An unfinished letter found on a dead German from the 9th Parachute Regiment described comrades chewing cigarettes and gnawing the ground in terror. “We thought the world was coming to an end.”

In a green Norman meadow at La Cambe, Gerhardt would lead the living in singing “Nearer, My God, to Thee,” as nearly two thousand division dead were honored beneath whitewashed wooden crosses and stars of David. An adjutant called the roster of those killed, each name answered in turn by a surviving comrade: “Here!” Then as the division band played “Beer Barrel Polka,” the men gave a great roar—*Twenty-nine, let’s go!*—and turned back to the battle.

* * *

Rommel rose with the sun as usual on Monday, July 17. As a precaution against Allied bombers he now often slept with the rest of his staff in paneled rooms tunneled into the chalk cliffs behind La Roche–Guyon. A dachshund, Elbo, dozed under the luggage stand; a good dog, Rommel told Lucie, “can take your mind off your troubles.” After a quick breakfast in the château, he clattered down the fifteen stone steps to the courtyard and climbed into the front seat of the Horch. His aide, a sergeant, and another officer sat in back, peering up for enemy fighters as the big convertible pulled through the gate and swung west past Giverny, where, in a calmer age, Claude Monet had painted his water lilies. The field marshal planned to inspect two divisions at Falaise, then visit two of his corps command posts near Caen.

Troubles he had, and neither a dog nor the Brahms radio concert he had listened to the previous evening could take them away. For a field marshal who often drove two hundred miles or more each day to visit his battle commanders, simply venturing beyond La Roche–Guyon had become perilous. All German road convoys and most single vehicles now moved only during the brief midsummer nights; from Normandy to Holland, roadsides were excavated with “funk holes,” slit trenches every sixty yards into which drivers and their passengers could dive whenever strafing planes appeared.

“Militarily things aren’t at all good,” he had written Lucie. “We must be prepared for grave events.” Caen finally had fallen on July 9, after British planes gutted the city with six thousand half-ton bombs in forty minutes. “There was nothing more to see,” a witness reported, “only more dust.” Eight thousand French refugees now jammed a lycée and the reeking Abbaye-aux-Hommes, founded by William the Conqueror as penance for marrying his cousin Matilda. German troops still held Caen’s southern outskirts, but the infantry strength of the 12th SS Panzer Division equaled a single battalion. The Murder Division had been murdered, at least a bit.

On any given day now, Army Group B might suffer as many losses as Rommel’s Afrika Korps had in the entire summer of 1942. Only 10,000 replacements had arrived to compensate for 100,000 German casualties in Normandy over the past six weeks. A British cannonade of 80,000 artillery rounds at Caen on July 10 had been answered with 4,500 German shells, all that were available. Rommel had seen a battalion commander riding horseback for want of a car or of fuel. “The divisions are bleeding white,” his war diary recorded. Berlin anticipated 1.6 million German casualties on all fronts from June through October, far more than the Fatherland could sustain.

That bloodletting had intensified with a Soviet summer offensive, launched on June 22 with close to two million Red Army troops, 2,700 tanks, and 24,000 field guns. In less than two weeks, an enormous pincer attack had obliterated twenty-five German divisions, ripping a hole 250 miles wide in the front. On this very Monday, tens of thousands of German prisoners would shuffle through Moscow in a winding column led by captured Wehrmacht generals.

Rommel’s disaffection grew day by day. Hitler “will fight without the least regard for the German people until there isn’t a house left standing in Germany,” he told his confidant Admiral Ruge. The field marshal was aware of talk, dangerous talk, of a separate peace on the Western Front, and perhaps a coup; he opposed making Hitler a martyr but would consider taking command of the armed forces if necessary. In early July, Rundstedt had been removed as commander in the west, ostensibly after pleading age and infirmity, but in fact because he had advised Berlin to “make an end to the whole war.” Hitler gave him a medal and a 250,000-mark gratuity to go take the cure at Bad Tölz. “I will be next,” Rommel predicted.

Rundstedt’s successor, Field Marshal Günther von Kluge, known as Cunning Hans, had commanded an army group in the east for two years and brought to France a reputation as a fearless and tenacious innovator. In their first meeting at La Roche–Guyon, he accused Rommel of “obstinate self-will,” but within a week concurred that “the situation couldn’t be grimmer.” On July 15, Rommel composed a three-page report for the high command, in which he wrote: “The situation on the Normandy front is growing worse every day and is now approaching a grave crisis. The unequal struggle is approaching its end.” Kluge endorsed the assessment in a cover note to Berlin.

Fried eggs and brandy awaited Rommel at midafternoon on Monday when the Horch pulled beneath a camouflage net at the I SS Panzer Corps command post in St.-Pierre-sur-Dives, twenty miles southeast of Caen. Nothing he had seen during the day’s travels had lifted his gloom, including strafed Wehrmacht trucks smoldering on the road shoulders. When Kurt Meyer, commander of the 12th SS Panzer, pleaded for Luftwaffe support, Rommel snapped in frustration, “Who do you think you’re talking to? Do you think I drive with my eyes closed through the country?”

During a conference at St.-Pierre with General Sepp Dietrich, the onetime butcher’s apprentice and beer-hall brawler who commanded the panzer corps, Rommel warned that a “large-scale attack” might come as early as that night. British armor and bridging equipment had been seen and heard massing in the Orne valley despite efforts to conceal the noise with artillery barrages. Rommel suggested that layered antitank defenses ten miles deep could blunt the attack and prevent the Allied bridgehead from merging with a second invasion force, still expected in the Pas de Calais.

Dietrich agreed that an attack seemed imminent: limestone under the Caen plain acted as a sounding board, amplifying enemy

tank sounds for any ear pressed to the ground. “You’re the boss, Herr Feldmarschall,” he said in his Bavarian twang. “I obey only you—whatever it is you’re planning.”

Just after four P.M., Rommel climbed back into the Horch, spreading a map over his knees. Bad news from St.-Lô required him back at La Roche–Guyon. “I’ve won Dietrich over,” he murmured to his aide.

The car raced east on Route D-4, past cap-doffing peasants and oxcarts flying white flags. Outside Livarot the driver detoured onto a farm track, then rejoined the main road three miles north of Vimoutiers. On the northern horizon, half a dozen enemy planes could be seen darting like dragonflies.

Abruptly the sergeant in the rear seat cried out: two Spitfires had spotted the Horch and were closing from behind, streaking just above the treetops. Flooring the accelerator, the driver had nearly reached a narrow lane behind a screen of poplar trees when the first gun burst flashed from the lead fighter’s wings at five hundred yards. Slugs stitched the left side of the Horch, mortally wounding the driver in the shoulder and arm. The car careered downhill, slamming against a tree stump before flipping into a ditch. Flung against the windshield and then from the car, Rommel lay in the roadbed twenty yards behind the wrecked Horch.

He was grievously hurt, bleeding from the ears with a fracture at the base of his skull, two more fractures at his left temple, a shattered cheekbone, a damaged left eye, and lacerations of face and scalp. Carried to a nearby gatekeeper’s lodge, he was driven to Livarot after a forty-five-minute search for another car. The local pharmacist, found sipping his evening calvados in a café on the town square, dressed the field marshal’s wounds, injected him with etherated camphor for shock, and pronounced him hopeless. Still unconscious, Rommel was loaded into another staff car and driven to the Luftwaffe hospital in Bernay, twenty-five miles distant.

There he would in fact survive, slowly recuperating in room 9 until stable enough to go home to Lucie in Herrlingen. Not for weeks would Reich propagandists announce that he had been injured in a car wreck, omitting the role of enemy fighters. For Erwin Rommel, the Führer’s marshal, the war was over.

* * *

Rommel was right about the Allied attack: at five A.M. on Tuesday, July 18, a morning fine and bright, 1,000 Lancaster bombers swept across the glistening Channel at three thousand feet, the first of 4,500 planes that were to smash a narrow corridor southeast of Caen that Tuesday. “Aircraft were spread out in a great fan in the red dawn, coming in over the sea,” Leigh-Mallory told his diary after watching from the cockpit of a small plane. “Soon there was nothing but a pall of dust and smoke.” A German panzer crewman “saw little dots detach themselves from the planes, so many of them that the crazy thought occurred to us: are those leaflets?… Then began the most terrifying hours of our lives.”

The first bombing wave alone dropped six thousand tons, with some targets calibrated to receive twenty-five pounds of high explosives per square yard in what one captain described as “a canopy of noise” that left German survivors stone deaf. The “little dots” fell and fell, and a few flaming aircraft fell too, but at length the formations made for home with what a Tommy called “a dreadful, unalterable dignity.” At 7:45 A.M. the shrill cry went out among the armored ranks massed along the Orne—“Move now!”—and the biggest tank battle fought by Britain in World War II had begun.

Operation GOODWOOD massed three British and Canadian corps—some 76,000 troops and 1,370 tanks—for a southward dagger thrust into five German divisions with 230 tanks plus 600 guns and heavy mortars. The iron-plated British VIII Corps would lead the attack with 700 tanks in three armored divisions. Montgomery, who had ample tanks but ever dwindling British infantry reserves, told subordinates that he intended “to draw the main enemy forces into the battle on our eastern flank … so that our affairs on the western flank may proceed the easier.”

That modest, credible battle plan—entangle Rommel with the British Second Army so the U.S. First Army could burst from the beachhead—was beset with tactical and conceptual complications. Flinging tanks insufficiently protected by infantrymen against entrenched antitank defenses had long proved perilous if not ruinous. Montgomery also told General Miles Dempsey, the Second Army commander, “to engage the German armor in battle and ‘write it down’ to such an extent that it is of no further value to the Germans as a basis of the battle”—that is, to attrit the enemy unto annihilation. British armored spearheads “should push far to the south towards Falaise,” some twenty miles from Caen, while spreading “alarm and despondency.” To Field Marshal Brooke in London, Montgomery predicted “a real ‘show down’ on the eastern flank.… With 700 tanks loosed to the S.E. of Caen, and armored cars operating far ahead, anything may happen.” War correspondents believed that a “Russian style” breakthrough could carry Second Army one hundred miles or more, nigh unto Paris.

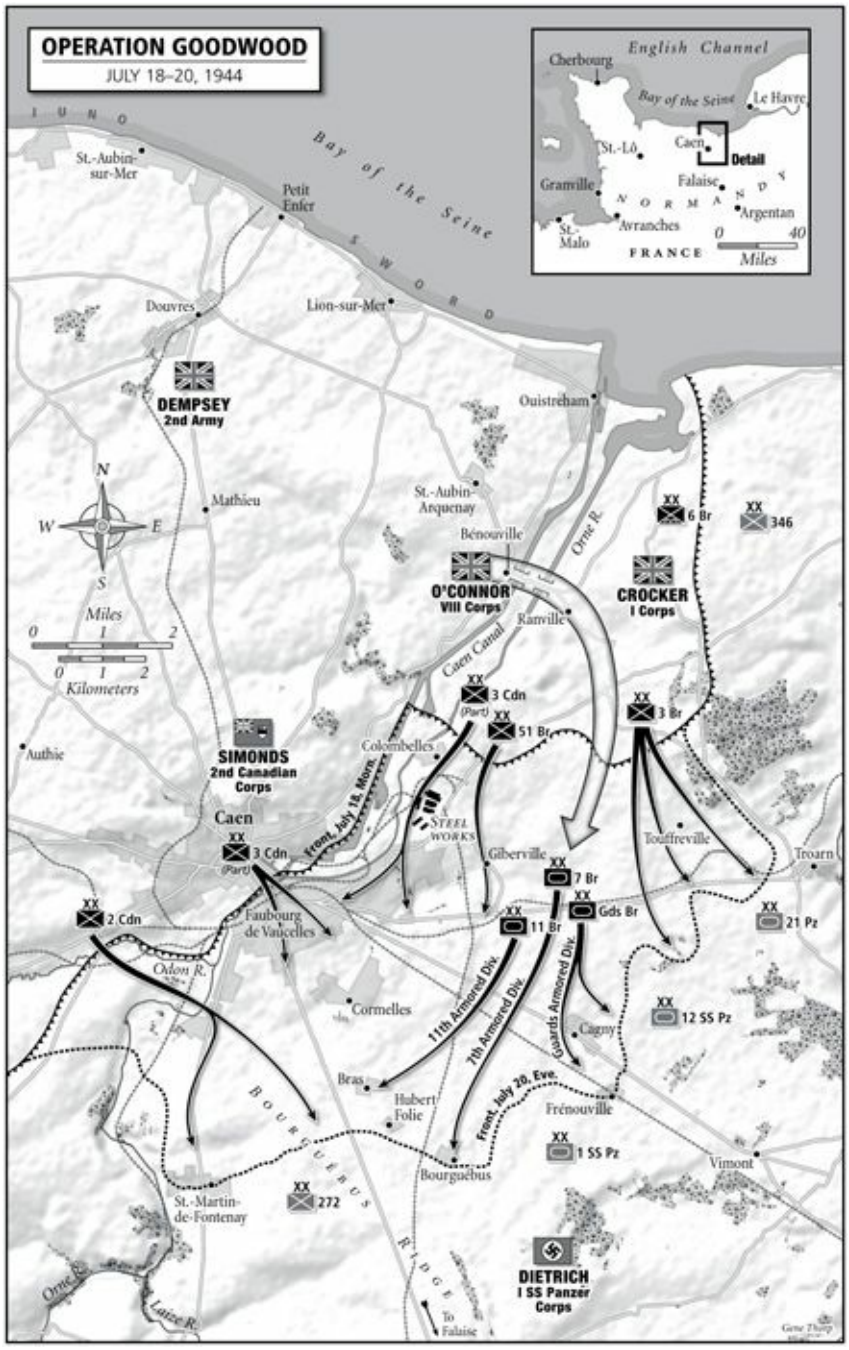
Montgomery had overegged the pudding. Many subordinates and at least some of his superiors anticipated a titanic battle of exploitation and pursuit. Eisenhower, told by Montgomery that the “whole eastern flank will burst into flames,” promised in return that the Yanks would continue “fighting like the very devil, twenty-four hours a day, to provide the opportunity your armored corps will need.” The supreme commander added in a cable: “I am viewing the prospects with the most tremendous optimism and enthusiasm. I would not be at all surprised to see you gaining a victory that will make some of the ‘old classics’ look like a skirmish between patrols.… Forgive me if I grow a bit exuberant.”

To wheedle those four thousand warplanes out of skeptical air commanders, Montgomery felt compelled “to paint his canvas in rather glowing colors, and to magnify or even over-emphasize the result to be gained,” Dempsey said after the war. “In doing this he did not take Eisenhower into his confidence.” Brigadier Williams, the British intelligence chief, added that Montgomery “had to be overconfident all the time in order to get people willing to be killed.”

Move now! Willing or not, the tanks trundled forward “like a fleet raising anchor,” prow to stern, debouching from minefield gaps marked with white tape. The 11th Armored Division led, followed by the Guards and 7th Armored Divisions, crossing three Orne bridges at a rate of one vehicle every twenty seconds: a grinding choreography that soon frayed. Through burning, breast-high wheat

they rolled, in a hole-and-corner terrain of fruit trees and stone villages, on ground that inclined south and allowed the hidden enemy perfect observation with long fields of fire. Some 760 Royal Artillery guns howled and stamped, and "shells roared through the air like angry women swishing out of a room," as one captain wrote. The rolling barrage swept forward three hundred yards every two minutes in what a tank crewman described as "a solid grey wall of shellbursts.… It was hard to believe that anything could live in it." But soon the barrage outran the tank squadrons, slowed by a rail embankment two miles from the start line, and the Germans, rattled but not unhinged by an air bombardment less apocalyptic than Montgomery had hoped, recovered their wits.

Torrid orange sheaves of flanking fire came from Cagny, a battered hamlet on the left edge of the attack corridor. Here, at ten A.M., Lieutenant Colonel Hans von Luck, a Rommel acolyte still wearing his dress uniform after three days' leave in Paris, found an intact Luftwaffe battery of four 88mm antiaircraft guns. With drawn pistol, Luck forced the reluctant battery commander to shift his tubes into an apple orchard—"You are going to fight the tanks"—and rounds began zipping through the wheat stalks "like torpedoes." The 11th Armored Division reported "great difficulty in locating where the fire came from," and before long sixteen Shermans stood burning in the grain. Cagny would hold out until early evening, a wicked nuisance.



Many more tanks soon burned farther south, past a second rail embankment that gave onto the main enemy gun line along the Bourguébus Ridge, inevitably pronounced Buggersbus. Carpet bombing had left both the ridge and SS reinforcements mostly unscathed, and fighter-bomber pilots found that camouflaged gun pits using flashless, smokeless powder were almost invisible. German defenders lay low when British scouts nosed forward, and "as a result the reports of no opposition in the Bourguébus area sent by scout cars were erroneous," the 11th Armored Division commander later explained. "Violent, impassable fire" subsequently swept the tank fleet, and soon "the horizon was blazing with Shermans," a Coldstream Guards lieutenant recalled.

"Some tank crews are on fire and rolling about on the ground trying to put their clothes out," the gunner John M. Thorpe informed

his diary. “Now all the tanks in front of us are burning fiercely.… Huge smoke rings leave their turrets, rising high into the windless sky.” Another Tommy wrote that “burnt and injured men kept coming back through the corn. We gave them a drink of water, and told them to keep going.” A corporal described the scorched Bourguébus slope as “a horrible graveyard of burning tanks.”

* * *

Montgomery took a different view. “Operations this morning a complete success,” he cabled Field Marshal Brooke just after four P.M. “Situation very promising and it is difficult to see what the enemy can do at present.” To Eisenhower he added, “Am very well satisfied with today’s fighting on eastern flank. We definitely caught the enemy off balance.… Second Army has three armored divisions now operating in the open country.” He gave locations for those divisions that were pure fantasy: VIII Corps had scratched out six miles on a front hardly wider than a knife’s edge, at a cost of two hundred tanks. Perhaps misled by blithe early dispatches from the field, he also issued a public statement in time for the BBC news at nine P.M.: “Second Army attacked and broke through. General Montgomery is well satisfied.” The London *Times*’ banner headline on Wednesday morning, July 19—“Second Army Breaks Through”—was outdone only by the *Daily Mail*’s: “Armor Now Swarming into Open Country.”

Montgomery’s cheery assurance sparked jubilation at Bushy Park, but that turned to ashes in the mouth when the true battle map came clear. On Wednesday, Kay Summersby wrote in her desk diary: “E worried because Monty has stopped going. E does not feel well, high blood pressure.” The day’s events would only make E feel worse. Bourguébus Ridge was reported “groaning with enemy,” including antitank reinforcements that ignited more Sherman pyres on the Caen plain. Dempsey’s two flanking corps, the British I to the east and the Canadian II to the west, found hardly more success: repeated attacks by the former on Troarn failed, and the latter seized the southern skirts of Caen before fighting off a ferocious counterattack. In one trapped brigade, according to a Canadian account, “men who were still alive lay hiding in the wheat” until they could creep to safety. At first light on Thursday, Tommies finally occupied the village of Bourguébus but advanced no farther. At four P.M. a thunderstorm broke “with tropical violence,” the advent of a two-day downpour that put paid to Operation GOODWOOD. Sergeants passed around the rum rations as soldiers crept across the battlefield to collect the dead.

The offensive had liberated another thirty-four square miles of France, plus the rest of Caen; this enlarged the beachhead sufficiently to bring the Canadian First Army vanguard to Normandy but hardly constituted the breakthrough hoped for by SHAEF. More than two thousand Germans had been captured, and, as Montgomery envisioned, additional panzer forces were lured to the Allies’ eastern wing. Yet Sepp Dietrich lost only seventy-five tanks and assault guns, by no means the evisceration of German armor that Montgomery also desired. The so-called death ride of the armored divisions cost more than four thousand Second Army casualties and more than four hundred tanks, about a third of the British armored force on the Continent. Airmen grumbled about “seven thousand tons of bombs for seven miles.”

After nearly seven weeks, OVERLORD had inserted thirty-three Allied divisions along an eighty-mile front but penetrated no deeper into Normandy than thirty miles, at a cost of 122,000 casualties. “We are up against a tougher proposition than the worst pessimist had in mind during the planning stages,” Major General Everett S. Hughes, a close confidant of Eisenhower’s, wrote his wife on July 22. Wits invented mock headlines—“Montgomery Sitting on His Caen”—but the *New York Herald Tribune* captured the prevailing gloom: “Allies in France Bogged Down on Entire Front.” The *Times* of London corrected its GOODWOOD zeal: “The word ‘break-through’ used in early reports can only be said to have a limited meaning.” Leigh-Mallory told his diary, “The fault with us is, basically, generalship.”

Grumbling and backbiting intensified within the Allied high command. Would Montgomery be sacked? Rumors flew, agitators agitated. Informed that V-1 launch sites would not soon be overrun, Air Marshal Tedder informed Beetle Smith, “Then we must change our leaders for men who will get us there.” He, Eisenhower, and others “had been had for suckers,” Tedder complained. “I do not believe there was the slightest intention to make a clean breakthrough.” Worse yet, he told Eisenhower, was the failure to exploit an attempt by the German military to kill Hitler with a bomb on July 20; with the Norman battlefield still deadlocked, Hitler could attend to reprisals and to shoring up his regime. The failed assassin, Colonel Claus von Stauffenberg, and at least two hundred others would be executed—shot, hanged, beheaded, poisoned, or garroted, sometimes on film—and thousands more were jailed. Before the month ended, Wehrmacht officers would be required to demonstrate fealty by giving the stiff-armed Nazi *Heil* rather than the traditional military salute.

“E is not pleased at progress being made,” Summersby noted. If displeased, he was also determined not to panic or to act rashly. Instead he would pressure his field commanders, directly and indirectly. Awakened one night by a phone call from Churchill, Eisenhower asked, “What do your people think about the slowness of the situation over there?” Perhaps the prime minister could “persuade Monty to get on his bicycle and start moving.”

To Montgomery, the supreme commander sent a sober, fourteen-paragraph note. “Time is vital,” Eisenhower wrote. “We must hit with everything.”

> I thought that at last we had him and were going to roll him up. That did not come about.… Eventually the American ground strength will necessarily be much greater than the British. But while we have equality in size we must go forward shoulder to shoulder, with honors and sacrifices equally shared.

He would keep faith—with the battle plan, with his commanders, and with their common cause. Perhaps only to his mother could he reveal how weary he was. “If I could get home,” he wrote Ida Eisenhower in Kansas on July 23, “I could lie down on the front

lawn and stay there for a week without moving."

The Bright Day Grew Dark

WEARING the West Point bathrobe he had carried through Tunisia and Sicily, Omar Bradley often stood before dawn at the eight-foot map board that now filled an olive-drab tent in Vouilly, four miles southeast of Isigny-sur-Mer. He too slept badly, despite sedatives at bedtime. Nearly every night he could be found in the small hours pacing the wooden floor of the map tent next to his trailer, contemplating what he had called "the frightful country ahead." A wet moon drifted over the First Army headquarters encampment, and the nauseating stink of dead cows carried on the night air. Eventually the cock would crow as pearl-gray light leaked from the east, and still Bradley attended his map, sketching boundary lines or penciling in roads. Then, wielding a long beech twig as a pointer, he again rehearsed in his mind's eye the coming attack that must end the stalemate and win the battle of Normandy. "I want it to be the biggest thing in the world," he told his staff.

Operation COBRA, that biggest thing, was Bradley's plan, although not his plan alone. Montgomery for one had encouraged a sledgehammer blow on a narrower front than the Americans commonly preferred; this was sound advice, deftly delivered. "Take all the time you need, Brad," the British commander had urged, pressing two slender fingers together against a map. "If I were you, I think I should concentrate my forces a little more." Joe Collins, whose VII Corps would serve as the point of the spear, had chosen the precise spot to attack: a bocage copse just west of St.-Lô, on the old Roman road to Périers. Fifteen U.S. divisions—six in Collins's corps alone—would blow through the battlefront to eventually reach Avranches, thirty miles south, opening the route to Brittany and the vital Breton ports. "Pursue every advantage," Eisenhower had urged, "with an ardor verging on recklessness."

That advantage lay mainly in airpower, particularly since artillery ammunition continued in short supply. A single heavy bomber carried the explosive punch of more than one hundred howitzers firing simultaneously, and Bradley wanted fifteen hundred heavies dropping sixty thousand 100-pound bombs within an hour on a rectangular swatch five miles wide and a mile deep—one bomb every sixteen feet. For a week he had made his case to his air brethren, even traveling to Leigh-Mallory's headquarters at Stanmore in Middlesex on July 19, as GOODWOOD was coming unstitched. The use of small bombs with instant fuzes would prevent the deep cratering that had bedeviled tanks crossing the carpet-bombed terrain at Cassino and at Caen, Bradley argued. To forestall fratricide, the bomber fleets should fly parallel to the front, using the perfectly straight St.-Lô–Périers road for guidance. Army assault battalions would pull back eight hundred yards as a precaution against errant bombs, yet this would leave them near enough to rush forward before the enemy recovered his wits, as apparently had happened in GOODWOOD.

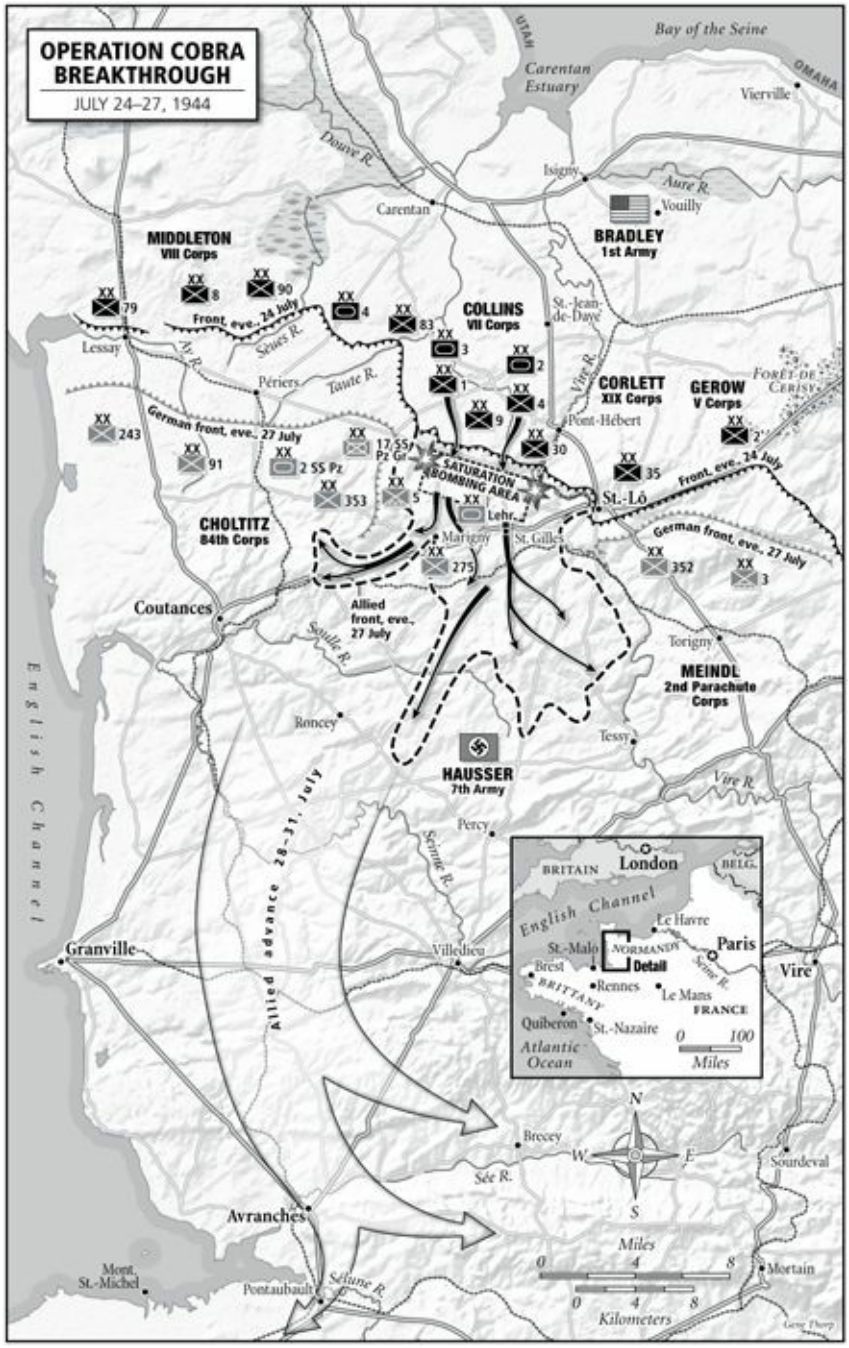
Very little in Bradley's vision appealed to airmen. The Army Air Forces' "Handbook for Bombardiers" included 125 pages on—among other arcane topics—ballistic coefficients, dropping angles, and Williamson's probability, all of which suggested that the general's proposed attack route was impossible. Fifteen hundred planes could not funnel into a one-mile corridor in the single hour that First Army allotted before the ground attack began; such a bombardment would take closer to three hours. Other technical problems also obtained, including the difficulties of dropping in the prevailing crosswind and of flying over intense antiaircraft defenses. Only if the planes attacked perpendicular to the front line—approaching from the north, over the heads of American troops—could they drop several thousand tons of bombs in an hour. Moreover, even in daylight and good weather, the margin of safety for dug-in troops was three thousand yards from the bomb line, almost two miles. Anything closer amounted to what one air commander called "bombing between the Army's legs."

Bradley agreed to pull his assault battalions back twelve hundred yards rather than eight hundred, but he balked at further concessions. Warned that 3 percent of the munitions would likely fall awry—some 1,800 bombs in the proposed COBRA payload—he accepted the risk. If GIs died, they were "nothing more than tools to be used in the accomplishment of the mission," he later wrote. "War has neither the time nor heart to concern itself with the individual and the dignity of man." As he had once told Ernie Pyle, "I've spent thirty years preparing a frame of mind for accepting such a thing."

* * *

Pyle spent Monday night, July 24, in an apple orchard near Pont-Hébert, wrapped in a blanket among tree trunks gashed white with bullet scars. After the Cherbourg campaign he had felt hollow and lethargic, like someone using up "your own small quota of chances for survival." He drifted to the back of the beachhead, writing about ordnance troops who refurbished rusty M-1 rifles with sandpaper and gasoline solvent. To combat veterans, those in the rear were known as "they" and their world was the "they area." Pyle felt guilty at lingering in the they area.

Now he had returned to the front, his inevitable province, and on Tuesday morning he stood behind a stone house in a farmyard lacerated with slit trenches. Officers from the 4th Infantry Division studied mimeographed sketches of the COBRA bombing sequence that showed where the heavy B-17s and B-24s would dump their loads, complemented by medium bombers and by fighter-bombers. Hardly half a mile to the south, red pillars of smoke from artillery canisters fired every thirty seconds rose at one-mile intervals along the St.-Lô–Périers road to delineate the bomb line. Cerise recognition panels covered the ground like flaming throw rugs, and every vehicle had been repainted with the Allied white-star insignia, first adopted two years earlier after tests to determine the geometric design most clearly visible from air and ground.



At 9:38 A.M., the first of 350 fighter-bombers began raking German positions along a three-hundred-yard corridor parallel to the road. From GIs tucked beneath the trees a throaty roar built to the echo, “like kids at a football game,” a lieutenant noted. Pyle squinted at the sky, hands cupped around his eyes to block the glare, listening to “the heavy rip of the planes’ machine guns and the splitting screams of diving wings.”

Not much had gone right with COBRA thus far. Originally scheduled to follow hard on the heels of GOODWOOD, the operation had been delayed by rain and cloud for days while Bradley glumly studied the three barometers he kept in his command post. Leigh-Mallory then ordered the attack for noon on Monday, July 24, rejecting a U.S. Eighth Air Force request to wait another day, or at least until midafternoon, when skies were expected to clear.

Flying from Stanmore to Bradley’s headquarters at Vouilly, Leigh-Mallory arrived on Monday at 11:20 A.M. to find clouds still smothering Normandy, bombers already on the wing, and no way to contact the pilots except by a frantic cancellation order radioed to England. Too late. Although many pilots chose to abort their drops because of poor visibility and explicit orders “not to bomb short as the penetration route is directly over friendly troops,” some bombed by mistake—one startled bombardier accidentally tripped the toggle switch when a chaff bundle smacked the nose of his plane—and others took a chance on dropping through the thinning overcast. Of 350 heavies disgorging nearly a thousand tons, only 15 percent hit the target; several medium bombers also missed by as much as seven miles, and P-47s attacked misidentified targets four miles short of the bomb line. Twenty-five GIs were killed and 131 wounded, nearly all in the 30th Infantry Division, whose assistant commander told First Army, “As a fiasco this operation was a brilliant achievement.”

Bradley’s fury knew no bounds: Leigh-Mallory flew back to England with accusations of duplicity and bad faith ringing in his ears. At 10:30 P.M. he phoned Bradley to confirm that the attackers had flown perpendicular to the target box rather than parallel, and that many bombs heavier than 100-pounders had been dropped. Bradley had evidently misconstrued what had been agreed to at the

Stanmore conference on July 19, and Leigh-Mallory had left that meeting early for another appointment before all details of the mission were clarified. A full COBRA bombardment could be launched again on Tuesday morning, Leigh-Mallory now added, but only by flying the same perpendicular route from the north. With more marginal weather predicted, Bradley agreed, grumbling bitterly, and Collins worked all night to get his bewildered corps repositioned to try again.

From his farmyard redoubt, Pyle watched for half an hour as fighter-bombers dipped and darted. The black blossoms of German antiaircraft shells spattered the sky. Then a new noise intruded, "a sound deep and all-encompassing with no notes in it—just a gigantic faraway surge of doomlike sound." From the north the B-17s and B-24s drew near, roofing the heavens with a stately procession of tiny silver cruciforms three miles up, "plowing their way forward as if there was no turmoil in the world." Gawking soldiers leaned back until their helmets fell off.

The first detonations to the south reminded Pyle of "the crackle of popcorn." Smoke and dust rolled back through the orchards, and "the bright day grew slowly dark." Then, inexplicably, the bomb loads drew ever closer, with a terrifying rattle of wind over tail fins, and the ponderous footfall of explosions stomped through the trees. Pyle dove beneath a heavy wagon behind the stone house, "waiting for darkness" as concussion waves hammered his chest and eyes in what he would describe as "the most sustained horrible thing I've ever gone through." At length the howling passed and a colonel staggered through the swirling dust, snapping his fingers and muttering "Goddammit, goddammit, goddammit."

For others it was worse. The star-crossed 30th Division took more casualties from the Army Air Forces (AAF) on this Tuesday forenoon than from the enemy on any day in the war. "Then came that awful rush of wind," a regimental history recorded, "that awful sound like the rattling of seeds in a dry gourd." Bombs entombed men in their trenches or split them open like deer carcasses. Bombs obliterated command posts, tossed cows into trees, and raised the dead from local cemeteries. The concussion "felt as if someone was beating you with a club," one officer reported, while another was whacked in the buttocks by what proved to be a body part. Men screamed for medics and raged against the "American Luftwaffe."

Just over fifteen hundred heavies dropped two thousand tons of high explosives and an even larger payload of fragmentation bombs; of those aircraft, three dozen bombed American troops, joined in the fratricide by forty-two medium bombers. High clouds had forced some planes to descend several thousand feet, loosening the formations and requiring crews to hurriedly recalculate data for their bombsights. Red marking smoke was easily confused with artillery muzzle flashes, and the St.-Lô–Périers road was soon hidden by dense bomb smoke carried on a five-knot southerly breeze. Two percent of all bombs had fallen short by a mile or more, killing 111 soldiers and wounding 490, this in addition to the casualties from the previous day. Among the dead was Lieutenant General Lesley J. McNair, the commander of Army Ground Forces, who was visiting from Washington and had rashly inserted himself into an assault battalion of the 30th Division; a search detail with picks and shovels combed the crater where he was last seen without finding a trace. Eventually his corpse was spotted sixty-five feet away, beyond recognition but for his dog tags, shoulder flash, and rank insignia. "I warned him time and again about unnecessary risk," Eisenhower cabled Marshall. A manifest listed all the personal effects left for his widow: "6 Lt. Gen. stars, tarnished, and clasp missing from 2 stars."

By the time the last medium bomber flew off at 12:23 P.M., nearly 2,500 planes had dropped five thousand tons of bombs plus heaps of white phosphorus and a new jellied-gasoline agent called napalm. In the pinched target box, where the Army's armored breakout was to burst forth, each square mile absorbed more than eleven thousand bombs, among the greatest concentrations of killing power in the history of warfare. As for the dead and dying GIs on the wrong side of the line, Pyle wrote with the laconic fatalism that now bleached his bones, "Anybody makes mistakes."

* * *

Eisenhower flew to see Bradley at Vouilly for a few hours on Tuesday afternoon, then returned to England, dejected and vowing never again to use heavy bombers in a tactical attack. "That's a job for artillery," he snapped. "I gave them a green light this time. But I promise you it's the last." Bradley continued to fume, at Leigh-Mallory and others, obfuscating his own role in putting troops danger close.

By early that afternoon the COBRA ground attack was well under way. Assault columns initially made meager progress: a 30th Division column butted into enemy resistance after only four hundred yards, including Panther tanks. "Good God," a GI in a light tank cried over the radio, "I fired three rounds and they all bounced off." Panzer return fire dismasted a platoon sergeant. "Just his legs and hips were there," a comrade wrote. "One arm, with the wrist watch on it, lay near the house." By nightfall, VII Corps had gained no more than a mile beyond the St.-Lô–Périers road and fewer than three hundred prisoners had been bagged. German shells rained down, leading an intelligence officer to conclude that "enemy artillery was not touched by our bombing."

Africa veterans like Eisenhower and Bradley should have recalled two lines of Kipling popular in Tunisia: *"Man cannot tell, but Allah knows / How much the other side was hurt."* In truth, German defenses had been blown to smithereens: the enemy was profoundly hurt, mortally hurt. The main opponent confronting VII Corps, the Panzer Lehr Division, had earlier been described as "worn out" by the German high command after six weeks of fighting; Tuesday's "conveyor belt bombing" had devastated the weakened division, flipping tanks, smashing radios, and obliterating headquarters. The division commander, General Fritz Bayerlein, former chief of staff for Rommel's Afrika Korps, described "half-crazed soldiers jumping out of the craters of a lunar landscape, running in circles.… Everything was burned and blasted." He calculated that 70 percent of his men were dead, wounded, or inert with "a feeling of helplessness, weakness, and inferiority." Orders could be transmitted only by motorcycle couriers nosing a path through drifted debris. When Field Marshal Kluge passed word that the St.-Lô–Périers corridor must hold, Bayerlein replied, "Tell the field marshal that the Panzer Lehr is destroyed. Only the dead can still hold."

Unaware of the size of the American host and lulled into complacency by Monday's aborted attack, German commanders had

been caught out. As Montgomery intended, two-thirds or more of Seventh Army's panzers still faced the British in the east, and reserves in the German Fifteenth Army remained pinned to the Pas de Calais, awaiting the thirty Allied divisions still believed to be assembling in England for a second invasion. Seventh Army failed to keep a sufficient armored reserve to plug any breach in the Cotentin, and battlefield leadership proved wanting. Kluge's headquarters informed Berlin late Tuesday night: "The front has, so to speak, burst. There is a penetration of two to five kilometers deep on a front seven to eight kilometers wide. It has not yet been possible to seal this off."

Nor would it be possible. Collins had massed 120,000 troops on a five-mile front along the St.-Lô–Périers road, plus fifteen thousand engineers to lift mines and bury dead livestock. His six hundred artillery tubes, with 140,000 rounds stockpiled, exceeded the firepower of the other three First Army corps combined. Most Sherman tanks were now fitted with hedge cutters for slashing through the bocage—rugged tusks designed by GIs and fabricated with angle-iron salvaged from German beach obstacles. Welders and virtually all of the oxygen acetylene cylinders in England had been flown to Normandy, where an assembly line in St.-Jean-de-Daye turned out three hundred cutters in two days, all kept secret before COBRA. No less innovative was a decision by Major General Elwood "Pete" Quesada, the tactical air commander, to position liaison officers with VHF radios in each tank column for direct communication with fighter-bombers overhead, a collaboration that proved priceless in what airmen called "hazing the Hun."

Collins had not planned to launch his exploitation force—the 1st Infantry Division and two armored divisions, the 2nd and 3rd—until a clear hole had been drilled through enemy defenses by shock battalions from the 4th, 9th, and 30th Infantry Divisions. But the absence of the usual German counterattack on Tuesday afternoon suggested disarray and debility in the opposing ranks, even if the lead U.S. echelons had yet to break into the enemy's rear. At 5:45 P.M. on Tuesday, Collins ordered the follow-on forces to attack the next morning, July 26. Riflemen crept forward through the night, feeling for booby traps, removing mines, and listening for the growl of panzer engines.

With the new day, the American onslaught built momentum, as if both opposing armies had begun to slide across a landscape tilting south. GIs rode into battle "Russian style" on tank hulls, leaping off to spray every swale and thicket with blistering fire. On average, 1st Division troops required under three minutes to clear each hedgerow, a task that had taken hours just a few weeks earlier. On the eastern lip of the breach, forcing a narrow sunken road to St.-Gilles cost seven hundred 30th Division casualties, but by midafternoon tanks were churning through the village against little opposition. Marigny fell to the 1st Division, the 9th Division lunged nearly three miles beyond the Périers road, and at four P.M. the German Seventh Army reported Americans leaking through seven punctures in the narrow front. Enemy efforts to fling two divisions west across the Vire River to cork the bottle came to naught after the U.S. XIX Corps blocked the move. Fuel shortages forced abandonment of two Panther companies from the 2nd SS Panzer Division and an American patrol killed the Das Reich commander, a small but satisfying measure of vengeance for the massacres at Tulle and Oradour. Kluge told subordinates to expect no further reinforcements for at least a week.

By nightfall on Thursday, 100,000 Americans were pouring through the five-mile breach, armored columns had closed on Coutances, and Bradley's map board showed ever more enemy positions with unit icons marked "Rem"—remnants. "This thing has busted wide open," the 30th Division commander told Collins.

French farmers flitted across the battlefield, stripping shoes and tunics from German corpses. GIs found white tablecloths and wilting flowers on a mess table in a captured bivouac, along with well-thumbed pornography, copies of *Life* magazine, and checkers on a board abandoned in mid-game. A tank lieutenant saw a German drop his rifle and scamper away. "Then I caught sight of holes in his head, and he crashed full tilt into an apple tree," he wrote. "He was running dead, like a chicken."

On Friday enemy forces scuffed to the rear across a twenty-mile front, pressed by both Collins's VII Corps and Major General Troy Middleton's VIII Corps, clattering down a corridor along the Cotentin coast. German ambuscades, local counterattacks, and confusion permitted substantial enemy forces to escape entrapment in the Cotentin. Even so, sheets of marching fire took a heavy toll. Pilots over Roncey reported a "fighter-bomber's paradise," with German traffic triple-banked and crawling bumper to bumper. For six hours Allied planes lashed the column, eventually joined by artillery, tanks, and tank destroyers until more than 100 panzers and 250 other vehicles stood wrecked if not burning; survivors pelted away on foot, silhouetted against the flames. The Hun had been hazed.

Coutances fell on Saturday morning, July 29. German naval crews at Granville spiked their shore guns before fleeing. "Things on our front really look good," an elated Bradley wrote Eisenhower. Ahead lay Avranches, among the oldest towns in Normandy, where the English monarch Henry II had arrived, barefoot and hatless, to make public penance on his knees for the murder of Thomas Becket in 1170. Built on a high bluff overlooking holy Mont-St.-Michel, eight miles to the west, Avranches gave onto Brittany and the Breton ports coveted by Allied logisticians. On Sunday evening, a spearhead from the 4th Armored Division lunged into the town only to find it undefended. Jubilant Frenchmen greeted them with waving tricolors.

Belatedly alive to their peril, German troops hurried toward Avranches in trucks and horse-drawn wagons. Counterattacking at dawn, they were thrown back with white phosphorus, strafing P-47s, and gouts of Sherman fire. American tankers and riflemen soon seized the vital bridge over the Sélune River at Pontaubault, four miles south of town and unaccountably still intact. Within hours, three more crossing sites over the Sélune had been secured. Here the roads radiated to all points of the compass, including the Brittany ports. Seven thousand German prisoners shambled into VIII Corps cages on July 31 alone; many had been simply disarmed and waved to the rear unescorted. "We face a defeated enemy," General Barton told subordinates in the 4th Infantry Division, "an enemy terribly low in morale, terribly confused."

In a phone call from Le Mans to his chief of staff in Paris at 10:30 that Monday morning, Kluge scoffed when told of Berlin's demand that another defensive line be thrown up in Normandy.

It's a madhouse here. You can't imagine what it's like.… All you can do is laugh out loud. Don't they read our dispatches? Haven't they been oriented? They must be living on the moon.… Someone has to tell the Führer that if the Americans get through at Avranches they will be out of the woods and they'll be able to do what they want.

The Führer would learn the truth of Kluge's assessment soon enough. With agility and celerity, and bolstered by ten thousand tactical air sorties, First Army had driven thirty miles in less than a week to outflank the German left and pivot into Brittany. This thing had indeed busted wide open. The war of movement had begun, at last.

Ministers of Thy Chastisement

DOWN metalled roads and farm lanes they pounded, columns of jeeps and tanks and deuce-and-a-half trucks snaking through the shot-threshed fields and the orchards heavy with fruit. MP motorcyclists weaved among the ranks, scolding dawdlers. Grenades hung from uniform lapels "like Cartier clips." Chalky dust powdered their faces and grayed their hair. "War was their business," wrote the photojournalist Lee Miller, "and they went on in a sloping march."

On they marched, south, east, and west: past stone barns and mules hauling milk in copper urns, past shops that still peddled perfume and silk scarves, past collaborators with crude swastikas swabbed onto their shaved heads. When the trucks halted for a moment and GIs tumbled out to urinate in squirming echelons on the road shoulders, civilians rushed up to plead for cigarettes with two fingers pressed to the lips, a gesture described by Forrest Pogue as the French national salute. Others offered tricolor nosegays made from blue hydrangeas, red roses, and white asters. "Heep, heep, whoo-ray!" the Frenchmen yelled, repeating phrases learned from doughboys a generation earlier. "I speeg Engless. Jees-Christ, cot-dam!" Soldiers replied in schoolboy French or with handy phrases published in *Stars and Stripes*, among which was the French for "My wife doesn't understand me." A GI shout of *"Vive la France!"* often elicited jugs of calvados and toasts to the spirit of Lafayette or hissing denunciations of the Boche, also known to the Yanks as Krauts, Jerries, Graybacks, Lice, Huns, and Squareheads.

German tourist posters still hung from schoolhouse walls, and German-language lessons—all umlauts and uppercase nouns—could be seen chalked on blackboards. But for mile after mile the only enemy encountered were prisoners, encouraged to surrender with the GI dialect known as Milwaukee German, or dead men, often buried beneath a makeshift marker with an epitaph reduced to a naked noun, also upper case: "A German." The Wehrmacht retreat had "a Napoleonic aspect," an officer in Army Group B conceded. Kluge in early August told his superiors, "No matter how many orders are issued, the troops cannot, are not able to, are not strong enough to defeat the enemy."

In hasty bivouacs the surging columns halted for the night, choking down cold K rations or heating soup in their helmets over a Sterno flame—the charred crown, with steel burned to a blue sheen, marked veteran troops as surely as a Purple Heart. Evening also was the time for brief memorial services. "One's life is held in balance by a little piece of metal smaller than a man's finger," one soldier wrote. A chaplain who offered a prayer for the dead invoked the Irish poet Charles Wolfe: "We buried him darkly at dead of night.… we left him alone with his glory."

* * *

SHAEF planners in late July estimated that Germany could be defeated quickly if nine more divisions were added to the seventy-five already allocated to OVERLORD. Unfortunately, with fewer than three dozen divisions now in France, almost no additional British units remaining, and U.S. reinforcements reaching France at a rate of less than one division per week, that war-winning tally of eighty-four would not be available on the Continent until August 1945. Instead, the Allies would have to settle for the arrival on stage of a man described by a reporter as "a warring, roaring comet" and by a West Point classmate as a "pure-bred gamecock with brains."

The first glimpse of Lieutenant General George S. Patton, Jr., for many soldiers came in Avranches, where he leaped from his jeep into an umbrella-covered police box and directed convoy traffic through a congested roundabout for ninety minutes. Assigned by Bradley to oversee VIII Corps's drive south, Patton had helped shove seven divisions past Avranches in seventy-two hours, cigar smoldering as he snarled at occasional Luftwaffe marauders, "Those goddamned bastards, those rotten sons-of-bitches! We'll get them." When a subordinate called to report his position, Patton bellowed, "Hang up and keep going." In a Norman landscape of smashed vehicles, grass fires, and charred German bodies, he added, "Could anything be more magnificent? Compared to war, all other forms of human endeavor shrink to insignificance. God, how I love it."

At noon on Tuesday, August 1, his U.S. Third Army officially came into being, with nine divisions under three corps. At the same instant, Bradley ascended to command the new 12th Army Group, complementing 21st Army Group while still subordinate to Montgomery. Bradley's former deputy, Lieutenant General Courtney H. Hodges, succeeded him as First Army commander. "We are advancing constantly," Patton told his staff. "From here on out, until we win or die in the attempt, we will always be audacious." To his diary he confided, "I am very happy."

"There are apparently two types of successful soldiers," Patton had recently written his son. "Those who get on by being unobtrusive and those who get on by being obtrusive. I am of the latter type." True enough, but for nearly a year he had been consigned to near anonymity. Slapping two hospitalized soldiers in Sicily, ostensibly for malingering, nearly cost Patton his stars; he

was denied an early role in OVERLORD and a chance to command the army group now led by Bradley, his junior and former subordinate. A minor but foolish indiscretion in April, when he told a British social club that "undoubtedly it is our destiny to rule the world—the Americans, the British, and of course the Russians," almost lost him Third Army. "Patton has broken out again," Eisenhower wrote Marshall after that incident. "Apparently he is unable to use reasonably good sense."

Narrowly pardoned, Patton spent the spring and early summer as a conspicuous decoy to confuse German intelligence about a second Allied landing. He shopped in Britain for hunting guns and saddles, wrote atrocious poetry, played badminton and golf, bought a white bull terrier named Willie, and offered Eisenhower $1,000 for every week in advance he was permitted to leave England for France. A reporter found him "neurotic and bloodthirsty." To his wife, Bea, who was not only his confidante but a kindred spirit—she once bribed an Egyptian boatman to smuggle her into a tattoo parlor in a failed effort to have a full-rigged clipper ship needled across her chest—Patton had written in early July, "Can't stand the times between wars."

He also reflected deeply on generalship and the exploitation juggernaut he would now command. His kit included Edward Augustus Freeman's six-volume *History of the Norman Conquest of England*, which Patton studied to understand William the Conqueror's use of road networks in France. He arrived in France determined not only to redeem his reputation but to find glory. "I'm in the doghouse," he told Joe Collins. "I've got to do something spectacular." Bradley had bluntly warned him: "You know, George, I didn't ask for you." But Bradley soon found himself impressed by a man who seemed more "judicious, reasonable, and likeable than in the Mediterranean." To his soldiers, Patton promised that the enemy would "raise up on their hind legs and howl, 'Jesus Christ, it's the goddamn Third Army and that son-of-a-bitch Patton again.'"

Now here they were, sluicing into Brittany with open flanks and a vulnerable rear. "I had to keep repeating to myself, 'Do not take counsel of your fears,'" Patton told his diary on August 1. To Bea he wrote that combat "always scares and lures me, like steeplechasing." He ordered laminated battle maps of the sort he had carried in Tunisia and Sicily—ten by twenty inches each, with a scale of eight miles to the inch. When the set was delivered, he scowled. "It only goes as far east as Paris," he complained. "I'm going to Berlin."

* * *

First he was going to Brest, and no special map was needed to see that Brest lay west while Paris and Berlin lay east. Only the seizure of a Normandy beachhead ranked higher in importance for OVERLORD planners than the capture of Brittany and its ports: St.-Malo, St.-Nazaire, Lorient, Brest, and Quiberon Bay, for which another grandiose artificial harbor was envisioned. Delays in shaking free of Normandy, as well as the cautionary tales of Mulberry A and scorched-earth demolitions at Cherbourg, failed to dampen the ardor of Eisenhower and his logisticians. Patton's army was to take Brittany.

But the collapse of the German left wing gave Montgomery pause, and as early as July 27 he had suggested that the campaign in Brittany might require only a single corps. Neither Bradley nor Patton took the hint. Patton, whose doghouse status made him leery of challenging Eisenhower's master plan, wagered Montgomery £5 that GIs would be in Brest by Saturday night, August 5. Claiming "a sixth sense by which I can always know to a moral certainty what the enemy is going to do," Patton insisted that "there aren't more than ten thousand Krauts in the entire [Brittany] peninsula." That was wrong by a factor of at least six. But to his 6th Armored Division, then 150 miles from the objective, he issued a two-word order on August 1: "Take Brest."

On the same day, Third Army's other spearhead, the 4th Armored Division, raced forty miles south from Avranches to the outskirts of Rennes, the Breton capital and a nexus for ten trunk roads. Here an epiphany struck Major General John S. Wood, the beetle-browed division commander. Known as P.—for "Professor," because he had tutored his classmates at West Point—Wood had attended the academy to play football after graduating from the University of Arkansas, where he studied chemistry. A devoted rose gardener and a linguist who had read both De Gaulle and the German panzer mastermind Heinz Guderian in the original, Wood often buzzed above the battlefield in a Piper Cub with red streamers flapping from the wingtips so that his men below could recognize him.

"We're winning this war the wrong way," Wood declared. "We ought to be going toward Paris." The French capital was only sixty miles farther from Rennes than Brest; Brittany was a cul-de-sac, while Paris led to the Reich. Wood ordered two 4th Armored columns to outflank Rennes and cut seven of those ten roads; the city fell on August 4. Proposing to reach Chartres—150 miles east—in two days, Wood radioed Patton, "Dear George … Trust we can turn around and get headed in right direction soon." Instead he was dispatched west into Brittany for a bloody siege at Lorient.

Bradley belatedly had come around to Montgomery's view that "the main business lies to the east." On August 3, he told Patton to clear Brittany with "a minimum of forces." Patton chose to pivot east with his XV and XX Corps while leaving VIII Corps behind, a splintering of the army that took time and consigned two cutthroat armored divisions, the 4th and 6th, to static siege warfare rather than freeing them to lead the charge across France.

The Brittany campaign soon proved bootless. None of the ports would be especially useful, in part because of their distance from the main battlefield—five hundred miles separated Brest from the German frontier—and in part because Hitler ordered various coastal fortresses held "to the last man, to the last cartridge." That recalcitrance soon neutered 280,000 German defenders along the European littoral, but it also denied several important ports to Allied logisticians for weeks, if not for the duration. The siege of St.-Malo ensnared twenty thousand GIs for a fortnight and wrecked the harbor; Brest, with seventy-five strongpoints, and walls up to twenty-five-feet thick, proved a particularly hard nut, costing ten thousand casualties among the seventy thousand Americans who would invest the citadel for more than a month in a medieval affair of scaling ladders and grappling hooks. Though Bradley later insisted that the Brest garrison was too dangerous to leave unchallenged in his rear, the diversion of five divisions to Brittany reflected an inflexible adherence to the OVERLORD plan. "We must take Brest in order to maintain the illusion of the fact that the U.S. Army cannot be beaten," Bradley told Patton, who agreed.

The war ended with not a single cargo ship or troopship having berthed at Brest, which bombs and a half million American shells knocked to rubble. The synthetic harbor at Quiberon Bay was never built. P. Wood, whose 4th Armored Division finally was released from siege duty at Lorient in mid-August to hie toward Nantes and far beyond, considered the Brittany sidestep "one of the colossally stupid decisions of the war." But with most of Patton's legions finally baying eastward by mid-August, both the initial swivel to the west and the failure to fulfill the strategic ambitions of the Brittany campaign seemed like small beer. "We have unloosed the shackles that were holding us down," Montgomery told his lieutenants:

> Whatever the enemy may want to do will make no difference to us. We will proceed relentlessly, and rapidly, with our plans for his destruction.… Our general situation is very good; the enemy situation is far from good.… Now is the time to press on boldly and to take great risks.

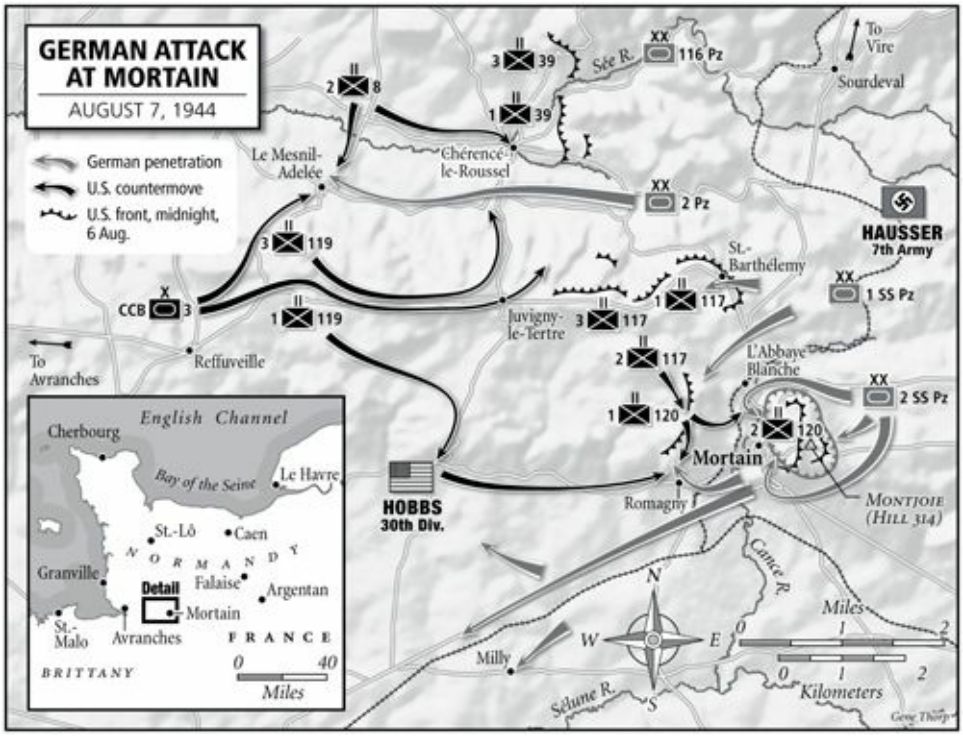
Montgomery's plan was a simple, handsome thing: three armies would clobber the Germans straight on while a fourth—Patton's Third—swung far to the right, toward Paris, to trap the reeling enemy against the Seine before the river bridges could be repaired. As Patton sent his XV Corps toward Le Mans, headquarters of the German Seventh Army, Montgomery heaved the bulk of Allied forces forward on a sixty-mile front from Avranches to Caen. The Canadian First Army on the left and the British Second Army in the center made modest progress against the preponderance of German armor, including two SS panzer corps. Tommies at last overran ruined Villers-Bocage on August 4 and bulled toward Vire, cheek by jowl with the U.S. V Corps of First Army. But here there were no thirty-miles-before-lunch sprints: the 28th Infantry Division, formerly part of the Pennsylvania National Guard, took 750 casualties on its first day in combat, while Loose Reins Gerhardt's 29th Division suffered another thousand in struggling ten miles toward Vire.

* * *

War, as the historian Bruce Catton once wrote, sometimes "went by a queer script of its own," putting a jackboot down on some anonymous, unlikely place like Shiloh Church or Kasserine or Anzio or Ste.-Mère-Église. Such a place was Mortain, a village of 1,300, twenty miles east of Avranches amid broken terrain dubbed the Norman Switzerland in a triumph of tourist-bureau ebullience over geography. The town's name was said to derive from *Maurus,* a reference to Moors in the Roman army; renowned for cutlery, first of pewter and then of stainless steel, Mortain in recent times also had become a mining and market hub, linking inland communes with the coast. Since June 6, thousands of refugees from the invasion zone had shuffled through, among them children wearing tags with the addresses of relatives to contact should their mothers fall dead.

The last German occupier in Mortain had been gunned down on August 3 by a French policeman armed with a nineteenth-century rifle and one bullet. Hours later, the 1st Infantry Division arrived, only to move along on August 6, supplanted on that warm, luminous Sunday by the 30th Division. Cheering civilians tossed flowers at the newcomers in their grinding trucks as they rumbled past busy cafés and hotels. Known as Old Hickory for its National Guard roots in Tennessee and the Carolinas, the 30th Division still was licking wounds from COBRA, including the fratricidal bombing. Two of the division's nine infantry battalions had been dispatched elsewhere; the rest now burrowed in across a seven-mile front.

Of keen interest was stony, steep Montjoie, looming over Mortain to the east and so named because from here joyful pilgrims first caught sight of Mont-St.-Michel, twenty-seven miles distant. To GIs the mile-long escarpment was simply Hill 314, after its height in meters; seven hundred men from the 2nd Battalion of the 120th Infantry chuffed to the crest before scratching at the skimpy fieldworks left by the 1st Division. With them was Lieutenant Robert L. Weiss, a short, lean, twenty-one-year-old artillery forward observer who wore the same wool serge shirt his father, a Hungarian immigrant, had worn in World War I. In addition to binoculars on a tripod, Weiss lugged a thirty-five-pound SCR-610 radio in a saddle-soaped leather case; the FM set had a five-mile range, just far enough to reach the howitzer batteries dug in to the west. Recently he had written his mother in Indiana, "I hope I get a chance to do a little shooting on my own the next few days." His weary comrades hoped only for a little rest.



This they would not get. Montgomery's assessment that "the enemy situation is far from good" was unarguable, and that very vulnerability made the Germans desperate. From his East Prussian headquarters a thousand miles to the east, Hitler detected "a unique opportunity, which will never return … to drive into an extremely exposed enemy area." At his direction, a counterattack spearheaded by four panzer divisions was to blast through Mortain to Avranches, cleaving Patton's Third Army from Hodges's First Army and, if not cudgeling the invaders back to their ships, at least reimposing the static war of early summer. "Tell Kluge," Hitler added in a message sent through high command, "that he should keep his eyes riveted to the front and on the enemy without ever looking backward."

Field Marshal Kluge replied that "such an attack if not immediately successful" would risk envelopment and annihilation. Even if the spearhead reached Avranches, the force would be too weak to hold its gains against Allied air, artillery, and armor. Eight German divisions had already been obliterated during July fighting in and below the Cotentin, plus others written off in Brittany and the isolated Channel Islands. Six replacement divisions had recently arrived on the Norman front from southern France and the Pas de Calais, permitting a reorganization of sorts: Panzer Group West was rechristened Fifth Panzer Army, with a dozen divisions in four corps, and Seventh Army counted sixteen divisions. Yet this host was fragile and dispirited.

Hitler waved away all caviling. The attack would go forward, as ordered, "recklessly to the sea, regardless of the risk."

* * *

Swirling fog lifted and descended with stage-curtain melodrama in the balmy small hours of August 7. Shortly after one A.M., American pickets reported a spatter of rifle fire, followed by the distinctive growl of panzers on the hunt. Then the attack slammed against the 30th Division front in scalding, scarlet gusts: 26,000 Germans in the first echelon, with 120 tanks crewed by men in black uniforms evocative of the old imperial cavalry. Machine guns cackled, and the percussive boom of tank main guns rippled up and down the line. American howitzers barked back, firing by earshot at bent shadows barely a thousand yards ahead. GIs scrambled among firing positions to simulate greater numbers; pockets here and there were cut off in what one soldier described as "an all-gone feeling." Wounded men mewed in the night.

Almost nothing went right in the German attack. A stricken Allied fighter-bomber smashed into the lead tank of the 1st SS Panzer Division, blocking the column for hours. Only three of six enemy spearheads surged forward on time. The right wing, anchored by the 116th Panzer Division, hardly budged; the commander would be sacked for "uninspired and negative" leadership. Of three hundred Luftwaffe fighters promised for the battle, not one reached the front.

The German weight fell heaviest on St.-Barthélemy, a crossroads two miles north of Mortain. Aiming at muzzle flashes, U.S. tank destroyer crews here demolished a Panther with a 3-inch slug at fifty yards, then another at thirty yards; both slewed across the road, burning with white fury. GIs at one roadblock let the panzers roll through, then butchered the grenadiers trailing behind. The 1st Battalion of the 117th Infantry suffered 350 casualties and retired to a hillside a thousand yards west of St.-Barthélemy, but the German offensive had been delayed six hours, with forty panzers soon crippled. Meanwhile, at the Abbaye Blanche, a twelfth-century stone heap just north of Mortain, a platoon of sixty-six men with bazookas and artillery repelled an SS regiment. GIs stood fast against tanks, flamethrowers, and grenades. More than sixty enemy vehicles would be knocked out hub-to-hub-to-hub.

Dawn, that pitiless revealer of exigencies, unmasked the German predicament. Four armored divisions—from north to south, the 116th Panzer, the 2nd Panzer, and the 1st and 2nd SS Panzer—stood exposed and blinking in the brilliant sunshine once the fog burned off. "First really large concentration of enemy tanks seen since D-Day," an RAF patrol reported. Typhoon fighter-bombers

soon scalded the German ranks with two thousand 60-pound rockets and 20mm cannon rounds the size of tent pegs. Joined by cab ranks of Thunderbolts and Hurricanes, the planes attacked until dusk in a shark-feed frenzy.

"Hundreds of German troops began spilling out into the road to spring for the open fields and hedgerows," a Typhoon pilot reported. Only a few dozen tanks and trucks were actually demolished from the air, and more than a few sorties mistakenly hit American revetments. But scores of other vehicles were abandoned under the onslaught or were wrecked by field artillery: a dozen battalions—144 tubes—raked the two roads leading west from St.-Barthélemy. A panzer corps headquarters described the attacks as "well-nigh unendurable," and Seventh Army on August 7 conceded that "the actual attack has been at a standstill since 1300 hours."

The only exception to the "exceptionally poor start," as Seventh Army described the offensive, was a narrow advance of four miles by the 2nd Panzer Division in the north, and the successful seizure of Mortain by the 2nd SS Panzer Division. Das Reich had struck at three A.M. on Monday in three columns, overrunning a roadblock to the south, capturing antitank guns to the north, and infiltrating through the 120th Infantry with help from two traitorous French guides. Wraiths in coal-scuttle helmets darted down the village streets, kicking in doors and poking through cellars. Thirty officers and men from the 2nd Battalion command post tiptoed out a back exit of the Hôtel de la Poste to hide in a house four hundred yards away. Most, including the battalion commander and a soldier armed only with an ax, would later be captured by the Germans while trying to creep off, though half a dozen escaped detection for a week, living on garden vegetables and food pilfered from the local hospital larder. A radioed query from the 30th Division headquarters six miles to the west—"What does your situation look like down there?"—drew a spare reply: "Looks like hell."

It also looked like hell from Hill 314, but at least the view was majestic. Lieutenant Weiss, with his field glasses and Signal Corps radio, had called in his first fire mission at six A.M., shooting only by sound and by map coordinates after sentries reported four hundred enemy troops scrabbling up the east slope. From a stone outcropping on the hill's southern lip, among scrub pines and the animal fragrance of summer pastures, Weiss soon saw columns of German soldiers threading the plain below, including bicycle troops with rifles slung across their shoulders. Again he murmured incantations into the radio handset. Moments later, rushing shells fell in splashes of fire and the singing fragments that gunners called Big Iron. German mortar and 88mm shells answered, pummeling Montjoie's rocky shoulders. Late in the afternoon Weiss radioed, "Enemy N, S, E, W." During a rare lull, one GI later wrote, "No birds were singing. No leaves were moving. No wind was blowing."

Nor were the Germans advancing. Artillery curtains directed from Hill 314 paralyzed Das Reich, kept the 17th SS Panzer Grenadier Division from scaling the hill, and prevented a collapse of the 30th Division's southern flank. White phosphorus forced enemy troops into the open, where they frantically brushed the burning flakes from skin and uniform; high-explosive shells then cut them to scraps. By nightfall, the German offensive had stalled completely; five divisions had been unable to punch through a single American division with fewer than six thousand infantrymen. "If only the Germans will go on attacking at Mortain for a few more days," Montgomery cabled Brooke that evening, "it seems that they might not be able to get away."

In this the enemy complied. Positions changed little on Tuesday, August 8, another pellucid day for killing, both on the wing and by observed artillery fire. Guns crashed and heaved around the clock. "Bruised them badly," Weiss radioed after one fire mission left spiraling smoke columns visible for miles. Although convinced that the offensive had failed, Kluge told his lieutenants, "We have to risk everything."

For four more days, Hill 314 remained what a German officer called a "thorn in the flesh." Hitler on August 9 again demanded that "the Allied invasion front be rolled up" with a renewed lunge toward Avranches by an improvised strike force under the Fifth Panzer Army commander, General Heinrich Eberbach. Arriving on the battlefield with little more than a radio truck, Eberbach told Kluge that the task was both impossible and "very unpleasant." At 6:20 P.M. that Wednesday, an SS officer scrambled up Montjoie under a white flag to demand the Americans capitulate within ninety minutes or be "blown to bits." Wounded GIs in slit trenches yelled, "No, no, don't surrender," and the senior officer on the hill, 1st Lieutenant Ralph A. Kerley, a lanky Texan, sent the envoy packing with a string of profanities. Five artillery battalions shattered a subsequent attack by bellowing Germans who fired machine guns and flicked grenades. Kerley called down one fire mission on his own command post. The field-gray tide receded.

Each night more slain soldiers on Hill 314 were tucked into makeshift morgues among the rocks after their bodies were searched for food and ammunition. Officers hoped that in removing the dead from sight they would bolster morale, but Montjoie reeked of men transformed into carrion. Each day Lieutenant Weiss set his precious radio batteries on a rocky shelf and let the sun recharge them a bit. Foragers filled canteens from a scummy cistern and found turnips, cabbages, and a few rabbits in a hutch. An effort to shoot medical supplies to the hilltop garrison in empty artillery smoke shells failed: G-forces shattered morphine syrettes and plasma bottles, and even crushed surgical tape into flat disks. A dozen C-47s using blue and orange parachutes sprinkled rations and other supplies over the hillcrest at 4:30 P.M. on August 10, but half the bundles drifted beyond the American perimeter into no-man's-land. On the night of August 11, the frustrated 30th Division chief of staff declared, "I want Mortain demolished.… Burn it up so nothing can live there." Artillery scourged the village like brimstone.

And then the battle ended. Even Hitler acknowledged futility. "The attack failed," he said ominously, "because Field Marshal von Kluge wanted it to fail." Sitting at a table in La Roche–Guyon with a map spread before him, Kluge tapped Avranches with his finger and said, "This is where I lose my reputation as a soldier." Before dawn on August 12, German columns skulked off to the north and east. A relief regiment from the 35th Division hiked up Hill 314 to carry off 300 dead and wounded; another 370 men walked down, including Lieutenants Weiss and Kerley. The 30th Division alone had suffered 1,800 casualties in the six-day brawl for Mortain, and other units together tallied almost as many.

Survivors would be fed, decorated, and returned to the fight. American artillery had once again displayed the killing prowess that had made it the king of battle since the Boston bookseller Henry Knox turned to gunnery in the Revolution. Here too the U.S. Army

had asserted a dominance on the battlefield—with firepower, tenacity, and a credible display of combined arms competence—that would only intensify over the next eight months, as the European campaign grew ever more feverish.

French civilians returning to wrecked Mortain "stood crying and rocking back and forth, as though in prayer," a witness reported. GIs made puns about whether yet another town had been liberated or "ob-liberated." Lieutenant Weiss, a dutiful son, sat down and scribbled his mother a letter on August 13. "Not much to write home about from here," he told her. "You know more about what goes on than we do."

* * *

Ultra's big ears had given the Allied high command a clear sense of German intentions since before the onset of the Mortain offensive on August 7. Decrypted enemy radio transmissions were neither timely nor detailed enough to forewarn the 30th Division, but intercepted messages soon disclosed both Kluge's battle plan and the obstacles to executing it. A decrypt on August 10 revealed that a renewed attack toward Avranches likely would begin the next day. Kluge's order had carried a plaintive ring: the "decisive thrust *must* lead to success."

Encouraged by Eisenhower, Bradley kept most of Third Army galloping east toward Le Mans, convinced that airpower and Collins's VII Corps could blunt the German offensive even if the "decisive thrust" squeezed past Mortain. During a press briefing near Colombières, Ernest Hemingway asked Bradley about a rumor that he had wagered Patton $100 on who would reach Paris first. A startled Bradley replied, "I am General Patton's commanding officer and I don't think it would be very sporting for me to make such a bet. Besides you can surely understand that we are not talking in terms of Paris yet."

Certainly they were thinking of it. Allied forces now occupied one-tenth of France's landmass and straddled the main roads to the French capital from the west. The longer the Germans "obstinated" at Mortain, in Churchill's expression, the greater the chance to encircle two German field armies comprising more than 100,000 troops. From his left wing on August 7, Montgomery had launched the Canadian First Army in a drive southeast toward Falaise with a strike force that included fifteen hundred bombers and half as many tanks. Bofors gun tracers marked the axis of attack through dust and smoke, and searchlights bouncing off the low clouds created artificial moonlight. The attack purchased nine miles before stalling in confusion halfway to Falaise—"the blind leading the blind," in one colonel's assessment. Fifty 88mm antitank guns punished the attacking tanks; more air fratricide inflicted three hundred Allied casualties, many in the new Polish 1st Armored Division. SS troops encouraged German defenders at pistol point with cries of, "Push on, you dogs!"

As this unspooled, Bradley was once again poring over the maps in his trailer, now with mounting excitement. On August 8, during a roadside K-ration lunch near Coutances with Eisenhower, who was touring the battlefield in a Packard Clipper driven by Kay Summersby, Bradley proposed curtailing Patton's wide envelopment. Instead, both First and Third Armies would wheel to the north; Patton would make a sharp left turn at Le Mans, driving sixty miles through Alençon to Sées. The Canadians would press on for twenty-two miles through Falaise and Argentan to meet their American cousins, cinch the sack, and trap more than twenty German divisions.

An exuberant Eisenhower followed Bradley back to his command post, where a quick telephone call enlisted Montgomery's support. Patton was dubious, halfheartedly arguing on the phone for continuing east in a more audacious envelopment that would bag the enemy between the rivers Seine at Paris and Loire at Orléans. When Bradley persisted, Patton capitulated, ordering his XV Corps to pivot north from Le Mans. "If I were on my own," he wrote Bea, "I would take bigger chances than I am now permitted to take."

Montgomery issued a formal directive, ordering the Canadians to secure Falaise. "This is a first priority, and it should be done quickly." In a message to inspirit "the United Armies in France," he asked that the Almighty "make us ministers of Thy chastisement."

Bradley continued to chortle at German obduracy in Mortain, the "greatest tactical blunder I've heard of." To a visitor he said: "This is an opportunity that comes to a commander not more than once in a century. We're about to destroy an entire hostile army."

* * *

Rarely does a battle follow the tidy arrows that have been sketched on a map or limned in a commander's imagination. The mighty struggle for the Falaise Pocket was no exception. Several factors prevented the enemy annihilation envisioned by the Allied high command, including miscalculation, confusion, and dull generalship. Not least among the variables was a German reluctance to be annihilated.

In the south, Third Army's drive began well enough under Major General Wade Haislip's XV Corps. Two armored divisions abreast led two infantry divisions against fitful resistance. The French 2nd Armored Division, kitted out with U.S. Army tanks, captured intact the bridges at Alençon on August 12. With Argentan as the day's objective, although it lay a dozen miles inside the British 21st Army Group sector, Haislip ordered the French commander, Major General Jacques Philippe Leclerc, to bend west. That would free the highway north from Sées for the U.S. 5th Armored Division, giving greater heft to the Allied attack. Evincing an attitude of *je m'en foutisme*—I don't give a fuck—Leclerc instead fanned out on all available roads, blocking passage of 5th Armored fuel trucks and giving the Germans six hours to rally sixty panzers from Mortain into a sector previously held by a rearguard bakery company.

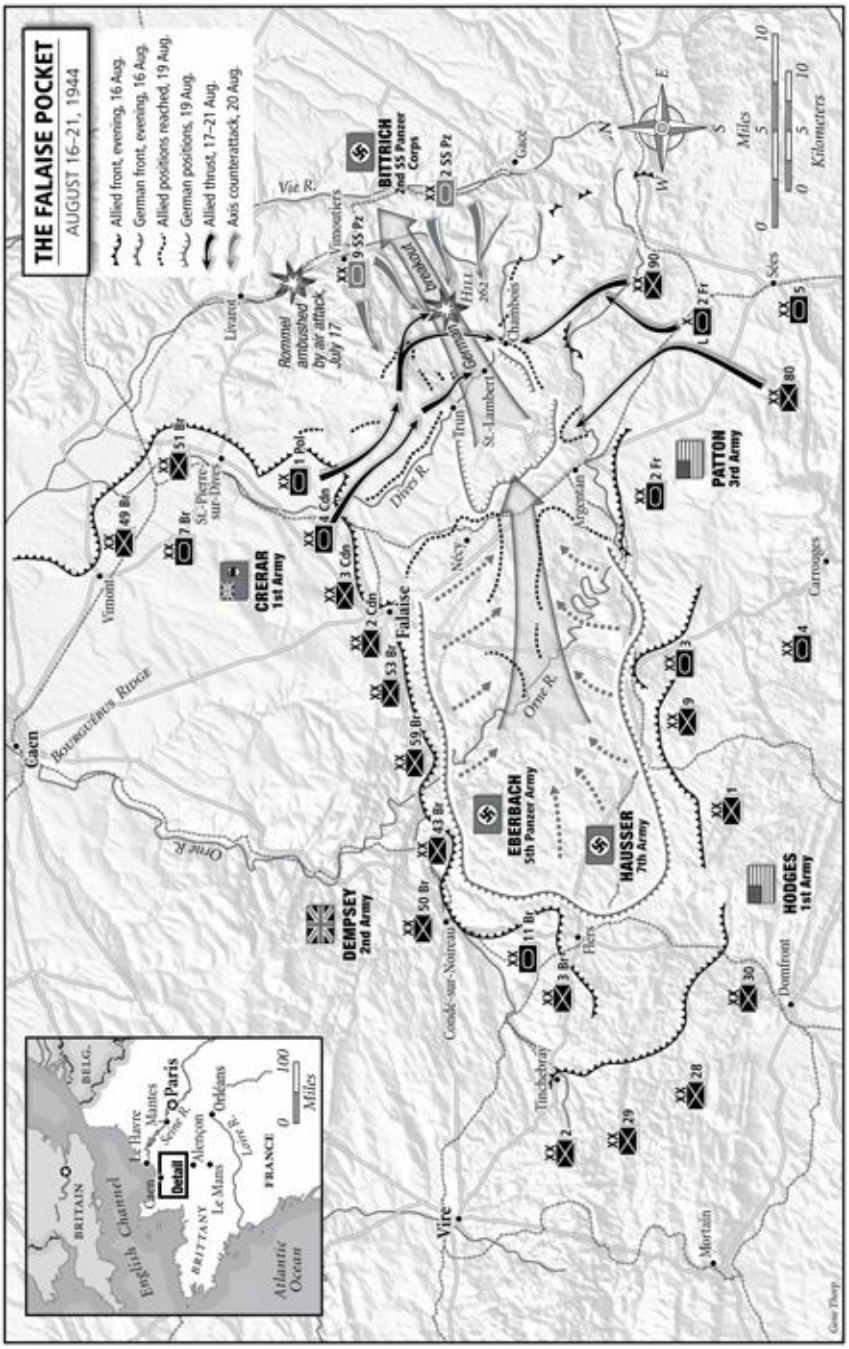
Patton was peeved but undeterred. With XV Corps sporting three hundred tanks, twenty-two artillery battalions, and complete air domination, he ordered Haislip to bowl through the German blockade, then "push on slowly until you contact our allies" near Falaise. Patton phoned Bradley early Sunday afternoon, August 13, to report his progress. "Shall we continue," he said with coarse humor,

“and drive the British into the sea for another Dunkirk?”

But Bradley had heard things go bump in the night. He now issued the most controversial order of his long career. “Nothing doing,” he told Patton. “Don’t go beyond Argentan. Stop where you are and build up on that shoulder.” The Canadian pincer from the north had made no headway, and Bradley wrongly believed—on the basis of sketchy Ultra reports and faulty intuition—that at least nineteen German divisions had begun stampeding eastward to escape the Allied trap. If that was true, then Haislip’s corps risked destruction by pushing north with an exposed left flank. Montgomery also felt perturbations at the American vulnerability, but as Bradley later wrote, “I did not consult with Montgomery. The decision to stop Patton was mine alone.” Patton argued to no avail, then told his diary that Haislip could “easily advance to Falaise and completely close the gap.… This halt is a great mistake.” A Third Army staff officer noted, “The General is beside himself.”

Canadian difficulties further unstitched the Allied master plan. Not until August 14 did the Canadian First Army finally gather its four divisions for an attack toward Falaise. Montgomery’s contempt for the Canadian army commander, General Harry D. G. Crerar, a chain-smoker with a hacking cough and recurrent dysentery, had only intensified in recent weeks. “I fear he thinks he is a great soldier,” Montgomery had recently written Brooke. “He took over command at 1200 hours on 23 July. He made his first mistake at 1205 hours, and his second after lunch.”

Worse yet, the Germans on August 13 had found detailed battle plans on the body of a Canadian officer killed after blundering into their lines; forewarned, the enemy shifted dozens of antitank guns to the avenue of attack. By Tuesday afternoon, August 15, the assault on Falaise had become “a molten fire bath of battle,” as the Canadian Scottish Regiment war diary recorded. Fratricide once again shredded the ranks: only belatedly did anyone realize that the yellow smoke used by Canadian soldiers to signify friendly positions was the same color used by British Bomber Command to mark targets. “The more the troops burnt yellow flares to show their positions,” the British official history recorded, “the more the errant aircraft bombed them.” The consequent four hundred casualties, plus washboard terrain and “dust like I’ve never seen before,” as one commander lamented, meant the Canadians would not reach Falaise until Wednesday. Even then, thirteen miles separated them from the Americans.



Bradley now made another momentous decision. Perhaps to mollify the restless, sulking Patton, and without consulting Montgomery, he agreed to dispatch more than half of Haislip's combat power—two divisions and fifteen artillery battalions—toward Dreux, sixty-five miles to the east. In his August 15 order, Bradley wrote:

> Due to the delay in closing the gap between Argentan and Falaise, it is believed that many of the German divisions which were in the pocket have now escaped.… In order to take advantage of the confusion existing, the Third Army will now initiate a movement towards the east.

In fact, no German divisions had yet tried to escape; Hitler still would not permit it. To reinforce a wide envelopment toward Paris—Patton's original proposal—Bradley weakened the shorter envelopment that he personally had designed. Nor was he confident in his course. "For the first and only time during the war," he later confessed, "I went to bed that evening worrying over a decision I had already made."

The two most senior Allied field commanders, Montgomery and Bradley, had made a hash of things. Neither recognized that German forces facing the callow Canadians and Poles were more formidable than those facing the Americans, because the latter had been weakened by COBRA and at Mortain. Montgomery failed to reinforce Crerar with the veteran British legions at his disposal; he also made little effort to confirm that he and Bradley fully understood each other. From his command-post menagerie near Vire, atwitter with "squeaking and scuffling" canaries in their cages, Montgomery evinced his usual sangfroid without imparting either urgency or command omniscience. "These are great days," he wrote a friend on August 14. "Some [Germans] will of course escape, but I do not see how they can stand and fight seriously again this side of the Seine."

Bradley was quick to fault Montgomery for various sins, including failure to move the army group boundary north of Argentan, as

well as neglect in requesting American help to seal the pocket. Yet he had been niggardly in offering that help and slippery in not disclosing his diversion of XV Corps to the east. Having recently read Douglas Southall Freeman's masterful *Lee's Lieutenants*, Bradley professed that "the one quality all the great generals had in common was their understanding." But such battlefield clairvoyance, which he had occasionally displayed as a corps commander in Tunisia and Sicily, often eluded him as an army group commander. The historian Russell F. Weigley later would lament "the absence of sustained operational forethought and planning on the part of both the principal allies."

Nor was Eisenhower much help. The supreme commander had proved an indifferent field marshal in Tunisia, on Sicily, and during the planning for Anzio; now at Falaise he continued in that deficiency, watching passively for more than a week without recognizing or rectifying the command shortcomings of his two chief lieutenants. Four armies—British Second, Canadian First, and U.S. First and Third—seemed only loosely hinged together. "Ike [was] fashionably garbed in suntans with Egyptian suede shoes and Kay was similarly dressed, making the rest of us look dull and dirty in comparison," an officer in Bradley's headquarters wrote after one mid-August visit. A British general later concluded, with more regret than censure, "He never really got the feel of the battle."

* * *

Whatever shortcomings vexed the Allied high command, they paled when stacked against the German fiasco. Dozens of tanks, assault guns, and artillery pieces stood immobile for lack of fuel. General Eberbach told Kluge on August 14 that three of his panzer divisions totaled only seventy tanks and that the 9th Panzer Division "has the strength of a company." Even SS troops were straggling. "Such tiredness," a German commander said later. "It caused hallucinations." For every five German casualties in the west since June 6, only one replacement had arrived. Kluge's headquarters warned the high command: "It is five minutes before midnight."

Then Kluge vanished. After a conference with Sepp Dietrich near Bernay, the field marshal left in his Horch at ten A.M. on August 15 to meet Eberbach and other field commanders at Nécy, six miles south of Falaise. He never arrived. "Ascertain whereabouts Kluge," Hitler's headquarters demanded. "Report results hourly." Berlin indelicately asked whether the field marshal might have defected.

Shortly before midnight he appeared at Eberbach's command post west of Argentan, disheveled and filthy. Fighter-bombers had strafed the Horch and two radio cars that morning, leaving him to cower in a ditch until sunset, then wend his way through snarled traffic. Eberbach told him that Hitler wanted another counterattack, a preposterous pipe dream. "The people there live in another world without any idea of the actual situation," Kluge said, gesturing vaguely toward Berlin. He returned to La Roche–Guyon in a borrowed car and at 2:40 P.M. on Wednesday, August 16, directed Army Group B to begin the retreat from Normandy. Hitler affirmed the decision two hours later.

The order would be Kluge's last. On Thursday, without warning, a short, jowly officer with a keen tactical eye framed by a monocle arrived at La Roche–Guyon with a letter from Hitler authorizing him to replace Kluge. Field Marshal Walter Model, son of a Royal Prussian music director, fancied himself "Hitler's fireman": during three years of service on the Eastern Front he had built a reputation as a soldier who could stabilize the field after defeats and retreats. A caustic, devout Lutheran with an adhesive memory, a taste for French red wine, and a belief in the prodigal use of firing squads for shirkers, Model was bold enough to have once asked a meddler from Berlin, "Who commands the Ninth Army, my Führer, you or I?" His bullying of subordinates led Rundstedt to observe that he had "the makings of a good sergeant." Even Hitler had muttered, "Did you see those eyes? I wouldn't like to serve under him."

Now Model was in command, and no Wehrmacht officer doubted it. His favorite maxims were: "Can't that be done faster?" and a line from Goethe's *Faust*: *"Den lieb' ich, der Unmögliches begehrt"*—I love the one who craves the impossible. In a conference at Fifth Panzer Army headquarters in Fontaine-l'Abbé, Model told his commanders, "My intention is to withdraw behind the Seine." As the retreat accelerated across the Norman front, two SS panzer divisions would swing southwest from the river to shore up an escape corridor near Trun for forces threatened with encirclement at Falaise. Already under blistering artillery and air attack, much of the German host in the west was at risk. For those who craved the impossible, the hour was ripe.

* * *

Legend had it that upon returning from the hunt on a fateful morning in 1027, the seventeen-year-old heir to the Norman duchy, Robert the Magnificent, also known as Robert the Devil, spied a tanner's beautiful daughter with her skirts hiked as she washed linen in a creek below the castle wall at Falaise. The subsequent assignation produced a son, William the Bastard, who survived various assassination plots to rule Normandy for more than half a century, to extend his reign into England in 1066, and to earn a new sobriquet.

By August 17, 1944, nearly a millennium later, the Conqueror's hometown had been so roughly handled that Canadian troops could no longer discern where the streets were laid; bulldozers simply carved a strip four meters wide through the drifted rubble. Bullet holes dinged the hoary castle keep, although the equestrian bronze of William stood intact. The last Tigers had rumbled from the cathedral ruins out the southwest corner of town the previous evening, but not until Friday morning, August 18, would sixty 12th SS diehards be exterminated in the École Supérieure. The only survivors were two teenagers, chosen by lot, who crept away to report that the town had fallen.

The eponymous Falaise Pocket by this time extended twenty miles from west to east and was roughly ten miles wide. Ultra had decrypted Kluge's withdrawal order, correcting Bradley's delusion that the enemy had already fled, and prompting Montgomery at last to ask the Americans to lunge eight miles northeast from Argentan toward Chambois and Trun, where the Poles and Canadians

were bound from the northwest in hopes of severing the two roads remaining to the Germans.

Bradley now confessed that he had sent most of XV Corps gamboling far to the east. He ordered Major General Leonard T. Gerow, commander of V Corps within First Army, to cobble together an attack using divisions left behind by Haislip, who was now racing toward Dreux. With three jeeps, nine officers, and a broken radio, Gerow drove sixty miles through teeming rain to arrive after daybreak on August 17 at his new command post in the Hôtel de France in Alençon. Here he found Major General Hugh J. Gaffey, the Third Army chief of staff, poised to attack in an hour under orders from Patton to form a provisional corps with the precise forces Gerow expected to command. After much confused palaver, Major General Gerow rejected Major General Gaffey's battle plan and postponed the attack until Friday morning to await more artillery.

Napoleonic it was not. Montgomery told Brooke at eleven P.M. on August 17 that "the gap has now been closed." That was untrue. He told Churchill, "The enemy cannot escape us." That too was untrue. To a friend he wrote, "I have some 100,000 Germans almost surrounded in the pocket." That was truer, but *almost* would not win the battle, much less the war. Fortunately, even as Allied commanders stumbled about, the reduction of the pocket by soldiers and airmen had begun in earnest. Spitfires, Typhoons, Mustangs, Lightnings, and Thunderbolts flew fifteen hundred to three thousand sorties each day in sanguinary relays from first light to last light. "Since the transports were sometimes jammed together four abreast," an RAF group captain explained, "it made the subsequent rocket and cannon attacks a comparatively easy business." A captured Canadian officer who later escaped described what he had seen on August 18: "Everywhere there were vehicle trains, tanks and vehicles towing what they could. The damage was immense, and flaming transport and dead horses were left in the road while the occupants pressed on, afoot."

Canadian troops on Friday won through to Trun, subsequently described as "an inferno of incandescent ruins." "Shoot *everything*," Montgomery urged them. The next day GIs from the 359th Infantry crept into flaming Chambois, soon dubbed Shambles. An officer reported blood "running in sizeable streams in the gutters." Fleeing Germans had been transformed into "nothing but charcoal in the forms of men" or "vertebrae attended by flies"; a dead driver perched on an artillery caisson still held reins attached to four horses, also dead. Then the Yanks spied Poles from the 10th Dragoons. "An American captain ran towards me," a Polish soldier later recalled, "and still running caught hold of me and lifted me in the air as if I had been a child." Cigarettes and chocolate were shared out, toasts drunk.

With eastbound roads now cut, remnants from nineteen German divisions were largely reduced to cart paths or to slinking cross-country by compass course. Three thousand Allied guns ranged the kill zone, and an artillery battalion commander from the 90th Division told his diary:

> The pocket surrounding the Germans is in the shape of a bowl and from the hills our observers have a perfect view of the valley below.… Every living thing or moving vehicle is under constant observation. I can understand why our forward observers have been hysterical. There is so much to shoot at.

With guidance from aerial spotters, gunners walked white phosphorus and high explosives up and down the enemy ranks. "We always hit something," said one pilot. A German general reported that many of his men were "without headgear, belts, or footwear. Many go barefoot." A staff officer added, "Heavy firing into the sunken road. A tank immediately reversed and ran over some of our men.… Someone at the rear started to wave a white flag on a stick. We shot him." That which the gun batteries overlooked, the fighter-bombers found, as pilots squinted for raised dust or the telltale glint of glass beneath the beeches and hornbeams. "I saw a truck crew, sitting on the steps of a farmhouse, dejectedly looking at the burning wreckage of their vehicles in the road," a Spitfire pilot said. "So I shot them up as well." A French farmer escaped the carnage to report, "It seemed as though I was on the stage of the last act of the Valkyrie. We were surrounded by fire."

Two death struggles within the larger apocalypse bore on the battle. At St.-Lambert, a village straddling the river Dives between Trun and Shambles, savage counterattacks by "shouting, grey-clad men" against gutful troops from the Canadian 4th Armored Division raged through Saturday and Sunday, August 19 and 20. Pillars of fire from burning gasoline trucks smudged the heavens; corpses, carcasses, and charred equipment dammed the Dives in "an awful heap" beneath one bitterly contested bridge. "We fired till the machine gun boiled away," a Canadian gunner reported. Improvised German battle groups shot their way through the cordon southeast of St.-Lambert, extracting not only panzers—with grenadiers clinging to the hulls "like burrs"—but also the Fifth Panzer Army command group and assorted generals, including Eberbach, who soon would be given command of Seventh Army.

Three miles northeast, eighteen hundred men from the Polish 1st Armored Division on Friday afternoon had scaled a looming scarp known as Hill 262 but which they named Maczuga—Mace—for its contours on a map. On Sunday morning, after a productive evening disemboweling a surprised German column plodding toward Vimoutiers on the road below, the Poles caught the brunt of an assault by the 2nd and 9th SS Panzer Divisions, summoned by Model from the Seine as his "break-in" force to extricate survivors from the pocket. With low clouds grounding Allied planes for part of the day, Germans swarmed up the wooded slopes "from all the sides in the world," one Pole recalled. Panthers and Shermans traded fire point-blank as the hereditary enemies slaughtered each other with bayonets and grenades into the night and through the next morning; all the while, escaping Germans streamed past the hill mass. A French-Canadian artillery observer, perched on Maczuga with two radios and two hundred guns in range, built a ring of massed fires around the redoubt, just as Lieutenant Weiss had done at Mortain. By the time the Canadian 4th Armored Division broke through on Monday afternoon, 325 Poles lay dead on Maczuga and more than a thousand others had been wounded. Panzers burned like haystacks across the hill, and SS bodies roasted in the grass fires ignited by tracer rounds.

For another day German stragglers died trying to ford the Dives or sneak through the shadows. Others surrendered, shouting *"Merde pour la guerre"*—Shit on the war. "It was more of an execution than a battle," a Canadian gunner said. Several hundred

Germans with armored cars and blazing 20mm guns charged through the wheat toward Trun on Monday; a Canadian line of eight Vickers machine guns "shot them down in droves," one soldier recorded. "It lasts a half hour or so." The dead were picked clean of Lugers, daggers, watches, and bloody francs, spread in the sun to dry. An old Frenchman pushing a cart poked a dead German with his foot, the reporter Iris Carpenter wrote, then chortled as he urinated on the body "with the greatest care and deliberation, subjecting each feature in the gray face to equally timed proportions of debasement." Yes, *merde pour la guerre*.

* * *

At last the guns fell silent, leaving the battlefield to resemble "one of those paintings of Waterloo or Borodino," wrote Alan Moorehead, who cabled the *Daily Express*, "I think I see the end of Germany from here."

Distances may deceive in war, and the German demise was farther off than he and others realized. The pursuit and annihilation of a beaten foe is among the most difficult military skills to master, as demonstrated from Gettysburg to Alamein; and defeats in Russia, North Africa, and Italy had taught the Wehrmacht how to retreat. Precisely a year earlier, 110,000 Germans and Italians had escaped seemingly sure destruction at Messina.

"All German formations that cross the Seine will be incapable of combat during the months to come," Montgomery promised London. That too was optimistic, and more enemy troops crossed than should have. Alas, no *corps de chasse* nipped at German heels for the forty miles from Vimoutiers to the river.

After liberating Orléans and Chartres on August 16 and 18, respectively, Third Army was ordered to swing below Paris and cross the Seine east of the capital en route to the German frontier. Fuel shortages already required daily emergency airlifts from England, but Eisenhower had ordered his lieutenants to outrun the enemy as he made for home. Of Patton's legions, only XV Corps had swiveled north, crossing the Seine on August 20 by boat, raft, treadway bridge, and a narrow footpath atop a dam near Mantes, thirty miles west of Paris. German blocking forces thwarted efforts to sweep downstream along the riverbank, but GIs managed to overrun La Roche–Guyon after firing mortars and rifle grenades into the courtyard; Model and his staff scurried off to Margival, where Rommel, Rundstedt, and Hitler had met two months earlier.

The Allied victory, though extraordinary, was incomplete. Despite "inextricable confusion," in one German general's phrase, as well as "shootings, threats, and violent measures" by SS toughs who controlled many of the sixty Seine crossing sites, those who escaped the Falaise Pocket mostly escaped Normandy. Two dozen improvised ferries, hidden by day along the oxbow glades, shuttled 25,000 vehicles to the east bank from August 20 to 24. Soldiers unable to book passage nailed together rafts from cider barrels, or pried doors from their hinges and floated them with empty fuel cans. Others lashed saplings with phone wire or clung to the bloated carcass of a dead cow drifting downstream. British intelligence estimated that 95 percent of German troops who reached the river also made the far bank. Estimates of the number escaping the Falaise trap ranged from thirty thousand to more than a hundred thousand; those who got away included four of five corps commanders, twelve of fifteen division commanders, and many capable staff officers. Tens of thousands more who were never within the pocket now joined the retreat across France.

Yet by any measure the defeat at Falaise was profound. Perhaps ten thousand Germans lay dead and fifty thousand more had been captured. Thunderbolts buzzed the roads, herding men waving white flags into prisoner columns. "Life in the cages is pretty crude," an American officer told his diary on August 24. "I heard one soldier tell another that water is being sold at 300 francs per canteen." Among the dead was Marshal Kluge: en route to Berlin after his displacement by Model, he stopped outside Verdun, spread a blanket in the underbrush, and swallowed a cyanide capsule. "When you receive these lines, I shall be no more," he told Hitler in a valedictory note. "The German people have suffered so unspeakably that it is time to bring the horror to a close." The Führer composed his epitaph: "Perhaps he couldn't see any way out.… It's like a western thriller."

Allied investigators counted nearly seven hundred tanks and self-propelled guns wrecked or abandoned from Falaise to the river. No Seine ferry could carry a Tiger, and panzers stood scuttled and charred on the docks at Rouen and elsewhere. The tally also included a thousand artillery pieces and twenty-five hundred trucks and cars. Model told Hitler that his panzer and panzer grenadier divisions averaged "five to ten tanks each." Divisions in the Fifth Panzer Army averaged only three thousand men, with barely one-third of their equipment. Army Group B had been demolished, complementing the destruction of Army Group Center in White Russia in June, although many divisions would display a knack for resurrection. As the historian Raymond Callahan later wrote, "The remarkable resurgence of the German army in the autumn obviously owes something forever unquantifiable to the imperfect Allied victory of Falaise."

Eisenhower took a quick tour of the pocket, swinging from Falaise to Trun and as far northeast as Vimoutiers. Two miles from Chambois, he climbed from the staff car and walked through the carnage wrought by his armies. "Indescribable horror and destruction," wrote a lieutenant colonel in his entourage. "German guns and trucks and wagons, bloated dead by the score scattered everywhere." Some were buried on the road verges, their paybooks tacked to crude crosses. A Canadian chaplain reported five thousand others tossed into a bulldozed mass grave at St.-Lambert. Charred corpses in burned-out panzers were dubbed "coal monuments" by Polish troops. British soldiers fired Sten rounds to evacuate gases from still more corpses before they were burned in a pyre. A German officer sat in the rear of a limousine next to his stylish mistress, both dead from cannon shells through the chest. "It was as if," one officer wrote, "an avenging angel had swept the area bent on destroying all things German."

Troops cleansing the pocket wore gas masks to cope with what became known as the "Falaise smell." Corruption even seeped into Spitfire cockpits at fifteen hundred feet. "Everything is dead," wrote Ernie Pyle, who had arrived on August 21. "The men, the machines, the animals—and you alone are left alive." A Canadian executioner with a pistol hiked along a stream bank where dozens of wounded horses "stood patiently waiting to die in the water." The labor of clearing eight thousand slaughtered horses and countless cows would keep the bulldozers busy until November; Allied administrators declared the Dives an "unhealthy zone," and

drinking water was trucked in for months. Not until 1961 would scrap-metal collectors remove the last battle detritus from the orchards and grain fields.

Norman schoolchildren sang in English to Canadian soldiers, “Thank you for liberating us.” The U.S. stock market tumbled in anticipation of peace and falling corporate profits. Reports from southern France suggested that a Franco-American invasion on the Mediterranean coast had pushed the enemy back on his heels. Many recalled November 1918, when the German army had abruptly disintegrated. “It is,” Montgomery declared, “the beginning of the end of the war.”

That much was true.

The Loveliest Story of Our Time

WARM summer rain drenched the motley legions of liberation at dawn on Thursday, August 24, as three columns from the French 2nd Armored Division made ready for battle twenty miles southwest of Paris. Village women scurried through the bivouacs carrying urns of coffee and platters heaped with fried eggs and breakfast rolls. Soldiers finished shaving with ritualistic precision, then shouldered their weapons and swaggered into formation, “booming like bitterns throughout the wood,” as an American colonel later wrote, “pounding their chests and screaming, *‘En avant!’*”

Tricolor pennants flew from three thousand vehicles named for Napoleonic triumphs or for French towns now unshackled, like *Caen* and *Cherbourg*. Each tank and scout car bore a white silhouette of France with the cross of Lorraine superimposed. The twelve thousand troops comprised not only French regulars, but sailors far from the sea, Lebanese Christian engineers, and Senegalese riflemen who until three weeks earlier had never set foot on European France. Also in the ranks could be found Spanish Republicans, Gaullists, monarchists, Jews, Muslims, Catholic reactionaries, animists, anarchists, antipapists, communists, socialists, freethinkers, and militant Quakers.

Scores of frisky “warcos”—war correspondents—buzzed about swapping rumors, including a ludicrous report that any procession into Paris must await the arrival of Franklin Roosevelt. Among the scribes was Pyle, wearing a beret that made him resemble Montgomery; also Hemingway, credentialed to *Collier’s* magazine but commanding various French cutthroats whom he had ostensibly supplied with tommy guns and pistols and who called him Colonel or *“le grand capitaine.”* These irregulars, wrote Robert Capa, could be seen “copying his sailor bear walk, spitting short sentences from the corners of their mouths,” while Papa nipped from a canteen of calvados and patted the grenade tucked inside his field jacket, “just in case.” Hundreds of other Resistance fighters fell in, including a circus truck of sharpshooters who hissed the day’s challenge and parole to one another—“Paris” and “Orléans”—and daydreamed of unfurling a tricolor on the Arc de Triomphe after four years of the stinking swastika.

Astride the road outside Limours, with tank goggles perched on his kepi and clutching the malacca cane he had carried through the war, stood the commander of this unorthodox cavalcade, Philippe François Marie, vicomte de Hauteclocque, who had concocted the nom de guerre of Jacques Philippe Leclerc to prevent reprisals against his wife and six children. Scion of minor gentry from Picardy, lithe and avian with azure eyes and a deep voice, Leclerc cultivated an air of mystery: “Like the Scarlet Pimpernel [he] is said to have been seen here, there, and everywhere,” wrote the OSS operative David Bruce, who was among Leclerc’s oddball lieutenants that Thursday morning. Leclerc had been a cavalry captain in June 1940 when he was wounded; he narrowly eluded German capture, escaping by bicycle to southwestern France, then slipping through Spain and Portugal on a forged passport amended with a child’s toy printing set. Sent by De Gaulle from London to rally anti-Vichy resistance in central Africa, he reclaimed the Cameroons and Chad for Free France, routed the Italian garrison at Koufra in southern Libya, then marched across the continent with four thousand men and a camel corps in a Kiplingesque anabasis to tender his services to Montgomery at Tripoli in January 1943. He subsequently organized the 2nd Armored Division in Morocco before landing over Utah Beach on August 1, the vanguard of a reborn French army in France. A devout Catholic who received the Eucharist every day, gunplay permitting, Leclerc also evinced a mulish streak that discomfited his ostensible superiors, as when he had snarled the roads at Argentan. Now informed that U.S. intelligence detected five thousand SS troops ready to die for Paris, Leclerc pointed an index finger at heaven and said, “Have no fear, we shall smash them.”

En avant, then, *en avant.* Bumper to bumper the columns surged forward at seven A.M., escorted by “a weird assortment of private cars, trucks, motorcycles, and bicycles,” Don Whitehead reported. Veterans of the Franco-Prussian War stood at attention on the sidewalks, snapping stiff salutes. Cheering civilians tossed flowers, apples, and tomatoes, and offered tankards of “beer, cider, white and red Bordeaux, white and red Burgundy, champagne, rum, whiskey, cognac, Armagnac, and calvados,” David Bruce recorded, “enough to wreck one’s constitution.”

Or perhaps enough to dull one’s martial edge. Ignoring General Gerow’s order to enter Paris from the west through Versailles, Leclerc shifted his weight to attack from the south past Arpajon, outrunning his artillery support and inadvertently stumbling into the thickest German perimeter defenses. The lesser, leftmost column punched through St.-Cyr to the intact Pont de Sèvres on the Seine, a few miles from the Eiffel Tower; the Arpajon force, after briefly sprinting at fifty miles an hour, soon battled roadblocks and street ambushes in suburban Massy and Fresnes. By Thursday evening the spearhead remained five miles from the Porte d’Orléans and eight miles from the city’s heart. Leclerc had suffered more than 300 casualties, with 35 tanks and 117 other vehicles destroyed.

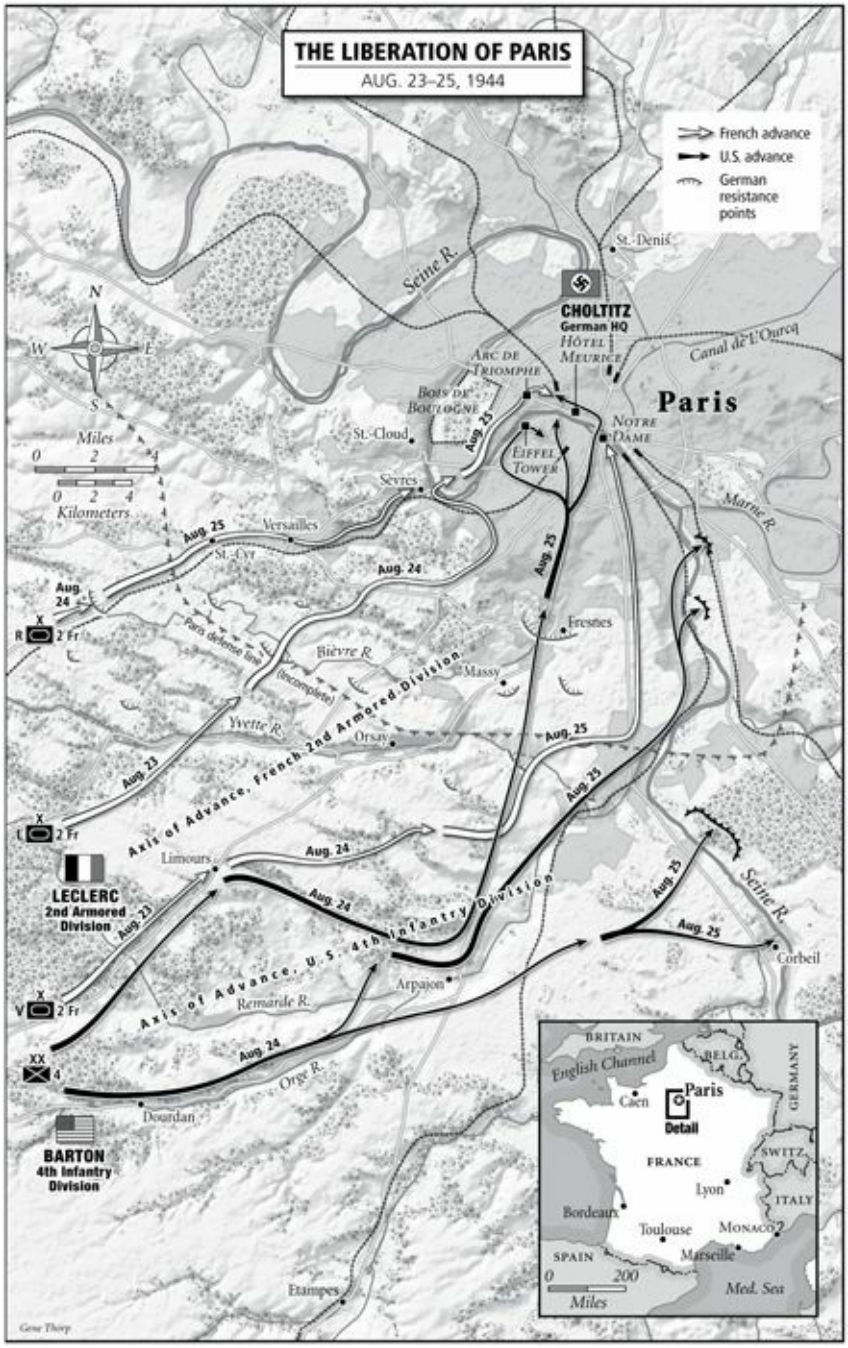
An irate Gerow complained to Bradley by radio about Leclerc “dancing to Paris” and “advancing on a one-tank front.” Equally irked, Bradley ordered the U.S. 4th Infantry Division to outflank the French and “slam on in” to the city from the southeast. Leclerc had a note dropped by spotter plane over central Paris: *“Tenez bon. Nous arrivons.”* Hold on. We’re coming.

* * *

Eisenhower had long planned to bypass Paris to avoid street brawling and because SHAEF logisticians warned that victualing the city would be "equivalent to the maintenance of eight divisions" in combat. But events had forced his hand. Labor strikes began on August 11, first by rail and subway workers, then by the police, three thousand of whom seized the *préfecture* on August 18. Wehrmacht patrols were bushwhacked across the city; ration convoys were hijacked while traveling from train depots. Shootouts left 125 Parisians dead on August 19. The last train carrying Jewish deportees had left Paris for the east on August 15.

De Gaulle, who arrived in Cherbourg on August 20, feared another Warsaw: after a Polish uprising there began on August 1, in errant anticipation of the Red Army's arrival, the Germans had methodically razed the city. Some 35,000 Resistance fighters infested greater Paris as part of a loose organization known as the French Forces of the Interior, or FFI, but their arsenal included only 570 rifles and 820 revolvers. De Gaulle moreover believed an insurrection would strengthen French communists, one of whom, a sheet-metal worker known as Colonel Rol, thundered that "Paris is worth 200,000 dead." Eisenhower had consistently promised De Gaulle that French troops would free the city when the moment ripened; Deux Mètres now not only invoked that pledge but also displayed his genius for "tantrums, sulks, insults, postures, silence, Olympian detachment, political self-righteousness, [and] moral holier-than-thouery," as the historian John Keegan later wrote.

The moment grew riper. As the insurrection intensified, messengers had slipped from the capital, foretelling catastrophe if the Allies did not step in, quickly. Hundreds of skirmishes broke out before a fitful truce took hold, widely ignored by both the SS and the communists. Isolated in enclaves, German defenders built strongpoints and deployed 88mm antitank guns on approaches to the city. Parisians resurrected the nineteenth-century art of barricade building, using street cobblestones, manhole covers, upended German trucks, and even a five-hole *pissotière*. Soon more than four hundred such redoubts stippled the city, including barricades with portraits of Hitler propped up like targets. "The pictures of Delacroix and Daumier had been studied not in vain," a postwar account noted, "and some [Parisians] affected the loose neckerchief and shirt unbuttoned to bare the chest." Insurgents stitched FFI armbands and mass-produced Molotov cocktails with champagne bottles; the lightly wounded wore arm slings fashioned from Hermès scarves. "For every Parisian, a Boche," communist placards urged. A clandestine radio station played "La Marseillaise," banned for four years; Parisians turned up the volume and opened their windows. "I have the feeling," a German sergeant wrote his wife, "things are going to get bad here fast." Another envoy, a plump Swedish ball-bearing factory manager named Raoul Nordling, told Bradley that at least some German authorities hoped for an Allied intervention before scorched-earth reprisals became inevitable.



By Tuesday, August 22, Eisenhower had relented. “If the enemy tries to hold Paris with any real strength,” the supreme commander told the Combined Chiefs, “he would be a constant menace to our flank.” Ambiguous intelligence suggested a German withdrawal. “It looks now as if we’d be compelled to go into Paris,” Eisenhower wrote Beetle Smith. “Bradley and his G-2 think we can and *must* walk in.”

Some Germans were indeed decamping. Hitler authorized the departure of clerks and police apparatchiks. One journalist described how “Gestapo small fry in gabardine raincoats” crowded the train stations along with “gray mice,” uniformed German females. Ash from burning documents drifted around the Hôtel de Talleyrand and the Bois de Boulogne. Vindictive soldiers smashed hospital elevators and clogged the plumbing with concrete, then stripped foliage from boulevard trees to camouflage trucks piled high with bidets, carpets, and other loot. “We’ll be back for Christmas,” they shouted. Parisians, who for four years had so painstakingly avoided eye contact that Germans joked about *“la ville sans regard”*—the city that never looks at you—now jeered and flourished toilet brushes at their departing occupiers.

* * *

With his main thrust delayed by skirmishers, General Leclerc dispatched a force with three Shermans and sixteen half-tracks through the back streets of southern Paris at dusk on August 24. Up the Avenue d’Italie the detachment darted, through spattering picket fire near the Gare d’Austerlitz. Seeing the five-pointed white star on the Sherman hulls, Parisians shrieked, *“Les Américains!”* Soon the truth would out: these troops were France’s own. Citizens opened barricades along the Seine and a radio broadcast from the Hôtel de Ville announced, “Rejoice! The Leclerc Division has entered Paris!… Tell all the priests to ring their church bells.”

From a balcony of the Hôtel Meurice, on the Rue de la Rivoli overlooking the Tuileries gardens, a chubby elf in a German general’s uniform stood listening to the consequent pealing, punctuated by a deep, fatidic toll from Notre Dame. Thick of body and

short of leg, with a dimpled cowcatcher chin and hocks for cheeks, General Dietrich von Choltitz was considered a *ganz Harter*—a tough guy—for his role in obliterating Rotterdam in 1940 and Sevastopol two years later; for those actions he was nicknamed "the Smasher of Cities." As a corps commander in Normandy, Choltitz had seen his force routed in COBRA before he was assigned to Paris under Hitler's edict that the city "must not fall into the hands of the enemy except as a field of ruins." A Saxon whose forebears had soldiered for eight centuries, he had told the Swede Nordling, "It has been my fate to cover the retreat of our armies and to destroy the cities behind them." On Sunday he sent a note to his wife in Germany, along with coffee requisitioned from the Meurice kitchen: "Our task is hard and our days grow difficult."

With only twenty thousand men to hold a city of three million, Choltitz had no illusions about the outcome of the imminent battle. "The enemy has now recognized our weakness," he told Model. But reducing the City of Light to Hitler's field of ruins held little appeal even for the *ganz Harter,* and he had temporized with skill, guile, and perhaps conscience. "Ever since our enemies have refused to listen to and obey our Führer," he told his staff with a sardonic glint, "the whole war has gone badly." While encouraging Nordling and others to put spurs to the Allies, Choltitz played for time by concocting elaborate, largely imaginary plans to destroy bridges, utilities, and two hundred factories. He told superiors of placing explosives by the ton in Les Invalides, the Opéra, and other public buildings; demolitionists would level the Arc de Triomphe for enhanced fields of fire and dynamite the Eiffel Tower "as a wire entanglement to block the Seine." All the while he urged "a prudent and intelligent attitude" from his troops while trying to play Resistance factions off against one another and hoping for reinforcements. Now, in a phone call to Army Group B headquarters, he held the receiver overhead. "Will you listen, please?" Choltitz said. "Do you hear that? It is bells.… What they are telling this city is that the Allies are here."

Just so. By ten on Friday morning, August 25, Leclerc managed to slide his entire division into town, tank tracks shedding sparks as they clipped across the cobbles. Two hours later, the 4th Division's 12th Infantry reached Notre Dame, then clattered through the eastern precincts. Despite vicious firefights at the Quai d'Orsay and elsewhere, crowds lined the sidewalk twenty deep, baying *"Vive la France"* in a hallucinatory admixture of celebration and gunfire. Anticipating something wondrous, women curled their hair and pressed their finest dresses. At 12:30 the national colors flew from the Eiffel Tower for the first time since June 1940; ninety minutes later, firemen unfurled the tricolor from the Arc de Triomphe. Animals set loose from a local circus scampered down the Champs-Élysées. So many Parisians pulled uniforms from storage in a rush to join the FFI that they were dubbed *Naphtalinés,* for their strong scent of mothballs.

"The rip tide of courage," in one GI's phrase, proved stirring and strong. Volunteer nurses in white smocks darted through bullet-swept streets to carry bloody litters to safety. At a traffic circle, where artillery fire splintered a chestnut tree and snipers took potshots, French half-tracks and tanks raced round and round, pumping "not less than five thousand bullets" into adjacent buildings. Resistance fighters in automobiles combed Parisian parks, firing at enemy bivouacs from the rumble seats. Police watched subway exits for fleeing Germans; "those who come out," a U.S. Army report noted, "are massacred or made prisoners." Five hundred Germans at the Chamber of Deputies surrendered to a Signal Corps photographer, and negotiations at some strongholds were conducted in Yiddish, the closest common language. Wehrmacht troops emerging with hands raised from the Hôtel Continental had the Iron Crosses ripped from their necks, while GIs ordered those captured in the Crillon to check their weapons in the cloakroom. On this feast day of St. Louis, who died in Tunis while crusading in 1270, most Parisians ate lunch at the usual hour.

Choltitz dined too, on Sèvres china with silver candlesticks in the elegant Meurice dining room. "Germany's lost the war," he told his staff, "and we have lost it with her." Upstairs his orderly packed a valise with three shirts, underwear, socks. At table, a lieutenant recalled, the general and his staff were "silent from the effort of showing no emotions." When asked to move away from the window to avoid stray bullets fired from the Louvre across the street, Choltitz replied, "No, particularly not today." But as the gunfire intensified he at last pushed away his plate. "Gentlemen, our last combat has begun." He stood to go wash and don a fresh uniform.

Just down the street, fighting swept through the Place de la Concorde, where the guillotine had removed more than a thousand heads during the Revolution, including those of Louis XVI, Marie Antoinette, and Robespierre. Five Sherman tanks sent to assault the Meurice were soon knocked out, but two hundred French infantrymen trotted under the arcade fronting the Rue de la Rivoli. Lieutenant Henri Karcher bolted into the Meurice lobby, flinging a smoke grenade from behind the reception desk, while a soldier scorched the elevator cage with a flamethrower. Upstairs an FFI fighter burst into an office and demanded of the portly figure sitting behind a table, *"Sprechen deutsch?"* "Yes," Choltitz replied, "probably better than you do." Karcher arrived to declare, "You are my prisoner."

A furious mob punched and spat at the Germans, snatching spectacles, watches, and shoulder boards as the erstwhile occupiers were herded through the street. At three P.M. Choltitz arrived at the Préfecture, where Leclerc also had been dining on china and a white tablecloth. They retired to the billiard room; Choltitz adjusted his monocle, then signed the formal surrender of Paris. Bundled into an armored car, he sat bowed and silent in the rear while a triumphant Leclerc stood in front like a centurion in his chariot. At the 2nd Armored command post, abutting platform No. 3 in the Gare Montparnasse, Choltitz signed another document ordering his remaining strongpoints to cease fire. He then requested a glass of water. Asked whether he intended to swallow poison, he replied, "Oh, no. We don't do things like that."

Teams of French and German officers carried white flags and copies of the cease-fire through the city. In a final redoubt at the Palais du Luxembourg, 700 Wehrmacht soldiers each received a pint of cognac and a pack of cigarettes; then, at 7:35 P.M., the gates swung open and their commander marched out beneath a huge white flag, followed by his troops and ten panzers. All told, 15,000 German soldiers were bagged in Paris—many would be confined for days in the Louvre courtyard—with another 4,200 killed or wounded.

"German spoken" signs vanished from shop fronts, sometimes replaced by Resistance placards that warned, "Supplier of the

Boche." Collaborators were pelted with eggs, tomatoes, and sacks of excrement; shorn women, stripped to the waist, had swastikas painted on their breasts and placards hung around their necks: "I whored with the Boches." An American sergeant barked at a mob shearing yet another wretch, "Leave her alone, goddamn you. You're all collaborationists." *Le Figaro* resumed publication of a daily feature called "Arrests and Purges." Rough justice flourished, the equivalent of that guillotine in the Place de la Concorde. The historian Robert Aron later calculated that as many as forty thousand summary executions of collaborators and other miscreants took place across France, "a figure sufficiently high to create a psychosis that will remain forever in the memories of the survivors." Some 900,000 French men and women would be arrested in the *épuration*—the purge—of whom 125,000 were forced to answer in court for their behavior during the occupation. Those guilty of *indignité nationale* served prison terms, while those convicted of *dégradation nationale* were banned from government jobs.

At ten P.M., the first of an eventual eighteen hundred Allied counterintelligence agents set up a command post in the Petit Palais. "T Force," mimicking a similar unit in Rome, had amassed the names of eighty thousand suspected spies, saboteurs, and villains in France, as well as thick dossiers on Gestapo and SS facilities. Eighty-four of those listed were collared that very day. Among the more wrenching discoveries would be three windowless torture cells in a German barracks, where condemned prisoners had scratched messages in charcoal or pencil. "Gaston Meaux, my time is up, leaves five children, may God have pity on them," read one; another, simply: "Revenge me." Alan Moorehead quoted a Parisian as saying, "I'll tell you what liberation is. It's hearing a knock on my door at six o'clock in the morning and knowing it's the milkman."

Such sobriety could not suppress "a great city where everybody is happy," in A. J. Liebling's judgment. "I never in my life been kissed so much," a sergeant wrote his parents in Minnesota. Another GI climbed three flights of stairs to visit a bedridden Frenchwoman who had pleaded to see an American before she died. "The cobblestones, the flapping signs in red and gold over the pavement cafés … three golden horse heads over the horse butcher, the *flics* with their flat blue kepis," Moorehead wrote. "Had we ever been away?" Leclerc's men seized a train before it departed for Germany with treasures from the Jeu de Paume in 148 packing cases: 64 Picassos, 29 Braques, 24 Dufys, 11 Vlamincks, 10 Utrillos, and works by Degas, Cézanne, Gauguin, and Renoir. The Bank of France cellars were found to hold 400,000 bottles of cognac, 3 million cigars, and 235 tons of sugar.

An American patrol arrived at the Claridge to be told by the manager, "This hotel is under lease to the officer corps of the German army." A colonel drew his .45 and said, "You've got just thirty seconds to get it unleased. We're moving in." Hemingway, pulling up to the Ritz with two truckloads of his French irregulars, told the bartender, "How about seventy-three dry martinis?" Later, after he and several companions had dined on soup, creamed spinach, raspberries in liqueur, and Perrier-Jouët champagne, the waiter added the Vichy tax to the bill, explaining, "It's the law." No matter: "We drank. We ate. We glowed," one of Hemingway's comrades reported. Private Irwin Shaw of the 12th Infantry, who later won fame as a writer, believed that August 25 was "the day the war should have ended."

To Ernie Pyle, ensconced in a hotel room with a soft bed though no hot water or electricity, "Paris seems to have all the beautiful girls we have always heard it had.… They dress in riotous colors." The liberation, he concluded, was "the loveliest, brightest story of our time."

* * *

De Gaulle entered the city late Friday afternoon by car down the Avenue d'Orléans, "gripped by emotion and filled with serenity," in his words. At five P.M. he made his way to the War Ministry in the Rue St.-Dominique, whence he had fled on June 10, 1940. All was unchanged—the heavy furniture, the ushers, the names on the phone extension buttons, even the blotting paper. "Nothing was missing except the state," De Gaulle later wrote. From a balcony at the Hôtel de Ville he proclaimed, "Paris outraged, Paris broken, Paris martyred, but Paris liberated. Liberated by herself, liberated by her people, with the help of the whole of France." He uttered hardly a word about the Americans, British, Canadians, or Poles, who together since June 6 had sacrificed more than fifty thousand lives for this moment. A U.S. Army captain assigned as De Gaulle's aide spent the evening scrounging rations, Coleman lanterns, and Players cigarettes for him.

"City is scarcely damaged. Great enthusiasm," 12th Army Group reported to SHAEF. Sufficient coal remained to fire the waterworks and to provide electricity for two hours a day until mid-September. A few buses with charcoal burners still ran, but they were far outnumbered by horse carts, antique carriages, and bicycles. The Dôme, the Rotonde, and other cafés in Montparnasse did a lively business beneath striped awnings. About two thousand Resistance fighters and twenty-five hundred civilians had been killed or wounded in the battle of Paris, and Hitler continued to kill more. Upon learning in answer to his infamous question—"*Brennt Paris?*"—that, no, the city was not burning, he ordered V-1 and Luftwaffe onslaughts. Bombers would inflict twelve hundred casualties in the eastern suburbs within a day after Choltitz's surrender. Parisians fired at the sky with every firearm at hand, including ancient pistols. "After a noisy hour," a witness reported, "the wheezy 'all clear' sounded." Eisenhower cabled Marshall, "We should not blame the French for growing a bit hysterical."

At three P.M. on Saturday, August 26, De Gaulle appeared at the Arc de Triomphe in an unadorned khaki uniform, as Moorehead reported, "stiff, ungainly, a heavy lugubrious face under his kepi … an imposing and unattractive figure." A police band played as he laid a cross of Lorraine fashioned from pink gladioli and relit the memorial flame that had gone cold four years earlier. Much palaver had been devoted to whether *le général* should ride a white horse or a black one down the Champs-Élysées; he chose instead to walk, preceded by four Leclerc tanks. A loudspeaker truck blared, "General de Gaulle confides his safety to the people of Paris." Behind him trailed an arm-in-arm, curb-to-curb phalanx of police, soldiers, and FFI fighters. They were followed by a procession of jeeps and armored vehicles teeming, it was said, "with girls whose destiny does not seem likely to be a nunnery."

A million people or more lined the boulevard, a prancing, dancing human herd, cheering to the echo the unsmiling man who

strode a head taller than the rest. Across the Place de la Concorde, near the smoke-stained Hôtel Meurice, De Gaulle had just climbed into an open car when shots rang out. Thousands fell flat on the pavement. “It was like a field of wheat suddenly struck by a strong gust of wind,” Moorehead wrote. “Everyone who had a gun began blazing away at the housetops.” Armored cars rushed “up and down the streets at fifty miles an hour, firing wildly with machine guns at roofs and high windows,” David Bruce told his diary. Thirty GIs standing on supply trucks fired “to beat hell,” an officer reported. Nary a marksman seemed sure of his target.

Undeterred, De Gaulle and his entourage crossed the Pont d’Arcole, FFI men with bandoliers strapped across their chests astride the running boards. At 4:15 P.M., as the convoy arrived at Notre Dame, the clap of a revolver and then automatic weapons fire seemed to come from overhead, perhaps from behind a gargoyle, sparking another wild spray of return fire that brought stone chips sprinkling down. As Leclerc barked for a cease-fire and whacked at soldiers’ rifles with his malacca, De Gaulle strolled through the Portal of the Last Judgment, head high and shoulders back. He marched down the aisle to the north transept, kepi in hand, when more shots reverberated through the nave. “The huge congregation, who had all been standing, suddenly fell flat on their faces,” a British intelligence officer reported. Worshippers crouched behind columns and beneath wooden stalls as policemen and FFI fighters fired at the organ pipes and clerestory. Ricochets pinged off the ceiling. Through it all De Gaulle stood unflinching, “the most extraordinary example of courage that I’ve ever seen,” a BBC reporter declared. Hymnal in hand, he honked through the *Magnificat*—a canticle to the Virgin—while an aide shouted at the cowering congregation, “Have you no pride? Stand up!”

Praise to God Himself would have to wait for a more pacific moment. The “Te Deum” was omitted, the service curtailed, and the great cathedral evacuated posthaste. Precisely who had started the gunfight would never be known. No sniper was shot, captured, or even spotted. “The first shots started a wild fusillade,” De Gaulle would write a day later. “We shall fix this too.” He returned to his car and drove off to begin the hard work of rebuilding France.

* * *

So ended the great struggle for Normandy. For Germany the defeat was monumental, comparable to Stalingrad, Tunis, and the recent debacle in White Russia. Fritz Bayerlein, commander of the Panzer Lehr Division and Rommel’s erstwhile chief of staff, later concluded that among history’s memorable battlefield drubbings, including Cannae and Tannenberg, none “can approach the battle of annihilation in France in 1944 in the magnitude of planning, the logic of execution, the collaboration of sea, air, and ground forces, the bulk of the booty, or the hordes of prisoners.” The “greatest strategic effect,” Bayerlein added, was to lay “the foundation for the subsequent final and complete annihilation of the greatest military state on earth.” That was true, though it badly undersold Moscow’s role in destroying the Reich.

German casualties in the west since June 6 exceeded 400,000, half of them now prisoners. More than four thousand panzers and assault guns were lost on all fronts during the summer, nearly half in Normandy. SHAEF would tell the Charlie-Charlies in Washington and London that the equivalent of eleven panzer or panzer grenadier divisions had been obliterated or “severely mauled,” although some still mustered ten thousand men, even if bereft of tanks. Thirty-six infantry divisions had been eliminated, “very badly cut up,” or isolated in coastal enclaves. Several thousand Luftwaffe planes were destroyed; as well, Berlin lost its early-warning network along the Atlantic and its access to French coal, bauxite, farm bounty, and horses. An OSS analysis concluded that Germany now averaged monthly casualties of a quarter million, while only 45,000 young men turned eighteen each month. A study of obituaries in seventy German newspapers over three years would find “a noticeable increase” in the proportion of war dead both eighteen or younger and thirty-eight or older. The Reich was bleeding to death.

The number of Americans killed, wounded, missing, or captured since June 6 topped 134,000; casualties among the British, Canadians, and Poles totaled 91,000. In half a million sorties flown during the summer, more than four thousand planes were lost, evenly divided between the RAF and the AAF. Some units had been eviscerated. The 82nd Airborne had given battle in Normandy with four regimental and sixteen battalion commanders, as well as several spare senior officers; of these, fifteen were killed, wounded, or captured. Normandy paid a fell price for her freedom: by one tally, of 3,400 Norman villages and towns, 586 required complete reconstruction. Throughout France, 24,000 FFI fighters would ultimately be slain or executed by the Germans; the 600,000 tons of Allied bombs dropped on occupied France—the weight of sixty-four Eiffel Towers—would be blamed for between 50,000 and 67,000 French deaths.

Most prominent among the German dead was Erwin Rommel, albeit his was a death delayed. For two months he recuperated from the strafing attack at home in Herrlingen, reminiscing about Africa and fingering his marshal’s baton. Insomnia, headaches, and his injured left eye troubled him; merely lifting the eyelid proved difficult. Despite an unctuous letter to Hitler—“Just one thought possessed me constantly, to fight and win for your new Germany”—he was implicated in the July 20 assassination plot as a man who had known too much for his own good.

The killers would come to Herrlingen in a green car with Berlin plates on October 14. After a brief private meeting with them in his study, Rommel told his son, “I shall be dead in a quarter of an hour.… Hitler is charging me with high treason.” Dressed in an open-collar Africa tunic, he emptied his wallet, petted the family dachshund, and climbed into the rear seat of the car with his marshal’s baton under his left arm. To spare his family he swallowed cyanide, permitting the regime to claim he had died of his injuries. Hitler, who sent a six-foot floral wreath even before Rommel’s death was confirmed, said of the news, “Yet another of the old ones.” In a funeral oration at the Ulm town hall, Rundstedt would declare, “A pitiless destiny has snatched him from us. His heart belonged to the Führer.” That was another lie: not his heart, but certainly his soul.

Among the Allied casualties was Ernie Pyle. “If I ever was brave, I ain’t any more,” he wrote a friend. “I’m so indifferent to everything I don’t even give a damn that I’m in Paris.” The war had become “a flat, black depression without highlights, a revulsion of the mind and an exhaustion of the spirit.” In a final column from Europe, he told his readers, “I have had all I can take for a while.

I've been twenty-nine months overseas since this war started; have written around seven hundred thousand words about it.… The hurt has finally become too great." Arriving at Bradley's headquarters on September 2—"worn out, thin, and badly in need of a shave," one officer reported—he said goodbye, then sailed home on the *Queen Elizabeth*, her decks crowded with other wounded. "I feel like I'm running out," he confessed to another writer. Eight months later, while covering the Pacific war, he would be killed by a Japanese bullet in the head.

For many rank-and-file troops a wild optimism took hold, "spreading like a disease," as one SHAEF officer wrote home. PX officials announced that holiday gifts already in the mail from the home front to soldiers in Europe would be returned because the war was likely to end before Christmas. But others recognized, as an officer told his family, that "Hitler can trade space for a long time." Eisenhower advised reporters, "Anyone who measures this war in terms of weeks is just a damn fool."

Yet surely things looked brighter than ever for the Allies. Berlin had again demonstrated a "fundamental inability to make sound strategic judgments," as the historian Geoffrey P. Megargee later wrote, with profound weaknesses in intelligence, personnel, and logistical systems. The tactical edge long possessed by Wehrmacht troops now seemed much diminished as GIs gained competence and confidence. The Luftwaffe had fled to the Fatherland, whereas the U.S. Army Air Forces had built thirty-one airfields in France by August 25 and in the next three weeks would begin sixty-one more. The U.S. Army had displayed not only devastating firepower—a method as effective as any in killing an adversary—but also an impressive ability to adapt under the gun. And Montgomery's strategy had won through, even if he resisted acknowledging necessary deviations from the plan. He had fought perhaps his most skilled battle, in the estimation of the historians Allan R. Millett and Williamson Murray, and the swift liberation of Paris lifted spirits throughout the Allied ranks. A British major wrote his mother, "The war is much more amusing now we are on the move."

The European war also could be seen ever more clearly to "possess a vivid moral structure," in the phrase of the writer Paul Fussell, who fought as an infantry lieutenant. Just when Allied soldiers reached Paris, Soviet troops in Poland overran the concentration camp at Majdanek, where tens of thousands had been murdered. "I have just seen the most terrible place on the face of the earth," a *New York Times* reporter wrote. Other journalists accompanying the Red Army described machines for grinding bones into fertilizer. "This is German food production," a Soviet officer explained. "Kill people, fertilize cabbages." Photos of Zyklon B, the poison used in gas chambers, appeared in *Life*, and *Time* published a vivid account of a warehouse containing 820,000 pairs of shoes taken from inmates: "Boots. Rubbers. Leggings. Slippers. Children's shoes, soldiers' shoes, old shoes, new shoes.… In a corner there was a stock of artificial limbs." Other storerooms contained piled spectacles, razors, suitcases, toys. The evidence gave weight to Roosevelt's recent accusations of deportations and "the wholesale systematic murder of the Jews of Europe," although not until the camps in Germany were uncovered in 1945 would the full horror come clear to the civilized world.

In truth, a soldier need not look far to know what he was fighting for: markers on Allied graves all over Normandy contained that most stirring of epitaphs, "*Mort pour la liberté.*" After viewing a military cemetery near Ste.-Mère-Église, a soldier on August 28 scribbled lines from A. E. Housman in his diary: "The saviors come not home tonight: Themselves they could not save." At the La Cambe cemetery, Don Whitehead listened as a French girl read a letter to a dead soldier from his mother: "My dearest and unfortunate son, on June 16, 1944, like a lamb you died and left me alone without hope.… Your last words to me were, 'Mother, like the wind I came and like the wind I shall go.'"

The death of Conrad J. Nutting III, whose P-51 clipped a tree as he attacked an enemy truck convoy on June 10, also prompted his pregnant wife, Katherine, to write to him beyond the grave:

> It will be my cross, my curse, and my joy forever, that in my mind you shall always be vibrantly alive.… I hope God will let me be happy, not wildly, consumingly happy as I was with you.… I will miss you so much—your hands, your kiss, your body.

Another pilot, Bert Stiles, who at age twenty-three had but three months of his own life left, wrote, "It is summer and there is war all over the world.… There is hope as bright as the sun that it will end soon. I hope it does. I hope the hell it does."

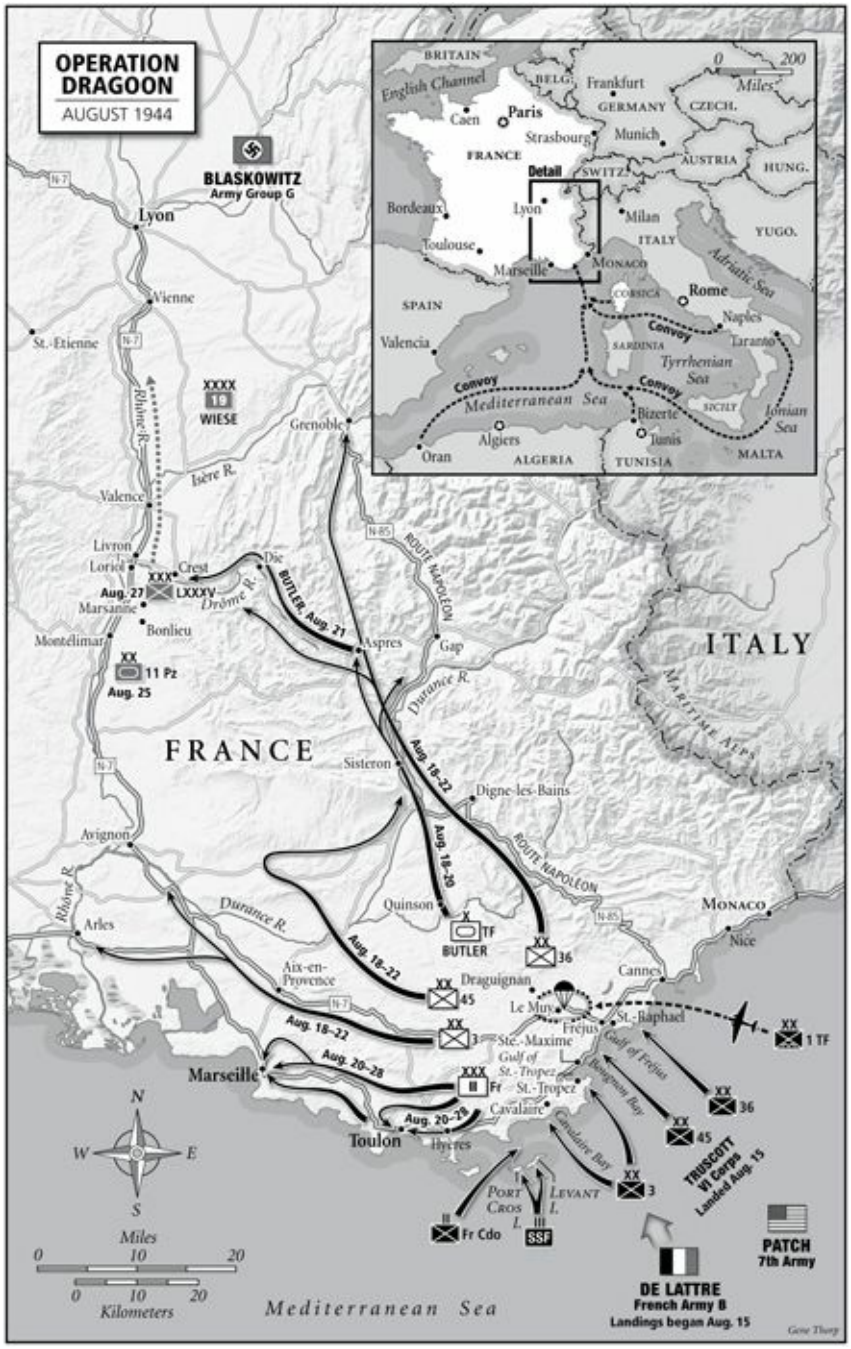
* * *

A final gesture of American arms played out in Paris three days after the Notre Dame shootout. De Gaulle had pleaded for two U.S. divisions as a "show of force" against communists and other troublemakers. A bemused Eisenhower agreed to a half measure, diverting the 28th Infantry Division through the capital en route to the front. The 28th's ancestry reached back to units first organized by Benjamin Franklin before the Revolution; its forebears had fought in every American war since. Once commanded by Omar Bradley, now the division was led by the paladin of Omaha Beach and St.-Lô, Dutch Cota, recently promoted to major general.

Hurriedly trucked to Versailles on Monday, August 28, then assembled in the Bois de Boulogne, the men toiled through a rainy night to clean uniforms and polish brass. On Tuesday morning, as skies cleared and the Seine bridges gleamed in the summer sun, Cota and the division band led the ranks in battle dress as they marched twenty-eight abreast to the strains of "Khaki Bill" beneath the Arc de Triomphe and down the Champs-Élysées, a sight so grand that its image soon appeared on a three-cent postage stamp. With weapons loaded and antiaircraft guns poised, the troops tramped past cheering Parisians and an improvised reviewing stand packed with generals in the Place de la Concorde.

Beyond Paris to St.-Denis they marched, through the rolling meadows of Ile-de-France, past stone churches and beetroot fields, marching as the blue shadows grew long, marching in pursuit of the foeman fleeing east, marching, marching, marching toward the sound of the guns.

Part Two


OPERATION DRAGOON
AUGUST 1944
BLASKOWITZ
Army Group G
XXXX
19
WIESE
BUTLER, Aug. 21
XXX
LXXXV
Aug. 27
XX
11 Pz
Aug. 25
Aug. 18–27
Aug. 18–20
Aug. 18–22
Aug. 18–22
Aug. 18–22
Aug. 20–28
Aug. 20–25
TF
BUTLER
XX
36
XX
45
XX
3
XXX
II
Fr
XX
1 TF
XX
36
XX
45
XX
3
TRUSCOTT
VI Corps
Landed Aug. 15
II
Fr Cdo
I
III
SSF
PATCH
7th Army
DE LATTRE
French Army B
Landings began Aug. 15
FRANCE
ITALY
Mediterranean Sea
Lyon
Vienne
St.-Etienne
Grenoble
Valence
Livron
Loriol
Crest
Die
Marsanne
Montélimar
Bonlieu
Aspres
Gap
Sisteron
Digne-les-Bains
Avignon
Arles
Aix-en-Provence
Quinson
Draguignan
Le Muy
Fréjus
St.-Raphael
Ste.-Maxime
St.-Tropez
Cavalaire
Toulon
Hyères
Marseille
Cannes
Nice
Monaco
Rhône R.
Isère R.
Drôme R.
Durance R.
Gulf of St.-Tropez
Gulf of Fréjus
Bourgneuf Bay
Cavalaire Bay
Port Cros I.
Levant I.
ROUTE NAPOLEON
N-85
N-7
Miles
0 10 20
Kilometers
0 10 20
N
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S
BRITAIN
English Channel
BELG.
Frankfurt
GERMANY
CZECH.
Caen
Paris
Strasbourg
Munich
FRANCE
AUSTRIA
HUNG.
SWITZ.
Detail
Bordeaux
Lyon
Milan
ITALY
YUGO.
Toulouse
Marseille
MONACO
Adriatic Sea
CORSICA
Rome
SPAIN
Naples
Valencia
SARDINIA
Taranto
Convoy
Tyrrhenian Sea
Convoy
Convoy
Mediterranean Sea
SICILY
Ionian Sea
Bizerte
Algiers
Tunis
Oran
ALGERIA
TUNISIA
MALTA
0 200
Miles
Gene Thorp

4. PURSUIT

"The Huntsman Is Hungry"

NAPLES in August 1944 still carried scars from the city's liberation ten months earlier and the hard winter that followed. A typhus epidemic had been suppressed by dusting a million citizens with DDT, but hungry Neapolitans rummaged for scraps in garbage bins along the piers, and black market C-ration hash sold for a quarter a can. Italian matrons struggling to make ends meet hawked their jewelry and old books "in a shamefaced and surreptitious way," wrote the British intelligence officer Norman Lewis; he described priests peddling umbrella handles and candlesticks supposedly carved from the bones of saints filched from the catacombs. The damage caused by German demolitions had been largely repaired, and the port was once again among the world's busiest; but a British study estimated that thieves pilfered one-third of all arriving cargo. American uniforms and GI blankets often reappeared on the street tailored as civilian suits after being unstitched, dyed, and recut. A sign above stolen footwear displayed on the Via Forcella promised, "You can march to kingdom come on these beautiful imported boots."

The city was "colorful, noisily poor, filthy, musical," wrote Lieutenant Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., a matinee idol now serving in the Navy. He might also have added baroque, sybaritic, and deeply odd. Superstitious men warded off the evil eye by reaching into a pocket to touch their testicles whenever strangers approached. Streetcorner troubadours sold freshly penned ballads, Lewis observed, all "dedicated to romantic frustration." Prostitutes' prices had jumped thirtyfold since the previous October, despite rumors that the Germans had smuggled in trollops with especially virulent strains of venereal disease. "Hey, Joe," adolescent pimps yelled at soldiers along the waterfront. "Piece ass! Gal nice!" Smoke and steam leaked from Vesuvius day and night, although most of the ash and vitrified clinkers from the eleven-day eruption in March had been swept up.

More than ever, Naples was a military town, sustaining two Allied armies that for a year had clawed their way up the Italian Peninsula. Although since June 6 the campaign seemed to have been reduced to a dismal backwater, two dozen divisions kept punching north of Rome, under the American Fifth Army in the west and the British Eighth Army in the east. German troops had abandoned Florence on August 7, and Allied forces now planned to assault the Gothic Line, yet another of those heartbreaking barriers built across the spiny Apennines. Troops poured into Naples for a final respite before the battle resumed, not just for "I&I"—intercourse and intoxication—but also for more sedate pastimes, like watching Dorothy Lamour in *Riding High* at the big open-air theater, or sipping a gin fizz at the Orange Club, or splashing about in the huge swimming pool with statuary nudes built for an antebellum world's fair.

But it was not the Allied armies preparing to breach the Gothic Line that now preoccupied military Naples. Rather, it was the quarter-million men seconded to Operation DRAGOON, who under Plan 4-44 had begun slipping inconspicuously from the port on August 9 for the invasion of southern France. Day by day more convoys left Naples, joined by ships from Malta and Palermo, Brindisi and Taranto, Bizerte and Oran, until nearly nine hundred vessels plied ten arterial routes across the Mediterranean, converging within striking distance of Provence along the west coast of Corsica. Making up the great fleet were attack transports and Liberty ships, LSTs and LCTs, twenty-one cruisers and eighty-seven destroyers and five battleships, including *Texas, Nevada,* and *Arkansas,* those smoke-stained veterans of Normandy.

By August 13, the 36th and 45th Infantry Divisions had finished their last rehearsals at Salerno, where wrecked Higgins boats and moldering corpses could still be found from the divisions' death struggle there the previous September. Now troops sat beneath tarpaulins on the transport decks, sewing shoulder flashes to uniform sleeves or thumbing through *A Pocket Guide to France.* The last tanks, trucks, and rubber terrain models were bullied into the holds. From the docks, cranes hoisted ten L-4 Piper Grasshoppers onto *LST-906,* which had been overlaid with a flight deck to serve as a makeshift aircraft carrier for artillery spotter planes. "Many a New Day" from *Oklahoma!* blared from loudspeakers on U.S.S. *Henrico,* while 3rd Division soldiers tuned a small radio to Axis Sally, a propaganda doxy in Berlin, who boasted that she was well acquainted with Allied designs on southern France. Unimpressed, the troops never glanced up from their poker game.

Pacing the bridge of the flagship, U.S.S. *Catoctin,* was a portly seafarer with cascading chins and as much experience at seizing a hostile shore as any American in uniform: Vice Admiral H. Kent Hewitt, who would command the invasion until ground forces were well inland. A native of Hackensack, New Jersey, Hewitt as a young Naval Academy ensign had circled the globe aboard U.S.S. *Missouri* with Theodore Roosevelt's Great White Fleet, and in the four decades since, he had sailed the wettest corners of the remotest seas. Thirty years ago, he had been in Naples harbor as a navigator aboard U.S.S. *Idaho* when Archduke Franz Ferdinand was shot dead in Sarajevo; he recalled vividly the battleship lowering her flag to half mast, as if to salute a dying world. Hewitt had won the

Navy Cross for valor in the ensuing war, and many decorations subsequently. In this war, too, he had distinguished himself by putting Patton's forces on the strand in both Morocco and Sicily despite ferocious storms. He was lucky, skilled, and unflappable. Now, as his crew prepared to cast off, Hewitt took a seat on the flag bridge and with a pencil stub began working a double-crostic. The puzzles lifted him above his troubles.

Troubles he had. DRAGOON had begun dreadfully. On August 4, Rear Admiral Don Moon, who had commanded the naval force at Utah Beach and would oversee the right wing of the DRAGOON landings, had begged Hewitt to postpone the invasion. For hours he argued that forces had arrived in Naples too late to prepare properly, that assault training had been too skimpy, that the forewarned Germans would butcher the landing teams. Hewitt had known Moon as an Annapolis midshipman, knew him to be intense, overworked, and reluctant to delegate authority; he evidently did not know that Moon on June 6 had tried to persuade Joe Collins to suspend the Utah landings, or that the ship's doctor aboard Moon's *Catoctin* had treated him for acute depression, or that the fleet medical officer also had interviewed Moon about his mental balance. "I don't think it's as bad as you think it is," Hewitt told him. He promised to consider Moon's plea.

At seven the next morning, Moon rang from his cabin to ask for orange juice. Fifteen minutes later, a steward entered the stateroom, opened the blackout curtain, and found the admiral, dressed in shorts and undershirt, sitting on the sofa with a .45 in his right hand, his eyes open, and a red worm of blood trickling from his ear. The spent bullet was found in the shower. A note in neat cursive on a ruled pad explained: "The mind is gone.… My mind is running cycles with occasional nearly lucid periods and then others the complete reverse.… What am I doing to you my wife and dear children? I am sick, *so* sick." An inquest before noon ruled death had come "during a period of insanity." The certificate read: "Cause: suicide, gunshot wound, head. Combat fatigue." He was buried at five P.M., ten hours after his passing, in the Naples military cemetery. To his widow and four children, Collins later wrote, "He was a casualty of this war just as much as if he had been killed in action." Hewitt sent his own chief of staff to take Moon's command.

At two P.M. on August 13, under clear skies on a calm sea, *Catoctin*, *Bayfield*, and more than two dozen transports eased away from the docks and built to twelve knots. An escort of sixteen warships joined this final convoy as it steamed from the Naples anchorage. A witness thought of John Masefield's lines from Gallipoli: "All that they felt was a gladness of exultation that their young courage was to be used."

Vesuvius had begun to recede in the distance when a commotion on deck caught Hewitt's attention. A British admiral's barge, making for the port from the island of Ischia, could be seen weaving among the outbound ships. A stubby figure with pink cheeks stood in the forepeak, disdaining a handhold and wearing a light tropical suit beneath an enormous sun helmet. Abruptly from soldiers and sailors crowding *Catoctin*'s rails a cry went up: "It's Churchill!" So it was: with a smile he doffed his ten-gallon helmet, wispy hair tossing in the breeze, then raised his right hand to flash the famous V with his fingers. The men huzzahed until he slid from sight in their wake.

* * *

He was traveling under the improbable nom de guerre of Colonel Kent, as if a phony name and a big hat could render him inconspicuous. Ostensibly Churchill was on a fortnight's bathing holiday in southern Italy, wallowing "like a benevolent hippo" at Capri's Blue Grotto and in various Tyrrhenian coves around Naples while following the heartening news from Normandy in his portable map room. Yet he also had come to keep a pale eye on an enterprise he still bitterly opposed, and which had churned up as much enmity within the Anglo-American alliance as any episode of the war.

DRAGOON, originally called ANVIL, had first been intended as a diversion during OVERLORD to occupy eighteen German divisions south of the Loire in Army Group G. Shipping shortages and delays in capturing Rome forced a postponement until long after the Normandy landings, yet the Americans remained keen on the operation. Marseille and Toulon would provide ports at a time when dozens of U.S. Army divisions were stuck at home for lack of dockage in Normandy. DRAGOON could discomfit the enemy with a thrust up the Rhône valley, an invasion route since Caesar's wars, and it would profitably employ several veteran French divisions now fighting in Italy; with a mother country still to liberate, De Gaulle had forbidden those forces to venture beyond the river Arno. "France," Eisenhower told the British, "is the decisive theater."

The British disagreed, politely at first, then adamantly. Churchill warned Roosevelt of a "bleak and sterile" invasion through Provence, followed by "very great hazards, difficulties, and delays" in slogging up the Rhône. Marseille lay four hundred miles from Paris, and a battle there was unlikely to influence the fight for northern France; simply reaching Lyon, he predicted, would take three months. Pulling the U.S. VI Corps and the French divisions from Italy "is unacceptable to us," the British military chiefs added. Instead, why not blast across the Po valley in northern Italy, swing east with help from an amphibious landing at Trieste, and drive through the so-called Ljubljana Gap in Slovenia to reach Austria and the Danube valley? The Allied commander in Italy, Field Marshal Sir Harold Alexander, promised Churchill that he intended to "eliminate the German forces in Italy. I shall then have nothing to prevent me from marching on Vienna." This thrust of "a dagger under the armpit," as the prime minister called it, might even force Hitler to abandon France in order to shore up his southeastern front.

Back and forth the argument flew like a shuttlecock. In an exasperated message to Marshall, Eisenhower decried the project of "wandering off overland via Trieste to Ljubljana.… We must concentrate our forces.… We need big ports." Even if the Germans in Italy collapsed, and heavily fortified Trieste fell, threading the gap meant traversing a high col only thirty miles wide, followed by six-thousand-foot mountains with poor roads, worse rails, and more narrow valleys. Pentagon studies, noting that "the Austrians held off the Italians [in this region] for four years in World War I," concluded that "not more than seven divisions at the outside could be pushed through" to Austria. Churchill advised Alexander to be ready to dash to Vienna with armored cars, even though British

planners reckoned a need for at least fifteen divisions. ("Winston is a gambler," his physician later explained, "and gamblers do not count the coins in their pockets.") Brooke privately decried "Winston's strategic ravings" about campaigning "through the Alps in winter." While also skeptical of DRAGOON, Brooke advised telling Washington, "If you insist on being damned fools, sooner than falling out with you, which would be fatal, we shall be damned fools with you."

The prime minister would have none of it. Later he portrayed his scheme as a way to forestall Soviet domination of eastern Europe, but in the summer of 1944 no such argument was advanced. In a windy message to Roosevelt marked "strictly private, personal, and top secret," he warned of "the complete ruin of all our great affairs in the Mediterranean.… This has sunk very deeply into my mind." The president rebuffed him with election-year logic another politician could understand: "I would never survive even a slight setback in OVERLORD if it were known that fairly large forces had been diverted to the Balkans."

Still Churchill persisted, flying to Normandy with an escort of six Spitfires as Mortain and Falaise began to unfold, hectoring Eisenhower, Bradley, and others with, as an Army staff officer described, "beautifully colored speech, hunched forward on his chair, his eyes slightly red and beady, scattering cigar ashes on the floor and hiding his burnt match under the seat." After directing British commanders to examine "in the greatest secrecy" whether DRAGOON forces could be diverted to Brittany, the prime minister urged Eisenhower to do just that. This was a loony caprice, so "extremely unwise" that it would "cause the utmost confusion everywhere," as the Pentagon advised. Not least, tens of thousands of troops were already boarding vessels insufficiently seaworthy to venture beyond the Straits of Gibraltar, and no major Breton port would open for weeks. "Ike said no, continued saying no all afternoon, and ended up saying no in every form of the English language at his command," Harry Butcher wrote. In a subsequent session in London, Churchill wept copiously and threatened to "lay down the mantle of my high office." "I have never seen him so obviously stirred, upset, and even despondent," Eisenhower cabled Marshall on August 11, after a taxing confrontation at 10 Downing Street. Roosevelt put paid to the wrangling in nine words: "There is no more to be done about it."

Unable to move the president or his lieutenants, Churchill raged with the ineffectual petulance of a declining power. Denouncing the "sheer folly" of his "strong and dominating partner," he slipped into first-person royal: "We have been ill-treated and are furious. Do not let any smoothings or smirchings cover up this fact.… If we take this lying down, there will be no end to what will be put upon us." Even the king's equerry told his diary, "Winston is very bitter about it, and not so sure that he really likes FDR." As for Marshall and the other American chiefs, Churchill now derided them to Brooke as "one of the stupidest strategic teams ever seen. They are good fellows and there is no need to tell them this." To Clementine he later wrote, "The only times I ever quarrel with the Americans are when they fail to give us a fair share of the opportunity to win glory."

And so he had come to Naples to take the waters. Britain would win the war while losing this battle and most other battles waged against the Americans henceforth. More than two years of bickering over strategy—with London usually prevailing—had made Marshall truculent and inclined to agree with the State Department adage that "an Englishman's idea of cooperation is to persuade someone to do what he wants him to do." Even Roosevelt would later declare, "Churchill is always a disperser." This contretemps was indeed the final gasp of the prime minister's cherished peripheral strategy for winning World War II; it had become incoherent, in the judgment of the historian Michael Howard. The fabled soft underbelly was "a slogan not a strategy," another British historian concluded, a hodgepodge of improvisations. While the Americans were wary of British imperial interests in the Mediterranean and eastern Europe, the project of stealing a march on the Russians was both impractical—the Red Army already was poised to spread through Romania, Bulgaria, Poland, and Hungary, and communist partisans were ascendant in Yugoslavia—and strategically suspect. Why antagonize Moscow when Soviet forces continued to do "the main work of tearing the guts out of the German army," as Churchill himself told the House of Commons in early August?

Certainly the fraught imperatives of national interest and national pride also were playing out. Britain's stature and influence seemed to diminish with each new arrival of a Liberty ship jammed with GIs; the empire's future was uncertain at best, and that insecurity would inform the Anglo-American brotherhood for the duration. Moreover, as Brooke wrote in August, the Americans "now look upon themselves no longer as the apprentices at war, but on the contrary as full-blown professionals." The U.S. Army this month would exceed eight million soldiers; more than one in every ten was in the Mediterranean, and the American high command was bent on putting them to good use quickly.

Churchill played a poor second fiddle. "The trouble is the P.M. can never give way gracefully," a British admiral observed. "He must always be right." As the war churned into its sixth year, some found the prime minister increasingly erratic. "He is becoming more and more unbalanced!" Brooke told his diary in late summer. "He was literally frothing at the corners of his mouth with rage." He was much given to "corrective sneering," his secretary reported, and obsessed with inconsequential details, such as the black bristles of the hairbrushes in the Cabinet War Room lavatory, which he complained hid the dirt. "Churchill is preoccupied by his own vivid world," the philosopher Isaiah Berlin wrote. "He does not react, he acts; he does not mirror, he affects others and alters them to his own powerful measure." The prime minister acknowledged his mulish nature: "Of course I am an egotist. Where do you get if you aren't?"

Without doubt, "that unresting genius," in the phrase of one contemporary, needed rest. "The P.M. is very tired," an aide complained. "He insists on everything being boiled down to half a sheet of notepaper. It simply can't be done." He had described himself in midsummer as "an old and weary man," and he advocated "economy of effort. Never stand up when you can sit down, and never sit down when you can lie down."

Already this Mediterranean sojourn had revivified him, as the Middle Sea always did. Champagne lunches were followed by brandy, an hour's nap, a bath, then a whiskey and soda, and more champagne and brandy at dinner before working until three A.M. (Churchill was no alcoholic, C. P. Snow once observed, because no alcoholic could drink that much.) Now, after passing the outbound fleet, he would return to the Villa Rivalta, his hostel above Naples Bay, and pack for a C-47 flight to Corsica, his own

staging area for the invasion. The U.S. Joint Chiefs, that "stupidest strategic team," had cabled London a week earlier: "We are convinced that DRAGOON will be successful in its landing phase, and we anticipate a rapid advance up the Rhône valley." Churchill intended to see for himself.

* * *

In the smallest hours of Tuesday, August 15—Napoléon's birthday—the invasion force crept toward sixteen narrow beaches along a forty-five-mile stretch of the Côte d'Azur. The coast here was steep-to, plunging to one hundred fathoms only three miles from shore, with a negligible eight-inch tide. Allied bombers since late April had dumped twenty thousand tons on German fortifications, and on more than a few French towns. Much of the population already had fled to the hills, hiding in streambeds and hollows from what one refugee described as "a deluge of metal." Coded phrases broadcast from Algiers and London on Monday night had alerted the FFI and OSS teams of the imminent assault: "Nancy has a stiff neck. The huntsman is hungry. Gaby is going to lie down in the grass." Each soldier aboard the combat loaders received an American flag armband and two packs of Lucky Strikes. "Swilled coffee and chain-smoked, flicking our Zippos with trembling, nicotined fingers," a soldier in the 45th Division told his journal. Some lay thrashing in the sickbays with recurrent malaria contracted in Italy—"pure fire, sunstorms flaring from inside outward," as a victim described his symptoms. Yet for most, another GI wrote in his diary, "it hardly seems that an invasion is on, things are so quiet."

Catoctin's malfunctioning ventilation system had forced sweltering passengers belowdecks to strip to their undershirts for much of the passage. But as the French coast drew near, Major General Lucian K. Truscott, Jr., commander of the U.S. Army's VI Corps—the main assault force in DRAGOON—carefully dressed for combat: enameled two-star helmet, breeches, lucky cavalry boots, and the white scarf, fashioned from a paratrooper's silk map found on Sicily, that had become his trademark. This was Truscott's third invasion. Previously he had commanded the left flank of Patton's force in both TORCH and HUSKY, before taking command during the darkest hours at Anzio and rallying VI Corps to be in on the kill at Rome. Truscott possessed what one staff officer called a "predatory" face, with protruding gray eyes and gapped incisors set in a jut jaw built to scowl. But the "beaten-up foghorn" voice, scarred from carbolic acid swallowed as a child, had softened a bit in recent months after repeated paintings of his vocal cords with silver nitrate. Partial though he was to violets on his desk and to lively discussions of poetry, history, and the rationalist edition of the New Testament edited by Thomas Jefferson, at heart Truscott remained "one of the really tough generals," as the cartoonist and infantryman Bill Mauldin described him. From an enlisted iconoclast, that was staunch praise.

Truscott's was an unorthodox path to high command. His father, originally a cowboy on the Chisholm Trail, had abandoned the range to become both the physician and the pharmacist in Chatfield, Texas; an unlucky dabbler in racehorse and farmland investments, he later moved the family to Oklahoma. Lucian at sixteen claimed he was eighteen to win a teaching job in a hinterland schoolhouse, walking six miles to and fro each day. A voracious reader who renounced strong drink, tobacco, and profanity, he eventually was promoted to principal. Yet not until he joined the Army and won a cavalry officer's commission in 1917, at age twenty-two, did he find his true calling. Slowly ascending through the ranks between the wars, Truscott won admirers for both his professional competence and his skills as a polo player. Army life also put rough edges on the former teacher, who soon drank, smoked, and swore profusely. For the past two years in Africa and Italy, he had had few peers as a combat commander, demonstrating what one high-ranking comrade described as "willpower, decision, and drive"; Eisenhower still lamented his inability to get Truscott released from Anzio for OVERLORD. Truscott's generalship stressed speed, vigor, violence, and clarity; staff papers that displeased him provoked the blunt, scrawled epithet "Bullshit." Convinced that American soldiers were "hunters by instinct," he urged his officers to "make every soldier go into every fight feeling like a hunter."

To his wife, Sarah, waiting in Virginia, Truscott had confessed in recent letters how "horribly lonesome" he felt. He regretted being so "far removed from the softening touch of women and home." Before leaving his quarters on *Catoctin* he took a moment to write her again, beginning, as he always began, "Beloved wife":

> On the eve of every major undertaking in this war I have always written to you so that you would know that if anything should happen to me you were in my mind and in my heart.… I would live no part of my life over if I had the opportunity. My only real regret is that I have not made you happier and your life easier.

He stalked from the cabin to join Hewitt on the bridge, jaw set, thick shoulders slightly hunched, the hunter looking for prey.

* * *

The enemy never had a chance. In rubber boats and kayaks, and on surfboards with electric motors, three thousand American and French commandos swept onto coastal fortifications and two offshore islands. Much of the littoral was sparsely defended; some hilltop pillboxes were found to brandish only Quaker guns made from streetlight poles. Allied deceivers dropped hundreds of rubber "paradummies" with noisemakers and colored lights far from the actual assault, and electronic simulators created ghost convoys where no ships sailed. So befuddled were the Germans that for days defenders braced against an expected attack at Genoa, two hundred miles northeast.

The usual anarchy and intrepidity attended the airborne assault. From ten Italian airfields, nine thousand paratroopers and glidermen made for the Riviera. Thick inland fog caused six of nine pathfinder teams to miss their drop zones; more than half of the main jump force in predawn drops also drifted wide. Some sticks fell ten miles or more from their targets, landing on rooftops and in

vineyards around St.-Tropez. Despite the muddle, airborne casualties were light—only 230, or under 3 percent—and the Germans were further discomposed.

At eight A.M., eleven American assault battalions swept ashore in a flat calm, hidden from enemy gunners by summer haze and six thousand tons of smoke spewed from special landing craft fitted with airplane propellers to spread the miasma. At Bougnon Bay, in the center of the assault, discouraged *Osttruppen* and superannuated Germans facing the 45th Division folded quickly. On the left, the 3rd Division also clattered through the dunes at Cavalaire Bay and across the St.-Tropez Peninsula.

Among those at the point of the spear with the 3rd Division's 15th Infantry Regiment was a short and skinny—5'7″, 138 pounds—staff sergeant who on Sicily and at Anzio had already earned a reputation for élan, and would soon be deemed "the greatest folk hero of Texas since Davy Crockett." Audie Leon Murphy, Army Serial Number 18093707, was the seventh child of an itinerant farmer who owned a milk cow and little else. A fifth-grade dropout who at one point during the Depression lived in a rail boxcar, Murphy later said, "I can't remember ever being young in my life." He had learned to shoot by plinking squirrels—"little greys," he called them—and became proficient enough to hit a darting rabbit from a moving car. His sister forged his enlistment papers in 1942, falsely attesting that he was eighteen rather than seventeen. He had fainted during the induction immunizations.

Sharpshooting now served him well. Murphy and his rifle platoon were making for St.-Tropez at ten A.M., when German machine-gun fire rattled down a rocky draw, stopping the advance with the incivility of a slammed door. Murphy scampered back to the beach, grabbed a light machine gun from a dawdling gunner, and dragged it back uphill to his men. With his commandeered gun, grenades, and a carbine, he killed two enemy gunners atop a knoll and enticed a white flag from a second nest. But when Private First Class Lattie Tipton stood to take the surrender, a sniper shot him dead. Enraged, Murphy killed the surrendering Germans with grenades before seizing an enemy machine gun; firing from the hip, he exterminated two more enemy fighting positions. "My whole being," he later wrote, "is concentrated on killing." Here surely was Truscott's instinctive hunter. When the shooting finally ceased, Murphy slipped a pack under Tipton's head as a pillow, then sat down and wept. The Army would award ASN 18093707 the Distinguished Service Cross.

Only on the invasion right flank did the enemy stiffen, particularly along the Gulf of Fréjus. Napoléon had landed on this shore after returning from Egypt in 1799, and fifteen years later embarked from the same beach for his exile on Elba, complaining that the French mob was as "fickle as a weathercock." Now, thick mines, barbed-wire tangles, and strongpoints hidden in villas and seaside gazebos proved irksome, although hardly as lethal as Admiral Moon had feared. Secret Navy drone boats—radio-controlled landing craft packed with four tons of explosives to blow holes in beach obstacles—failed abjectly, possibly because German radios used the same frequencies. The boats "milled around at high speed in crazy directions, completely on their own," a witness reported; some reversed course toward the offshore fleet and had to be sunk by destroyers. "As a general proposition," a Navy demolition officer reported, "the drone boats did not function."

The American weight of metal soon carried the day. Bombers and naval gunfire raked the coast, leaving the piney hills charred and smoking. Boats carrying a regiment from the 36th Division pulled back from Fréjus, momentarily infuriating Truscott, who squinted through the haze from *Catoctin;* sensibly, officers orchestrating the landing chose to put in on an easier beach farther east. Hewitt's dispatch that afternoon was only slightly exaggerated in reporting unqualified success:

> All ships and craft reached their final assault destination as per plan.… Airborne landings were on schedule and successful. … No losses of own aircraft reported.… Bombardment reported excellent.… Landings on all beaches successful with good timing.

A naval officer aboard *LCI-233* was more succinct in his diary: "Frankly, this has been the quietest beachhead I have ever seen."

By the close of this D-Day, 66,000 troops were ashore with fewer than 400 casualties, including 95 dead. Some 2,300 German prisoners had been captured—many preferred to surrender rather than risk the vengeance of the maquis roaming the coastal uplands—and Hitler would declare August 15 "the worst day of my life." DRAGOON had fallen on an attenuated Army Group G: the German commander in southern France, General Johannes Blaskowitz, already in bad odor for objecting to SS atrocities in Poland, had been forced to give one-quarter of his infantry divisions and two-thirds of his armor to the struggle in Normandy. He was left with a hollow force of less than 300,000, including Armenians, Azerbaijanis, and four battalions of "Russians in France Fighting for Germany Against America." Within Blaskowitz's far-flung Nineteenth Army, the 11th Panzer Division, his only mobile reserve, was stuck west of the Rhône after the Army Air Forces destroyed every bridge on the river's lower reaches. Ferrying the entire division across took nearly a week; even then some panzers would be stalled for lack of fuel, which had to be floated down from Lyon.

By twilight on Tuesday, many defenders were scrambling north in disorder, jamming hijacked buses and even dray carts. American patrols snaked into the steep red-rock hills, thick with maritime pines and cork oaks. The coastal roads were "already choked with traffic, and bands of prisoners, their hands in the air, were marching toward the water line," wrote the reporter Eric Sevareid, ashore with the 45th Division. To oversee both Truscott's corps and follow-on French forces, the U.S. Seventh Army command post moved into Hôtel Latitude 43, an Art Deco complex on the lip of St.-Tropez; the army war diary noted that "resistance by German forces has been weak at most points." Sevareid described "the Cinzano signs, the powder-blue denim of the workmen, the faintly sourish smell of wine as one passed the *zincs,* the dusty plane trees, the little formal gardens, the soft, translucent air." A French admiral aboard *Catoctin* declared, "What happiness to recover this coast of France, the most fair, the most amiable, and the most smiling of our country." Truscott and his staff motored ashore to dine in a nearby château on white linen with the VI Corps crystal and silver service. Bill Mauldin declared DRAGOON to be "the best invasion I ever attended."

Within the Allied high command, perhaps only the prime minister was disgruntled. Wearing his blue, brass-buttoned Trinity

House uniform, he had sailed for five hours from Corsica aboard H.M.S. *Kimberly* to join the bombardment fleet nine miles from the Riviera. Although Churchill was particularly keen to see French colonials in action—he described them as "frog blackmoors, whose bravery I do not doubt"—the *Kimberly* ventured no closer than seven thousand yards for fear of sea mines. St.-Tropez remained swaddled in haze and smoke, all but invisible. Out of cigars and "in a querulous mood," as his physician noted, the prime minister retired below to read *Grand Hotel,* a novel he had found in the captain's cabin. On the flyleaf he scratched an inscription: "This is a lot more exciting than the invasion of Southern France."

The Avenue of Stenches

THE immediate objective of DRAGOON were the ports of Toulon and Marseille, respectively code-named ASTORIA and CYRIL. Seventh Army had little capacity for unloading supplies over the beach, so trucks, gasoline, ammunition, and other matériel needed to sustain Truscott's lunge to the north could come only through the twin anchorages, the capture of which was assigned to the French. On Wednesday evening, August 16, four divisions from the French II Corps began landing in the Gulf of St.-Tropez, a day ahead of schedule owing to feeble German resistance. They eventually would be joined by three more divisions in I Corps, giving France a quarter-million men under arms in the south.

Known for now as Army B, it was a vivid soldiery, as picturesque as Leclerc's division then capering toward Paris. Nearly half were from North Africa or the sub-Sahara, complemented by Somalis, New Caledonians, Tahitians, Indochines, Syrians, Lebanese, and Legionnaires. Africans composed almost three-quarters of the infantry regiments, including six thousand ferocious Berber *goumiers* wearing sandals and striped djellabas, with boots tied around their necks as they led their mules across the beaches. With little capacity for modern military logistics, the French relied on the U.S. Army for everything from pork-free rations for Muslim soldiers to French-English dictionaries. This summer alone the Americans had provided 1,100 tanks, 215,000 rifles, 17,000 tons of corned and frozen beef, 20 million Atabrine antimalaria tablets, 7 million packets of pipe tobacco, and 7,000 extra canteens. (Senegalese soldiers were said to require four liters of water each day, double the normal ration.) Extra tanker trucks also were needed because of French reluctance to convert cherished wine transports into gasoline carriers.

The gimlet-eyed commander of this force stepped ashore at six P.M. Wednesday after a voyage from Taranto aboard the former Polish cruise ship S.S. *Batory:* General Jean Joseph Marie Gabriel de Lattre de Tassigny, whose impeccable ensemble included kepi, yellow gloves, and a swagger stick tucked beneath his left arm. Described by French colleagues as "an animal of action" and *"jupiterien,"* De Lattre impressed Hewitt as "very pleasant, very volatile," while Truscott saw "thin hair graying around the temples, a square open face with cold eyes, medium height, trim, neat, and very soldierly." Given to abrupt dead-of-night appearances in the ranks, roaring, "What have you done for France?," De Lattre would be acclaimed by one biographer as "the greatest soldier to serve France since the age of Napoleon I."

De Lattre sprang from minor gentry in the Vendée on the Atlantic coast and graduated near the bottom of his St.-Cyr class in 1909. During the Great War, he twice gathered intelligence by slipping through the lines disguised as a factory worker to dine in a Metz restaurant packed with German officers. In a skirmish in 1914, he killed two enemy soldiers with a sword his grandfather had carried in the Napoleonic Wars, but was impaled by a German lance; a sergeant had to stand on his chest to yank it out. He was to suffer three more wounds before the Armistice and be mentioned in dispatches eight times. A fervent Catholic—in peacetime he routinely helped, barefoot, to carry the sick at Lourdes—he had insisted that chaplains accompany his assault troops in order to give quick absolution to the dying. His personal motto, adopted in the 1930s, was *Ne Pas Subir:* Do not give up.

Loyal to Vichy for more than two years after the German invasion, he had finally refused to countenance Hitler's occupation of southern France following the Allied seizure of North Africa in November 1942. Charged by a Vichy court-martial with abandoning his post, he was sentenced to ten years in prison. His son Bernard, then fifteen, aided his escape by smuggling tools and a rope into his father's cell. In September 1943, De Lattre loosened a window frame, shinnied down to a courtyard, scaled an outer wall, and fled to Algiers by way of London. There De Gaulle gave him command of the French army in exile. Known as *le Roi Jean* for his imperial airs, De Lattre stationed an imposing *sénégalais* outside his office door to sound a clarion on a trumpet whenever the double doors flew open and the general stepped out. He "lived on stage," the historian Douglas Porch later wrote, "as gracious to dignitaries, whom he received with Bourbon *éclat,* as he was severe with subordinates, whom he slaved to exhaustion." Often dining at midnight, he worked until five A.M., then signed orders in bed at dawn; visitors to his headquarters might sit for days on the outer stairs, awaiting an audience. "The General," an aide explained, "is a nocturnal."

The DRAGOON landing plan for Army B had been redrafted seventeen times at De Lattre's insistence. While conceding that "we Frenchmen are not the masters" and that subordination "is the price we must pay to be able to participate in the liberation of France," he resented being under American command and beholden to American supply. Storming into a U.S. Army headquarters, aflame with grievances, De Lattre would let loose a torrent of French as an interpreter struggled to keep pace, then stalk out, always saluting smartly before slamming the door. He was "ardent to the point of effervescence," said De Gaulle, who believed that De Lattre's faults derived from "the excesses of his virtues." Now accompanied by Bernard, the youngest soldier in the French army, he collared a subordinate in St.-Tropez and with eyes bright told him, "Toulon awaits you."

The Germans waited, too. Here and in Marseille, thirty miles farther west, 35,000 defenders had been ordered by Hitler to stand "to the last man." General Blaskowitz reported that his fortifications at Toulon were 75 percent complete, with Marseille a bit more advanced; water and ammunition had been stockpiled, and both garrisons reinforced. Port demolitions began soon after the first

Americans crossed the beaches to the east.

Toulon was the greatest naval base in France and the tougher nut. Three craggy fortresses dominated the landward approaches, and nearby mountainsides were rigged with dynamite to trigger rockslides. Seventy or more guns ranged the roadstead, among them "Big Willie," a turret with two 340mm barrels plucked from the scuttled French battleship *Provence* and installed in armor plate and thick concrete at St.-Mandrier, commanding the harbor mouth; with a range of twenty-two miles, the guns were more than a match for any weapon in the Allied fleet. Even so, Admiral Hewitt ordered the hornet's nest poked. On Saturday, August 19, after the fortifications had been pummeled from the air, *Nevada, Augusta, Quincy,* and the French battleship *Lorraine* paraded along the horizon, lobbing two hundred shells like so many playground taunts. Not until Sunday did Big Willie reply, chasing the interlopers back into their smoke banks at flank speed with a splashy fall of shot that quickly closed from a two-mile miss to a thirty-yard miss. Big Willie was "too much for us," an officer aboard *Quincy* confessed; Allied shells striking the turret's concrete casements "just bounced off like us spitting against the wall." The naval brawl would last more than a week, but Toulon—like Cherbourg—clearly would not fall from the sea.

De Lattre had assumed as much and so cleaved his army into five battle groups, with orders to outflank and encircle both Toulon and Marseille. This scheme began badly when German gunners demolished the lead French tank in a convoy on Highway 57, then cut down trees behind the rear tank to trap the column and pick off eight more. In Hyères, ten miles east of Toulon, defenders who included stranded submariners made a fortress of the Golf Hotel and adjacent links; three French artillery battalions fired a thousand rounds point-blank, augmented by two hundred naval shells. A sunset bayonet charge by Tahitian troops through the dining room and cellars ended resistance, with 140 Germans captured and many more slain.

By last light on Monday, August 21, Toulon was surrounded. Monks from a local monastery guided French detachments across the stony, pathless terrain to the north. A battalion commander led his men through the night by marking the trail with toilet paper provided, as De Lattre acknowledged, by U.S. Army quartermasters. A company commander scouted the city in a borrowed policeman's uniform while gunners shouldered a dozen battalions of artillery onto the frowning heights. One by one the battered strongpoints fell: defenders were flushed from their lairs with white phosphorus and flamethrowers, "like rabbits driven out by a terrier," in De Lattre's phrase. To diehards in the Arsenal Maritime, a French colonel on August 25 warned that at seven P.M. "my Senegalese will receive the order to massacre you all"; the last defenders blew up their remaining ammunition, roused themselves with a shout of "Heil Hitler!," and marched into captivity. Not until dawn on August 28 did the last two thousand sailors manning Big Willie and other guns on St.-Mandrier capitulate; Hewitt's ships had fired more than a thousand shells from as near as five miles. When the captured garrison commander declined to provide a map of German minefields, De Lattre vowed to shoot him. "Three hours later," he reported, "I had the plans."

Marseille fell almost at the same moment. Founded as a Greek trading post in the sixth century B.C., the storied port had become France's second largest city, with half a million citizens and the most vital anchorage in the Mediterranean, comprising thirteen miles of quays. On August 21, as De Lattre's columns approached from the east, northeast, and north, the Marseillais had rebelled, building barricades with paving stones and shooting up isolated German patrols. Oily smoke from burning refineries in the suburbs drifted over the city as *goumiers,* described by one Frenchman as "figures from another world," scrambled over goat paths and through olive groves to cut escape routes leading north. In the early hours of August 23, Algerian infantrymen accompanied by Sherman tanks hurried through the streets to the old port, cheered on by civilians in nightclothes who threw open their shutters to bray with delight. Although the German garrison bristled with at least two hundred guns in a double defensive line, the city soon grew indefensible. While *Nevada* and other warships pounded away, De Lattre spread his maps in a nearby hotel courtyard where vacationing guests, including pretty girls in sundresses, continued to sip iced apéritifs under umbrellas on the terrace.

When a tricolor rose over the captured redoubt at Fort St.-Nicolas, the garrison commander, General Hans Schaeffer, composed a message: "It would be purposeless to continue a battle which could lead only to the total annihilation of my remaining troops." French soldiers found him at dawn on August 28 in an underground burrow with two telephones and a plate of Gruyère cheese; he emerged pale and haggard to sign the surrender with a borrowed pen. Church bells rang in jubilation. Marseille had fallen nearly a month ahead of the DRAGOON timetable.

Thirty-seven thousand prisoners would be taken in the two port cities, at a cost of four thousand French casualties, including eight hundred dead. Toulon had been so thoroughly dismembered by German demolitions that the Allies forsook it as a major port. Marseille was devastated even beyond Allied fears, "the German masterpiece" of ruination, according to American port officials who had rebuilt Naples. Of 121 piers, not one could be used; dynamite and two thousand large mines had transformed every quay and warehouse into "a chaos of steel, concrete, and cables." Eleven large ships, including transatlantic liners, had been wrecked to block the harbor entrance, and 257 cranes had been pitched into the water. Scores of other sunken vessels blocked each berth with scuttling techniques "not previously encountered." As in Cherbourg, booby traps seeded the ruins, and more than five thousand mines of seventeen different types would be lifted from the water with the help of blimps used to spot them.

Yet the Allies had their port. Almost miraculously, the first Liberty ship would berth in Marseille on September 15, and Hewitt reported that ten days later the docks could handle 12,500 tons of cargo each day. For now, French regiments hurried west, to the mouth of the Rhône. De Lattre cabled De Gaulle, newly installed in Paris: "In Army B's sector there is no German not dead or captive."

* * *

Following his abdication and removal to Elba in 1814, Napoléon threw himself into a life of exile while waiting for the restored Bourbon regime to make itself intolerable. Joined by his mother, his sister, and his Polish mistress with their illegitimate son, he built

roads and bridges, organized balls, banquets, and theatricals, and played countless hands of cards, at which he cheated without scruple. Bored to tears after nine months, and burning with what the historian Norwood Young would call "the Corsican spirit of vendetta," he surreptitiously had the brig *Inconstant* painted, recoppered, and provisioned with biscuit, rice, brandy, and salt meat. Accompanied by a flotilla of six other vessels and determined to again become "the man of Austerlitz," Napoléon in February 1815 gave a British man-of-war the slip and beat for the French coast with twelve hundred retainers and old imperial guardsmen. "I was so unhappy that I was not risking much," the once and future emperor later explained, "only my life." He stepped ashore near Antibes to begin the fateful Hundred Days; in making for Paris, he avoided the royalist Rhône valley and chose a route along the western flank of the Alps, through Digne, Sisteron, and Grenoble.

The Route Napoléon led, indirectly, to Waterloo three months later, but that failed to discourage American planners: they had chosen this very path for a possible quick lunge toward Lyon, two hundred miles northwest of St.-Tropez. Since De Gaulle had demanded that the Americans immediately return to De Lattre's command a French armored brigade after just three days' employment in the initial DRAGOON landings, Truscott was forced to cobble together an all-American mechanized exploitation force. To command this scratch assemblage he appointed his deputy, Brigadier General Frederic Bates Butler, a West Point engineer from California who had once managed Herbert Hoover's White House for the War Department and more recently had seen much combat in Tunisia and Italy. Two days after the U.S. landings, as Army B began to pivot west toward Toulon, the most exhilarating Ultra messages ever intercepted in the Mediterranean galvanized Task Force Butler into an avenging instrument of pursuit.

An order radioed from the German high command at 9:40 A.M. on August 17 and deciphered by British cryptologists less than five hours later—even before General Blaskowitz received it—revealed that Hitler had directed Army Group G to retreat from southern and southwestern France, except for forces consigned to defend the ports. Other intercepts confirmed that the Germans intended to flee rather than fight. Blaskowitz would try to merge his forces with Army Group B, which had begun retreating eastward from Normandy. Now the U.S. Seventh Army could speed north without fear of counterattack from the east by enemy units in the Maritime Alps; airborne troops would screen that right flank, aided by the French maquis and commando teams code-named CHLOROFORM, NOVOCAINE, and EPHEDRINE. Unloading priorities on the beaches were immediately revised to emphasize vehicles and fuel, and Task Force Butler would be reinforced eventually by the 36th Infantry Division—formed from the Texas National Guard—with orders to intercept and destroy the fleeing Germans.

Truscott put the spurs to Butler, who galloped north from Le Muy before dawn on Friday, August 18. "No-man's land," he declared, "is our land." The force had traveled less than seven miles, choosing to avoid the easily barricaded Route Napoléon in this sector, when the column was stopped cold in Draguignan by a stupendous roadblock built by unwitting 36th Division engineers. While this barrow of boulders, mines, and cables was muscled aside, cavalry scouts captured a German corps commander who was found sitting on a park bench with pistol and brandy at hand, "having a nice quiet dignified weep," as Butler reported, while his orderly stood near holding the general's suitcase and eyeing a vengeful French mob.

And then they were off. Task Force Butler covered forty-five miles on Friday and the same on Saturday and Sunday, using Michelin maps and a Cub plane overhead to spot downed bridges, most of which had been blown by the maquis. In Quinson, when jeeps mired in a creek bed, civilians formed a fire brigade to pass flagstones and build a ford. A thousand prisoners were taken in Digne-les-Bains, many of them just arrived from Grenoble with vague, useless orders to block the Route Napoléon. Sisteron fell without a fight on August 19.

Across folded limestone hills they sped, through stands of chestnut and Aleppo pine, slowed only by nagging gasoline shortages and by road signs that locals had jumbled to confuse the Boche. Frenchmen in threadbare Great War uniforms held their salutes on the roadsides, and mildewed tricolors were retrieved from cellar hiding holes. Eric Sevareid described the chase

> through civilized, settled Provence, through the sun fields of Van Gogh and the green-and-purple patchwork of Cézanne. … The sun was warm and the air like crystal. The fruits were ripening, and the girls were lovely.… This was war as it ought to be, the war of pageantry and story.

In Gap, nearly a hundred miles from the sea, a cavalry troop of 130 men and ten armored cars fired a few dozen rounds from their assault guns, toppling a radio tower. An Army captain warned the German garrison that sixty B-17s were prepared to flatten the town; the bluff worked, or perhaps it was fear of maquis reprisals that caused another eleven hundred enemy soldiers to appear in the town plaza, wearing full packs and ready for the cages. They were frog-marched to the rear by captured Poles deputized as prison guards.

At four A.M. on Monday, August 21, an envoy appeared in Butler's command post at Aspres with a message from Truscott: "You will move at first light 21 August with all possible speed to Montélimar. Block all routes of withdrawal up the Rhône valley." Ultra and air reconnaissance had shown four retreating German divisions concentrated along the Rhône, with a rear guard provided by the 11th Panzer Division. The U.S. 3rd Division, Truscott's former command, would act as a hammer in striking from the south, while Task Force Butler and the 36th Division provided the anvil across the Rhône gorge at Montélimar, a town long celebrated for its nougat. Leaving a small blocking force at Gap to protect his rear, Butler and his wayworn column made a sharp turn to the west and at daybreak began a sixty-mile dash toward the river.

By now supply shortages threatened to undermine Truscott's master plan. Thousands of tons of ammunition had been loaded on top of other cargo in ships on the presumption that it would be required for fighting through the beachhead. Now stevedores stacked mountains of ammunition above the waterline so they could burrow deeper into the holds for desperately needed gasoline and food. The audacious sprint north—some scouts were almost to Grenoble—required supply trucks to make a three-hundred-mile round-trip, but the Seventh Army motor pool on August 21 comprised just sixty-two vehicles. Three U.S. infantry divisions together were

burning 100,000 gallons of gasoline every day, but beach depots on this Monday held only 11,000 gallons. In the haste to turn ships around, thousands of artillery rounds had been inadvertently sent back to the United States, and a thousand mortar shells somehow ended up in Sardinia. French supply units proved particularly feeble, with severe shortages of even simple items such as tire patches. Artillery firing at night was reduced to conserve ammunition, and GIs in the battle zone were placed on two-thirds rations.

Even so, by late Monday afternoon the vanguard of Task Force Butler reached the wooded high ground north of Montélimar with armored cars, tank destroyers, and Stuart light tanks. An artillery battery unlimbered, and soon the crash of guns echoed across the riverbanks. German convoys nosing north on Highway 7 along the Rhône's eastern shore swerved in panic as exploding shells heaved up geysers of dirt and smoke. A cavalry troop pushed down the Drôme, a narrow, west-flowing tributary of the Rhône; they blew a road bridge and ripped up a truck convoy. Fifty Wehrmacht vehicles soon burned like pitch.

VI Corps had severed the enemy escape route, and they had done it with just a few platoons overlooking the river and gunners reduced to twenty-five rounds per howitzer. From his new command post in Marsanne, eight miles northeast of Montélimar, Butler advised Truscott in a message shortly before midnight that with reinforcement, resupply, and more artillery he would launch a full-throated attack the next day.

"Everything has gone better than we dared hope," Truscott told Sarah in a note scribbled on Monday night, subsequently adding, "Georgie P. is not the only one who can cover ground." He was cheerful enough to tell her about camp life, of eating Gruyère, "which of course delights my soul," and swapping a pound and a half of coffee for three bottles of vermouth. Although he had seen few wildflowers, "this country is too beautiful to fight over, or should be at any rate." He asked her to send him soda crackers, witch hazel, four bottles of hot sauce to spice his rations, and a dozen Benzedrine inhalers.

"I am having my troubles and think I need a lot of things I do not have," he told her. "But think of how my opponent must feel."

* * *

His opponent felt dreadful. Blaskowitz, trying to hustle two corps from the Nineteenth Army up the Rhône after receiving Hitler's withdrawal order, was so unsure of battlefield dispositions that he described himself as commanding in "pre-technical days." A sharp debate had unfolded within Army Group G over whether the 11th Panzer Division—the most mobile and lethal unit in southern France—should save itself by fleeing, or be sacrificed to help other divisions escape. For now, as ferries finished lugging panzers to the river's eastern shore near Avignon, the division feinted toward the beachhead, then fell in behind her retreating sisters as a rear guard, bounding north between successive positions eleven kilometers apart to remain beyond American 105mm howitzer range. Trucks and troop carriers dangled ropes to tow bicycle troops, and engineers blew holes in the Rhône cliffsides as shelters against Allied strafing attacks.

Truscott took the German feint. The 3rd Division had traveled more than thirty easy miles from the beachhead before encountering modest resistance and blown bridges on August 20 at Aix-en-Provence; the next morning, Truscott got wind of a battlefield rumor suggesting that 150 panzers had sortied southeast from Avignon. The division commander, Major General John W. "Iron Mike" O'Daniel, was ever eager to do battle. (De Lattre once said that his face "might have been carved out with an axe.") But at noon on August 21, Truscott phoned his command post. "Tell General O'Daniel that I want him to halt the bulk of his command," Truscott told a staff officer. "The 11th Panzer is out in front of you and there is a possibility you might get a counterattack." For two days, the 3rd Division inched along before creeping into Arles at midday on August 24 and into Avignon a day later, tormented by mines, felled trees, and dropped bridges, but by few Germans. Most enemy troops were scurrying north up the Rhône.

At Montélimar, Task Force Butler struggled to hold sway over a 250-square-mile sector east of the river, across terrain ranging from flat farmland to looming hills almost two thousand feet high. Now confronted by two German corps frantic to escape, Butler's little command included thirty Shermans, a dozen tank destroyers, an infantry battalion, and twelve self-propelled guns. Few American fighter-bombers appeared overhead; the first airstrip in southern France had been completed only late on the twentieth, and the Army's swift advance had outrun P-47s flying from Corsica, which often forsook bomb payloads in order to carry extra fuel in wing tanks. Reinforcements from the 36th Division were nowhere to be seen, except for a single infantry battalion and two VI Corps artillery battalions that arrived on August 22.

This pleased Truscott not at all. At eleven that morning he flew by Piper Cub to the 36th Division command post in Aspres to find an infantry regiment and various gunners still in bivouac. The division commander, Major General John E. Dahlquist, was out in the field, so Truscott wheeled on the staff, his carbolic growl restored:

> Don't you understand? This is the opportunity of a lifetime. We can trap the entire German corps and 11th Panzer Division with a few men and guns. Every minute is precious. Now get moving.

For Dahlquist, he left a scorching note, describing himself as "considerably upset" that artillery and other corps units attached to the 36th were meandering toward Grenoble rather than besieging Montélimar. "Apparently I failed to make your mission clear to you," Truscott wrote. "Make no mistake about it—I expect you to command … and will hold you responsible."

In truth, Dahlquist was out of his depth. A large, fleshy Minnesotan who had worked as a haberdasher and college thespian in Swedish-language dramas before enlisting in 1917, he was humorless, blunt, and given to brooding. The campaign would quickly wear him down. "I must admit I get winded going up the hills," he wrote his wife. "Too many cigarettes." After receiving his commander's note, Dahlquist called Truscott to explain that his division was scattered from St.-Tropez to Grenoble. Half his transport had yet to be unloaded from the ships; his men had even commandeered a Spanish consul's car, and a small truck towing an antitank gun had been seen carrying three dozen men, including one astride the tube. "There is absolutely no gas available at the beaches,"

Dahlquist added. “I have less than five thousand gallons.” Truscott waved away the excuses. “Your primary mission is to block the Rhône valley and I expect you to do it,” he said. “And when you run out of gas, you park your trucks and move on foot.”

Tough talk would not win the day. A battalion from the 141st Infantry cut Highway 7 before dawn on Thursday, August 24, but by early afternoon enemy forces had breached both flanks. A grim unit history later described Panthers “so close you could feel the heat from the motor.” The battalion withdrew “at night from a hill covered with burning, exploding tanks, knocked out guns, and dead men.”

The German capture of a 36th Division battle plan that same day revealed a weak seam in the American line, along a segment held by a single engineer company at Bonlieu, several miles east of the Rhône. Six German battle groups attacked there and at other points on Friday, in fighting so intense that a U.S. battalion commander called artillery onto his own post to avoid being overrun. A chaotic midnight cavalry charge led personally by the 11th Panzer commander bowled aside another roadblock on Highway 7—“Come on, you bastards, give up,” the Germans demanded in English—and enemy convoys continued leaking through to the north.

Truscott again flew to Dahlquist’s command post, now south of Crest on the Drôme. “John, I have come here with the full intention of relieving you from command,” the corps commander said. “You have failed to carry out my orders. You have just five minutes in which to convince me you are not at fault.” Dahlquist used the time well; Truscott left persuaded the division had finally come to fight.

Surely the artillery had. More than eight battalions—some one hundred guns—ranged the highway, the town, and the narrow river gorge known as the Gate of Montélimar. Shellfire grew so furious that the road asphalt caught fire, and gunners aiming at nearby rail lines smashed several German trains trying to force the gate on the Rhône’s east bank. A single infantry company fired 2,500 mortar rounds on Sunday, August 27, in beating off successive counterattacks. The weather gods also helped, with heavy downpours that put the Drôme in spate, inundating the fords German engineers had built of railroad sleepers laid on crushed stone; for several hours, until the water subsided, the fleeing columns were stalled on the south bank under scorching artillery. By midday Sunday, three German infantry divisions had splashed across the Drôme, herded by the 11th Panzer, while a fourth division struggled up Highway 7. Blaskowitz urged speed in messages carried through the screaming shellfire by couriers with dispatch cases.

In a confused mêlée after midnight on Monday, August 28, two columns from the German 198th Division collided northeast of Montélimar with Dahlquist’s 143rd Infantry; enemy corpses carpeted the roadbed, and most of those not killed were captured. Savage gunfights raged through the orchards and scrub woods along the Drôme, where the 132nd Field Artillery Battalion opened fire at eight thousand yards on German columns stacked bumper to bumper and three abreast at river fords. Horse-drawn wagons unable to scale the muddy embankment slid back into the water, animals and men shrieking in terror as the singing shell fragments chopped them to pieces.

Task Force Butler, reduced to hardly more than a battalion, soon pushed into Loriol on Highway 7 just below the Drôme; GIs severed the road for a final time. At Livron, on the north bank, they counted five hundred dead horses and one hundred vehicles destroyed within a hundred-yard radius. Truckloads of cognac and cigarettes were abandoned by Germans pelting north toward Lyon, and riflemen pulled looted Bank of France notes by the fistful from the wreckage.

The 3rd Division’s 15th Infantry pushed into Montélimar from the south at 2:30 P.M. on Monday, clearing the town of snipers and booby traps through the night and the next morning. Audie Murphy was among those creeping from house to house. As his eyes adjusted to the dim light, behind one creaking door he glimpsed what he later described as “a terrible looking creature with a tommy gun. His face is black; his eyes are red and glaring.” Murphy saw a muzzle flash just as he fired; then came the sound of shattering glass. He had shot his own reflection in a mirror, prompting one comrade to observe, “That’s the first time I ever saw a Texan beat himself to the draw.”

The battle of Montélimar was over, but once again a chance to annihilate a fleeing enemy had gone begging. “Although the concept was daring,” a VI Corps colonel concluded, “the execution left much to be desired.” Task Force Butler had been too weak, the 36th Division too slow, the 3rd Division too cautious, the Army Air Forces too late to the game. Some sixty thousand U.S. artillery shells had scourged but not obliterated the enemy. “I fumbled it badly,” Dahlquist wrote his wife on August 29, “and should have done a great deal better.” In exchange for sixteen hundred American casualties, Blaskowitz’s losses exceeded ten thousand, including six thousand captured, but half were laborers, railway workers, and other noncombatants. About 80 percent of those fleeing up the Rhône’s east bank would reach Lyon, although Blaskowitz reported that the 338th Division mustered barely one thousand men. The 11th Panzer lost half its armor and a quarter of its artillery, but stolen French vehicles kept the division mobile. A German commander considered the escape “almost a miracle.”

Truscott was disappointed—perhaps not least in his own generalship. Even the best battle captain may be outmaneuvered by war’s caprice and a wily, desperate opponent. But a view of the battlefield from a Cub cockpit soon lifted his spirits: an aide described the scene as “carnage compounded.” For fifteen miles along the river, the detritus of eight days’ fighting stretched like a black mourning ribbon: two thousand charred vehicles; at least a thousand dead horses, many still harnessed to caissons and gun carriages; and “fire-blackened” Germans said to be such “an affront to the nose” that this grisly segment of highway became known as the Avenue of Stenches. As at Falaise, bulldozer operators wore gas masks.

All in all, Truscott allowed himself what he described as “some degree of satisfaction.” In two weeks, another ten thousand square miles of France had been liberated, while VI Corps had captured 23,000 Germans to complement the even larger throng bagged by the French. The DRAGOON death struggle was over, and a race to the German frontier had begun.

* * *

Two field-gray torrents streamed toward the Fatherland from southern France. The German First Army—half of Blaskowitz's Army Group G—beat its slow way, mostly on foot, from the nether reaches of the southwest and the Atlantic coast. Though they were 88,000 strong, only a fraction were combat troops, and few of those were armed with more than rifles. Hitler had ordered them to "carry away or destroy during the retreat everything of economic or military value," including bridges, locomotives, and power stations; to this list the high command added horses, cattle, timber, coal, furniture, and even underwear, all of which was plundered or put to the torch. Frenchmen of military age were to be kidnapped whenever possible. Civilians were murdered for petty offenses, such as "improper remarks" about the shrinking Reich.

Allied air strikes and FFI marauders punished this retreating horde, and only sixty thousand or so would reach Germany. "Foot March Group South," one of three columns within First Army, found itself isolated and cut off near Beaugency, southwest of Orléans, despite giving 8 million francs to local officials to buy goodwill and to pay for scorched-earth inconveniences. After making bonfires of their weapons, twenty thousand Germans in Foot March Group South would surrender to one of Patton's divisions along the Loire.

The other retreating gaggle in what Berlin now called "the trekking Wehrmacht" included the 138,000 men of Nineteenth Army tramping up the Rhône with horses so heavily camouflaged that "from above they look like moving bushes," a VI Corps intelligence officer wrote. It was this force that drew most of Seventh Army's attention. Field Order No. 4, issued on August 28, demanded that every effort be exerted to overtake and destroy the Germans, if not in the eighty-four miles between Montélimar and Lyon, then in the two hundred miles between Lyon and the Rhine. Stalin the previous November had declared the Swiss to be "swine" and urged the Allies to disregard Switzerland's neutrality if necessary; that suggestion found no favor in Washington or London, and American and French pursuers were told to swing wide of Geneva and the adjacent cantons. The anxious Swiss mobilized their militia anyway as fighting drew near, and bitterly objected to repeated American violations of Swiss airspace. On a single September day thirty intrusions would be logged, including some by errant P-47s that shot up a train chuffing from Zurich to Basel, mistaking it for German.

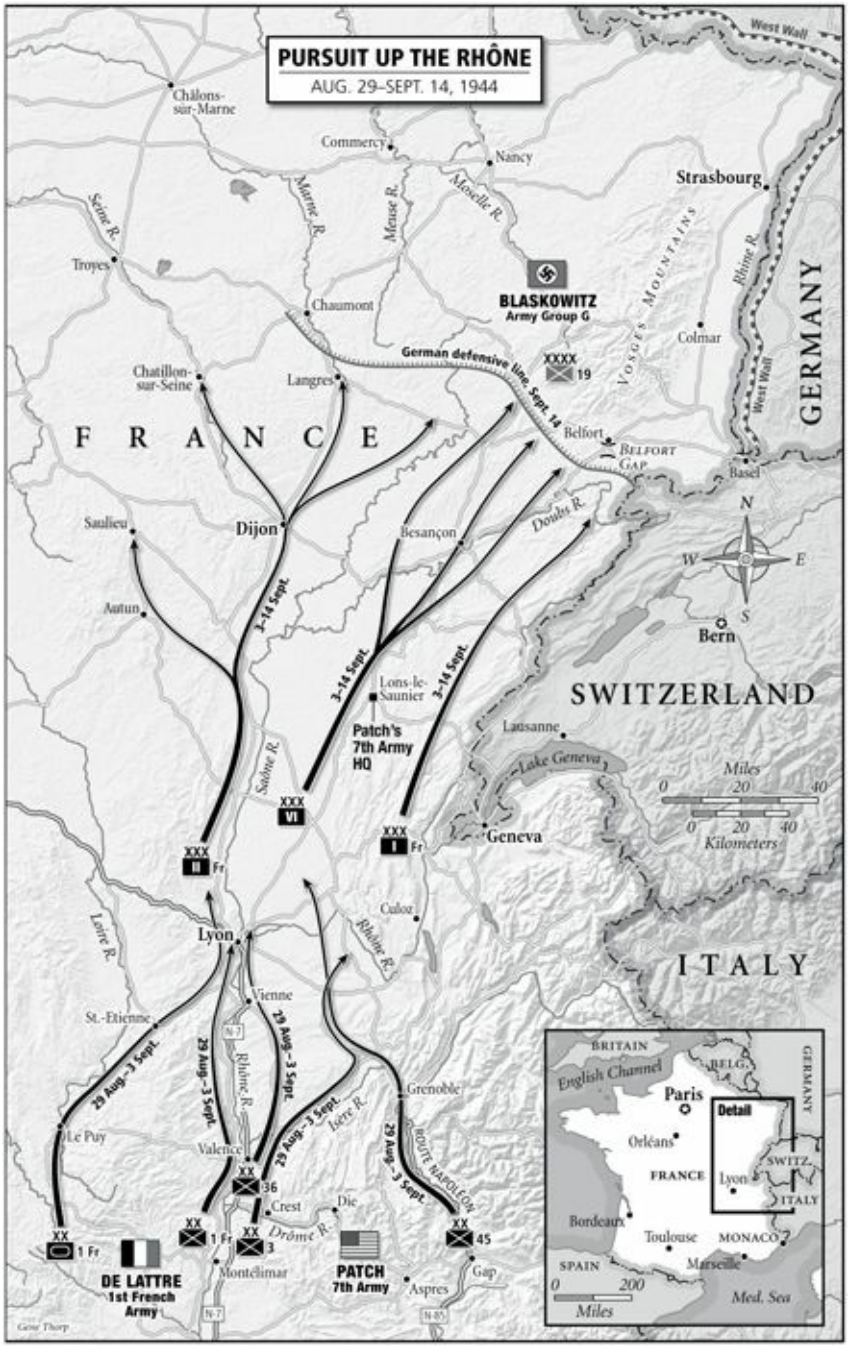
By early September, almost 200,000 Allied soldiers had come ashore in Provence. Up the Rhône and along the Route Napoléon, a GI described scenes "of liberation, libation, osculation, gesticulation, and celebration." A BBC reporter found his jeep "festooned with humanity" as he tried to drive north; a British liaison officer accompanying VI Corps admitted that his job was "to get into towns we liberate with the first troops and hand out British flags to be put up, although we have no British fighting units with us." French farm wives filled the helmets of passing soldiers with eggs, or handed out cakes of butter rolled in clean wet leaves.

"Sometimes the sheets on the hotel beds don't get changed between German and American occupation," wrote J. Glenn Gray, a Seventh Army counterintelligence officer. A French officer pointed to a dead German lying on the roadside with his hands folded across his chest and said, *auf Deutsch, "So möchte ich sie alle sehen"*—I'd like to see them all like this. A dignified American woman with close-cropped gray hair, whose living room in Culoz was dominated by a large portrait of her painted by Picasso, sent a note to Seventh Army headquarters along with a fruitcake baked by her companion, Alice B. Toklas. "We have waited for you all so long and here you are," wrote Gertrude Stein. "I cannot tell you enough what it means to see you to hear you to have you here with us." (Of Stein's prose, an American officer wrote: "I understand that she puts together a lot of repetitions which have significance only to those whose minds are in a higher sphere than mine.")

In Grenoble, the fleeing Germans set fire to 37 Rue Maréchal Pétain, said to be the Gestapo headquarters. As victims' bodies turned up here and there, a notice posted at the prefecture advised, "Bring your documents on atrocities to the third floor." A separate room was set aside to record denunciations of collaborators. One drizzly afternoon, several thousand citizens with umbrellas or newspapers folded into rain hats gathered in a factory yard where six French fascists were tied to execution stakes. Eric Sevareid described the "metallic noise of rifle bolts and then the sharp report" of a firing squad; a French officer administered the coup de grâce with a pistol shot in the ear of each slumped figure as a "terrible, savage cry" rose from the howling crowd. "Mothers with babies rushed forward to look on the bodies at close range," Sevareid wrote, "and small boys ran from one to the other spitting upon the bodies."

A 36th Division patrol entered Lyon on Saturday morning, September 2, followed a day later by the French 1st Division hurrying up the west bank of the Rhône. To reach France's third largest city had taken less than three weeks rather than the three months predicted by Churchill. The Americans were accorded the thin satisfaction of knowing, as the historian Trumbull Higgins later wrote, that "the British opposed to the end the only fully successful military operation in the Mediterranean between the fall of Tunis and the final collapse of Germany."

"In the shops one could buy anything," a 45th Division soldier in Lyon told his journal. "Evening gowns, furs, electric fixtures, furniture, antiques, everything except food"—a sad irony in a city celebrated for gastronomy. Lyon during the German occupation had been considered "the capital of repression" in southern France, with 14,000 arrests in the city and surrounding district, as well as 4,300 murders and 300 rapes. The Resistance now cashed its blood chits. "Too much gunfire on the streets here from the FFI," an American colonel wrote. "It seems they are completely out of control. I'm reminded of a revolution."



Tracers fired into a city hospital that supposedly housed German snipers set the building on fire. Nurses scurried out carrying patients on stretchers, whom they "laid under the plane trees along the parkway by the river near a stack of fresh coffins," Sevareid wrote. Of two dozen bridges in the city, the Germans had demolished all but two. Hundreds of French farmers pushing produce carts aggravated monumental traffic jams, and military convoys often waited three to six hours to cross makeshift spans over the Rhône before swinging northeast toward the Rhine.

* * *

Precisely where those convoys should go now confounded the Seventh Army and its commander, Lieutenant General Alexander McCarrell Patch, Jr. DRAGOON's success had put Patch on the cover of *Time* magazine, giving the public another hero to lionize and another battle front to cheer on. "This temporary notoriety will soon die out," the general wrote his wife, Julia. "God protect me from being spoiled by it."

That seemed unlikely. Sandy Patch was tall, gangly, and so taciturn that Truscott believed he had "some difficulty in expressing himself." De Lattre more charitably detected a "mystic turn of mind" in a man with "ascetic features." Possessed of "a temper like the devil before dawn," in one subordinate's phrase, he could also play the accordion and roll a cigarette with one hand from his sack of Bull Durham. Born in the Apache country of southern Arizona to a cavalry lieutenant who had lost a leg chasing horse thieves, Patch had graduated from West Point in 1913 without distinction except as a pole vaulter; he served credibly in France during the last war and began this one in the South Pacific. George Marshall had personally thanked him for a "superb job in New Caledonia and Guadalcanal" as a division and corps commander, then almost cashiered him for indiscreetly discussing the secret American code-breaking that permitted American fighter pilots in April 1943 to ambush and kill Admiral Isoruku Yamamoto, the architect of the Pearl Harbor sneak attack. "I am puzzled as to the course to follow," Marshall had confessed during the investigation. In the end the

chief did nothing, preferring to forgive if not forget, and Patch, now fifty-four, had been packed off to Europe.

"It feels as though it was three months ago when we commenced landing on the beaches," Patch wrote Julia in September. "I look now for some very heavy stubborn resistance." Resistance he got, but it was neither especially heavy nor stubborn. After three weeks of running, Blaskowitz halted the Nineteenth Army more than a hundred miles northeast of Lyon at Besançon, a town tucked into an oxbow of the river Doubs and elaborately fortified by the famed seventeenth-century military engineer, Vauban. At Truscott's urging, the 3rd Division pounced before the enemy could dig in, reducing five outer forts in quick order with scaling ladders borrowed from local farmers. Twenty-five tank destroyer shells fired point-blank at the citadel gate unmanned the defenders on September 8, and four thousand men in the garrison surrendered or pelted for the woods on stolen bicycles. "I never saw such confusion in my life," an American officer said. "Germans were flying every which way."

The captured booty included 183,000 gallons of high-octane gasoline, a godsend. Truscott persuaded Patch to exploit the "fleeting opportunity": rather than wait for the French to move forward, as originally planned, three U.S. divisions wheeled east toward the Belfort Gap. That ancient pass, also known as the Gate of Burgundy, had for centuries served as a trade and invasion corridor between the Rhône and the Rhine. Narrowing to just fifteen miles between the Jura Mountains in the south and the Vosges Mountains to the north, the gap in looking east gave onto the Alsatian plain, the Rhine valley, and the Black Forest beyond. Patch's decision to press ahead irked the easily irked De Lattre, who accused the Americans of conspiring to exclude Army B from its fair ration of glory; in response, Patch agreed to permit one French corps to drive toward Belfort between Truscott's right flank and the Swiss border, while another corps, which liberated Dijon on September 11, swung northeast toward Strasbourg. In a September 12 conference, Patch endorsed Truscott's assessment that "the Belfort Gap is the gateway to Germany."

Then the ground shifted. Far from this battlefield, Eisenhower struggled to control an Allied host that stretched from the North Sea to the Côte d'Azur. Prepossessed by the two army groups commanded by Montgomery and Bradley, he devoted little attention and less creative thought to the armies in the south, which now fell under SHAEF. The DRAGOON force he personally had insisted upon now seemed like an awkward appendage, bulling toward what he considered a topographical dead end in the Vosges and the Black Forest. The supreme commander in mid-September told Bradley that he would subordinate Seventh Army to the 12th Army Group but for the political necessity of keeping American suzerainty in the south: De Gaulle surely would demand overall French command of the remaining forces there if Patch was seconded to Bradley. At a minimum, Eisenhower promised, Seventh Army would always support Bradley's larger maneuvers to the north. For that reason, VI Corps and other American forces were to be consolidated, cheek by jowl, with Patton's Third Army, making the U.S. armies contiguous and giving De Lattre the extreme right wing of the Allied line, including the Belfort Gap.

Of these rarefied machinations, Truscott knew nothing. On Thursday, September 14, Patch's Field Order No. 5 arrived at the VI Corps command post. The corps was to pivot northeast, attacking through the Vosges toward Strasbourg. Truscott was "both surprised and disappointed," his headquarters war diary recorded, the "plan being entirely contrary to his conversation with Gen. Patch on [September] 12th." Bedeviled by an abscessed tooth and seething with grievances, Truscott stewed for an evening, nipping from a bottle of "medicinal bourbon." The next morning he composed a letter to Patch that ranged in tone from prickly to impudent.

"The assault on the Belfort Gap should begin at the earliest possible moment," Truscott wrote, before Blaskowitz stiffened his defenses. De Lattre would not be ready until early October, but one French and three American divisions could attack immediately. To fight in the Vosges, as Seventh Army now proposed, would waste "the three most veteran divisions in the American Army.… As demonstrated in Italy during last winter in less rugged terrain, the Boche can limit progress to a snail's pace." If Patch did not want VI Corps to force the Belfort Gap, Truscott proposed packing up his divisions for an assault on Genoa to help Fifth Army in Italy. Unaware that the army commander was heeding a SHAEF directive, he closed by asking Patch to refer the matter up the chain of command for adjudication.

Truscott sent the note to the Seventh Army command post, now in a French barracks at Lons-le-Saunier, where Napoléon had persuaded Marshal Ney—"the bravest of the brave"—to rejoin him during the Hundred Days.

Patch phoned at 6:30 P.M. on Saturday, September 16.

Patch: I don't think that letter of yours was advisable. A less sensitive man than I—and I'm not sensitive at all—would see the lack of confidence shown in your leaders.

Truscott: I wrote the letter only because it was something I believe in.

Patch: When I have something on my chest I just have to say it to that person.

Truscott: You have my complete and wholehearted support, once the decision is made. If you think someone else can do the job better, it's all right with me. But I don't think you can find one.

Patch: I know that.

So ended DRAGOON, in bickering frustration.

Truscott's pluck notwithstanding, his ability to force the Belfort Gap and jump the Rhine was dubious at best. With frayed logistical lines stretching three hundred miles, a senior officer observed, VI Corps was "living with just one day's supplies ahead of the game." Blaskowitz on September 19 reported to the German high command that his residual armies were forming a defensive bulwark west of the Vosges, "still able to fight, although much weakened." His greatest fear—a flanking attack southeast toward Belfort by Patton's Third Army—had not come to pass. Of the Army Group G troops who decamped from southern France, more than 130,000 had escaped, although Nineteenth Army salvaged only 165 of 1,600 artillery pieces, and 11th Panzer had barely two dozen tanks left. For his troubles, Blaskowitz was sacked that very day; infuriated by the retreat and by reports of German straggling,

Hitler summoned a panzer army commander from Russia to replace him. Blaskowitz soon returned to Dresden. “Hans is now home,” his wife wrote her relatives, “planting cabbage.”

On the same Tuesday that Blaskowitz was relieved, Truscott received his third star. He, Patch, De Lattre, and their men had reason for pride: in barely a month, they had hastened the German eviction from France, opened new ports and airfields, started the rehabilitation of French industry and commerce from Bordeaux to Burgundy, and demolished two enemy armies by killing, wounding, capturing, or marooning 158,000 Germans.

But ahead lay the granite and gneiss uplands of the Vosges, a primordial badland of cairns, moors, peat bogs, and hogback ridges rising above four thousand feet. Freezing autumn rains had begun here already, Sevareid noted, causing GIs to recall “the Italian winter and to long again for home.” The VI Corps war diary recorded, “Looking for skis.” In a letter home, Truscott wrote, “I dread the approaching wet and cold and snow and tedious mountain work. The skies weep continuously now.” Patrols creeping along the dark flanks of the Vosges could hear the plink of picks and shovels as German sappers burrowed into the hillsides. “There are indications,” Truscott told Sarah, “that the beast has every intention of continuing the fight right to the bitter end.”

“Harden the Heart and Let Fly”

A WORLD away, although barely two hundred crow-flying miles distant, the Allied cavalcade that had burst from Normandy now spilled across the continental crown, down pilgrim paths and drove roads, through fields of wheat stubble and ripening beets, greeted by pealing church bells and farmers who waved with one hand while tossing buckets of water on their burning crofts with the other.

By the end of August the front stretched from Abbeville on the Somme to Commercy on the Meuse, where a bridge was seized intact on the morning of the thirty-first. A great crescent, extending from Brest nearly to Belgium, was packed with more than two million Allied soldiers and 438,000 vehicles—a two-to-one edge in combat troops over German forces in the west and a twenty-to-one advantage in tanks. The AAF and RAF together massed 7,500 bombers and 4,300 fighters. Montgomery’s fifteen divisions in 21st Army Group filled a fast-moving front sixty miles wide across the hedgeless fields between the Seine and the Somme, overrunning or isolating the Rocket Gun Coast. The last of eight thousand V-1s was fired from France on the night of September 1, as launch battalions fled for Holland or Germany; twelve hundred more would be dropped from Luftwaffe aircraft in coming months, but to small effect. “The battle of London is won,” Britain’s home secretary declared. (Churchill privately proposed that all V-1 equipment and German fortifications along the Channel coast be destroyed to prevent future use by the French, “if they fall out of temper with us.”)

In 12th Army Group, Bradley commanded twenty-one divisions, with three more soon to arrive. The First Army zone now spanned sixty-five miles, plated on both flanks by armored divisions, while Patton’s Third Army braced the right wing with two corps abreast. The U.S. Ninth Army was created in early September with orders to finish reducing Brest and to contain the enemy garrisons in other Breton ports; the German commander in Brest soon buckled, emerging from the rubble with his Irish setter, a ton of personal luggage, and his fishing tackle. “I deserve a rest,” he told his captors. Four Allied airborne divisions also had regrouped in England to await another summons of the trumpet.

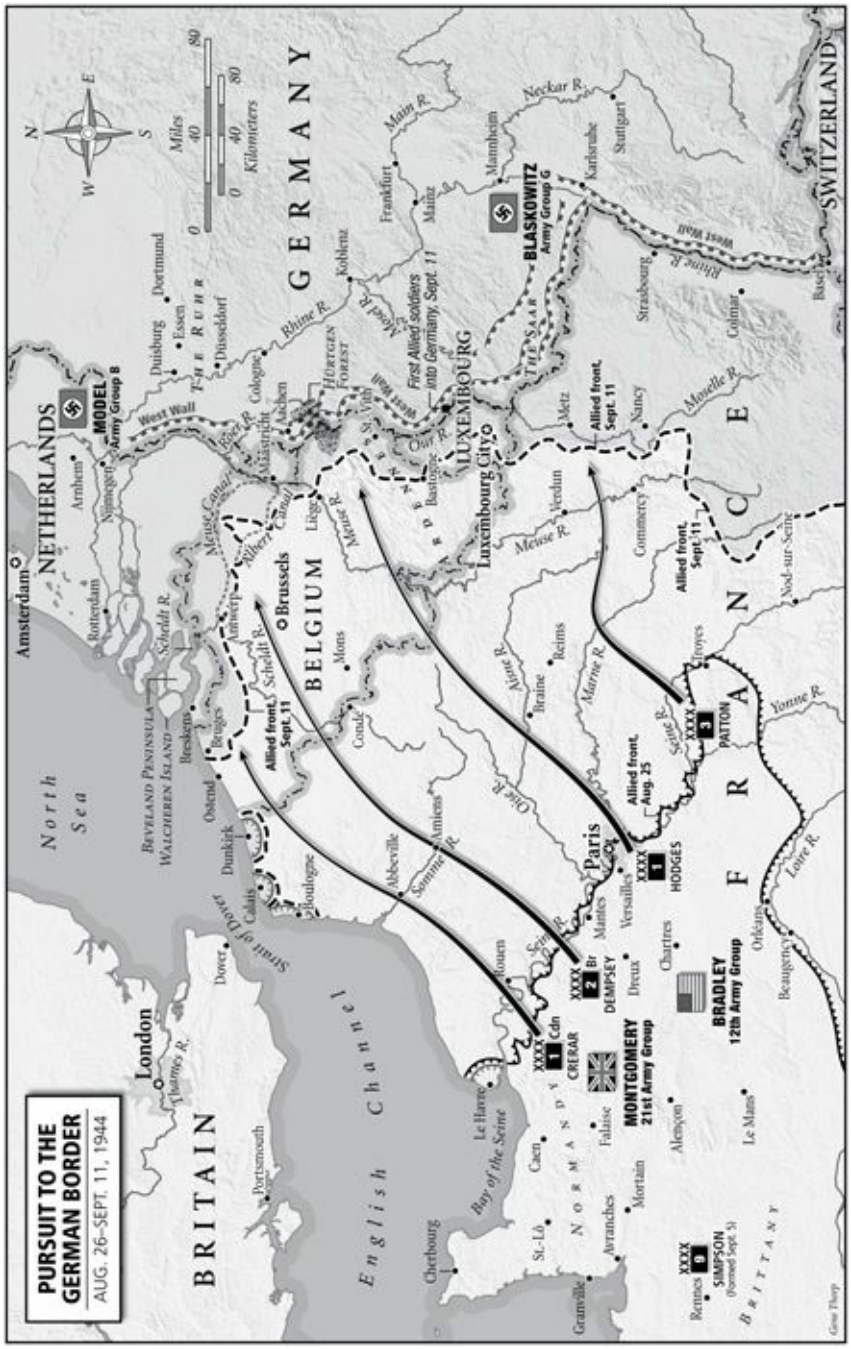
Under this onslaught the Wehrmacht stumbled eastward in “a planless flight,” as one German general acknowledged. OB West listed eighteen divisions as “completely fit” for combat, while twenty-one others were “totally unfit,” sixteen were “partially fit,” seven had been “dissolved,” and nine were “rebuilding.” Flyers signed by Field Marshal Model and passed out along the retreat routes advised, “We have lost a battle, but I tell you we will still win this war!” A proposed defensive line on the Somme never congealed, however, and German soldiers streamed toward the German frontier through Picardy and Belgium, Lorraine and the Ardennes, bellowing, “The Americans will be here in twenty minutes!” Some jumpy demolitionists misplaced their explosives so that trees to be felled as obstructions instead toppled away from the road. In what the OB West war diary called an “ignominious rout,” Germans unable to find white flags surrendered by waving chickens.

On came the avenging armies—perhaps not twenty minutes behind German heels, but close enough. “Any Boches today?” an ancient Frenchman was asked near the front at Guise. “Ah, yes, the brutes,” he replied, spitting in the road and pointing in all directions. “There, and there, and there, and there.” By truck and by foot the pursuers pursued; a battalion from the 1st Division, which covered 272 miles in the last week of August, rode twenty-two miles on August 29 and walked another eight after the trucks circled back for another load of troops. The British 11th Armored Division drove through the entire rainy night of August 30, drivers snoozing during each brief halt. Gun flashes limned the skyline like heat lightning, and shell craters were edged with the gray lace of burned powder until military traffic pounded them smooth. Fleeing German dray horses were cut down by the thousands; they were among a half-million killed in August, always to the regret of Allied cavalrymen. “There was nothing for it,” a British trooper said, “but to harden the heart and let fly.”

No sentimentality obtained for enemy soldiers. “We blew up everything that didn’t look right,” a lieutenant in the 60th Infantry told his diary, “especially little haystacks out in the fields, a good place for German snipers.” At Braine, near Reims, Patton’s vanguard caught two trains with seventy railcars carrying troops and loot from Paris; tank and tank destroyer fire slapped the engines, then automatic weapons stitched the carriages, killing fifty before five hundred others surrendered. A witness with Third Army described “the long ecstatic agony of serving machine guns on living targets,” and the pleasure that tank gunners felt in fingering their Sherman triggers, which they called “tits.” “The whole west front has collapsed,” a German regimental commander wrote on August 31, “and the other side is marching about at will.”

Not quite. Fuel shortages, nettlesome since early August, had become grievous as the Allied armies raced eastward. Daily fuel consumption had tripled from six gallons per vehicle in late July to eighteen; a single armored division now burned 100,000 gallons in each day of cross-country fighting. The five-gallon can remained the primary delivery means, and SHAEF logisticians were so desperate that consideration was given to using battleships to haul jerricans of gas to the French beaches. A Canadian corps was immobilized for several days; two of eight divisions in the British Second Army remained on the Seine to allow the other six to move on. A corps in the U.S. First Army stalled for four days, and corps commanders cadged cans of gasoline to keep their staff cars running. Nowhere did the need pinch more than in Third Army. Of seventeen tanks sent to capture a Meuse bridge in Verdun on August 31, all but three ran out of gas en route. Patton's fuel dumps the previous day had received 32,000 gallons, less than one-tenth of Third Army's requirement. His G-4, the army logistician, rated the supply of motor fuel as "extremely critical." "Damn it, Brad," Patton told Bradley, "just give me 400,000 gallons of gasoline and I'll put you inside Germany in two days."

Onward they pushed, on foot when necessary, through villages displaying homemade American flags, crayoned on paper or pillowcases with polka-dot stars. "Vote for Dewey," mischievous GIs yelled, to be answered by cheering, agreeable Frenchmen, "Vote for Dew-ee." An observant soldier told his parents that the locals numbered their building floors beginning above the ground level. "If that was the only mistake the French ever made," he added, "we wouldn't be here today."



Giddy rumors swirled, including a Swiss claim that Hitler had fled to Spain. An intercepted German radio report of insurrection in Cologne stirred great excitement until U.S. analysts realized that the news was disinformation from an Allied psychological operations team. Still, optimism ran rife. Bradley on September 1 predicted that he would reach the Rhine by Sunday, September 10, and staff officers selected half a dozen river crossing sites. Bradley's aide jotted in a diary, "Everything we talk about now is qualified by the phrase, 'If the war lasts that long.'"

"End the war in '44," soldiers chanted. *Time* reported that officials from New York to Seattle had begun planning Victory-in-Europe celebrations; a man in Santa Fe had offered $10 "to the first newsboy to reach him with the *New Mexican* announcing the fall of Germany." With the European war seemingly winding down, Churchill's War Office asked Montgomery whether he could spare an extra army headquarters staff for Burma. The Pentagon drafted plans to leave one-fifth of all ordnance stocks in Europe with a postwar occupation force, while one-fifth would be sent to the Pacific and three-fifths shipped home.

"There is a feeling of elation, expectancy, and almost bewilderment," the prime minister's secretary wrote on September 1. Beetle Smith assured reporters, "Militarily the war is won." Even as Eisenhower tried to tamp down expectations, he told his diary, "Our military forces can advance almost at will.… The defeat of the German armies is complete, and the only thing now needed to realize the whole conception is speed."

* * *

The Allied juggernaut aimed vaguely for Berlin, intent on ripping out Germany's political heart. But a nearer, interim target was the enemy's industrial heart in the Ruhr valley, a sooty ellipse that extended east from the Rhine for some sixty miles to include the smokestack cities of Essen, Dortmund, and Duisburg. Two-thirds of German steel and more than half the country's coal had traditionally come from the Ruhr, and loss of the region would also devastate the chemical and munitions industries, with a projected 40 percent drop in artillery ammunition and explosives production. Hitler would have no choice but to defend this vital region, and a SHAEF study signed by Eisenhower in May posited that "an attack aimed at the Ruhr is likely to give us every chance of bringing to battle and destroying the main German armed forces."

Four paths led to the Ruhr from the west, but most planners considered only two of them suitable for big mechanized armies. One route, north of the Ardennes—the rugged forested hills that occupied much of southern Belgium and Luxembourg—aimed directly at the Ruhr; it could be supported by Allied seapower and aircraft based in Britain. The second route angled south of the Ardennes, through the so-called Metz Gap. Even before OVERLORD began, Eisenhower had advocated taking both avenues, a strategy of advance on "two mutually supporting axes" that would stretch enemy defenses across a broad front, exploit Allied mobility, and permit shifts in the weight of attack as needed. The southern route also would menace the Saar valley, second only to the Ruhr as an industrial locus in western Germany. SHAEF in late August estimated that the enemy could muster no more than eleven divisions northwest of the Ardennes and five divisions to the south. Eisenhower's planners had proposed that 21st Army Group strike northeast toward the Rhine through Amiens and Liège in the main effort, while 12th Army Group lunged toward Metz and beyond in a subsidiary attack.

Montgomery would have none of it. In a message to Brooke in London on August 18, he had urged channeling both army groups north of the Ardennes "as a solid mass of some forty divisions which would be so strong that it need fear nothing." Concentration of Anglo-American power in the north would utilize the Allied preponderance in armor and bring the war to a quicker close, an issue of particular urgency as Britain ran out of men. Montgomery also argued that a single commander was needed to oversee Allied ground forces driving toward Germany from the Seine—"This is a *whole time* job for one man"—and he claimed that Bradley agreed with this strategic assessment.

Bradley most certainly did *not* agree, nor did most of the other senior Allied generals, including Montgomery's own chief of staff, Major General Francis W. "Freddie" de Guingand. When told that Montgomery proposed to "put everything in one punch," Air Marshal Tedder retorted, "I always thought in a fight it was better to use both hands." Eisenhower on August 23 drove to the 21st Army Group command post in Condé, near Falaise, for a long, tedious conference from which Beetle Smith was excluded at Montgomery's churlish insistence although De Guingand was allowed to remain. When Montgomery proposed halting Patton's Third Army to divert more fuel to the other spearheads, Eisenhower told him, "The American public would never stand for it, and public opinion wins wars." Standing before a map with his hands clasped behind his back, Montgomery replied, "Victories win wars. Give people victory and they won't care who won it."

Montgomery emerged from the caravan at Condé having extracted certain concessions to strengthen his attack, including priority in using the airborne reserve and in drawing supplies. Moreover, the U.S. First Army would swing largely north of the Ardennes rather than south; this would shore up 21st Army Group's right flank, a reinforcement that some SHAEF planners had long considered.

Eisenhower also agreed that a single commander would oversee the assault on Germany, but that generalissimo would not be B. L. Montgomery. Rather, Eisenhower would take the job himself, and before leaving Condé he told Montgomery that at George Marshall's insistence this rearrangement would take effect in another week. In truth, Eisenhower had dictated a secret memo to his staff in mid-May laying out his eventual role as ground commander, while specifying that "nothing must be said … to indicate there would ever be any diminution of General M's command or responsibility.… The less said the better."

Churchill, "as a solace," promoted Montgomery to the rank of field marshal on September 1, giving him the equivalent of five stars to Eisenhower's four. This, as the prime minister said with no little spite, "will put the changes in command in their proper perspective." Although Eisenhower praised Montgomery to reporters as "not only my very close and warm friend, but … one of the great soldiers of this or any other war," the promotion went down badly at SHAEF.

"Damn stupid & I warrant most offensive to Eisenhower & the Americans," Admiral Ramsay told his diary. Patton wrote Bea on September 1 that "the Field Marshal thing made us sick, that is Bradley and me." Even Brooke felt uneasy, telling a colleague that Montgomery "is probably the finest tactical general we have had since Wellington. But on some of his strategy, and especially his relations with the Americans, he is almost a disaster." Militarily the war might be won, as Beetle Smith had averred, but close combat within the Allied high command was just starting.

* * *

Late in the morning of Saturday, September 2, Eisenhower flew in his B-25 to Bradley's command post in Chartres. In the middle distance the twin spires of the magnificent cathedral poked the heavens. Patton also arrived, "bumptious and noisy," in a staff officer's description, accoutred with a revolver and his bull terrier, Willie, whom he occasionally introduced as "a sodomy son of a bitch." An aide made drinks with ice from a refrigerator that Eisenhower had given Bradley after complaining, "Goddamn it, I'm tired of drinking warm whiskey every time I come to your headquarters."

On a huge wall map of Europe, a bull's-eye encircled Berlin. Dressed in his combat jacket and jump boots, Bradley argued for crossing the German frontier immediately, thus preventing enemy defenders from shoring up the border fortifications known as the Siegfried Line. He also wanted a bulletproof car and armored jeeps for travel in Germany. "Each town in our path" should be bombed, he believed, to "teach them the lesson of death and destruction they have carried to the rest of the world."

Patton offered to "stake my reputation" on Third Army's ability to fight to the Rhine despite crippling supply shortages. "That reputation of yours hasn't been worth very much," Eisenhower said, smiling broadly. Patton barked with laughter. "Pretty good now," he said.

A message from Beetle Smith warning of approaching storms cut short the conference. No sooner had the B-25 lifted off than flames licked from the right engine. After an emergency landing, Eisenhower folded himself into the rear seat of a tiny L-5 Sentinel for a turbulent 120-mile flight west to the Cotentin Peninsula, where his new headquarters had just opened near Granville, another of those French coastal towns that Englishmen over the centuries had captured, fortified, lost, burned, bombarded, and enjoyed on holiday.

Short of fuel, tossed by gusty winds, and unable to find an airstrip in the pelting rain, the pilot set down on a narrow beach not far from the supreme commander's compound. As he helped push the plane toward the dunes to escape the rising tide, Eisenhower slipped in the sand, badly wrenching his right knee. After hobbling across a salt marsh with an arm around the pilot's neck, anxiously watching for mines, he flagged down a jeep carrying eight astonished GIs, who lifted him into the front seat and drove him to his villa. Two aides carried him to a bedroom.

Eisenhower had hurt his left knee in the 1912 Army football game against Tufts, a serious injury requiring seven hospitalizations over the years. But no mishap was more inopportune than this damage to his "good" knee, now swollen and acutely painful. A doctor slathered the joint in a plaster cast and prescribed indefinite bed rest; Eisenhower refused to allow his blood pressure to be read for fear that the persistent ringing in his ears marked some debilitating condition that would get him sent home.

For more than a fortnight the supreme commander was largely immobilized, leaving Granville briefly only three times in eighteen days. The villa was pleasant enough, with a splendid view of Mont-St.-Michel to the south. Two resident cows provided fresh milk and cream for the mess, and for ninety minutes each day a therapist baked and massaged Eisenhower's aching knee. In scribbled notes to Mamie he apologized for being "always a bit off-key when I try to talk seriously," and he confessed to thinking of their dead son, Doud Dwight, who would have been twenty-seven. To his living son, John, a newly commissioned lieutenant who had proposed they make "an air tour of the United States" after the war, Eisenhower wrote, "Who is going to buy the plane? I am broke and I suspect you are not far from it."

Even for an ambulatory commander, Granville was an ill-chosen headquarters—isolated, remote from the front, and so plagued with signal deficiencies that for three weeks Eisenhower could communicate with his armies only by cable, courier, messages jury-routed through the RAF, or in rare tête-à-tête conferences. His indifference to Seventh Army's exploits in southern France owed something to his sequestration in Granville, but the forced seclusion also allowed him to mull his plan for the push into Germany. Following the hail-fellow session with Bradley and Patton in Chartres, he came to regret his earlier concessions to Montgomery and to reaffirm his commitment to a multipronged advance on a broad front. In a two-hour lunch with Ramsay, Eisenhower complained that Montgomery seemed to covet Bradley's motor transport in order to allow 21st Army Group to "advance alone on Berlin. This would entail a complete standstill order on the U.S. armies." Montgomery's view certainly was more nuanced—he by no means favored halting the U.S. First Army—but Ramsay denounced the ostensible proposal as "Monty-like" and "tripe."

On Monday, September 4, Eisenhower told his lieutenants by cable that "our best opportunity of defeating the enemy in the west lies in striking at the Ruhr and at the Saar." Patton's advance, hamstrung by the fuel priority accorded First Army to support Montgomery, was to be reinvigorated; the two American armies would share equally in the paltry gasoline supply, each receiving 3,500 tons a day. "We must now as never before keep the enemy stretched everywhere," Eisenhower wrote Marshall the same day.

An exasperated Montgomery privately complained that Eisenhower appeared "to have a curious idea that every army command must have an equal and fair share of the battle." Given the logistical limitations, he insisted, "the only policy is to halt the left and strike with the right, or halt the right and strike with the left." The left—his force and First Army—was aimed at the Ruhr and therefore deserved first call on supplies. In a quick, eyes-only rebuttal to Eisenhower on Monday, he wrote:

> We have now reached a stage where one really powerful and full-blooded thrust toward Berlin is likely to get there and thus end the German war. We have *not* enough maintenance resources for two full-blooded thrusts.… If we attempt a compromise solution and split our maintenance resources so that neither thrust is full-blooded we will prolong the war. I consider the problem viewed as above as very simple and clear-cut.

Eisenhower replied on Tuesday, affirming his order and further explaining his strategic logic. But so maladroit was the Granville signals operation that the message reached Montgomery in two pieces, backward, and late: the second half arrived on Thursday and

the first half on Saturday. A British officer later reported, "Monty walked up and down, waving his arms and saying, 'The war is lost.'"

The misdirected signal was entirely apt for two men talking past each other. Soldiers and historians were to argue the merits of each case for decades. Eisenhower later caricatured Montgomery's scheme as a "preposterous proposal to drive on a single pencil-line thrust straight on to Berlin," and Smith called it "the most fantastic bit of balderdash ever proposed by a competent general." Bradley, who had been victimized in Sicily by what he called Montgomery's "arrogant and egotistical" demand that U.S. forces give way to the British, asserted that "if you try to fight the German on one front only, you're playing right into his hands."

Montgomery's vision had the military virtue of mass—the concentration of combat power—but it ran counter to SHAEF calculations of what was possible for an Allied force still drawing supplies across beaches several hundred miles away. One study estimated that a single-axis thrust to Berlin by three British and two American corps would need nearly 500 truck companies, of which only 347 existed. Even with supplies augmented by airlift and through the docks at Antwerp, a long lunge across Germany would require the "wholesale grounding" of many Allied corps, including twenty-two U.S. divisions relegated to "hibernation." Moreover, the need to protect long open flanks in the enemy heartland meant that a solitary Allied spearhead would be no stronger than six or eight divisions with little air support—"easy prey for the German mobile reserves," as one logistician warned. A British intelligence brigadier at SHAEF concluded that simply encircling and holding the Ruhr would prove impossible without more robust combat forces than now available on the Western Front. "Monty," he added, "was overbidding his hand." Even De Guingand cited fatal shortages of transport and bridging equipment; after the war, he observed that Hitler's eventual defeat required a Soviet offensive of 160 divisions complemented by a massive attack from the west and another eight months of savage air bombardment.

Most strategists would come to similar conclusions. Britain's youngest brigadier in 1944, the future field marshal Lord Carver, wrote:

> In both world wars there were countless examples of single thrusts … attracting the enemy's reserves and thus being brought to a halt.… The strategy which had been generally successful was one of alternating thrusts, delivering a blow in an unexpected area when the enemy's reserves had been attracted elsewhere.

Two-fisted punching had in fact won through for Montgomery at Alamein, Mareth, and Normandy. Likewise, the American historian Russell F. Weigley observed that, for the side playing a strong hand, "the whole history of American strategy since U. S. Grant confirmed that the enemy can be hit with advantage at several places and thus forced to accentuate his weakness through dissipation." As the historian Gerhard L. Weinberg noted, "Whatever Montgomery's talents, mounting rapid thrusts was not one of them."

Nor was the field marshal inclined "to appreciate that in higher strategy political factors can sometimes have the same weight as purely military considerations," as Montgomery's biographer Ronald Lewin later acknowledged. Eisenhower believed that triumph in Europe must be shared, especially given the expanding American dominance in men and matériel. But this equitable recognition cut no ice with Montgomery: Eisenhower's "ignorance as to how to run a war is absolute and complete," he told Brooke, who made this condemnation his own. "Ike knows nothing about strategy and is *quite* unsuited to the post of supreme commander," Brooke confided to his diary. Eisenhower's decision to personally oversee the ground campaign, he wrote, "is likely to add another 3 to 6 months on to the war."

Eisenhower's generalship was without doubt vulnerable to criticism. Montgomery's complaint that "he was extremely susceptible to the personality of the last commander he saw before he made his decision" had a whiff of truth, as did Patton's diary entry on September 2: "Ike is all for caution, since he had never been at the front and has no feel of actual fighting." Beguiled by the pursuit of a battered enemy, he repeatedly gave short shrift to logistical needs and failed to ensure that his directives were heeded. Smith groused that "the trouble with Ike" was that "instead of giving direct and clear orders, [he] dresses them up in polite language." He was a conciliator, Smith added, who rarely issued unequivocal orders and never decreed: *Do as I command and be silent.* If consistent in his views supporting a broad, multipronged assault on Germany, he was "hardly decisive in the way he communicated them to Montgomery," Stephen E. Ambrose later wrote. "He allowed Montgomery to carry every argument to its bitter end."

This bitter argument indeed was far from over. "There is never a moment that doesn't have its strain or particular problem," Eisenhower had written Mamie, and he would confess to her, "God, how wearying and wearing it all gets." Yet Allied unity remained the central principle of his command and he would go to great lengths to preserve it, including self-delusion. "The team is working well," he wrote Marshall in September. "Without exception all concerned have now fully accepted my conception of our problem and are carrying it out intelligently and with energy."

* * *

The armies fought on, largely unaware of the generals' quarrels at echelons above reason. All but immobilized for the first five days of September, Third Army at last saw fuel stocks begin to improve. New orders listed Metz and two misspelled German cities, "Maintz" and "Frankfort," as objectives. B-24s were pressed into service as flying gas stations, each carrying two hundred five-gallon cans; Patton encouraged air resupply by awarding bounties of confiscated cognac and champagne to helpful pilots. With almost 300,000 troops, Third Army remained short of everything from grenades and binoculars to radios and wristwatches; army shortages for the week of September 2 included 270,000 pairs of combat boots, 540,000 wool blankets, 6,000 radio tubes, and 48 surgical bullet probes. Patton had given up cigars in a gesture of solidarity with his strapped army—he often smoked twenty a day—but captured German commissaries yielded three million pounds of beef, fifty thousand cases of champagne, and huge stocks of sardines

and the Italian silk used for parachutes.

In a breezy session with reporters, Patton first complained that "a goddamn army commander doesn't do anything but sit around and curse," then explained, "I never worried about flanks. That was probably due to my long-felt masculine virility." After lamenting that "when you slow anything down, you waste human lives," he told the scribes, "I hope to go through the Siegfried Line like shit through a goose."

To his northwest, Courtney Hodges's First Army crossed the Belgian border and liberated the Walloon city of Mons early on September 3. "Once again," the 3rd Armored Division reported, "cognac, champagne, and pretty girls." And once again, tens of thousands of retreating Germans faced annihilation. Even with two-thirds of its worn tanks now unfit for combat, the 3rd Armored took 2,500 prisoners, and this on a day when the division was grounded for want of fuel. What one U.S. Army unit described as "a confused, blinded, heterogeneous mass" from twenty or more dismembered Wehrmacht divisions now crawled through southwest Belgium with stolen French cars and Belgian farm wagons, canalized by American roadblocks.

Bounding from the south, the 1st Division fell on the German flank. Shermans churned across the loamy fields trailed by olive-drab clouds of riflemen. Four-barrel .50-caliber antiaircraft guns, depressed as infantry weapons, peppered enemy ranks, and P-47s peeled from the perfect sky to rake the German columns, nose to tail. "Those are magnificent Belgian horses, and I hate to pot them," one pilot radioed. "Well, here goes." Long Tom 155mm field guns, accustomed to pounding targets a dozen miles away, now served as sniper rifles, shattering half-tracks and haystacks until the air reeked of burning fodder and flesh, both equine and human. "You only want to slaughter us," a captured officer complained.

In addition to some 3,500 enemy dead, another 25,000 would be bagged alive in three days. In batches of fifty they trudged to the cages, booed by passing Belgian Boy Scouts whose mothers were carving steaks from the horse carcasses. Three thousand prisoners temporarily penned in the slag yard of an old redbrick sugar refinery emptied their pockets as ordered, and GIs sifted through the little piles of nail clippers and clasp knives; an American lieutenant held up a discarded condom wrapped in foil and told a chubby *Landser*, "You will not love for a while." With Falaise and the capitulation at Brest, the Mons Pocket was among Germany's worst drubbings in northwestern Europe in 1944.

Thirty miles to the north, the British Second Army also swept into Belgium, after streaking 250 miles in six days. Hitler ordered Boulogne and Dunkirk held as bitter-end fortresses, but the Canadians had taken Rouen and pressed toward Bruges. General Eberbach was caught fleeing in a Volkswagen outside Amiens—"I commanded what used to be the Seventh Army," he told his captors—and the garrison commander at Le Havre would soon surrender in his pajamas, bemedaled nonetheless, along with eleven thousand others.

At eight P.M. on Sunday, September 3, the Welsh Guards rolled into Brussels and ignited a tumultuous celebration. "The joy of Paris was a pallid thing compared to this extravaganza," Moorehead reported. The Guards Armored Division clattered down the Chaussée de Ninove, tank tracks chewing at the cobbles. The great dome of the Palais de Justice, set afire as a parting gesture by the retreating Germans, was likened by a reporter to "a flambeau in the night." Ecstatic Belgians shouted the only English they knew —"Goodbye, Tommy, goodbye!"—and lobbed hydrangeas, apples, and bottles of Lion d'Or beer into the passing vehicles.

Local worthies appeared in sashes and other badges of office to declaim, proclaim, acclaim. The Royal Hampshires found that no sooner did they post a sentry than a happy throng would "bear the man away … to regale him." Bistros sent waiters into the streets to fill soldiers' mess tins with champagne and ice cream; the bulging larders caused one Guardsman to grumble that "Belgians felt they had done their bit by eating their way through the war." Undimmed, the celebration would continue for more than a week, fueled by the capture of a German wine dump containing "eighty thousand bottles of a remarkable claret," Moorehead wrote. Countless drunken verses of "Tipperary" could be heard day and night, and effigies of Hitler were paraded through the streets to be beaten, burned, and cursed in Flemish, French, Dutch, and various other liberated tongues.

* * *

On Monday at noon British tanks nosed through the outskirts of Antwerp, past houses put to the torch by Belgian resistance fighters for belonging to alleged collaborators. Jubilant crowds reluctantly parted, allowing the 11th Armored Division to race downtown, where nonplussed German soldiers were still sipping beer in sidewalk cafés. By two that afternoon, a tank squadron had reached the docks. Thanks to the Belgian "White Resistance," which had attacked and delayed German demolitionists, the port, sluice gates, and underground oil storage tanks with their capacity of two million barrels remained intact. A sharp firefight around pillboxes in a city park petered out by 9:30 P.M., and surviving defenders surrendered or melted away. After a fruitless search for a cinema to use as a jail, British officers instead converted the local zoo into a prison compound—hungry citizens, it was said, had devoured most of the menagerie. Six thousand captives soon crowded the pens, sorted into separate cages in the lion house for officers, Belgian fascists, and German mistresses. Other ranks filled the bear pits, the tiger pens, the monkey house. "The captives sat on the straw," wrote Martha Gellhorn, "staring through the bars."

With Brittany's ports soon to be forsaken, no liberated city in Europe was more important to the Allied cause than Antwerp. By the mid-sixteenth century it had become the richest town on the Continent, surpassing even Venice and Genoa, with a hundred or more ships at anchor every day, carrying spices from Portugal, grain from the Baltic, silk embroideries from Italy. The Inquisition, a Spanish pillage, and the rise of Holland cost the city its prosperity; not until the nineteenth century did Antwerp ascend again to become a bustling hive of diamond-cutting, cigar-rolling, sugar-refining, and beer-brewing. By the 1930s it ranked with Hamburg, New York, and Rotterdam among the world's finest ports, handling a thousand ships each month, with twenty-nine miles of quays, more than six hundred cranes, nine hundred warehouses, and a vast rail yard. All this was recovered whole on September 4. One early-twentieth-century estimate had calculated that the city's defenses "would require an army of 260,000 men to besiege it

effectually, and at least a year to reduce it by starvation." The British had needed but a few hours.

The capture of Antwerp and the exploitation of its port had been stressed since the earliest Allied invasion plans in December 1941. Eisenhower in a message to Montgomery on August 24 reiterated the need "to get a secure base at Antwerp," an order repeated in a formal directive to top commanders on August 29 and September 4. Montgomery echoed the supreme commander, stating his intent "to capture Antwerp," as well as "to destroy all enemy forces in the Pas de Calais and Flanders." But Antwerp had a topographical quirk that required more than simply seizing the docks and the monkey house. Communication with the North Sea from the port required control of the eighty-mile estuary at the mouth of the river Scheldt, including fortified Walcheren Island on the north side of the Scheldt, and the polders around Breskens on the southern bank.

Having sailed these waters in war and in peace for centuries, the Royal Navy was intimately familiar with the estuary. Four thousand British troops had died of fever on Walcheren during a campaign in 1809, with the survivors evacuated ignominiously to England. Churchill himself, as first lord of the Admiralty, had rushed to Antwerp in October 1914 to rally the Belgian government in defense of the port. Admiral Ramsay on September 3 sent a telegram to SHAEF, with a copy to Montgomery, reminding all that "both Antwerp and Rotterdam are highly vulnerable to mining and blocking. If enemy succeeds in these operations, the time it will take to open ports cannot be estimated." The first sea lord, Admiral Andrew Browne Cunningham, told his diary on September 7: "Again impressed on the [Combined Chiefs of Staff] that Antwerp, though completely undamaged, was as much use as Timbuctoo unless the entrance and other forts were silenced and the banks of the Scheldt occupied. I fear this is being overlooked by the generals."

Alas, yes. An Ultra intercept of a Führer order on September 3, stressing the "decisive importance" of holding the Scheldt, was disregarded by Allied commanders; so were subsequent orders from Hitler, including an intercepted message reminding Fifteenth Army that "it must be insured that the Allies cannot use the harbor for a long time." This "incomprehensible" error, the historian Ralph Bennett later concluded, was "a strategic mistake of such magnitude that its repercussions were felt almost until the end of the war." Eisenhower's messages to his top commanders about Antwerp had not specified capturing the Scheldt, and neither Montgomery nor Dempsey, the Second Army commander, attended the issue. Montgomery believed the enemy army's position was hopeless. "The bottle is now corked," he declared, "and they will not be able to get out."

A Royal Marine Commando unit trained for amphibious assault had instead been diverted to besiege Dunkirk from a landward vantage. The 11th Armored Division commander, Major General G. P. B. "Pip" Roberts, had been told little more than to seize the docks and port in Antwerp. His corps commander, Lieutenant General Brian G. Horrocks, later confessed to "suffering from liberation euphoria" that entailed dining with the Belgian queen mother and her lady-in-waiting rather than studying a map. "If I had ordered Roberts not to liberate Antwerp but to bypass the town and advance only fifteen miles northwest … we should have blocked the Beveland isthmus" and potentially trapped the Fifteenth Army near the Dutch border, Horrocks wrote in his memoir. "My eyes were fixed on the Rhine."

The British drive soon was stymied. An artillery major directed fire to the north from the top floor of an Antwerp office building while a Belgian secretary brought trays of coffee with cognac and played American blues on the office phonograph. But none of the bridges across the imposing Albert Canal north and east of the city had been captured—fifteen of seventeen still stood as late as September 5—and now they were all blown. An effort to seize a bridgehead across the canal came a cropper when army storm boats were found to have holes in the bottom. "German reaction was swift and most unpleasant," a brigadier reported, and included panzer fire that addled sappers trying to lay a bridge. Enemy battle groups rushed to reinforce the canals, but with other British corps to move forward, Montgomery had already ordered Horrocks to halt for regrouping.

An evacuation of German troops by ferry promptly began across the Scheldt from Breskens, west of Antwerp. In little more than a fortnight, 86,000 men, 600 artillery pieces, 5,000 vehicles, and 4,000 horses, mostly from the Fifteenth Army, escaped to fight another day. The estuary's north-bank fortifications on Walcheren Island and Beveland, already formidable, grew stouter, while a stubborn rear guard of eleven thousand troops showed no sign of abandoning the pocket around Breskens.

Montgomery told London on September 7 that he hoped to be in Berlin in three weeks. But that was unlikely without the fuel, ammunition, food, and other war stuffs that could arrive in bulk only through a big-shoulders port. For now, as the U.S. Army official history later concluded, "Antwerp was a jewel that could not be worn for want of a setting." A British officer in Antwerp offered his own judgment: "Success can be most bewildering."

5. Against the West Wall

"Five Barley Loaves and Three Small Fishes"

VERSAILLES had long proved irresistible to empire builders. A modest seventeenth-century hunting lodge, built above a fenny country village twelve miles southwest of Paris, had quickly grown into the world's most celebrated château, an emblem of both the ancien régime and French regal indulgence. More than twenty thousand nobles, courtiers, merchants, and servants eventually basked in the radiance of the Sun King and his dimmer heirs, crowding together in what one traveler described as "a state of unhygienic squalor." Later, the palace had served as a headquarters for the Prussian army besieging Paris in the starving winter of 1870, when 65,000 Parisians perished despite eating the city's cats, crows, and rats. Here, in January 1871, the German Empire had been proclaimed in the Hall of Mirrors, that exquisite gallery of seventeen reflecting arches facing seventeen arcaded windows. Here too, with a grim and vengeful echo, the treaty to end the First World War was signed in June 1919, as celebratory guns boomed, fountains spurted, and blue-coated Republican Guardsmen held their sabers aloft to salute the Hun's subjugation. Two decades later the Hun was back, for a four-year stay.

It was here that Eisenhower chose to locate his new command post. Even as he recuperated from his bum knee in distant Granville, SHAEF staff officers swarmed into Versailles and made it their own. Headquarters offices filled the plush Trianon Palace Hotel, where a room with a bath that went for 175 francs a night before the war now could not be had at any price except by holders of a SHAEF master pass, a stiff piece of paper the size of a playing card emblazoned with a blue border and a red cross. Waiters in black tie served K-ration lunches on white linen with crystal stemware and plates trimmed in gold. The Clemenceau Ballroom, used by the Allied powers to negotiate the 1919 treaty and more recently by the Germans to decorate Luftwaffe pilots during the Battle of Britain, now served as a map room. Thickets of antennae sprouted in the royal gardens, and latrines lined the stately château trees near the faux farm that had allowed Marie Antoinette to live a Rousseauian fantasy of pastoral simplicity. Staff sections and signal offices filled the great stables built by Louis XIV, each said by one visitor to be "larger than some of our state capitols."

Eisenhower's office occupied a white stone annex behind the hotel; a bronze bust of Hermann Göring found in the foyer was turned to the wall because, as an officer explained, "he has been a bad boy." Eleven paintings, including a Van Dyck, were plucked from the château to appoint the supreme commander's suite, apparently without his knowledge, along with an eighteenth-century desk and other furnishings from the Mobilier National. An incensed lieutenant who in civilian life had been a curator at the Metropolitan Museum of Art managed to have most of the loot put back.

SHAEF by midsummer had already tripled in size from the 1,500 Allied officers and men originally envisioned for the headquarters. Now the roster tripled again, to 16,000; they would fill 750,000 square feet of office space. Eventually 1,800 properties around Versailles were commandeered to house 24,000 Allied garrison troops. A French magazine mocked SHAEF as the Societé des Hôteliers Américains en France, while military wits claimed the acronym stood for Should Have Army Experience First. One officer likened the organization to a sea serpent: "Some had seen its head, some its middle, some its tail. No one had seen all of the sprawling mass."

Another sea serpent had wrapped its tentacles around Paris proper, with even greater speed and adhesion. Created in Britain in May 1942 to succor the logistical needs of the U.S. Army in Europe, the Services of Supply had been renamed the Communications Zone, or COMZ, on June 7 and now comprised half a million troops, or one in every four GIs on the Continent. A vast headquarters near Cherbourg, with five thousand prefabricated buildings and tentage for eleven thousand, was abruptly abandoned when the liberation of Paris triggered a stampede for the capital. COMZ convoys rolled into the City of Light hauling, as an Army major recounted, "tons of files and thousands upon thousands of clerks, typists, guards—its statistical departments, its coding and decoding rooms, its huge telephone exchange, and all the other complicated paraphernalia of big business." COMZ immediately requisitioned 315 hotels and put 48 others on notice of indenture; more than three thousand additional Parisian properties were claimed for the cause, including fourteen million square feet of depot space, 29,000 hospital beds, and "apartments of proper elegance and swank for the brass," in one officer's description. Only after abject pleadings were Parisian children permitted to keep their schools. French officials complained that the Americans' demands exceeded even those of the Germans'.

All this and more was the handiwork of the COMZ commander, Lieutenant General John C. H. Lee, known as John Court House Lee, Jesus Christ Himself Lee, and God A'Mighty Lee. Son of an Iowa insurance agent and given his mother's improbable Christian name, John, Lee had graduated from West Point with Patton in 1909, then made a career as an Army engineer doing river, dam, and harbor duty in places like Detroit, Guam, and Rock Island. *Time* magazine in mid-September called him "a man of exceptionally friendly and attractive personality," an encomium affirmed by almost no one who knew him. A fussy martinet who wore rank stars on both the front and back of his helmet, Lee was said to have a supply sergeant's parsimony in doling out Army kit "as if it were a personal gift," rewarding friends, of whom he had few, and punishing enemies, of whom he had many. He had a knack for risible

self-delusion, once standing in a London theater to acknowledge an ovation in fact intended for Eisenhower, sitting in the box above him; he also claimed that Marshall had chosen him for his current job because of "my ability to get along with people." The Army's official history, rarely astringent in describing senior generals, in this case captured the man: "Heavy on ceremony, somewhat forbidding in manner and appearance, and occasionally tactless … General Lee often aroused suspicions and created opposition." The Army's chief surgeon in Europe admitted that "he's nobody I'd ever want to go fishing with for a week." Classmate Patton was less circumspect, calling him "a glib liar" and "a pompous little son-of-a-bitch only interested in self-advertisement." Yet field commanders rarely crossed him, fearing reprisal in the supply shed; when Lee visited Third Army, Patton welcomed him with an honor guard, a band, and a banquet.

Booted and bedizened, wearing spurs and clutching a riding crop, Lee kept Bibles in his desk and in his briefcase. He preferred, by his own account, "to start each morning at His altar whereon we lay our problems." He often press-ganged his personal retinue of forty—including a chiropractor, eight correspondence secretaries, and a publicist who had once worked for the movie mogul Samuel Goldwyn—into escorting him to church, which he attended daily and twice if not thrice on Sundays. Then he was off to inspect his vast dominion, either in a black, red-cushioned limousine driven by a Baptist lay preacher, or in a special railcar, which one minion described as Lee's private "instrument of torture." Regardless of conveyance, he liked to read scripture aloud. Any approaching subordinate was to tender a salute at precisely ten paces, and woe to the soldier whose helmet was cockeyed. A hospital staff's preparations for a Lee visitation included three simple injunctions: "Dress up. Stop all operations. Liquor down the toilet." Even the bedridden, one surgeon recorded, "had to lie at attention, [and] the ambulatory had to get out of their chairs and stand at attention all the time he was on that ward until he called at ease." Excess slop in a mess-hall garbage pail sent him into a pale fury. Whipping out a spoon, he would sample the waste himself, declaring, "You see, I can eat it and you're throwing this away."

In Paris, Lee kept a huge war room in the Hôtel Majestic basement, and three suites upstairs for his own use. (His personal baggage included a piano.) The adjacent Avenue Kléber became known as the "Avenue de Salute," and Lee dispatched officers to patrol the sidewalk and take the names of soldiers who failed to render the proper courtesy. Additional suites were reserved for him in other grand hostels; denizens at one were advised, "The Hôtel George V is considered General Lee's personal residence, and assignments of accommodations carry the understanding that such persons are his guests." The front curb was to be kept clear for his own entourage; other cars "will be required to park around the corner or down on the next block."

"Why didn't somebody tell me some of those things?" Eisenhower later asked after hearing of Lee's idiosyncrasies. The complaint said more about the supreme commander's inattention than about Lee. Not for two weeks did Eisenhower learn of the COMZ land rush in Paris, which he had intended to keep mostly free of Allied soldiers. On September 16, he personally wrote a blistering rebuke to the man he had deemed "a modern Cromwell":

> Due to the heavy shipments of your personnel and supplies to that area before I was aware of it, it is impossible to shift your headquarters at this moment without interfering with your first priority duties. Nevertheless you will immediately stop the entry into Paris of every individual who is not needed at that spot for an essential duty.… I regard the influx into Paris of American personnel, including your headquarters, as extremely unwise.… I am informed that the dress, discipline and conduct of American personnel in Paris is little short of disgraceful.

Lee was an unrepentant sinner. "I have no regrets," he said. "One should be as far forward as possible."

* * *

Lee's "first priority duties" required provisioning a huge fighting force four thousand miles from home with 800,000 separate supply items, eightfold more than even Sears, Roebuck stocked. The task might well have overmatched the most gifted administrator, and certainly it taxed Jesus Christ Himself. Allied invasion architects had assumed that by D+90—September 4—only a dozen U.S. divisions would have reached the Seine, whereupon a pause of one to three months would be imposed to consolidate the lodgment area before resuming the attack across France. No logistician expected to reach the German border until May 1945. In the event, sixteen divisions were 150 miles beyond the Seine on September 4, and barely a week later the Allied line had reached a point not anticipated until D+350.

Battlefield exigencies disrupted and then demolished a supply plan two years in the making. The need for more combat troops to fight through the bocage had been met at the expense of service units—mechanics, fuelers, railroaders, sutlers of all sorts—and the subsequent breakout from Normandy caused Eisenhower in mid-August to pursue the fleeing enemy without pausing to shore up his logistics. The thrill of the chase held sway. Marshall and Eisenhower further accelerated the flow of divisions to the theater, advancing the schedule by two months at a severe cost in cargo shipments. Other afflictions impaired the supply system: the loss of Mulberry A; the demolitions at Cherbourg, Marseille, and Le Havre; the abandonment of ports in Brittany; the Allied bombardment of French rails and roads; the quick advance up the Rhône; and Hitler's stubborn retention of Dunkirk and other coastal enclaves. Liberated Paris pleaded for an air delivery of 2,400 tons in emergency food, medicines, and other goods each day, of which Bradley conceded 1,500—the equivalent of the daily needs of 2.5 combat divisions.

Truck convoys that in July had required just hours for a round-trip to the front now took up to five days to reach the battlefield and return to the beaches. The First Army quartermaster depot moved six times in six weeks while trying to keep pace with the advance, even transforming eighteen artillery battalions into truck units. Moreover, the distance from American factories meant that items ordered in eastern France typically took almost four months to reach the front from home; at any given moment, two thousand tanks were in the pipeline. As Patton told reporters in September, "We cannot make five barley loaves and three small fishes expand

like they used to."

Much more than bread and seafood was needed, of course. Purchasing agents roamed across neutral Europe buying Swedish paper, Spanish apricots, Portuguese figs, and bananas from the Canary Islands. Thirty-three woodcutting camps opened in France, Belgium, and Luxembourg to split a million cords of firewood. Nineteen thousand tons of wood pulp shipped from the United States to local factories became fifty million rolls of toilet paper. But efforts to buy military uniforms from French clothiers were undone by language hurdles and the need to convert U.S. measurements into metric equivalents; SHAEF reported that "one-sixteenth of an inch on each of twelve measurements for the seams in a uniform would mean throwing off completely the proper size."

Average daily supply needs totaled 66.8 pounds for every Allied soldier on the Continent: 33.3 pounds of gas, oil, grease, and aircraft fuel; 8 pounds of ammunition, including aerial bombs; 7.3 pounds of engineer construction material; 7.2 pounds of rations; and sundry poundages for medical, signal, and miscellaneous supplies. (Quartermasters found that ravenous troops were eating 30 percent more than the normal ration allocation.) Four advancing armies burned a million gallons of gasoline each day, exclusive of the needs of Patch and De Lattre in southern France, and intensified fighting in the east would mean stupendous ammunition expenditures, including 8 million artillery and mortar shells each month.

Prodigal wastage, always an American trait, made the logistician's life harder. Infantry divisions had been authorized 1,600 M-7 grenade launchers with a replacement rate of 2 per week, but some were losing 500 to 700 a month. Eisenhower described other ordnance losses as "extremely high," and he warned the Pentagon that every month he was forced to replace 36,000 small arms, 700 mortars, 500 tanks, and 2,400 vehicles. Five times more mine detectors were requisitioned than anticipated, and First Army alone used 66,000 miles of field wire each month, stringing almost a hundred miles every hour—double the allotment. Of 22 million jerricans sent to France since D-Day, half had vanished, and SHAEF asked Washington for 7 million more. The need to fly fuel to bone-dry combat units, Eisenhower added, meant that "it is now costing us 1½ gallons of 100-octane [aviation] gasoline to deliver one gallon of 80-octane motor fuel to forward depots."

All this fell largely unforeseen on Lee, who was reduced to sending crates of oranges and other delicacies to Beetle Smith in hopes of retaining SHAEF's confidence. (He regretted not playing bridge as a means of infiltrating Eisenhower's inner circle.) SHAEF certainly shared culpability, not least because it had abandoned plans for a robust network of supply depots across the Continent and relied instead on scattered ad hoc dumps. The SHAEF chief logistician on September 9 warned that "maintenance of the armies [is] stretched to the limit.… The administration situation remains grim." Bradley's top supply officer in 12th Army Group subsequently agreed: "For a period of about one month now the logistical situation has been disorderly and for the past three weeks has been bad."

* * *

COMZ improvised, with mixed results. Fuel shortages tended to be a problem of distribution rather than supply, and an elaborate nexus of pipelines was built to reduce reliance on tanker ships, gas trucks, and jerricans. A project called PLUTO—Pipeline Underwater Transport of Oil—laid twenty-one lines across the bottom of the English Channel; pumping stations were dubbed "Bambi" and "Dumbo," in keeping with the Disney motif. The first pipe to Cherbourg was completed in mid-August, but an inconsiderate ship's anchor ruined it within hours. Two days later another line was wrecked after fouling a propeller; still another failed in late August, when ten tons of barnacles grew on the submerged pipeline drum and kept it from rotating. PLUTO proved disappointing—"a scandalous waste of time and effort," in one admiral's view; the Channel lines provided far less than 10 percent of Allied fuel needs on the Continent during the war. Tankers, gas trucks, and jerricans remained indispensable.

A terrestrial innovation was the Red Ball Express, a cargo haulage service begun in late August. Soon seven thousand trucks carried four thousand tons or more each day on one-way highways to First and Third Army dumps, typically a three-day round-trip. MPs posted 25,000 road signs in English and French, and Cub planes monitored the traffic flow. Problems arose immediately. Red Ball burned 300,000 gallons of gasoline a day, as much as three armored divisions in combat. Drivers sometimes loaded six to ten tons of cargo on 2½-ton vehicles; the Red Ball units became known as "truck-destroyer battalions." Despite a twenty-five-mile-per-hour speed limit, seventy trucks on average were wrecked beyond repair every day. On one stretch marked "steep hill and dangerous curve," eight gasoline semi-trailers in a single convoy flipped over, followed by eight more the next day. "The gas splashing inside throws you from side to side," one driver explained. "This affects your steering." Of fifteen thousand U.S. Army vehicles "deadlined" and useless in Europe in the fall of 1944, nine thousand were trucks littering French byways.

Roads deteriorated in the autumn rains, and a dearth of spark plugs, fan belts, and tools hampered mechanics; one company with forty-one trucks possessed a single pair of pliers and one crescent wrench. The daily ruination of five thousand tires—many shredded by discarded ration cans—led to such a desperate shortage that even threadbare spares were stripped from vehicles throughout the United States and shipped to Europe. Pilferage from trucks and dumps grew so virulent that General Lee requested thirteen infantry battalions as guards; over Bradley's bitter protest, Eisenhower gave him five, with shoot-to-kill authority. Red Ball moved over 400,000 tons in three months, and eventually was supplemented by other routes with names like White Ball, Red Lion, and Green Diamond. But as one major general in Paris lamented, "It was the greatest killer of trucks that I could imagine."

A single train could haul the equivalent of four hundred trucks. Eighteen thousand men, including five thousand prisoners of war, labored to rebuild the French rail system, which had been obliterated by years of Allied bombing. Thirty-two trains left Cherbourg over a single, reconditioned track on August 15, creeping across bridges at ten miles per hour, on a two-day trip to Le Mans. A line to Paris opened on September 1, and by the end of the month almost five thousand miles of track had been refurbished. Shortages of skilled train, yard, and rail crews impaired operations; signalmen often were reduced to flagging with lighters and burning cigarettes. Two dozen Army railway battalions eventually arrived from as far away as Persia and Peoria. The Army used 200,000 rail cars in France, of which 31,000 were shipped in pieces from the United States, assembled in Britain, and ferried across the Channel: freight

cars, flatcars, tank cars, gondolas, cabooses, and thirteen hundred muscular American engines. By year's end, eleven thousand miles of French and Belgian track had been rebuilt, along with 241 rail bridges.

Without ports, all the roads, rails, and truck-destroyer battalions in Europe had limited utility. A parody by exasperated SHAEF officers held that "the number of divisions required to capture the number of ports required to maintain those divisions is always greater than the number of divisions those ports can maintain." Fifty-four ports had been studied by OVERLORD planners for possible use; Lee narrowed the number under consideration to three dozen, of which half eventually played a role for the Allies. Marseille and other harbors in southern France proved a boon, handling more than one-third of all Allied supplies sent to France in the fall of 1944. Cherbourg tripled its expected cargo capacity, to 22,000 tons a day; it was said that unloaded rations were piled "as high as Napoléon's hand" around the famous statue of *l'empereur* pointing toward England. But SHAEF calculated that combat supply requirements in the coming month would sharply outpace the Allied ability to unload and distribute cargo; the number of ships anchored in Continental waters awaiting berths would exceed two hundred by mid-October.

Clearly the solution was to be found in Antwerp: using rail and road networks, Cherbourg could support a maximum of twenty-one divisions, while Antwerp using rails alone could sustain fifty-four. Cherbourg lay almost four hundred miles from the huge forward depots now under construction at Liège, in eastern Belgium; from Antwerp, the distance was sixty-five miles. Although the Allied port predicament was deemed "grave," the opening of Antwerp would have "the effect of a blood transfusion," Eisenhower promised Marshall. Meanwhile the armies would make do with brute-force logistics, another American specialty. Stevedores manhandling cargo off an old Hog Islander freighter in Rouen were surprised when the Norwegian captain's caged parrot abruptly sang the opening bars of "The Star-Spangled Banner"—voice cracking on the high notes—then squawked, "What a life! Misery! Misery!"

Every Village a Fortress

A STUBBY C-47 transport plane banked east of Brussels on Sunday afternoon, September 10, before leveling off to touch down on the airdrome at Melsbroek, previously used by the Germans but now occupied by the Royal Air Force and code-named B-58. Wearing the rank insignia of a new field marshal, Montgomery strode across the runway as the propellers twirled to a stop, then bounded up the ramp and into the cabin with a pugnacious glint.

There he found Eisenhower, his knee bandaged and throbbing. Only with help had he managed to hobble aboard the plane; Montgomery had insisted on a personal meeting but protested that he was too busy to leave Brussels, so the supreme commander had come to him. After a perfunctory greeting, Montgomery asked that Eisenhower's chief administrative officer, Lieutenant General Sir Humfrey M. Gale, be ejected from the plane, although his own logistician, Major General Sir Miles Graham, would remain. Air Marshal Tedder, the SHAEF deputy commander, could also stay. No sooner had Eisenhower meekly complied than the field marshal pulled a crumpled sheaf of top secret cables from his pocket, including the first half of the bifurcated message of September 5 that had arrived Saturday morning, four days late.

"Did you send me these?"

"Yes, of course," Eisenhower replied. "Why?"

"Well, they're nothing but balls," Montgomery said, "sheer balls, rubbish." In a seething tirade, his reedy voice trilling, he claimed to have been betrayed and insisted that the broad, double-thrust advance on Germany would fail. Was George Patton actually running the war for SHAEF?

A scarlet flush crept up Eisenhower's neck, but his voice was level as he leaned forward, tapped Montgomery's knee, and said, "Monty, you can't speak to me like that. I'm your boss."

The field marshal settled in his seat with a weak smile. "I'm sorry, Ike," he said.

For a long hour they bickered, "a complete dogfight," in Graham's description. Montgomery restated his case for a single thrust; if given transport and fuel from the Canadians and Third Army, plus the four airborne divisions, he was certain he could capture the Ruhr with twenty divisions from the British Second and American First Armies, opening the road to Berlin. Patton's strike toward Metz in the south would weaken the Allied center, he said, leaving none of the armies with sufficient strength to burst ahead.

Eisenhower agreed that the Ruhr remained their main objective, but any lunge toward Berlin—still four hundred miles away—would risk lethal attacks on both flanks. "You can't do that," he told Montgomery. "What the hell?" The broad-front strategy made better strategic sense, he added. It was safer and surer and would keep the enemy off balance.

Eisenhower was intrigued, however, by Montgomery's description of a new plan to drop several parachute divisions into Holland, clearing a corridor for Dempsey's Second Army and other forces to seize a bridgehead over the Rhine. Similar proposals had been advanced before, but this scheme was bigger, stronger, more ambitious, and Eisenhower was willing to try it. The operation would be given a two-word code name: MARKET GARDEN.

At length Montgomery rose, saluted, and trotted down the stairs to the tarmac, a pinched, elfin figure in a beret. "Our fight must be with both hands at present," Tedder wrote shortly after the conference. "Montgomery will of course dislike not getting a blank check."

The aircraft engines coughed and caught. Eisenhower flew off in pain.

* * *

For all that had been said, much remained unsaid. The two had barely mentioned Antwerp and MARKET GARDEN got short shrift. Following the meeting, Montgomery sent a carping, thirty-three paragraph note to Brooke. The supreme commander, he complained,

> is completely out of touch with what is going on; he tries to run the war by issuing long telegraphic directives. Eisenhower himself does not really know anything about the business of fighting the Germans.… Just when a really firm grip was needed, there was no grip.

Regardless of American requirements, Montgomery had privately concluded that 21st Army Group did not need Antwerp to drive halfway across Germany. Graham, his logistics chief, posited that a fighting division could get by with 350 to 400 tons of daily sustenance, barely half the SHAEF estimate. British units had done so in Africa, albeit under very different combat conditions. If two Allied corps reached Berlin, Montgomery believed, German defenses would be in such "disorder" that the Third Reich would disintegrate. Lesser ports, such as Dieppe and Le Havre, could sustain an advance on the enemy capital; just "one good Pas de Calais port," Montgomery added, would suffice to reach Münster, fifty miles beyond the Rhine, if augmented with daily airlift and more trucks. Unfortunately, the first Pas de Calais port—Boulogne—would not open until mid-October; the same was true of battered Le Havre. Until then only Mulberry B, far from the front, could handle sizable British cargo ships, and autumn weather made that ever riskier. Worse yet, fourteen hundred three-ton British trucks had just been found to have faulty pistons, and the same defect plagued all the replacement engines. Nevertheless, according to the Canadian official history, Montgomery's staff had assigned the prying open of the Scheldt as a "last priority" for the Canadian First Army.

Another grim battlefield development also had come into play. Montgomery on Saturday had received a secret War Office cable informing him that two explosions in England the previous evening heralded a new German assault against the home island. Without warning, at 6:34 P.M. on September 8, an explosion carved out a crater twenty feet deep in Stavely Road near the Thames, killing three, demolishing eleven houses, and wrecking fifteen more; the blast had been audible in Westminster, seven miles distant. A second explosion rocked Epping sixteen seconds later. Just days earlier, Churchill's government had declared victory against the V-1 in the battle of London; Whitehall now refused to publicly acknowledge a new German threat. Suggestions from the government that natural-gas accidents were responsible inspired caustic jokes about "flying gas mains" and applications by the credulous for damages from local utility companies.

The true culprit, the V-2 rocket, was forty-six feet long, weighed almost thirteen tons, and carried a one-ton warhead. Reaching 3,600 miles per hour and an apogee of sixty miles, it had an impact velocity comparable to fifty big train engines slamming into a neighborhood. The V-2 was the handiwork of a young Prussian Junker named Wernher von Braun, who belonged to the Nazi Party and the SS, and who since 1937 had been working on a liquid-fuel rocket at Peenemünde, a bucolic Baltic fishing village recommended by his mother.

The rocket had long been expected by British intelligence. "Existence of V-2 is established beyond doubt," a secret report on July 11 confirmed. Some analysts feared a warhead of up to six tons, carrying gas or "bacteriological germs" and capable of destroying all buildings within a mile or more of impact. Saturation bombing of Peenemünde killed many German scientists and engineers, delaying the rocket program for two months. But the ruthless use of slave laborers by the thousands and the construction of simple mobile launch equipment had permitted Hitler in early September to authorize the start of Operation PENGUIN. Fourteen V-2s would be fired on average every day in coming months, although they had an annoying tendency to break up in flight. Unlike the V-1, the V-2 could not be defended against—at Mach 5, it was simply too fast. Already 1.5 million Londoners had left the city because of the recent V-1 onslaught, and now the British government also considered evacuating.

The initial volley had been fired from western Holland, and the SS general overseeing PENGUIN had placed his headquarters outside Nijmegen, a Dutch town only ten miles south of Arnhem on the Rhine, a prime objective of Operation MARKET GARDEN. The message from London advising Montgomery of the first rocket attacks also pleaded, "Will you please report most urgently by what approximate date you consider you can rope off the coastal area contained by Antwerp-Utrecht-Rotterdam?" While General Dempsey and others favored a more easterly advance toward the Rhine at Wesel, this new German onslaught further persuaded Montgomery to drive north, deep into Holland. "It must be towards Arnhem," he said.

Tedder was right: Montgomery disliked not getting a blank check. On Monday he cabled Eisenhower that without greater logistical support no offensive toward the Rhine would be possible for almost two weeks, perhaps longer. "This delay," he added in a thinly veiled threat, "will give the enemy time to organize better defensive arrangements and we must expect heavier resistance and slower progress."

* * *

Eisenhower had returned from Brussels bruised in spirit and sore of body. "E. is spending a few days in bed on account of his leg," Kay Summersby told her diary on September 11. The supreme commander began dictating notes for a future memoir, "to put down some of the things that might be appropriate for me to say in a personal acc[ount] of the war," as he wrote in his office journal. Regarding the field marshal, he added, "Monty seems unimpressed by necessity for taking Antwerp approaches.… Monty's suggestion is simple—give him everything. This is crazy."

Ramsay arrived for a visit on the eleventh to find Eisenhower in pajamas. The admiral noted in his diary:

> He let himself go on subject of Monty, command, his difficulties, future strategy, etc. He is clearly worried & the cause is

undoubtedly Monty who is behaving badly. Ike does not trust his loyalty & probably with good reason. He has never let himself go to me like this before.

At a moment when strategic harmony was needed in the Allied high command, dissonance and puerile backbiting obtained. Eisenhower was sympathetic to the British impulse to scourge the V-2 launch sites, and he saw MARKET GARDEN as a bold stroke that could hasten Germany's defeat. Despite the risk of a delay in opening Antwerp, he believed that these disparate objectives could be achieved without crippling the American drive toward the Saar. "There is no reason," he wrote Bradley, "why Patton should not keep acting offensively if the conditions for offensive action are right." As for the field marshal, Eisenhower's private comments had become ever more scathing. "He called him 'a clever son of a bitch,' which was very encouraging," Patton confided to his diary. After the war Eisenhower would be far harsher, telling the author Cornelius Ryan, "He's a psychopath, don't forget that. He is such an egocentric.… Essentially he's not an honest man."

That assessment was absurd. Even if solipsistic and at times careless with the truth, Montgomery—who was as responsible as any man for victory in Normandy—was hardly a psychopath. Fortunately for the Allied cause, Eisenhower bit his tongue and soldiered on, game if gimpy. In reply to Montgomery's warning of a fortnight's delay, he sent Beetle Smith to Brussels for more palaver, then agreed to bolster 21st Army Group with an extra thousand daily tons of supplies, by truck and by plane. He also authorized Montgomery to communicate directly with Hodges's First Army on his right flank, rather than routing all messages through Bradley. Montgomery sent thanks, then privately gloated. "Ike has given way," he told a confidant in London. "The Saar thrust is to be stopped.… We have gained a great victory."

He was deluded. Eisenhower had offered concessions without conceding. The Saar thrust would continue. And the only victory that concerned three million Allied soldiers in harm's way was the one their commanders were supposed to effect on the battlefield. To Marshall, Eisenhower wrote a petulant note that again distorted Montgomery's argument:

> Montgomery suddenly became obsessed with the idea that his army group could rush right on into Berlin provided we gave him all the maintenance that was in the theater—that is, immobilize all other divisions.… Examination of this scheme exposes it as a fantastic idea.… I have sacrificed a lot to give Montgomery the strength he needs.

As for the future, Eisenhower proved himself an imperfect seer:

> We will have to fight one more major battle in the West. This will be to break through the German defenses on the border. … Thereafter the advance into Germany will not be as rapid as it was in France … but I doubt that there will be another full-dress battle involved.

Just after six P.M. on the warm, clear Monday evening of September 11, a jeep carrying a five-man American patrol from Troop B of the 85th Reconnaissance Squadron crept north on the river road from Vianden in northeastern Luxembourg. Thickly timbered hills pitched and yawed in all directions, and blue shadows bled into the dells. The jeep lurched to a halt near the jackstraw wreckage of a blown bridge across the narrow Our River. Staff Sergeant Warner W. Holzinger, a German-speaker from Reedsburg, Wisconsin, scrambled down the bank, followed by a rifleman and a French interpreter hired by the troop in Paris. Holzinger's orders from the 5th Armored Division urged caution, but added, "Should probing indicate great weakness in some portion of the frontier line, penetration may become possible." The sergeant detected great weakness. With the limpid water barely reaching their boot cuffs, he and his two comrades sloshed twenty yards across the Our to become the first Allied soldiers into Germany.

Up the slope for four hundred yards they trudged to a clutch of houses, where a farmer reported that the German rear guard had scuttled off the previous day. With the man impressed as a guide—"in case he was lying," Holzinger later explained—the GIs hiked to the crest of a knife-blade ridge half a mile above the river for a panoramic view. Raking the hills with his field glasses, Holzinger counted twenty concrete pillboxes tucked among the glades and brakes, including one with a chicken coop attached. Each appeared to be vacant. As dusk thickened, he hurried back across the river to report by radio that his men had found the Siegfried Line.

By midnight, other patrols from the 4th and 28th Infantry Divisions had also crossed the border, to be greeted by hostile stares and white bedsheets draped from upper windows. Three corps abreast, the U.S. First Army approached the German frontier through southern Holland, eastern Belgium, and Luxembourg. Scouts watched for "cuckoos"—local civilians, often ethnic Germans of dubious loyalty, scurrying east—and listened to the *chat-chat-chat* of machine guns said to be "eating away at each other" as outposts traded fire across the lines. Farther south on the same Monday, a patrol from the 6th Armored Division in Patton's army spied French dragoons from Patch's army at Saulieu in Burgundy. A few hours later, a detachment from General Leclerc's French 2nd Armored Division—also part of Third Army—encountered twenty men in three scout cars from De Lattre's 1st Infantry Division outside Nod-sur-Seine, forty miles northeast of Dijon. Straightening his collar as he ran, the local mayor raced toward the rendezvous with the entire village on his heels. There beneath an elm tree on Route Nationale 71, as church bells sang in their belfries, they witnessed officers from the two units shake hands to seal the merger of the Allied liberators who had landed in Normandy with those who had come through Provence.

From the North Sea to the Mediterranean, the Allies now presented an unbroken front. Never had the Third Reich's prospects seemed bleaker. The Wehrmacht in three months had lost fifty divisions in the east, twenty-eight in the west, and territory several times larger than Germany proper. Axis regimes in Romania, Bulgaria, and Finland were suing for peace. Berlin had begun evacuating southern Greece, dispatching transport planes across the Aegean at night to spirit 37,000 troops from Crete. The

operational life of a U-boat commander now averaged just two patrols. Advancing Soviet armies had swarmed into the Baltics and halfway across Poland before the Red Army paused to regroup, a delay that had let the Germans obliterate rebellious Warsaw. After five years of war, German army casualties exceeded 114,000 officers and 3.6 million enlisted men, not counting those who returned to duty after recovering from their wounds.

For all his troubles in the east, Hitler's greatest peril at the moment lay in the west, where three army groups prepared to pounce on Germany. In search of a savior, he once again summoned Field Marshal von Rundstedt, who after his dismissal in July had spent much of his time taking the cure at Bad Tölz. "I would like to place the Western front in your hands again," Hitler told him. Field Marshal Model would remain in harness to command the remains of Army Group B. "My Führer," Rundstedt replied, "whatever you order, I shall do to my last breath." *Life* declared him not only "the Wehrmacht's best general," but "Germany's last hope."

From his new headquarters near Koblenz, Rundstedt soon found how wan hope had become. The German high command, Oberkommando der Wehrmacht, or OKW, considered its fighting strength in the west to equal no more than thirteen robust infantry and four motorized divisions; several dozen others were exhausted if not eviscerated. Rundstedt advised Berlin that "Army Group B has about 100 tanks in working order"; the oncoming Allies, he added, had "roughly 1,700." General Erich Brandenberger had taken command of Seventh Army after Eberbach's capture only to be told that "it is unknown where the army headquarters are for the moment"; when the command post was found, Brandenberger reported, "everything gave the impression of flight and disorganization." In mid-September, he calculated the effective strength of his army at three to four divisions, including such "mongrel units" as one assembled from two hundred postal detachments. Across the front, items from tanks and trucks to ammunition and uniforms were in short supply. Eighteen new "Volksgrenadier" divisions had been created in late summer from recuperating hospital patients, industrial workers, stragglers, combat veterans, converted sailors and airmen, and boys. More such divisions would materialize, but each numbered only ten thousand troops, compared to seventeen thousand in the Wehrmacht's palmy days, and transport was predominately bipedal or four-hooved.

The Siegfried Line—to Germans, the *Westwall*—stood as a last bastion before the Rhine. Begun in 1936, its fortifications eventually stretched from the Dutch border to Switzerland and comprised three thousand pillboxes and bunkers. Built with walls and ceilings up to eight feet thick, some included fireplaces, tin chimneys, and connecting tunnels. Others were disguised as electrical substations, with dummy power lines, or as barns, with hay bales stacked in the windows. Planned with a shrewd eye for terrain and interlocking fields of fire, the pillboxes were most numerous where approach avenues seemed especially vulnerable; as many as fifteen big bunkers might be found in a single square kilometer. Thousands of dragon's teeth—pyramidal tank barriers of reinforced concrete two to six feet high—also stippled the landscape. By 1939, propaganda films were assuring German audiences that the Fatherland had been made invincible against ground attack from the west.

But years of neglect had ravaged the West Wall. Barbed wire, steel doors, and heavy weapons were plundered for the Atlantic Wall. Saplings and brush soon blocked firing apertures. Farmers laid roadbeds atop the dragon's teeth to reach their fields and transformed pillboxes into tool sheds or storage bins for potatoes and turnips. Bunkers flooded, or were looted, or became hideouts for soldiers straggling back from Normandy. Dank as a troll's lair, the fortifications seemed "more like sewage works than subterranean forts," one visitor reported.

Hitler in mid-August ordered the *Westwall* rehabilitated with a levy of "people's labor." Simply finding keys to locked doors proved exasperating. By September 10, the workforce had grown to 167,000, including girls from the League of German Maidens and boys from the Hitler Youth, as well as others plucked from depots, training schools, police stations, and convalescent homes. Captured weapons from the Eastern Front rearmed some bunkers, although the concussion and large barrel of the MG-42—a notoriously lethal German machine gun developed after the West Wall was designed—proved too much for many pillboxes.

With characteristic agility, Rundstedt manned the fortifications with makeshift units rushed to the front. Even as he complained on September 10 of needing another six weeks to properly rebuild the line, he improvised with dismounted panzer crews, border guards, and training battalions. The 49th Infantry Division scooped up officers and men from more than a dozen broken battalions and moved into a ten-mile stretch of the wall. The equivalent of two Luftwaffe divisions were deployed along a sixty-mile stretch in Holland. The I SS Panzer Corps officially halted its long retreat on September 14 to help shore up defenses. Within a week, 160,000 stragglers had been redirected to the front, with twenty-one Volksgrenadier divisions and nearly eight panzer divisions stiffening the *Westwall*.

Hitler demanded "a holding of the position until annihilation." He added:

> The fight in the West has spread to the German Reich. The situation no longer permits any maneuvering. Stand your ground or die!… Every bunker, every block of houses in a German city, every German village must become a fortress.

The question of how to breach the Siegfried Line now preoccupied Allied generals and privates alike. "It is a monument to stupidity," Patton insisted. "Anything that man makes, man can overcome." But the U.S. Army had little experience in reducing elaborate European fortifications; Corps of Engineer manuals focused more on makeshift fieldworks. A single bunker atop a hill south of Aachen and attacked by the 39th Infantry in mid-September showed how tough the nut could be. Sequentially and without success, GIs fired bazookas and placed pole charges; poured burning gasoline under the door; detonated a beehive explosive charge on the rooftop ventilator, followed by three dozen stacked Teller mines and eleven more beehives; and scorched the embrasures with flamethrowers. Only after three hundred pounds of TNT were tamped into a divot on the roof and detonated with a monumental roar did thirty Germans emerge under a white flag to report that the greatest inconvenience during the ordeal was the occasional snuffing out of their candles.

Ordinary artillery barrages did little against West Wall redoubts except "dust off the camouflage." Napalm and other incendiaries proved disappointing. Experiments showed that twenty-five to fifty pounds of explosives often was needed to break a single dragon's tooth, and large pillboxes required half a ton. Ten to twenty rounds fired from a self-propelled 155mm gun might penetrate six-foot concrete walls, or might not. Engineers learned to use an armored bulldozer hidden within a smoke screen to entomb pillboxes; doors were sealed shut with a jeep-towed arc welder. At a minimum, heavy shelling sometimes made it hard for defenders to breathe by causing the inside concrete walls to powder.

As Rundstedt rushed defenders into the line, two American armies poked and probed, looking for a seam to rip. Patton's brash assurance notwithstanding, his Third Army had yet to even close with the Siegfried Line, which abruptly bent eastward in trace with the border. Reduced to Michelin maps and guesswork—200,000 aerial photos, requiring four acres of paper, would not arrive until mid-September—Patton planned to leap the Moselle and advance to Mainz and Mannheim on the Rhine. He intended to bypass the French city of Metz "if it doesn't fall like a ripe plum," and little resistance was anticipated short of the West Wall.

Hitler had other ideas. German reinforcements swarmed in from Denmark and northern Italy, giving the Metz commander the equivalent of almost five divisions to shore up not only the elaborate constellation of forts around the city but also a defensive line west of the Moselle. Four armored columns from Third Army reached the river north and south of Metz on September 7 to find screaming sheets of enemy artillery and no bridges still standing.

The next morning, a battalion from the 5th Infantry Division slipped across the Moselle from Dornot only to be counterattacked by close-order panzer grenadiers shrieking "Heil, Hitler!" Four American companies dug a last-ditch horseshoe line only three hundred yards wide with the river at their backs; wounded GIs were asked not to cry out in hopes of keeping secret the extent of the casualties. Peppered from the bluffs by German flak guns, the battalion fought off three dozen assaults in sixty hours. "This sure is a hell hole," the unit log noted. Not until nightfall on September 10 were survivors authorized to fall back across the river, evacuating under blistering fire in three bullet-pricked boats that required two men to bail for each man paddling. Others swam with water wings fashioned from inflated condoms, or rode rafts built from empty ammunition cans. In addition to more than 360 battle casualties, the battalion sent another 150 to the hospital with combat exhaustion.

Patton would gain other bridgeheads over the Moselle, and on September 14 the unfortified city of Nancy was captured to become the Third Army headquarters. But his barnyard aspiration—"to go through the Siegfried Line like shit through a goose"—had clearly been checked. He had misjudged enemy grit: a Reuters dispatch reported that captured Germans tended to "thrash about and bite." By attacking on a broad front, Patton had failed to exploit a vulnerable if temporary gap between the German Fifth Panzer and First Armies. For now he was reduced to bluster. "I have studied the German all my life," he told his staff in Nancy. "I know exactly how he will react.… He hasn't the slightest idea what I'm going to do. Therefore, when the day comes, I'm going to whip hell out of him."

* * *

Farther north, First Army's prospects at first seemed brighter as three corps butted up against the West Wall on a seventy-five-mile front, shoulder to shoulder to shoulder. On the army's right wing, where Sergeant Holzinger had first trespassed across the Our, V Corps soon found itself overmatched by enemy counterblows and scorching fire from stout fortifications in the Ardennes borderlands. The 28th Infantry Division, proud to have tramped through Paris on its postage-stamp march three weeks earlier, now had so little artillery ammunition that guns were restricted to twenty-five rounds a day and only one battalion per regiment could fight at any given time. Three days' brawling in the sinister German uplands known as the Schnee Eifel made little headway, though the Americans took seventeen pillboxes and fifty-eight prisoners in one firefight. Even this modest penetration of the Siegfried Line provoked a counterattack that cost the division fifteen hundred casualties. Once again, as in World War I, the unit's red keystone shoulder flash—honoring its Pennsylvania National Guard heritage—became known as the *Blutiger Eimer*, the Bloody Bucket.

In a sector just to the north, Hemingway on September 12 accompanied the 4th Division into Germany, where he found "ugly women and squatty ill-shaped men." Requisitioning a deserted farmhouse, he shot the heads off several chickens with his pistol, then served a supper of fricassee, peas, onions, and carrots to regimental officers, one of whom wrote, "We all seemed for the moment like minor gods." The moment passed. A counterattack by the 2nd SS Panzer Division sealed a six-mile gap torn in the line and inflicted eight hundred American casualties; one company broke and pelted a mile to the rear. On Friday, September 15, the division command post shuffled back into Belgium, purportedly the 4th Division's first retreat since the Carolina maneuvers of 1941. A promising 5th Armored Division foray also petered out, and the corps bridgehead was soon abandoned, leaving the Ardennes to lapse into an uneasy repose that would last until mid-December.

On First Army's left flank, XIX Corps rolled through the Dutch city of Maastricht on September 14, finding the Germans gone but for three scoundrels burning papers at the Gestapo headquarters. Three days later, the 30th Division crossed into Germany only to encounter pillboxes and fire pits newly manned by Austrians in a Volksgrenadier division. A corps offensive to seize crossings on the Roer River, nine miles distant, was twice postponed for lack of ammunition, heavy weather, and anxiety over an exposed northern flank; this gave the enemy time to entrench and the Americans time "to ponder their apprehensions," as the Army's official history acknowledged.

That left the last, best chance for a quick American breakthrough in the First Army center, where Joe Collins's VII Corps had massed before Aachen with three divisions abreast on a thirty-five-mile front. Collins knew this ground intimately from his three years with the occupation force in Koblenz after World War I. (He prided himself in correctly pronouncing German names.) He also knew that the Aachen Gap had been a major trade gateway since the Roman Empire and, as he put it, "the real route into and out of Germany" since early Christendom. For precisely that reason, Hitler had doubled the strength of the *Westwall* here with twin fortification belts: the Scharnhorst Line almost straddled the Belgian-Dutch border, paralleled a few miles to the east by the thicker

Schill Line. Aachen sat in a bowl between the two belts, ancient and vulnerable, the city of Charlemagne and Nazi romanticism, where for seven centuries Holy Roman emperors had been crowned as heirs to the Caesars.

Collins now made a tactical choice he would soon regret. He decided to isolate Aachen rather than capture it. Short of gasoline and ammunition, keen to avoid an urban gunfight like the Cassino bloodletting in Italy, he ordered the 1st Division to seize the hills ringing the city south and east while the 9th Division pushed through the dense woods, seven miles below Aachen, known as the Hürtgenwald—the Hürtgen Forest. Between those two infantry divisions, the 3rd Armored Division would butt northeast toward the village of Stolberg, beyond which lay open ground leading to the Roer and Rhine Rivers. With luck, Collins believed, the Germans would abandon Aachen rather than risk encirclement by fifty thousand American troops chewing through the Scharnhorst and Schill Lines.

* * *

The sudden appearance of VII Corps had ignited panic in the city. Antiaircraft crews smashed their gun sights and fled toward Cologne, followed by police, municipal, and Nazi Party officials. Hitler ordered the evacuation of all 160,000 citizens. Terrified of being shot as traitors if they failed to comply, shopkeepers, pensioners, and mothers pushing prams soon clogged the roads leading east.

Into this chaos on the evening of Tuesday, September 12, came General Gerhard Graf von Schwerin, ordered to defend Aachen with the sixteen hundred men and thirty tanks remaining in his 116th Panzer Division, reinforced by two feeble Luftwaffe battalions and some local militiamen he called "Santa Clauses with fowling pieces." A veteran of Africa and Normandy, winner of the Knight's Cross for valor, Schwerin was a Prussian nobleman whom Hitler had described as "a splendid battlefield commander who unfortunately is not a National Socialist." Another officer later added, "He was intelligent, but this often proved a handicap."

Placing his new command post in the opulent Palast Hotel Quellenhof, Schwerin on Wednesday morning did the unthinkable: with the city likely to fall in just hours, he countermanded Hitler's evacuation order. Troops fanned out across Aachen, shooting looters and urging citizens to return to the surer safety of their homes. Then Schwerin sat at his desk and composed an appeal, in English, to be given the American commander whenever he took the city: "I stopped the absurd evacuation of this town; therefore, I am responsible for the fate of its inhabitants and I ask you, in the case of an occupation of your troops, to take care of the unfortunate population in a humane way."

He entrusted the letter to the only official still left in Aachen, a telephone company bureaucrat, then rushed to shore up the crumbling defenses along the city's southeastern perimeter.

A day passed, and then another. By dusk on Friday, the 1st Division had ruptured the Scharnhorst Line to ring Aachen on the west, south, and east. The 9th Division had pushed through the western fringe of the Hürtgen Forest, with its 47th Infantry Regiment on Saturday scooting past the last concrete bastion of the Schill Line to Schevenhütte, ten miles into Germany. The 3rd Armored Division captured a chain of villages—Roetgen, Schmidthof, Rott, Brandt—and edged to the southern lip of Stolberg, where fleeing Germans left half-eaten meals on the tables and half-packed suitcases on the beds.

But the momentum had seeped out of Collins's attack. Of several hundred Sherman tanks authorized for the armored division, only seventy remained fit for combat, hardly more than a battalion; after cantering across France, many now could manage only a low-gear crawl. Trucks, half-tracks, and jeeps were equally decrepit. Many GIs lived on captured rations. Resupply required a two-hundred-mile round-trip to Army depots for ammunition, and an even longer journey for fuel. Fifty rounds from a tank destroyer failed to reduce one obdurate pillbox, and in an especially vicious firefight enemy mortars and 88mm guns crippled a dozen Shermans.

The dawning realization that the Americans intended to force the Stolberg corridor rather than assault Aachen revived the German high command. Guns and panzers were shifted, artillery recalibrated, and on Saturday morning the newly rebuilt 12th Infantry Division—nearly fifteen thousand men known as the Wild Buffaloes—poured into the fight aboard buses and trucks. Storm troopers and party officials scuttled back to enforce another demand by Hitler that Aachen be forcibly evacuated of civilians. Schwerin's letter fell into Nazi hands, and he was advised that he would be tried for cowardice by the notorious People's Court, known for administering justice with a noose. He fled to a farmhouse northwest of the city, protected by a cordon of motorcycle troops with machine guns; remarkably, at Rundstedt's urging, Hitler soon forgave him with no more than a reprimand, and a few months later Schwerin would command first a division in Italy and then a corps. "Fate," he explained, "had decided."

A German counterattack on Sunday with fixed bayonets across open ground south of Aachen was smashed by seven hundred rounds from the 32nd Field Artillery Battalion; dead and maimed fusiliers lay in field-gray windrows splashed with crimson. A German reporter in Aachen that Sunday described how "almost in every street a building was burning like a huge torch." GIs poked through a cemetery where fifteen wooden coffins had been abandoned before they could be interred, each with a thumb-tacked card bearing the name of a dead German soldier in Gothic script. A fading spray of red and white dahlias included a farewell message: "To Our Comrades, a Last Greeting."

After five days of fighting, Collins had gashed a twelve-mile hole in the first belt of the West Wall and a five-mile rift in the second. But he lacked the strength to exploit his opening. Stolberg, a meandering stone town folded into a pinched valley, had become a house-to-house battle of precisely the sort he had hoped to avoid. Collins moved his command post into a brick building previously used as a Nazi headquarters in Kornelimünster, barely two miles from the front; here he studied his maps and field reports under nagging artillery fire—staff officers tacked blankets across holes blown in the walls—and pondered what might have been. For him too, fate had decided.

Three German divisions soon sealed off the American salient, with five times as many panzers and assault guns around the city

than had been there a week earlier. Hitler demanded fanatical resistance in what he now called “Fortress Aachen.” The battle increasingly would move to the cellars, like Stalingrad. “Each and every house will be defended,” the Führer added, “to the last man and the last bullet.”

A Market and a Garden

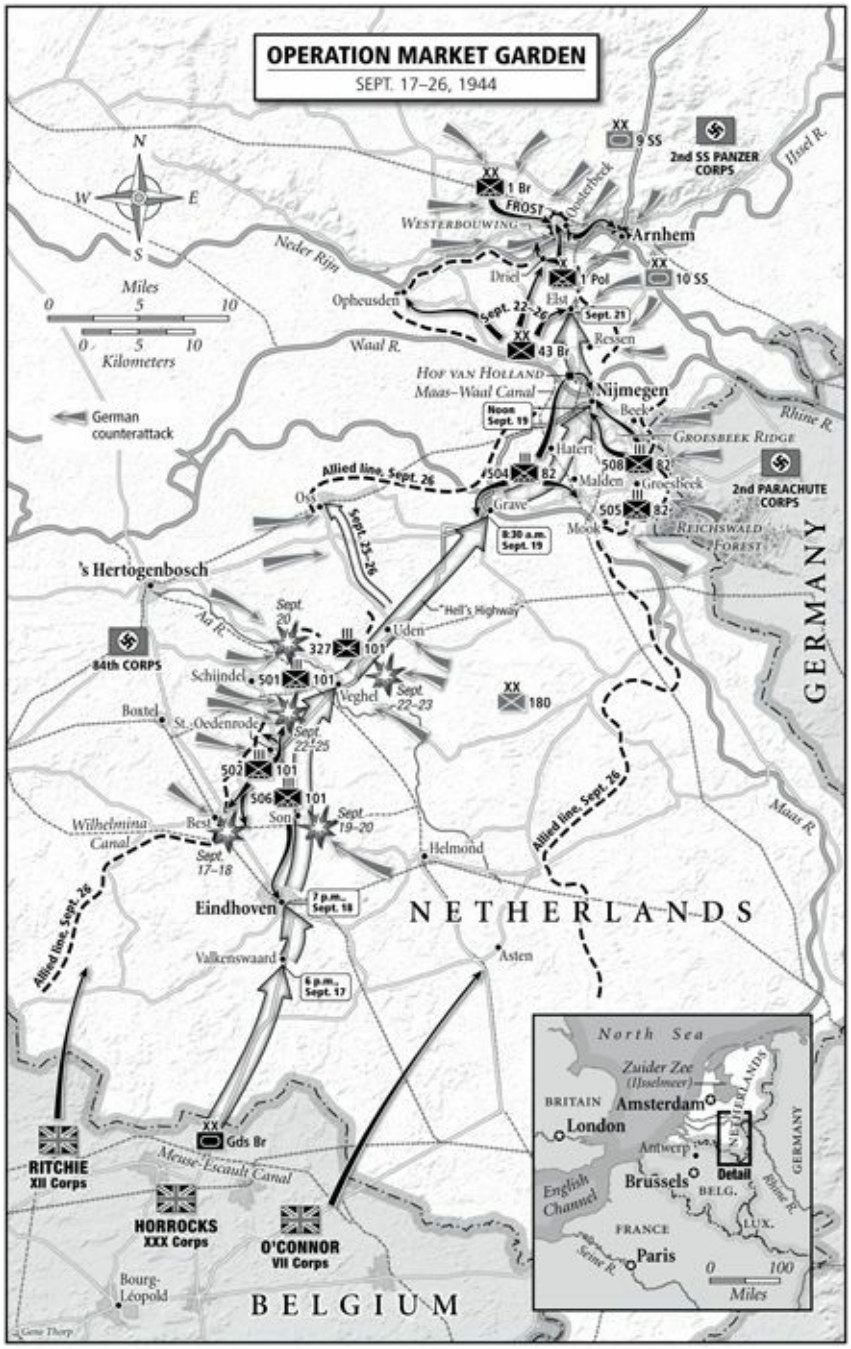
SINCE its founding in 1835 as a military garrison on the moors of northeast Belgium, the Flemish town of Bourg-Léopold had seen fortune ebb and flow with each passing army. It was said that here the invading Germans in 1914 had first experimented with chlorinated gas. Between world wars, the cantonment became Europe’s largest and most modern, a camp for forty thousand Belgian soldiers and several thousand horses—all for naught against a new generation of German attackers, who bombed Bourg-Léopold in May 1940, then occupied the casern for four years, using the municipal woods to execute more than two hundred men, mostly suspected resistance supporters. British bombers in mid-May 1944 had accidentally slaughtered seventy-seven townfolk during a raid on the camp, but made amends two weeks later by returning to kill scores of German soldiers in their barracks.

Now the Germans were gone, again, and Allied soldiers swarmed through the cobbled streets. The British XXX Corps had planted its headquarters outside town, near a honey farm with brightly painted wooden hives, and military policemen in brassards and red caps briskly directed dust-caked convoys to the engineer dumps scattered around Bourg-Léopold. Nine thousand sappers had assembled two thousand truckloads of road metal, bridge girders, and barge anchors, all sorted into columns with code names for quick deployment.

On the radiant Sunday morning of September 17, dozens of British officers, none below the rank of lieutenant colonel, filed into the dingy cinema on Nicolaylaan, across from the hip-roof train station. They were a vivid lot, sporting chromatic scarves, ascots, and berets affixed with the badges of Scots, Irish, and Welsh Guards, of Grenadier and Coldstream Guards and Household Cavalry. Their costumes, a brigadier recorded, included “sniper’s smocks, parachutist’s jackets and jeep coats over brightly colored slacks, corduroys, riding breeches or even jodhpurs.” After an exchange of barked greetings—some had fought together since before Alamein—they settled into their moviegoer seats to study a huge sketch map of eastern Holland propped against the screen on stage.

At eleven A.M. Lieutenant General Brian Horrocks, in a high-necked wooly beneath his battle-dress blouse and an airborne smock, ambled down the center aisle, provoking another yelping chorus of salutations. Lanky and spare, Horrocks was said by one admirer to possess “an ascetic, almost an ecclesiastical face,” and his thick nimbus of white hair added a patriarchal mien to a man barely forty-nine. Mounting the stage, he surveyed the assemblage with a wry smile, then welcomed them with a quip that would be oft-repeated in later years to illustrate his sangfroid: “This is a tale you will tell your grandchildren, and mighty bored they’ll be.” Much knee-slapping ensued.

Horrocks was made for such moments. He had been born in an Indian hill station, the son of a knighted army surgeon, and as a young officer was severely wounded in the gut and captured at Ypres in 1914; repatriated after four years in a German prison camp, he squandered his accumulated back pay in an epic six-week spree. In 1919 he was captured again, this time by the Reds while fighting with a British contingent aiding the Whites in the Russian civil war. Again he was repatriated, having managed to survive typhus in a Bolshevik jail. After eighteen years as a captain, and a turn in the 1924 Olympics as the British pentathlon champion, he quickly ascended the ranks when war resumed, although he deemed himself “a not very bright philistine who had been lucky.” Evacuated from Dunkirk, he later fought with Montgomery at Alamein and across Africa. While preparing to command the British corps at Salerno, he was struck down by a German fighter during a strafing run on Bizerte; one bullet caught him in the leg and another punctured his lungs and intestines before exiting through his spine. Half a dozen brutal surgeries kept him hospitalized for more than a year, and medicos declared he would never have another field command. Instead, Montgomery summoned him in August to take XXX Corps. The botched capture of the Scheldt adjacent to Antwerp was in part Horrocks’s fault—as he candidly confessed—and if he now radiated vigorous good humor, some of those hunched in their cinema seats thought he appeared a tad frail.



Eyes alight, graceful hands gliding up and down, he spoke for an hour to review, for a final time, the plan called MARKET GARDEN. The Allied objective was "to dominate the country to the north as far as the Zuider Zee"—a shallow lake off the North Sea, better known as the IJsselmeer—"thereby cutting off communications between Germany and the Low Countries." With luck and élan, a quarter of a million enemy soldiers would be trapped in the western Netherlands, including those from the Fifteenth Army who had escaped across the Scheldt; the attack also would overrun many of the pestiferous V-2 rocket sites. An Allied juggernaut spearheaded by three armored divisions would then pivot east into Germany toward the Ruhr, having outflanked the Siegfried Line. Code names for various Dutch localities had been drawn from Shakespeare, including HAMLET, MACBETH, DUNCAN, BANQUO, OTHELLO, IAGO, YORICK, JULIET, and GUILDENSTERN—even indifferent scholars could not help but notice that things ended badly for this dramatis personae—but the three central characters represented a trio of large towns to be seized: BRUTUS, or Eindhoven, thirteen miles north of the current Allied line; BELCH, or Nijmegen, fifty-three miles north; and MALVOLIO, or Arnhem, sixty-four miles north. The Zuider Zee lay another thirty miles beyond Arnhem.

Linking these towns was a single narrow highway that ran through drained polders in terrain so excruciatingly flat that elevations varied no more than thirty feet over the course of fifty miles. Nine substantial bridges required capture or, if destroyed, replacement—hence the heaps of engineering matériel—and watercourses to be spanned included three wide rivers, two smaller tributaries, three major canals, and countless ditches, kills, and irrigation channels. Most imposing were the Meuse, known as the Maas once it entered Holland, and the Rhine, or Rijn, which, after widening to its greatest girth upon reaching the Dutch frontier, fractured into several "distributaries" before crossing a broad marshy plain to reach the sea. Two-thirds of the river's flux swept down the river Waal through Nijmegen; the Neder Rijn, or Lower Rhine, which kept the original stream's name but not its grandeur, flowed roughly parallel to the Waal and the Maas as it angled through Arnhem. The city had long been a retirement mecca for wealthy Dutch merchants from the East Indies: "Arnhem," a holiday guide from the 1930s proclaimed, "is an attractive residential center amidst

delightful scenery, and with an exceedingly healthy atmosphere."

Horrocks paused, glancing at his notes and then at the map behind him before continuing. The deed would be done, he explained, by air and by land. For the largest airborne operation of the Second World War—the MARKET of MARKET GARDEN—the newly created First Allied Airborne Army was even now ascending from fields across England, bound for the Netherlands. Nearly 35,000 soldiers would be plunked down—most by parachute, the rest by glider—in what British planners insisted on calling "a carpet of airborne troops." At the foot of the carpet, in the south, the U.S. 101st Airborne Division would envelop a fifteen-mile corridor that included Eindhoven. In the middle, the 82nd Airborne sector stretched for ten miles, and included both the Nijmegen bridge over the Waal and a nine-span bridge across the Maas at Grave, or rather TYBALT. At the top of the carpet, the British 1st Airborne Division would seize Arnhem and a span across the Neder Rijn.

As this unfolded, the land assault—GARDEN—starting later in the afternoon would gallop north from Belgium with three divisions under XXX Corps in a thrust that was to be, in Field Marshal Montgomery's words, "rapid and violent, and without regard to what is happening on the flanks." Two vehicles abreast at a density of thirty-five trucks, tanks, and personnel carriers per mile would snake up that single highway, twenty thousand vehicles all told. Speed, Horrocks stressed, was "absolutely vital." The first Guards tanks should reach Eindhoven within two to three hours; if the vanguard reached the 1st Airborne paratroopers at Arnhem within forty-eight hours, as he hoped, much of the corps could be across the Rhine by the end of D+3, or Wednesday, September 20.

A SHAEF intelligence summary issued September 16 reported that "the enemy has by now suffered, in the West alone, losses in men and equipment which can never be repaired in this war.… No force can, then, be built up in the West sufficient for a counteroffensive or even for a successful defensive." German strength facing the 100,000-man XXX Corps directly across the Dutch border was estimated at six infantry battalions backed by twenty armored vehicles and a dozen field guns; scant enemy activity had been detected in the last two days. Still, no one expected that an assault of such rococo choreography would be easy. The regiment chosen to lead the ground attack, the Irish Guards, concluded that "on the whole it would be much easier for a rich man to get into heaven" than for XXX Corps to reach the Zuider Zee.

The conference ended with few questions. The earlier badinage had subsided, supplanted by knit-browed sobriety as the men filed from the theater. Horrocks thought the Irish Guards officers looked especially pensive.

At an abandoned factory on the south bank of the Meuse–Escaut Canal near Bourg-Léopold, Horrocks climbed an iron ladder to the flat roof. The warm midday sun spangled the dark canal and the irrigation ditches running north into Holland. An occasional German shell swished overhead, and the yap of a machine gun could be heard in the middle distance. Behind him, he spied some of the 350 British guns hidden in woodlots and farmyards. Tanks trundled forward, slowly to avoid raising dust, and sappers reinspected their bridge loads.

Earlier that morning Horrocks had asked an American colonel, "What do you think of the plan?" When told with a shrug, "It's all right," the corps commander laughed gaily, but the Yank saw anxiety in his eyes. Horrocks was in fact fretful. During the mad pursuit across France he had collapsed with a recurrent fever and was confined to his caravan; Montgomery had not only concealed his frailty—"Don't worry," the field marshal said, "I shan't invalid you home"—but invited him to recuperate in his own camp. Whether Horrocks was fit for the rigors ahead remained to be seen. The date also made him uneasy: no attack he had launched on a Sunday had ever fully succeeded.

From a nearby radio came word that the MARKET air armada was well under way. He cocked an ear for the distant drone of planes, a gaunt and lonely figure peering from his rooftop parapet.

* * *

Many others invested in MARKET GARDEN also felt perturbations, though for reasons more tangible than superstitions about the Sabbath. Under relentless pressure on Eisenhower from George Marshall and others in Washington to get those airborne divisions into the fight, the plan had been slapped together in less than a week. The First Allied Airborne Army, also created at War Department insistence, and the corps headquarters that preceded it had drafted and discarded eighteen operational plans in the past forty days, including a scheme for seizing airfields in Berlin and other missions with names like WILD OATS, TRANSFIGURE, COMET, and the unfortunate HANDS UP. Even Montgomery seemed exasperated by the frantic cycle of concocting and scuttling plans to sprinkle paratroopers across the Continent. "Are you asking me to drop cowpats all over Europe?" the field marshal had reportedly asked his subordinates.

Some commanders worried about MARKET's dispersal of paratroopers along a fifty-mile corridor. Others opposed GARDEN's tangential line of advance through boggy terrain to the north, *away* from the U.S. First Army axis toward the Ruhr. In contravention of Montgomery's earlier demand for one "full-blooded thrust" into Germany, the two main Allied legions would steadily diverge from each other. "It's a foolhardy thing to do, and you'll take a lot of casualties," Bradley told Eisenhower. "In addition, it's not in accordance with the plan Monty and I made together." "Flabbergasted," as he himself said, at not being consulted before Eisenhower approved MARKET GARDEN, Bradley also resented the diversion of transport planes needed to resupply his armies. The airborne army, he complained, showed "an astonishing faculty for devising missions that were never needed."

Personalities added fat to the fire. Commanding that airborne army was a short, vain, querulous U.S. Army Air Forces lieutenant general named Lewis H. Brereton, a Naval Academy graduate said to be capable of swearing in four languages and whose philandering had drawn a personal rebuke from General Marshall. "Mystify, mislead, and surprise," Brereton liked to tell subordinates, quoting Stonewall Jackson, but some wondered who was being duped. Blamed for ineffective close air support with the ground forces during the Normandy campaign's early weeks, when he commanded the Ninth Air Force, Brereton was "not sincere

nor energetic nor cooperative," according to Bradley, who applauded his transfer to the airborne with two words: "Thank goodness." Brereton was disappointed in his new role, but he now oversaw both the U.S. XVIII Airborne Corps and the British I Airborne Corps—four divisions and a Polish brigade in all, as well as a fleet of transport planes.

If Brereton's interactions with his fellow Americans were prickly—the XVIII Airborne chief of staff called him "a stupid ass"—his relations with the British had grown venomous, particularly with his deputy, Lieutenant General Frederick A. M. "Boy" Browning, who would lead the MARKET assault. A handsome, mannered Grenadier Guardsman who had served valiantly in the last war but had yet to see action in this one, Browning was a high-strung mustache-twirler given to designing his own uniforms—false uhlan front, zip opening at the neck, polished Sam Browne belt, gray kid gloves, swagger stick—and occasionally kicking over the furniture. Some British subordinates privately called him "that popinjay," and Americans were wary of what one officer called "too deliberate a smile." Pilot, sailor, bobsledder, and national champion in the high hurdles, Browning nevertheless owed some of his cachet to his wife, the celebrated novelist Daphne du Maurier, whose *Rebecca* had, when translated to film by Alfred Hitchcock, won the Oscar for best picture in 1941. Browning so loathed Brereton that in early September he quit as deputy commander, only to withdraw his resignation a day later. Even now, with planes in the air by the thousands, the two men were seeking a modus vivendi to get them through the battle.

Finally, and most substantively, some officers sensed that the Germans were less supine than presumed. Brigadier E. T. Williams, Montgomery's intelligence chief, cautioned the field marshal that the Allies' "enemy appreciation was very weak" and that no proper study of the ground around Arnhem had been made. (The road bridge over the Neder Rijn had been penciled onto Allied map sheets, which were based largely on Dutch surveys made in the 1920s, before the span existed.) A radio decrypt also revealed that the enemy expected a XXX Corps thrust toward Nijmegen. The Polish commander, General Stanisław Sosabowski, after listening to an excessively chipper review of the battle plan on September 14, burst out, "But the Germans, how about the Germans, what about *them*?" Sosabowski later complained that someone "with a vivid imagination, optimism, and little knowledge was producing parachute battle orders with the same frequency and ease as a conjuror producing rabbits from a top hat." A British brigadier acknowledged a tendency "to make a beautiful airborne plan and then add the fighting-the-Germans bit afterwards."

Guessing which Germans would be fought proved vexing beyond all other vexations. Radio traffic showed that Model's Army Group B headquarters had shifted to Oosterbeek, outside Arnhem. Other intelligence suggested enemy reinforcement of river and canal defenses, but with troops considered "low category"; some improvised Luftwaffe ground units were apparently so rudimentary that they lacked field kitchens. Ultra decrypt XL 9188 in early September revealed that various battered units from Normandy had been ordered to western Holland to refit, and subsequent intercepts indicated that this gaggle included the II SS Panzer Corps. Not until September 15 had the SHAEF high command taken note that the corps' two divisions, the 9th and 10th SS Panzer, seemed to have laagered near Arnhem. Together they had suffered nine thousand casualties at Caen, at Falaise, and in the retreat across France; they had also lost much of their armor, including 120 tanks on August 19 alone. But whether the divisions were still eviscerated, where they were headed, or even precisely where they were now located remained opaque.

Montgomery's senior staff officers almost to a man voiced skepticism about MARKET GARDEN. Beetle Smith grew anxious enough to alert Eisenhower, who hesitated to intervene in tactical dispositions but authorized his chief of staff to raise the issue with the field marshal. Smith flew to Brussels on Friday, forty-eight hours before the assault was to begin, and suggested strengthening the MARKET force to be dropped at Arnhem, perhaps by shifting one of the American airborne divisions farther north. "Montgomery ridiculed the idea and laughed me out of his tent," Smith later reported. "He waved my objections airily aside."

Montgomery's insouciance was understandable, even if his alleged demeanor was not. Five Allied corps were about to descend on a narrow sliver of western Holland where the enemy was "weak, demoralized, and likely to collapse entirely if confronted with a large airborne attack," according to a British Second Army assessment. The German defenses around Arnhem had recently been gauged as no larger than a brigade of three thousand men, with insignificant tank strength. The Dutch underground had noted panzers and SS soldiers near Arnhem, but German infiltration of the resistance had resulted in the capture and execution of several dozen agents and made the Allies distrust information sent from the Netherlands. No conclusive intelligence about the two SS panzer divisions could be teased out, and the partial reports were passed to neither Horrocks nor most airborne commanders. The presence of tanks at Arnhem "was the one awkward fact that would not fit the desired pattern," the intelligence historian Ralph Bennett later wrote, "so the best thing was to sweep it under the carpet."

* * *

Boy Browning declared himself ready to sacrifice a third of his MARKET force in simply laying the airborne carpet, but such a gallant immolation would prove unnecessary. At two dozen English airfields on that lovely Sunday morning, the mighty flock had gathered: 1,545 transports and 478 gliders to be escorted by more than 1,000 fighters in two aerial trains across the North Sea for a flight almost three hours long. Hundreds of bombers also flew, bringing the entire winged fleet to 4,676. Tea wagons rattled along the runways with bacon sandwiches and great steaming mugs. "That means business," one crewman said. "They never give you a cup of tea unless you're really going." At Grantham, a British sergeant strutted down the sun-washed flight line in an opera hat, doffing it and bowing to men right and left.

"Emplane!" The order echoed and reechoed. With much grunting and cursing, the thousands heaved themselves aboard—among them many Normandy veterans, who called themselves "the Old Men." Fighters and pathfinders lifted off first, and by noon, just as Horrocks finished his briefing in the Bourg-Léopold theater, more than twenty thousand troops were off the ground, with 330 artillery tubes and 500 vehicles. Men played chess or read the Sunday papers; others dozed or gawked from the tiny windows at "an immense armada of aircraft, some towing gliders, which stretched as far as could be seen," as one lieutenant wrote. "They floated up and down

in unison like an outstretched blanket being gently shaken."

The first British pathfinders jumped at 12:40 P.M., followed twenty minutes later by gliders landing every nine seconds—"plowing up dirt like a ship in a heavy sea," in one GI's image. Then, from an altitude of six hundred feet, the parachutists spilled out, so many that astonished witnesses below thought they were snowflakes or flak bursts, and within eighty minutes those twenty thousand Allied cutthroats were deep behind enemy lines. Aircraft losses were modest: sixty-eight planes, including fighters and bombers lost to flak. Gleeful children near Arnhem sang "Jingle Bells" in Dutch to parachutists wriggling from their silks.

That this welcoming chorus congregated several miles west of town underscored one of two tactical complications beclouding the sunny first hours of MARKET. Airborne doctrine held that drop and landing zones should be as close to the mission objective as possible, preferably within five miles; these instead lay seven to eight miles from the Arnhem road bridge. Accusatory fingers subsequently would be pointed either at Major General Roy Urquhart, commander of the 1st Airborne Division, a novice parachutist who was said to lack the requisite experience and credibility to insist on closer drops, or, more plausibly, at air commanders who refused to fly closer because of possible enemy flak and because of congestion in the airspace between Arnhem and Nijmegen.

The second complication was evident just by counting noses: barely half of the 3.5-division force designated for MARKET was on the ground, and no more troops would arrive until the following day or later. General Brereton's troop carrier commanders had insisted that only a single mission fly on Sunday; a second sortie would ostensibly exhaust air and ground crews and leave insufficient time to service and reload the planes (although double missions over the same distance had been flown from Italy in DRAGOON the previous month). Pleas by airborne commanders and by an emissary from Montgomery to Brereton's headquarters failed to reverse the decision, despite an analysis that showed transporting the entire combat force at a deliberate rate could take up to four days. Particularly for the British, the combination of too few men with too far to travel would soon prove fateful, even as paratroopers from the 1st Airborne Division collected their kit and hurried east in search of a bridge to seize.

* * *

The day went well enough for the Yanks in the south. Almost seven thousand men from the 101st Airborne spilled across the polders between Veghel and Best, where red flags and billowing orange smoke denoted battalion assembly areas. Dutchmen capered through the fields, shaking hands with their liberators and offering sandwiches, pitchers of milk, and bicycles, for which receipts were issued. Stray Germans here and there were captured or killed in a hundred sharp spasms of violence; under a fruit tree near a captured jam factory, where GIs discovered shelves of preserved apples, pears, and plums, the poet-paratrooper Louis Simpson found a mattress "with a German officer stretched on it. He had been laid there to die in all possible comfort."

Nine road and rail bridges stood in the division sector, but only at Son, four miles north of Eindhoven, did one span cause immediate grief. At a crossing over the Wilhelmina Canal, a bazooka team from the 506th Parachute Infantry knocked out an 88mm gun with a single round, and a sergeant with a tommy gun mowed down six fleeing crewmen. Troopers pressed to within thirty yards of the canal bank, only to see the bridge abruptly levitate from its piers and vanish in a smoky roar. Hardly had the debris stopped raining than GIs swam to the south bank or crossed in rowboats. Using ropes, scavenged doors, and barn wood, engineers threw a narrow catwalk across the stone stubs of the now naked piers, and a thousand men tiptoed to the far bank as an inky evening settled over the battlefield. The 506th was supposed to sprint south and seize Eindhoven and its bridges by eight P.M., welcoming Horrocks's Guardsmen from Bourg-Léopold, but the delay at Son meant that any rendezvous would have to await first light on Monday.

Twenty miles north, 7,300 troops from the 82nd Airborne had also arrived intact in a confetti of green, orange, blue, red, and chartreuse parachutes. All but one of 482 planes and two of 50 gliders reached the target zones below Nijmegen. Among the few jump casualties was the 82nd commander, James Gavin, who fractured two vertebrae in a hard landing between Groesbeek and Mook. Allowing himself little more than a grimace, Gavin shed his parachute, picked up an M-1 rifle, and in less than an hour had set up his command post in a leafy thicket just west of Groesbeek.

With the ascension of Matthew Ridgway to command the XVIII Airborne Corps, Gavin had taken over the 82nd in mid-August. At thirty-seven he would be not only the youngest major general in the U.S. Army during World War II, but also the youngest division commander since the Civil War. That achievement was all the more remarkable given his start in life. Gavin was an orphan (he later concluded that his mother had been an immigrant Irish nun in Brooklyn); adopted as a toddler, he was raised among Pennsylvania's anthracite collieries by a woman who invoked the Holy Family as she beat him with a hairbrush, a broomstick, or a cat-o'-nine-tails specially made in a harness shop. Sometimes she waited until the child was asleep to launch her assault.

After eight years of grammar school, Gavin soaped miners' beards for a barber, delivered boots for a shoemaker, and ran a filling station for an oil company. On his seventeenth birthday he fled to New York and joined the Army. Stationed in Panama, he read and studied diligently enough to win admission to West Point. He lied about his age to avoid disclosing that he had enlisted as a minor. A perpetual student he remained, even now subscribing to *The New Yorker, Time, Reader's Digest,* and the Book-of-the-Month Club. In a loose-leaf notebook titled "Generalship," organized by virtues such as "enterprise" and "intelligence," he copied a phrase he attributed to Voltaire: "That calm courage in the midst of tumult, that serenity of a soul in danger, which is the greatest gift of nature for command." Gavin called it "the courage of two o'clock in the morning." Ridgway had recently praised his young subordinate's "self-possession regardless of the pressure in and out of battle, loyalty, initiative, zeal, sound judgment, and common sense.… He adds great charm of manner."

Though Gavin casually referred to war as "the scuffle," he was realistic about human limits. After combat jumps into Sicily, Salerno, and Normandy, he had come to believe that "courage for every man is like a bank account" that must not be overdrawn. MARKET would require another judicious withdrawal. "It looks very rough," he had written in his diary on Thursday about the impending attack. "If I get through this one I will be very lucky."

Eleven bridges could be found in the 82nd sector, and enemy demolitionists blew those at Malden, Mook, and Hatert as paratroopers closed in. But the rivet-skinned, nine-arch span over the Maas at Grave still stood when soldiers from the 504th Parachute Infantry rushed the southern ramp, gutting a concrete flak tower with bazooka rounds through the firing ports, then shooting up two truckloads of absconding Germans and swinging a captured 20mm gun onto the remaining defenders. Shouts, explosions, bullets pinging off the girders—the battle din ebbed at last and a brilliant bouquet of green flares signaled that the hour was won. Engineers snipped detonation wires and ripped out boxes of dynamite painted to resemble bridge steel. In Grave the Dutch sang "Tipperary" as the Germans skulked off, and a message flew up the division chain of command: "Bridge number eleven is ours."

Bridge eleven and all its sisters were worthless if the Germans seized one of the few bits of elevated terrain in Holland, and this beyond all else preoccupied Gavin. Groesbeek Ridge, an unprepossessing eminence three hundred feet high and five miles long southeast of Nijmegen, dominated the Maas, the Waal, and the Maas–Waal Canal; General Browning's orders to the 82nd specified that "the capture and retention of the high ground between Nijmegen and Groesbeek is imperative in order to accomplish the division's task." With eight 75mm howitzers banging away an hour after the jump—each had arrived in seven pieces, by parachute—Gavin spent the afternoon shoring up strongpoints along the ridge and squinting across the nearby German border for signs of an enemy counterattack. Nijmegen and its two grand bridges would have to wait until these approaches were secure.

Near the 82nd command post, a Dutch commando captain stepped into a farmhouse outside Groesbeek to use the telephone. After ringing friends in the north, he emerged to tell Gavin, "Fine. Everything is going as planned, and the British have landed at Arnhem."

* * *

So too had the Germans, and with this convergence the heartache began in earnest. Field Marshal Model had been sipping a preluncheon glass of Moselle in his headquarters at the Tafelberg Hotel in Oosterbeek when a staff officer rushed in with news of British glider landings barely two miles away. "Right. Everyone out," Model said. "They're after me and this headquarters." Hurrying down the steps, papers and underwear spilling from his attaché case, he leaped into a staff car and raced to the II SS Panzer Corps headquarters, eighteen miles to the east. By midafternoon he was organizing German counterblows at Arnhem, Nijmegen, and points south. "Imagine!" Model exclaimed. "They almost got me."

They did get the Arnhem commandant, General Friedrich Kussin, who wandered across town in his Citroën to investigate the commotion only to blunder into a fusillade of British rifle and Sten-gun fire that flattened his tires and killed both his driver and batman. Shot in the chest and throat, Kussin flopped from the car to the pavement, quite dead, a revolver in his gloved right hand and an unfinished cigarette in his left, his mouth agape in a rictus of astonishment. Vengeful Dutchmen ripped the rank badges from his collar.

Not much else went right for General Urquhart or his division. Six thousand German troops had bivouacked around greater Arnhem—double the anticipated number; they were mostly grenadiers from the two SS panzer divisions as well as "ear and stomach battalions" composed of soldiers with maladies afflicting those organs. Others hurried into battle aboard farm carts, wood-burning trucks, and even fire engines. Within ninety minutes of the British landings, about four hundred SS soldiers had blocked two of the western approaches to town, forcing the Tommies into a garden-by-garden gunfight on their long tramp toward the bridge.

Ignoring warnings of danger ahead, Urquhart—a strapping, amiable Scot, with combat experience in Africa and Italy—wandered too far forward and found himself first under machine-gun fire and then cut off from the rest of his command in a confused warren of Dutch alleys. Darting through kitchens and across terraces, he and two other officers finally hid in the attic at 14 Zwarteweg, without food, water, or a toilet, as SS troops sniffed through the streets below and positioned an antitank gun near the front door. For forty hours, until the Germans retrenched to the east, the 1st Airborne Division headquarters would be without its commander. Urquhart acknowledged feeling "idiotic, ridiculous, [and] as ineffectual in the battle as a spectator."

A single British parachute battalion won through. Following a southern route through gorse and birch stands near the Neder Rijn, Lieutenant Colonel John D. Frost's 2nd Battalion had woven proffered marigolds into their helmet nets and captured a few German soldiers said to have been "snogging with their Dutch girlfriends." Radios proved so erratic that bugle calls were used instead, and the southern span of Arnhem's rail bridge blew up in the faces of the platoon sent to secure it. But at eight P.M. Tommies reached the northern piers of the intact road bridge, and Frost's men soon burrowed into buildings along the riverbank. Several dozen paratroopers wrapped their hobnail boots in curtain strips to deaden their footfalls, then crept onto the span only to be smacked back by cackling machine guns. British return fire with an antitank gun and a flamethrower ignited paintwork on the girders. A German attempt to rush 10th SS Panzer troops across the bridge from the south ended with enemy trucks blazing on the ramp and charred bodies smoldering in the roadbed.

A brutal deadlock had begun. Of nearly 6,000 British paratroopers, only 740 would reach the bridge, enough to revoke German possession of the span but too few to assert a British claim. Relief battalions pushing from the west found the streets ever more perilous, not least from German snipers lashed to tree branches with rope stays. Flames danced all night from the burning bridge and from wooden houses set ablaze by gunfights along the embankments. From his makeshift command post a block from the river, Frost—an Africa veteran who optimistically had shipped his golf clubs and hunting gun overland to Holland—peered south through the lurid orange glow, hoping that a new day might reveal Horrocks's tanks lining the far shore.

* * *

That would not happen.

At precisely two P.M. that Sunday, seventeen Allied artillery regiments had begun a lacerating barrage, as Horrocks and his coterie looked north and rubbed their hands in gleeful anticipation atop the factory roof near Bourg-Léopold. Shells gnawed at fields and pine thickets for a thousand yards on either side of the Eindhoven road, and every five minutes another eight Typhoons swooped in with rocket fire to savage any lurking ambushers.

At 2:35 P.M., the Irish Guards lieutenant commanding the lead tank ordered, "Driver, advance!" Like a circus parade the column surged forth, nose to tail, gears grinding, every chassis groaning beneath ammunition crates, rations for six days, and enough jerrican fuel to travel another 250 miles after gas tanks ran dry. The artillery barrage now rolled forward, barely three hundred yards ahead of the armored vanguard; brown dust and blue exhaust masked the bursting shells. Across the Dutch border they rumbled at eight miles per hour. "Advance going well," an officer reported by radio. "Leading squadron has got through."

No sooner had the hand-rubbers on the roof congratulated one another than scarlet tongues of German fire licked along the column. Within two minutes, nine Irish Guards tanks had been disemboweled with antitank guns and hand-held Panzerfausts—"a nasty gap of a half a mile littered with burning hulks," as one witness described the scene. Infantrymen hitchhiking on the armored decks dove into roadside ditches, and crews scrambled from their hatches except for a few poor souls who burned down to their tanker boots. An armored bulldozer lurched forward to push the pyres from the concrete roadbed, and Typhoons pirouetted in for another two hundred sorties, rocketing enemy positions real and imaginary.

The German defenders soon were identified as two battalions from the 9th SS Panzer Division—"a complete surprise," British intelligence acknowledged—plus two battalions from the 6th Parachute Regiment. "Our intelligence spent the day in a state of indignant surprise," the Irish Guards war diary recorded. "One German regiment after another appeared which had no right to be there." The consequent "ugly mood" inspired one Irish sergeant to force several prisoners onto his tank at gunpoint to identify hidden enemy emplacements. Even so, another artillery barrage was needed at six P.M. before the Irish Guards staggered into little Valkenswaard to harbor for the night on the central square, now laved in orange light from burning houses. A few dozen scruffy prisoners sat in a cage tucked beneath the municipal bandstand.

For seven miles from the Dutch border to Valkenswaard, double- and triple-banked British vehicles jammed the road, annoyed by occasional enemy mortar rounds. In few spots was this narrow aisle into occupied Holland wider than thirty feet, and the Guards Armored Division now knew vividly what a terrain study had concluded a week earlier: "Cross-country movement in the area varies from impracticable to impossible.… All canals and rivers present obstacles, accentuated by the thousands of dikes and shallow drainage ditches." Eindhoven still lay six miles ahead—the 101st Airborne's failure to reach the city by eight P.M. had not mattered—and Arnhem seemed a world away. Despite the quick destruction of those first nine tanks, losses were light: only fifteen dead in the entire Guards Armored Division. Yet the XXX Corps drive stopped cold for twelve hours, and little consideration was given to preserving at least an illusion of momentum, perhaps by letting the fresh Grenadier Guards pass through their battered Irish brethren. Horrocks had urged speed, but there was no speed.

"Things are going very well indeed," Brereton's headquarters told SHAEF. "We have had very few losses." Eisenhower's operations chief phoned with "congratulations on the successful outcome of the operation," the First Allied Airborne Army chief of staff noted in his diary. "Everyone at SHAEF was delighted."

Everyone at SHAEF was deluded: MARKET GARDEN had been lost on the very first day through failure to seize the bridges at Arnhem and Nijmegen, and the failure was compounded by the ponderous overland advance. A titanic, often heroic battle remained to play out, with particular fates by the tens of thousands in the balance. But the margin for victory, always razor thin, now was irretrievably gone.

* * *

Eindhoven was home to the Philips electronics company, founded in 1891 by a cousin of Karl Marx's. In addition to making lightbulbs, the firm had expanded to vacuum tubes, radios, X-ray equipment, and, in 1939, the electric razor. Still, with no apologies to Paris, Eindhoven thought of itself as the *Lichtstad*, the city of light. For the past four years, nearly all exports had gone to Germany at Berlin's insistence. But the firm proved deft at sheltering Jews by insisting they were irreplaceable specialists, and several hundred Jewish workers would survive the war.

Now this company town of thatched roofs, clipped lawns, and neat privet hedges was set free. Troopers from the 101st Airborne nudged into Eindhoven from the north early on Monday, September 18, routing a few score Germans and finding all bridges intact. Jubilation burst from every doorway and unshuttered window, a din of tin whistles, toy drums, and singing citizens draped in orange, the Dutch national color. Thousands danced in gyrating circles, offering their liberators apples and gin. "The air seemed to reek with hate for the Germans," an American officer observed.

Not until dusk did XXX Corps arrive from the south, having taken the entire day to crawl six miles. Following a sluggish start from Valkenswaard, the Guards Armored Division encountered more troublesome ambuscades, now stiffened with Panther tanks. Fog at Belgian airfields and other aggravations grounded the Typhoons, and attempts to detour east or west were impeded by frail bridges. "Every time the advance seemed to be progressing," the Grenadier Guards reported, "a canal or stream would intervene with a bridge that invariably broke after a couple tanks had crossed." Pushing at last through orange-bedecked Eindhoven, the Guardsmen halted for the night below Son while engineers finished laying a Bailey bridge over that toppled Wilhelmina Canal highway span. Off again they rolled at dawn on Tuesday, down the tree-lined road known already as Hell's Highway, through St.-Oedenrode and Veghel toward Grave, an iron thread snaking through one needle's eye after another, now more than thirty-three hours behind schedule.

Reinforcements from England also arrived, though hardly with the ease of the surprise initial drops on Sunday. Almost 150 gliders

landed at Son early Monday afternoon, defying gunfire from German marksmen lined up shoulder to shoulder as if on a rifle range. Gavin at the same time found two drop zones east of Groesbeek Ridge infested with enemy troops who had leaked across the German border with more than a dozen 20mm guns. Resupply planes were already on the wing, so an improvised counterattack force fixed bayonets and charged down the ridge to chase off the intruders just in time. A midafternoon lift of nearly four thousand aircraft delivered twelve hundred gliders and seven thousand troops across the battlefield. More than two hundred B-24 bombers, stripped of their ball turrets, bombsights, and waist guns, also spat supplies by parachute, with spotty accuracy. All in all, the 82nd received about 80 percent of its expected replenishment, but the 101st got less than half.

The 101st found more unexpected trouble four miles west of Son at Best, a town of cobblers and boot makers, with a brick factory and a cold-storage plant. Unaware that a thousand Fifteenth Army troops protected the vital German supply road through Best, a solitary company from the 502nd Parachute Infantry arrived to claim both the town and a single-span concrete bridge over the Wilhelmina Canal for an alternative route from Eindhoven. Lieutenant Edward L. Wierzbowski led his platoon to the northern lip of the canal, where five machine guns opened up from the far bank, soon punctuated by mortar rounds. At eleven A.M. on Monday the bridge blew to smithereens, and Wierzbowski and his men spent the day and following night fighting for survival from a shallow trench sixty yards back from the water's edge.

Among seven wounded GIs huddled in an adjacent foxhole was Private First Class Joe E. Mann, a twenty-two-year-old with thin lips, wide-set eyes, and a strong nose, the fifth of nine children from a farm family near Spokane. Mann, the platoon scout, had helped destroy an ammunition dump and an 88mm gun with bazooka rounds before being shot in both arms, which now dangled uselessly in a double sling. On Tuesday morning a swirling fog abruptly lifted along the canal to unveil creeping wraiths in field gray almost atop the American position. GIs managed to scoop away two enemy grenades before they detonated but a third exploded, blinding the platoon machine-gunner, who still managed, groping wildly, to find a fourth and fling it back. The fifth grenade fell behind Mann, who leaned back and absorbed the blast with his torso, saving his comrades in a gesture later commemorated with the Medal of Honor. "My back's gone," he told Wierzbowski. Two minutes later he was dead.

Nearly out of ammunition and with only three men left unwounded, the lieutenant knotted a filthy handkerchief to his carbine muzzle and surrendered the platoon. The battle at Best, envisioned as a company operation, soon sucked in the entire regiment, and only the arrival of British tanks decided the day by securing the Allied left flank. Fourteen hundred German prisoners would be taken, and more than three hundred enemy corpses counted, including some reportedly shot by their own comrades while trying to give up. Yet the town itself remained just outside Allied lines, and so it would remain for weeks.

* * *

An entry in the 82nd Airborne's intelligence log on Monday morning—"Dutch report Germans winning over British at Arnhem"—was more than matched in brevity by a British acknowledgment of "a grossly untidy situation." In a shot-torn town where the bakeries remained open and milkmen still made their rounds, the 1st Airborne Division found itself in great peril. Three battalions had tried and failed to reach Colonel Frost and his men where they still clung to the north ramp of Arnhem's highway bridge. Parachuted supplies had drifted mostly into German hands, and foul weather forced a postponement in the drop of Polish reinforcements. Balky radios, all but worthless in wooded or urban terrain, limited communication between the embattled Arnhem force and the rest of the First Allied Airborne Army to an occasional truncated exchange. General Urquhart would not rejoin his headquarters from the Zwarteweg attic until Tuesday morning, and by that afternoon over half of the British soldiers north of the Neder Rijn were listed as casualties. One brigadier was reduced to describing himself as "a broken-down cavalryman leading little bayonet rushes." Brazen civilians built roadblocks with bodies—German, British, Dutch—laid head to toe like sandbags in a futile effort to keep the SS from roaming freely across town. "Everything," a British account conceded, "had gone awry."

Nothing was right except the courage, and nowhere was courage greater than at the bridge. Living on apples and pears scavenged in the cellars, along with tea, nips of cherry brandy, and Benzedrine, Frost's force by Tuesday had been cudgeled back into a perimeter of ten buildings from an original eighteen. Heavy Dutch furniture barricaded the doors and windows. Buckets, jugs, and vases were filled with water to douse incendiaries. To avoid fratricide the men called to one another from blown-out windows with an old African war cry—"Waho, Mohammed!"—using rolled strips of wallpaper for megaphones. A German effort to force the bridge from the south with a dozen armored cars and two Mercedes trucks ended in a fiery welter of wrecked vehicles; another seventy enemy dead paved the ramp. An enemy FW-190 fighter swooped across the river on Tuesday afternoon to drop a bomb—it proved a dud—then clipped the southern tower of the fourteenth-century St. Walburgis church with its left wing before cartwheeling into a small lake. "Great joy all round," wrote a British sapper.

Germans on the south bank of the Neder Rijn unlimbered 40mm flak guns against the British strongholds, then 88mm and even 150mm. Tiger tanks and Nebelwerfer six-barreled rocket launchers—Screaming Meemies—joined the cannonade with high explosives and white phosphorus. "Starting from the rooftops, buildings collapsed like dolls' houses," an SS private recorded. Another German likened the effect of panzer shells on masonry to "the skin peeling off a skeleton." After a shell hit a house near the roofline, "the entire building seemed to shake itself like a dog," a British mortarman reported, and when a second round struck "the walls appeared to breathe out before the whole structure collapsed."

"Arnhem was burning," Frost later recalled. "It was as daylight in the streets, a terrible enameled, metallic daylight.… I never saw anything more beautiful than those burning buildings." Despite a BBC report that "everything was going according to plan" in the Netherlands, the 2nd Battalion's predicament had grown hopeless. "It is a pretty desperate thing to see your battalion gradually carved to bits around you," Frost wrote after the war. Before scrambling to another position, paratroopers loosened their helmet straps and sat for a moment with fallen comrades: "Nobody is in such dire need of companionship as a dead man," one major explained.

But soon enough, the ripe corpses of British and German alike were tossed from upper windows into the streets below.

By Wednesday the Neder Rijn embankment held by the British was described as "a sea of flame," with enemies pressing from east, north, and west. At 1:30 P.M. mortar shards crippled Frost in both legs; he was carried to a fetid cellar where the floor was so packed with the wounded and dead that orderlies had difficulty squeezing through. "Our building is on fire," wrote a sergeant consigned to the same hole. "We no longer have any means to put it out. In our cellar there is an all-pervading stench of blood, feces, and urine." Germans held prisoner in the basement, including captured crewmen from a V-2 battery, sang *"Deutschland, Deutschland, über alles,"* in hopes the SS would recognize their comrades' voices before flinging in grenades.

Both sides agreed to a two-hour cease-fire late Wednesday to evacuate the wounded and the gibbering shock cases. "Are you British or American?" asked the first SS soldier into Frost's cellar. Doors were ripped from their hinges and used as stretchers to hoist men outside, where "the scene resembled one of those paintings that you see in regimental museums entitled 'The Last Stand,'" a Tommy recalled. Panzer grenadiers offered brandy, chocolate, and congratulations for a fight well fought, "a harder battle than any I had fought in Russia," as one declared. Frost, who would spend six months in a prison hospital, considered his SS captors "kind, chivalrous, and even comforting." But not to all: a Dutch physician who had treated British wounded in the Domestic Science School for Girls was put before a firing squad with four others, and only three hours later did a German officer, hearing moans, administer a coup de grâce with pistol shots to the head. Likewise, a young Dutchman who had fought with the paratroopers, and whose swaddled forearms had been seared by phosphorus, was forced to his knees and executed; a witness described "the heavily bandaged hands sprawled out in front like two grotesque paddles."

The cease-fire expired and the battle resumed, briefly. The last battalion diehards surrendered at five A.M. Thursday, after holding out for more than three days. Eighty-one paratroopers had been killed, and the rest were prisoners. A final message dispatched over one of those feeble radios was heard only by German eavesdroppers: "Out of ammunition. God save the king."

The Arrow That Flieth by Day

AT 4:30 P.M. on Tuesday, September 19, as the Arnhem bridge predicament turned from dreadful to desperate, young General Gavin stood outside a schoolhouse in Malden, three miles west of Groesbeek. Toeing the curb with his jump boot, he awaited the arrival of half a dozen British and American commanders to plot their next move.

Afternoon shadows stretched through the village and thickening clouds drifted overhead. The fine weather had deteriorated: more than a thousand supply planes had taken off from England during the day, only to encounter fog so thick over the Channel that glider pilots could see barely three feet of tow rope. Although many aircraft turned back, forty-five planes and seventy-three gliders had been lost. Only half of an expected sixty-six artillery tubes and 2,300 reinforcement troops reached Holland. The resupply of ammunition and rations was deemed "negligible."

Of five major objectives assigned the 82nd Airborne in GARDEN, four had been taken, but the fifth—a crossing over the Waal in Nijmegen—remained beyond reach. A single battalion from the 508th Parachute Infantry had tried to take the road bridge on Sunday evening, but rather than follow Gavin's instructions to circle along the river bottoms from the Groesbeek Heights, the regimental commander heeded Dutch assurances that cutting through Nijmegen's serpentine streets would be quicker and surer. At ten P.M., enemy troops had spilled from trucks onto a traffic circle near the southern approach to the bridge, and a muddled firefight in the dark foiled the American gambit. Soon 10th SS Panzer soldiers were entrenched among the stone ruins of the Valkhof, the imperial Carolingian redoubt built by Charlemagne in 768 and where his son, Louis the Pious, once housed his hunting falcons.

Nor had the belated arrival of XXX Corps on Tuesday morning carried through to the Waal. Both the 82nd Airborne and flag-waving Dutchmen had welcomed the Guards Armored Division to the nine-arch bridge at Grave at 8:30 A.M., and the first tanks barreled into Nijmegen's suburbs just past noon. Two-thirds of the golden corridor from Bourg-Léopold to Arnhem now belonged to the Allies. But an attempt to rush the river at Nijmegen failed. Three columns made for the road bridge, the rail bridge, and the post office, which Dutch patriots believed housed the detonators to destroy both spans. Only the last of these forays succeeded, and the post office proved empty but for civilians cowering in the cellar and a few dead Germans behind the stamp counter. Enemy commanders were so confident of holding the bridges that the spans remained standing; Model wanted them intact for a counterattack from Arnhem through Nijmegen. As a barrier around the southern ramps, SS engineers had stacked fuel cans in several hundred houses, then bowled thermite grenades through every third door. Another Dutch city was in flames.

Joining Gavin along the Malden curb were the cigar-chewing Colonel Reuben H. Tucker—a thirty-three-year-old Sicily and Anzio veteran from Connecticut who commanded the 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment—and three mud-spattered British colonels, each wearing corduroy trousers, suede chukka boots, and the regimental badges, respectively, of the Irish, Grenadier, and Scots Guards. In addition, each wore what a witness described as "the most amazing air of nonchalance." A trio of British generals also joined the klatch: Major General Allan H. S. Adair, commander of the Guards Armored Division; the tall, angular Horrocks; and Boy Browning, who had arrived in a nearby cabbage patch with his headquarters staff aboard thirty-six gliders. Twirling his mustache more intently than ever, the MARKET commander had exchanged his attaché case and parade-ground battle dress for an airborne smock, with field glasses looped around his neck. But even Browning's renowned poise showed signs of fraying. Earlier in the day he had received another inane congratulatory message from higher headquarters; this one, from Beetle Smith, pronounced SHAEF "extremely pleased with the show," which was unfolding "exactly" as anticipated. Browning in a burst of pique had heaved an ink jar at the photo of a

German general tacked up on a wall.

Gavin quickly described the predicament in Nijmegen. On the south bank of the Waal, enemy troops held a kilometer-wide sector, from the rail bridge in the west to the road bridge in the east. This swatch extended three hundred yards from the river into the burning town. As many as five hundred SS men defended each span, with others burrowed around the Belvedere, a seventeenth-century watchtower. Even the riverfront bandstand was now a strongpoint with firing loopholes. German reinforcements could be seen crossing the bridges on foot and by bicycle. Guns firing from the north bank had clobbered several British tanks, and stymied American paratroopers in the city had been reduced to wrapping themselves in drapes and furniture slipcovers to stay warm at night. In frustration, Gavin had urged six hundred Dutch resistance fighters to snipe at enemy troops around the bridges with weapons scavenged from the dead. At this point little was known about the British plight in Arnhem—Browning's radios were hardly better than General Urquhart's—but contrary to earlier intelligence assessments, Gavin was certain that the enemy was not "a broken German army in full retreat." Captured SS men appeared "tough and confident."

Colonel Tucker, whose helmet brim nearly hid his eyes, occasionally removed his cigar to spit. ("Every time he did," a British colonel later wrote, "a faint look of surprise flicked over the faces of the Guards officers.") Gavin believed the only way to eject the enemy from Nijmegen was to outflank him: he proposed that as British tanks and a paratrooper battalion pressed the attack through the town, Tucker's regiment would cross the Waal downstream of the rail bridge to attack the German rear. Given the urgency in reaching Arnhem, rather than wait for nightfall the attack would be launched as soon as possible on Wednesday. But first they needed boats. None could be found along the river.

Browning and Adair said little. Tucker spat. Horrocks was skeptical; a daylight crossing of the Waal—four hundred yards wide, with a current of eight knots—seemed potentially as suicidal as the American assault across the Rapido in central Italy eight months earlier. More than two thousand GIs had been killed or wounded in that fiasco. But Horrocks agreed there was little choice. The XXX Corps engineering train should have several dozen assault boats amid the jumble of bridging equipment. Horrocks would order them found and hurried up Hell's Highway, even though with tens of thousands of soldiers already jamming that narrow ribbon, traffic was nearly at a standstill. Before the conference adjourned, he offered Gavin some advice: "Jim, never try to fight an entire corps off one road."

Two hours later, as dusk sifted over the battlefield and commanders bustled about preparing for the morrow, 120 low-flying Luftwaffe planes pummeled Eindhoven in the only large, long-range air strike by German bombers during the fall of 1944. Philips workers and their celebrating families had been banging those toy drums and chalking their names on British fenders when Dutch rail workers reported rumors of approaching panzers. The orange bunting and Dutch flags abruptly vanished. "All smiles stopped together," Alan Moorehead reported.

> Mothers with their paper caps awry ran along the street to gather up their children.… The tin whistles subsided almost on a note and there was no more dancing.… Every one of the fat jolly faces was now full of apprehension.

No enemy tanks appeared, but instead "a clear golden cluster of parachute flares burst into light above the town.… The streets were like day again." Moments later the bombs began to tumble, igniting half a dozen ammunition trucks in the Stratumsedijk and setting the factory ablaze. Generals Ridgway and Brereton, making their way together toward Nijmegen to ensure that at least six generals would supervise the five-battalion attack on Wednesday, found themselves in an Eindhoven park "flat on our stomachs for almost an hour," as Brereton informed his diary. Ridgway later wrote, "Great fires were burning everywhere, ammo trucks were exploding, gasoline trucks were on fire, and debris from wrecked houses clogged the streets." Women and children sang hymns in a shelter "full of mad cyclonic gusts of air and light," in Moorehead's description. A bomb struck another packed cellar on Biesterweg, incinerating forty-one people. Water pressure failed across the city, and among nine thousand damaged buildings, over two hundred houses were gutted. The city of light burned and burned.

Dawn revealed the full catastrophe. Of more than 1,000 civilian casualties, 227 were dead. Their bodies would be collected at a school in Thijmstraat and placed in narrow coffins with peaked lids and brass handles for burial in a mass grave. Eindhoven had become an obvious military target once GARDEN convoys arrived, but Moorehead raged anyway. "A blind act of malice on the part of the enemy," he fumed. "A hideous, unforgivable thing."

* * *

The boats were late arriving on Wednesday, delaying the river assault in Nijmegen until midafternoon. After yet another postponement and more mumbled excuses about the traffic on Hell's Highway, Gavin wheeled on Horrocks. "For God's sake, try!" he snapped. "It is the least you can do." Twenty minutes before the attack was to begin, three British trucks pulled up behind a riverside power plant a kilometer west of town. Rather than the expected thirty-three boats, there were twenty-six—shellfire had wrecked a fourth truck—and frail vessels they were. Nineteen feet long, with plywood bottoms and green canvas sides pegged to the gunwales, the boats were "of a type more suitable for the quieter rivers of England" than for traversing the true Rhine, as a Guardsman conceded. Some carried only two paddles rather than the required eight. "Flimsy, flat-bottomed little things," Captain Henry B. Keep later wrote his mother, "smaller than Daddy's tin ducking boat."

As a Royal Engineer major gave rudimentary instructions behind a dike—"Head them upriver as much as possible," he advised with a shrug—paratroopers from the 3rd Battalion of the 504th Parachute Infantry wolfed down pork chops ladled from a large pot, or dragged on a last cigarette. Typhoons clawed the far shore, followed by a fifteen-minute barrage from a hundred artillery tubes. Two dozen British Sherman tanks lurched into view to pop away, first with high-explosive shells and then with white phosphorus to

build a milky smoke screen. At 3:02 P.M., a whistle trilled. Four hundred grunting men hoisted the boats onto their shoulders—each vessel weighed six hundred pounds—and staggered across the dike to the steep, muddy lip of the river Waal.

Instantly German fire from three directions diced the river with steel, "like a school of mackerel on the feed," in one soldier's description. Boats bogged in the river mud or capsized in the shallows as men leaped aboard. Others spun in circles or swept downstream with drowning men clinging to the gunwales. From the rail bridge alone, almost three dozen German machine guns cackled, punctuated by a pair of 20mm guns. Hissing bullets skipped like hot stones across the water and through the canvas hulls; troopers plugged the leaking holes with caps, gloves, and handkerchiefs. A direct hit from a mortar round flipped a dozen men into the Waal. An engineer shot through the head tumbled overboard with his feet still wedged beneath a seat so that the torso served as a second rudder, swinging the boat round and round until comrades smeared with blood and brains could finally heave his corpse into the river. "The man next to me had the middle part of his head blown away, so that his skull dropped on what was left of his lower face," Chaplain Delbert Kuehl recalled. In the same boat, the battalion commander, Major Julian A. Cook, murmured "Hail, Mary, full of grace" over and over as he paddled. "Thy will be done," the chaplain added.

"It was a horrible, horrible sight," a British tank commander later recalled. "Boats were literally being blown out of the water." The three British generals—Browning, Horrocks, and Adair—watched transfixed through field glasses from the top floor of the power plant. A stiff breeze shredded the smoke screen, giving German gunners on the rail bridge and on the opposite embankment a clear view of their targets. Tracers braided and rebraided. The roar of gunfire and ripping canvas carried on the water, and more men pitched over, to be rolled to the center of the boats where steam rose from their leaking wounds. Paddlers without paddles gouged at the boiling Waal with rifle butts, helmets, and entrenching tools in an ecstasy of flailing. "My God," said Horrocks, "look at 'em."

Half made the far shore, tumbling from the cockleshell flotilla to lie gasping and retching in the muddy lee of the north bank. Thirteen surviving boats started back: ballasted with dead men, riddled with holes, and paddled by exhausted U.S. Army engineers. Eleven boats would survive a second passage; four more crossings then ferried over the balance of the 3rd Battalion, followed by 1st Battalion and Colonel Tucker. German prisoners were impressed as galley slaves to paddle on the final circuits in what became known as the "Waal Regatta."

Those vomiting on their knees along the shore soon rose with murder in their eyes. "God help anyone in front of us," one trooper said. With squad rushes they bounded forward in a spree of what one sergeant called "jack-in-the-box shooting," killing fifty Germans near the river before loping six hundred yards to the dike road to kill more with grenades and bayonets. One company slaughtered the enemy garrison at Hof van Holland, a decrepit old Dutch fort, after swimming the moat and scaling the earthworks or storming over a narrow wooden bridge. Other troopers shook themselves out into a skirmish line and stalked toward the bridge, firing from the hip. Captain Keep described his men as "driven to a fever pitch [and] lifted out of themselves—fanatics rendered crazy by rage and lust for killing.… I have never witnessed this human metamorphosis so acutely displayed as on this day. The men were beside themselves."

Sensing that the day had turned and pressed by British tanks bulling north through Nijmegen, SS troops sidled onto the rail bridge, only to be raked with Browning Automatic Rifle fire and two captured German machine guns: Tucker's men had seized the northern ramp, waving yellow recognition flags to ward off British fire across the river. German engineers who had been repairing the bridge superstructure were shot dead in their safety harnesses; for days, they would dangle from high in the girders "like a group of gargoyles," Captain Keep told his mother. Other enemy troops dove into the river, pursued by gunfire, or were killed trying to surrender. "Old German men grab our M1s and beg for mercy," a corporal recalled. "They were shot pointblank." A German lieutenant colonel told his diary, "The Americans behaved as they always do, throwing our wounded from the bridge into the Waal, and shooting the few prisoners." Two hundred and sixty-seven enemy bodies would be counted on just the rail bridge.

Paratroopers darting through river grass along the Waal also reached the northern approach to the road bridge at dusk, just as Grenadier Guards tanks in Nijmegen broke past Charlemagne's Valkhof and onto the span, spitting fire. German 88mm rounds tore the air, "ripping and screaming like great Roman candle balls of light," an American commander reported. Shells gouged two British tanks, but one skidded sideways through an enemy roadblock on the far ramp and blew away a pair of roadside antitank guns. Fleeing SS troops hied into the gloaming through gooseberry brakes. British engineers combing the girders for explosives found dynamite and detonators lashed to a catwalk eighty feet above the river.

"The most gallant attack ever carried out during the whole of the last war," as Horrocks would call it, was over. The cost included two hundred paratroopers from Tucker's regiment. Model's order to "blow up the road bridge at Nijmegen" came too late. The 10th SS Panzer radioed the bad news: "They're over the Waal."

Montgomery monitored the battle through liaison officers and radio reports. He had neither visited the battlefield during MARKET GARDEN nor seen his field commanders; he was having his portrait painted, again, and seemed entranced by the experience, boasting that the likeness would "create a tremendous sensation at next year's Academy." Yet at 10:50 P.M. on Wednesday he felt confident enough of the view from Brussels to cable Eisenhower:

> Things are going to work out alright.… The British airborne division at Arnhem has been having a bad time but their situation should be eased now that we can advance northwards from Nijmegen to their support. There is a sporting chance that we should capture the bridge at Arnhem.

In a subsequent message to Brooke, he added, "I regard general situation on rivers as now very satisfactory." This assessment was nothing less than hallucinatory. Despite the valor at Nijmegen, any "sporting chance" to take the Arnhem bridge had passed. Things in Holland were not going to work out, even if the high command did not yet know it. As a XXX Corps account later acknowledged,

“In front, on the flanks, and in the rear, all was not well.”

* * *

Gavin knew. Even before his first trooper splashed into the Waal, he had been summoned from the power plant in Nijmegen by a frantic call from his chief of staff near Groesbeek: “General, you’d better get the hell back here or you won’t have any division left.” Racing to his command post, where he was surprised to find a begrimed Ridgway newly arrived after his Eindhoven ordeal, Gavin learned that German paratroopers had overrun Beek in the north and part of Mook in the south, threatening not only Hell’s Highway but that priceless Dutch anomaly, the high ground overlooking Nijmegen. Only darkness, Coldstream tanks, and Gavin’s pluck saved the day—in one perilous instance he squirmed on his belly across a macadam road beneath enemy grazing fire. Counterattacks at first light on Thursday retook Beek, secured Mook, and slapped the Germans back to the east.

But troubles in the Anglo-American rear had only begun. A panzer attack at Son on Wednesday would have broken through but for ten pugnacious British tanks. Allied intelligence had presumed the enemy incapable of shifting substantial forces to counter MARKET GARDEN; in the event, another 85,000 Germans flooded the battlefield in barely a week. Two additional British corps assigned to safeguard the Allied flanks—XII in the west and VIII in the east—plodded across boggy heathland, averaging just three miles a day against fitful resistance. As of Friday, September 22, the former had yet to reach Best and the latter was stalled southeast of Eindhoven.

That same morning, Hell’s Highway was cut for the first time, despite Dutch warnings of enemies massing both east and west between Veghel and Uden. For more than a day—“the blackest moment of my life,” Horrocks confessed—panzers blocked the road, severing the supply lifeline to three Allied divisions now north of the Maas. No sooner had British tanks and U.S. paratroopers reopened the route on Saturday afternoon than the Germans struck again six miles north of Son, in fighting so vicious that American gunners fired over open sights at four hundred yards. This time Hell’s Highway would be closed for two days, long enough for the enemy to destroy fifty vehicles and seed the roadway with mines.

The new bridgehead over the Waal failed to uncork the advance to Arnhem, as Montgomery had hoped. After a thirty-five-hour delay at Nijmegen to capture the bridges, the XXX Corps vanguard sat for another eighteen hours. Enemy raids and congestion on Hell’s Highway played hob: reinforcements from the British 43rd Division took three days to travel sixty miles in reaching the Irish Guards and the 82nd Airborne. Tommies had been delayed while helping GIs at Mook and in clearing Nijmegen, and some supplies promised by SHAEF failed to appear. Gavin also concluded that after five years of war British veterans were excessively cautious, nurturing what he called “Why die now?” sentiments. He found Colonel Tucker in a farmhouse near the rail bridge seething at the delay. “What in the hell are they doing?” Tucker demanded, gnawing his cigar. “Why in the hell don’t they get on to Arnhem?”

At 1:30 P.M. on Thursday, September 21, the Irish Guards at last edged forward on a road elevated six feet above the fens, carrying a captured German map that showed enemy guns tucked behind a tree line at Ressen, three miles north of Nijmegen. The map proved accurate: eleven panzers, two 88mm batteries, two infantry battalions, and various other highwaymen waited in ambush. In a reprise of the advance from Bourg-Léopold, the stately British procession abruptly burst into flames, with three Shermans burning and the trailing column “piled up … head to tail in silhouette.” Misbehaving radios kept Typhoons from attacking, the jammed traffic on Hell’s Highway held the artillery too far south, and a British officer eyeing “these sad flat lands” of dikes, ditches, and fruit trees declared, “We’re not going to get a yard up this bloody road.”

More than a yard they got, yet not much more. In terrain as hostile to armored spearheads as the Norman bocage, the Guards reached Elst—halfway to Arnhem—in three days. “But farther they could not go,” a regimental history lamented. Before the week ended, Guards officers with shotguns were roaming the countryside in search of plover and pheasant, determined to make the most of their misery.

* * *

The British survivors at Arnhem were now pinched within a three-mile perimeter in leafy Oosterbeek, just west of town above the water meadows of the Neder Rijn. General Urquhart’s command post filled the handsome, big-windowed Hartenstein Hotel, handsome no more. Corpses lay stacked like wood in the garden, and even the hotel radiators had been drained to slake the thirst of the wounded. Slit trenches snaked among the laurels and beneath the beech trees. Captured Germans squatted on tennis courts used as prison cages. “In the evening I would go to my trench and smoke a pipe,” a paratrooper later wrote. “I used to watch an apple tree which grew nearby, and had red apples on it, and then I watched the stars come up.” Not far from here, the poet Philip Sidney had lain mortally wounded after the battle of Zutphen in September 1586. That gentle Sidney had watched the same stars, the same moon climbing the sky with sad steps, brought some comfort.

Between mortar barrages—called “hate” by the British—German loudspeakers played “In the Mood” or broadcast surrender appeals. Tommies answered with maledictory catcalls and Bren-gun fire; snipers notched their rifle butts for every coal-scuttle helmet knocked awry. Each day the weight of metal grew heavier in what the enemy came to call the *Hexenkessel*, the witches’ cauldron. German flamethrower teams and fifteen factory-new King Tiger II tanks joined in brawling “from room to room, from the ground floor up, from garden to garden, and from tree to tree,” as an SS captain described it. A Dutch woman observed, “You have no idea how much people scream in such circumstances.” XXX Corps artillery near Nijmegen ranged the enemy with admirable accuracy and kept the 9th SS Panzer at bay. That too brought some comfort.

Of nearly 9,000 British soldiers inserted north of the Neder Rijn, about 3,600 could still fight, but they had dwindling means. Of 1,500 tons of supplies dropped since September 18, less than 200 tons had been recovered by Urquhart’s men, and 66 transport planes—among 629 sorties flown—had been shot down. The cellars and stout-walled houses in Oosterbeek brimmed with wounded

men, sick men, dying men, and men newly dead. A gallant Dutch woman, Kate ter Horst, glided among them to read King David's Ninety-first Psalm by flashlight: "Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day." Urquhart radioed an appeal to Browning on Thursday evening: "Our casualties heavy. Resources stretched to utmost. Relief within twenty-four hours vital."

Relief came, though far too little and much too late. Reinforcement by General Sosabowski's Polish airborne brigade had twice been postponed by bad weather, and the demise of Frost's battalion prompted a new scheme to have the Poles jump on September 21 near Driel, just across the river from Urquhart's bridgehead, rather than parachuting near the now forsaken bridge. More foul weather over the Continent forced many befuddled pilots to turn back—one lost soul ended up in Ireland—and Sosabowski found himself in Driel with only two-thirds of his command, some one thousand men, and no means of crossing two hundred yards of river; a ferry supposedly waiting for him had been cut loose and then sunk to keep it out of German hands. Enemy soldiers further reinforced the north bank, overrunning a single British platoon on the Westerbouwing heights and narrowing Urquhart's river frontage to seven hundred yards.

A night passed, then another. A few Poles slipped into the British camp by dinghy or raft, but a subsequent attempt to storm across provoked sheets of plunging fire—"hell on the river," Sosabowski called it. A battalion from the Dorsetshire Regiment, vanguard of the 43rd Division, also took a try on the night of September 24, after trucks carrying assault boats—many without paddles, again—were late, got lost, or suffered ambush. An hour into the crossing, unbearable machine-gun fire and grenade volleys ended the foray, with more than three hundred of the four hundred waterborne Dorsets soon dead or captured. "Gallant, but quite useless," one British officer concluded. A Polish correspondent waiting at the Hartenstein that Sunday wrote, "Everything would seem to point to our situation having become tragic."

When the end came, it came quickly. In the gloomy XXX Corps command post at Malden on Monday morning, September 25, Browning and Horrocks agreed to cut their losses and extract the 1st Airborne Division from Arnhem that night, under a plan improbably code-named BERLIN. "Never was darkness more eagerly awaited," a clerk in the Hartenstein cellar scribbled in the division diary. Urquhart had studied the surreptitious British withdrawal from Gallipoli in 1915, and on his orders forward trenches thinned out as men slipped toward the river, boots wrapped in rags, faces blackened with ashes and mud, their path marked by white tape. Orderlies trundled the lightly injured in wheelbarrows and on handcarts; medical truces had already remanded twelve hundred wounded into German hands, and many more would be left behind in the care of chaplains and medical officers.

"The night was made for clandestine exits," Urquhart later remarked. Wind and heavy rain tossed the birches in the bottoms and the chestnuts on the Westerbouwing bluffs. XXX Corps artillery pounded the perimeter to further muffle the sounds of flight. Burning houses glowed red and weird. Holding hands in a queue 150 yards long, the men shuffled through the mud flats in groups of fourteen to match the capacity of thirty-seven storm boats crewed by Canadian and British engineers. A sergeant shared out the Benzedrine, and officers put a match to their last secrets. Gunners tossed their sights and breechblocks into the water. Boat by boat they slipped across the obsidian Neder Rijn in the rain, until the bows bumped against a groyne on the far shore where a voice called from the darkness, "All right. Let's be having you." In a barn south of Driel plates of hot stew were ladled out, along with tumblers of Cointreau and mugs of tea laced with rum. Forty trucks and ambulances shuttled the escapees to Nijmegen.

Dawn caught the division not quite all away. The demented whine of enemy machine guns sounded abruptly from the reeds, and mortar rounds stomped along the river. Some men plunged into the water and flailed for the southern bank, or drowned. A final boat was so overloaded that the coxswain could not pull the outboard starter cord. Passengers paddled with hands and rifle butts, but bullets chewed the vessel to flinders; only four of twenty-five aboard lived to reach the safe shore. Three hundred others gathered on the shoreline were captured, but 2,600 had escaped.

Urquhart was among those who got away. Early Tuesday morning, September 26, he appeared red-eyed and muddy at Boy Browning's large, fine house below Nijmegen. Roused from sleep, Browning took twenty minutes to change from pajamas into an immaculate uniform, his Sam Browne belt gleaming like glass.

"I'm sorry we haven't been able to do what we set out to do," Urquhart said.

Browning waved away the apology. "You did all you could," he said crisply. "Now you had better get some rest."

* * *

In the small hours of Friday, September 29, twelve German commandos in wetsuits slipped into the Waal five miles upstream of Nijmegen. Trained in Venice for aquatic skullduggery, all were strong swimmers—one had competed in the Olympics—and together they guided half a dozen tubes, each sixteen feet long, stuffed with nearly a ton of hexanite explosive, and suspended between a pair of air cylinders for buoyancy. Down the dark river they swam, snipping a hole in the new concertina boom before lashing their charges to the bridge piers and setting the detonator timers for a sixty-minute delay. Exhausted and numb with cold, the men staggered from the water a mile downstream, close to where Tucker's regiment had crossed the previous week. Sentries immediately captured ten of the twelve, but at 6:30 A.M. a volcanic sequence of blasts ruptured the Dutch dawn, blowing an eighty-foot gap in the deck of the road bridge and dropping the long central span of the rail bridge into the river. The last casualties of MARKET GARDEN lay on the muddy bed of the Waal.

This rude gesture hardly dampened the Allied high command's insistence that the bold airborne lunge across Holland had been "a decided victory," in Churchill's phrase. Brereton declared the operation a "brilliant success," while Montgomery passed word to the king that he was "well pleased with the gross result of his airborne adventure," which he deemed "90 percent successful" because the ground force had covered nine-tenths of its intended distance. (Air Marshal Tedder tartly observed that "one jumps off a cliff with an even higher success rate, until the last few inches.") Browning claimed that given the chance he would not alter his plan a whit. "Who

was to tell at that time," he later said, "that the German Army was going to recover as a fighting force?" Even Urquhart asserted, "We have no regrets."

Brave words from a division commander without a division: two-thirds of those fighting for the 1st Airborne had been killed or captured, and the casualties included eight of nine battalion commanders and twenty-six of thirty rifle company commanders. Allied airborne losses in MARKET approached 12,000, more than half of them British; moreover, in 17,000 air sorties, 261 planes and 658 crewmen were lost. Casualties in Horrocks's XXX Corps totaled 1,500, plus 70 tanks. Cornelius Ryan, whose *A Bridge Too Far* remains the classic narrative of the battle, put total Allied losses at 17,000 in nine days. The II Panzer Corps listed 3,300 killed, wounded, and missing, but other tallies suggested that total German losses were at least double that figure. Dutch road builders and construction crews went on finding skeletons for decades.

Even decided victories and brilliant successes sometimes required scapegoats. Montgomery blamed the weather for his unfulfilled 10 percent. Brereton blamed XXX Corps. Browning blamed Sosabowski; accused of incompetence and insubordination—he was, to be sure, given to prickly impertinence—the Pole was stripped of his command at British insistence, and not for more than sixty years did the Dutch recognize his valor with a posthumous award. Paratroopers quipped that Montgomery was "too busy fighting Eisenhower to fight the Germans," and a Royal Signal Corps private suggested that "a bit more constructive criticism of the plan and less of the 'Ready! Ay, ready!' attitude on the part of the senior commanders wouldn't have been amiss." The operation in fact had lacked what one British general called "a single controlling mind": in that regard it reflected the larger Allied campaign in western Europe. Horrocks at least had the grace to blame himself for various shortcomings, including not dispatching the 43rd Division on a different axis than Hell's Highway and failure to keep a senior Dutch officer at his elbow.

Several hundred fugitive Allied troops eventually slipped back across the lines, often with help from courageous Dutch civilians. But more than six thousand others marched off to captivity for the duration, many singing "Green grow the rushes, O." On a square in downtown Arnhem, a captured British officer put his men through a smart parade drill to "show these bastards what real soldiers look like" before the long column tramped eastward in the custody of what one grizzled sergeant major insisted on calling "the detaining power."

The Dutch too would tramp away. German orders in late September required 95,000 civilians to evacuate Arnhem for northern Holland, and another 50,000 were forced from homes along the Neder Rijn. Soldiers then systematically plundered the city, with one truck collecting sewing machines, another tools, still another household linens, all for distribution in the bombed cities of the Ruhr. Other reprisals included the execution of fifty resistance members accused of helping the British, and jail for others involved in a rail strike that had been called when the first Allied parachutists drifted to earth on that glorious Sunday afternoon so long ago. At a price of five thousand buildings destroyed or damaged in Nijmegen alone, one-fifth of the Netherlands had been liberated. But the rest would endure another nine months of occupation: Allied soldiers did not reenter Arnhem until mid-April 1945. Before then, the "Hunger Winter" reduced the Dutch to eating dogs and tulip bulbs, and sixteen thousand died of starvation anyway. "My country," Prince Bernhard observed, "can never again afford the luxury of another Montgomery success."

Nor could the Allies. MARKET GARDEN had won a sixty-five-mile salient that crossed five major water barriers but led nowhere. Without turning the German flank or gaining a bridgehead over the Neder Rijn, 21st Army Group had nearly doubled the perimeter to be outposted, from 150 to 280 miles. That task would entangle most of Second Army, as well as the two committed U.S. airborne divisions, which, with Eisenhower's tacit approval, would be stuck helping the British hold this soggy landscape until mid-November, eating British oxtail soup and heavy puddings, drinking British rum, and smoking British cigarettes considered so foul that some GIs preferred to inhale torn strips of *Stars and Stripes*. Soldiers stood in empty oil drums to keep their feet dry; when the British sent Gavin a personal caravan with a bed and running water, he hid the thing unused, confessing, "I'd be mortified if my boys knew that I had one." The 82nd and 101st suffered another 3,600 casualties during the restive Dutch autumn, more than the divisions sustained during MARKET. "The fighting has been much more vicious and intense than in Normandy," Gavin wrote. The British remained in the salient so long that those plover-hunting officers eventually turned their shotguns on overwintering ducks, which they stalked on ice skates.

MARKET GARDEN proved "an epic cock-up," as a British major averred, a poor plan with deficient intelligence, haphazard execution, and indifferent generalship. The occasion did inspire heroics and displays of combat leadership as stirring as any in modern warfare; Eisenhower offered Montgomery a fistful of American valor decorations to be awarded in the 1st Airborne Division as the field marshal saw fit: ten Distinguished Service Crosses, ten Silver Stars, ten Bronze Stars. Montgomery shifted his command post to Eindhoven, along with his menagerie of rabbits, canaries, and squirrels, and he sent an aide to Britain to fetch his winter kit, including a heavy dressing gown, thick vests, and wool underwear.

The failure at Arnhem, Montgomery cabled Brooke, "will not affect operations eastward against [the] Ruhr." In this he was mistaken. The battle would be, as the historian Max Hastings wrote, "the last occasion of the war when Eisenhower unequivocally accepted a strategic proposal by Montgomery," and the field marshal's advocacy of a single exploitative thrust into Germany under his command seemed ever less credible. Even Montgomery now acknowledged the primacy of Antwerp. "The opening of the port," he wrote in late September, "is absolutely essential before we can advance deep into Germany." Whether that amounted to more than lip service remained to be seen.

Beyond battlefield consequences, MARKET GARDEN preyed on the mind of every man scarred by this primordial struggle. "There was a change of mood after Arnhem," a British captain wrote. "One just didn't feel the same. We were getting rather tired." Bradley's logistics chief told his diary, "The picture is not very good and it looks like we will have a real struggle from now on." Few could doubt Alan Moorehead's conclusion that "there was only one way—the hard way. All hope of a quick end of the war in 1944 had gone."

Teeming autumn rain fell often, with implications for campaigning on the Continent as portentous as Montgomery's request for woolen drawers. "I am not looking forward to the winter war we have ahead of us," Gavin wrote his daughter. "I wear everything that I can get on, but I feel as though I will never be warm again." In their very bones, they now knew that there was indeed but one way ahead: the hard way.


BATTLE FOR AACHEN
OCT. 7–21, 1944
Roer R.
XX 29
CORLETT
XIX Corps
XX 2
Übach
Baesweiler
N
W
E
S
Miles
0 1 2
0 1 2
Kilometers
NETHERLANDS
III 116 29
II 99
30TH INFANTRY DIVISION
III 119 30
III 120 30
III 117 30
German line, morning, Oct. 7
Alsdorf
GERMANY
Kerkrade
American line, Oct. 20
German line, Oct. 20
I SS Panzer Corps
XX 116 Pz
Eschweiler
XX 3 Pz Gr
German counterattack, Oct. 11-19
Kohlscheid
Würselen
116th Inf Regt
119th Inf Regt
Eschweiler
Laurensberg
German line, Oct. 7
Juncture, Oct. 16
Ravelsberg
Crucifix Hill
Haaren
Verlautenheide
Palast Hotel Quellenhof
Lousberg
Eilendorf
Inde R.
German line, Oct. 7
WILCK
Cathedral
Rothe Erde
Stolberg
American line, Oct. 20
III 16 1
III 18 1
XX 3
Aachen
1ST INFANTRY DIVISION
III 26 1
Brandt
COLLINS
VII Corps
Kornelimünster
BELGIUM
Schmidthof
Roth
0 100
Miles
North Sea
NETH.
Vicht
BRITAIN
Amsterdam
Jülich
Detail
Cologne
Brussels
BELG.
Spa
Aachen
LUXB.
Luxembourg City
FRANCE
Seine R.
Paris
Rhine R.
Gene Thorp

6. The Implicated Woods

Charlemagne's Tomb

For the most loyal Germans, Aachen had always seemed a city worth dying for. Thermal springs believed to have healing powers had lured first the Romans and then the Carolingians. Here Charlemagne may have been born and here certainly he died, in 814, after creating the First Reich. His holy bones slept in a gold casket in the choir apse of Aachen's great cathedral. From Otto I in the tenth century to Ferdinand I in the sixteenth, thirty kings and twelve queens had been anointed, crowned, and enthroned on the homely marble seat that once held Charlemagne's royal posterior. The cathedral also housed four relics that for the past half millennium had been removed from storage every seven years for veneration by pilgrims: the apparel of the Virgin, the swaddling clothes and loincloth of Christ, and the garment John the Baptist wore at his decapitation.

It was said that the fearless burghers of Aachen had danced rapturously in the streets during the plague of 1374. That native pluck had been put to the test repeatedly during recent bombing attacks. An Allied raid in July 1943 demolished three thousand buildings, and additional strikes in the spring of 1944—with bombs fuzed to explode only after penetrating into the cellars of five-story stone structures—scarred every one of the city's sixty-six churches, including the cathedral. The raids also battered the town hall, originally built on the ruins of Charlemagne's palace and later renovated in the Baroque style to display statues of fifty German rulers along the north façade.

Now smoke rose from Aachen again. General Collins's VII Corps had bored through both bands of the Siegfried Line in mid-September without capturing the city or making further headway toward the Rhine, and he intended to rectify those omissions. By early October, the U.S. First Army had narrowed its front from one hundred miles to sixty, giving Collins greater combat heft; the new Ninth Army had also pushed forward and would soon assume command of the left wing of the American line, abutting the British. Seventy-four American gun batteries began pounding Fortress Aachen, where eighteen thousand German troops had been committed to defend the cradle of Teutonic nationalism unto the last bullet, as Hitler required. Drew Middleton of *The New York Times*, studying the smoke-draped city through field glasses, saw "a gray and brown mass marked here and there by licking tongues of flame and pierced by the steeples of churches and factory chimneys."

To help VII Corps complete Aachen's encirclement before pushing eastward, XIX Corps dispatched the 30th Division—the stalwarts of Mortain—along with a regiment from the 29th Division to punch a hole through the West Wall northwest of the city beginning on October 2. Troops were issued extra rations of chocolate and cigarettes, as well as duckboards to lay across the boggy beet and turnip fields. Napalm fizzled in the wet woodlands, but massed mortar fire chewed through enemy barbed wire, and almost twenty thousand artillery rounds in half a day gutted the German defenses. By October 7, 30th Division troops had surged five miles beyond the West Wall on a six-mile front, bolstered by tanks of the 2nd Armored Division. "We have a hole in this thing big enough to drive two divisions through," reported Major General Leland S. Hobbs, the 30th Division commander. "This line is cracked wide open." A day later, as his men swung south to outflank Aachen, he added, "The job is finished as far as this division is concerned."

Hobbs was dead wrong. Piecemeal enemy counterattacks with reserves pulled from Arnhem in the north and Alsace in the south stalled the division three miles short of Aachen in a dreary slag-and-shaft scape of collieries and mining villages. The job of cinching the noose would require help from the 1st Division, which already held a semicircular twelve-mile front, west, south, and east of the city. At four A.M. on Sunday, October 8, the 18th Infantry attacked northeast of Aachen, bounding from pillbox to pillbox, scorching the firing ports with bazookas, bangalore torpedoes, flamethrowers, and satchel charges. A German redoubt on Crucifix Hill fell by midafternoon, as did the huge white cross on the crest, toppled either by shellfire or vengeful GIs. A day later two companies slipped past enemy pickets without firing a shot and climbed the Ravelsberg, another high-ground stronghold. Eight more pillboxes surrendered at dawn on Tuesday, October 10, and GIs gobbled down the breakfast lugged uphill that morning by an unwitting German kitchen detail.

Field Marshal Rundstedt warned Berlin that no greater danger now faced the Fatherland in the west than the peril before Aachen. The main German supply route into the city had been crimped, and hardly a mile separated the 1st and 30th Divisions. So confident were the Americans that Major General Clarence R. Huebner, commander of the 1st Division, on Tuesday gave the Aachen garrison twenty-four hours to surrender or face extermination. "There is no middle course," warned the ultimatum, which was delivered by two hundred artillery rounds packed with surrender leaflets, as well as in broadcasts by Radio Luxembourg and booming public-address speakers.

Lest the Germans miss the message, at 10:10 A.M. two lieutenants and a private first class walked up Triererstrasse with a white

flag and a copy of Huebner's demand. At a rail underpass in eastern Aachen, a voice called *"Komm!"* Blindfolded and led to a cellar, the envoys upon being unmasked handed the ultimatum to a German officer wearing an Iron Cross and a Russia campaign ribbon; in return they received a signed, stamped receipt. After an exchange of cigarettes and salutes, the trio was guided back to the underpass by sentries nipping from a liquor bottle. Colonel Gerhard Wilck, who in September had replaced the discredited General von Schwerin as Aachen's garrison commander, was not the surrendering sort. The answer was *"Nein."*

* * *

Aachen's dismemberment began in earnest on Wednesday morning, when three hundred Allied planes dropped sixty-two tons of bombs on targets stained with red artillery smoke. Five thousand artillery rounds followed over the next two days, then another hundred tons of bombs and five thousand more shells. At precisely 9:30 A.M. on Friday, October 13, troops from the 2nd Battalion of the 26th Infantry simultaneously tossed one thousand grenades over the railroad embankment near Triererstrasse, then scrambled across the tracks and into the inner sanctum of Charlemagne's capital.

They found "a sterile sea of rubble," in one GI's phrase, a ghost town with 20,000 civilians of Aachen's original 165,000 living in dank holes. A garrison of 5,000 troops and policemen defended the inner city, reinforced by constabulary volunteers from Cologne and I SS Panzer Corps grenadiers who had hurried in on Rundstedt's orders. Huebner could muster only two battalions from the 26th Infantry for his assault force, but much had been learned in Italy about urban combat. Aachen would now serve as a test bed for new destructive techniques developed by troops whose battle cry became, "Knock 'em all down!"

Street by street, building by building, room by room, assault squads methodically clawed across the city from east to west, darting between doorways and down alleys smoked with white phosphorus. With Peliserkerstrasse as a boundary line between the battalions, the 3rd pushed through the foundries and rolling mills on Aachen's northern edge, while the 2nd bulled into the town center at a pace of four hundred yards a day. A tank or tank destroyer perforated each building with crashing fire, floor by floor from street to attic, forcing defenders to the cellars, where grenades finished them off. Bazooka teams knocked down doors, and engineers blew holes in ceilings or walls with beehive charges—"mouseholing" skills learned in Cassino and Ortona—to let riflemen move up, down, and laterally without using defended stairwells. Every closet, every coal bin, every sewer main was searched, and bulldozers piled rubble atop each manhole cover. To further discourage German infiltration, select rooms in cleared houses were booby-trapped, often with a No. 2 green bean can filled with nails, three pounds of dynamite, a No. 8 blasting cap, and a trip-wire trigger.

Three captured German streetcars were each packed with a thousand pounds of captured enemy munitions and a delay fuze, then rolled downhill through no-man's-land; the thunderous explosions did little damage but elicited appreciative cheers from the American line. Flamethrowers proved persuasive, even though stone burned poorly: a three-second spurt of fire followed by an ultimatum on Saturday—"Surrender or get fried"—cleared a fetid three-story air raid shelter of more than seventy-five soldiers and a thousand civilians with hands raised. For recalcitrants in bunkers, 1st Division engineers found that mattresses wedged into firing ports amplified the explosive pressures inside so that even small charges would fracture the concrete. An order went out to collect mattresses from every occupied German village.

Another lethal legacy from the Italian campaign was the M-12, an ungainly 155mm gun mounted on a tank chassis that was capable of keeping pace with armored spearheads during the gallop across France. On a single day in Aachen, M-12s fired sixty-four rounds almost point-blank to demolish nine buildings, including a movie theater occupied by a company of enemy riflemen, every one of whom was killed or wounded. As 2nd Battalion edged closer to the rubble that once was the town hall, with its proud façade of German rulers, an M-12 clanked onto Wilhelmstrasse; there a tank destroyer fired sixteen rounds to bore a hole through a house wall. The 155mm gun then used the firing loophole to throw seven rounds down Hindenburgstrasse into the State Theater, five blocks away. German troops in the stronghold pelted west toward the cathedral.

Across the city the Americans crept at a steady, sanguinary fifty feet an hour, shooting, dynamiting, grenading. National Socialist slogans on a broken wall reminded the faithful, *auf Deutsch,* "For this we thank our Führer," and, "You are nothing, the state is all." GIs chalked their own scatological exegesis. Drew Middleton described a soldier firing into the street from a back bedroom, where eiderdown quilts in red silk covered the beds. "The sons of bitching bastards," the GI muttered as he emptied his rifle. "The fucking, fucking bastards."

Knock 'em all down.

* * *

As the house-to-house ruination proceeded, the imminent merger of the 1st and 30th Divisions outside Aachen had hit a snag. Savage German artillery ripped up the ridgelines, searched the dells, and scorched suburban streets—enemy observers could see the Americans plainly—forcing GIs to shelter in captured pillboxes from daybreak until dusk. Not even a radio antenna could protrude without being snipped off by whizzing shell fragments. The 30th Division had suffered two thousand casualties since beginning its assault, and the 1st had lost another eight hundred. Lieutenant General Hodges, the First Army commander, grew impatient and then choleric, proposing to sack Hobbs, the commander of the 30th Division. "He hasn't moved an inch in four days," Hodges complained. "We have to close that gap."

Hodges also castigated the XIX Corps commander, Major General Charles H. Corlett, for shooting two thousand rounds of reserve artillery ammunition. Raised on a ranch in southern Colorado and known as "Cowboy Pete," Corlett had commanded assaults in both the Aleutians and the South Pacific; at Aachen he had already thrown in his last reserves, converted engineers to trigger-pullers, and contemplated shoving cooks and clerks into the line. When Hodges kept pressing the point—"When are you going to close the gap?" he demanded—Corlett jumped into his jeep and drove to First Army headquarters. Unable to find the army commander, he instead

roared at the staff, “If you don’t think we are fighting, I will take you down and show you.”

Worse was yet to come, and much of it would fall on the 1st Division’s 16th Infantry. “Every hour seems interminable,” Captain Joe Dawson, commander of G Company, had written his family in Waco earlier that week. “Long, long ago I entered this land of horror.” In fact just over four months had passed since Dawson landed at Omaha Beach to fight across Easy Red and up the Colleville bluffs; for that passage, he received the Distinguished Service Cross. Since then he had shed twenty-five pounds as well as any illusions he still harbored after the campaigns in North Africa, Sicily, and Normandy. “For over two years,” he had recently written his sister, “I’ve calloused my emotions with countless experiences that will never be recalled to memory if I can find power to erase them forever.”

Son of a Baptist preacher and just thirty-one, he looked older. “His face is bony,” wrote W. C. Heinz, a reporter for the New York *Sun* who was with Dawson at Aachen, “and he has large ears and very brown eyes.” Three miles northeast of Aachen cathedral, G and I Companies occupied a ridge eight hundred feet high and four hundred yards long, with clear vistas not only of the city but also of adjacent Belgium and Holland. Maps and magazines lay scattered on a table in Dawson’s pillbox command post, along with a candle, a kerosene lamp, two field phones in leather cases, and a small radio that could pick up Bruno and the Swinging Tigers on Radio Berlin. Soldiers in G Company debated with theological intensity whether the malodorous German corpses along the line deterred enemy frontal attacks. One GI advised, “Just move the ones that are within ten feet.”

The past week had brought “periods of quiet and periods of great noise,” Heinz wrote; but with five hundred shells hitting the ridge each day—one every three minutes—tranquil moments had grown rare. Great noise returned before dawn on Sunday, October 15, when 3rd Panzer Grenadier Division troops filtered onto the ridge from the east with orders to break the siege of Aachen. “We could hear them singing rousing marching songs as they came through the woods,” a sergeant later recalled. Mortars and six artillery battalions blunted the initial assault, but at dawn a dozen panzers stood in a meadow below the pillboxes. By ten A.M. several Tigers had churned uphill through a railroad cut, raking the Americans with main-gun and machine-gun fire. GIs unable to even peer from their foxholes defecated in empty ration cans and flung their scat at the enemy. “G and I Companies are being overrun with tanks and infantry,” the regimental log recorded at 12:44 P.M., then added fourteen minutes later, “Situation critical … Situation very critical.” Dawson called artillery onto his own command post, every concussive thud “like a body being thrown against the door.” P-47 fighters roared in at twenty-five feet just before two P.M., guns winking along their wings, and the gray tide ebbed, leaving more dead to stink up the slope. Bing Crosby and Judy Garland sang from the little radio.

At nine P.M. the attackers again advanced, under hissing chandelier flares that stretched the panzer shadows into long, lupine shapes. Two tanks closed to within ten yards of G Company’s line before massed artillery again bounced them back. Fires burned in the trees and among the diced bodies. “Much moaning and groaning out in the wooded area,” an Army account noted. More German assaults followed, with bayonets fixed. When an officer warned General Huebner of mounting casualties, the division commander drew on his pipe and replied, “If higher authority decides that this is the place and time that the 1st Division is going to cease to exist, I guess this is where we cease to exist.”

As the enemy attacks grew feebler, two dozen men from G Company counterattacked with grenades, tommy guns, and their own fixed bayonets, slaughtering all enemies lurking along the line. More than two hundred German corpses were counted across a quarter-mile slope, but it was the sight of a dead GI that made Dawson buckle for a moment. “He doesn’t know why, and I don’t know why, and you don’t know why,” the captain told Heinz. “You want to know what I think? I think it stinks.” Dawson put his head in his hands and sobbed.

Then the silver voice of Lily Pons, the coloratura soprano, came from the radio. Dawson abruptly straightened. “Shut up. I want to hear this,” he said. “It’s the ‘Bell Song’ from *Lakmé*.”

“Puccini,” said a lieutenant in the command post.

“No, not Puccini,” Dawson said. “Not Puccini, but I can’t remember the name of the guy.”

At 4:15 P.M. on Monday, October 16, 30th Division scouts edged from the southwest corner of Würselen to meet comrades from the 18th Infantry scrabbling down from the Ravelsberg. Aachen’s fate was sealed, though German efforts to crack the encirclement would persist for several days. By one count, the enemy had lost sixty-three of ninety panzers thrown into the battle.

No, not Puccini. Lakmé, an opera in three acts set in British India, was by Léo Delibes.

The tally for G Company totaled forty-eight men, one-third of the unit. Joe Dawson had more memories to erase. Gesturing outside his pillbox to the scorched ridge that would subsequently bear his name in Army nomenclature, Dawson told Heinz, “We died right here.” To his family he wrote, “My nerves are somewhat shattered.”

* * *

In keeping with the Führer’s wishes, Aachen’s death throes were painful and protracted. From his headquarters a couple miles northeast of the cathedral in the five-story Palast Hotel Quellenhof, once the kaiser’s country home, the dutiful Colonel Wilck proclaimed, “We shall fight to the last man, the last shell, the last bullet.” The hotel billiard room, beauty parlor, and children’s dining room all became strongpoints, and Wilck’s men hauled a disassembled 20mm gun to the second floor, piece by piece, then rebuilt it to cover approaches through Farwick Park. Into the park on Wednesday, October 18, swept the 26th Infantry’s 3rd Battalion, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel John T. Corley, the Brooklyn-born son of Irish immigrants, whose combat decorations over the war’s course would include two Distinguished Service Crosses and eight Silver Stars.

At seven A.M., as mortars pummeled the German line south of the tennis courts, an M-12 rumbled down Roland Street, flanked by tanks and tank destroyers spitting fire into the smart houses fronting the boulevard. Thirty rounds of 155mm fire soon made a

shambles of the Palast and the nearby Kurhaus spa; a U.S. platoon rushed across the half-moon driveway into the hotel lobby, killing two dozen defenders in a brisk exchange of grenades that shredded the hunting-scene oils in the reading room. Wilck had retreated hastily to a stout bunker at the north end of Lousbergstrasse, where he held out for three more days, assuring Berlin by radio that "the defenders of Aachen will prepare for their last battle" even as they donated ten thousand marks to charity in a gesture of solidarity with the German *Volk*. "We shall fight on," he vowed.

The colonel instead had packed his bags. On Saturday morning, overzealous GIs shot two German emissaries who emerged from the bunker carrying a white flag. Two more figures soon crept out—nervous American prisoners this time—to inform Corley of Wilck's capitulation. At noon he emerged, a slender man with a pointed chin and hair swept back from his widow's peak, with four hundred bitter-enders behind him. "They marched smartly in column," wrote Don Whitehead, "all well-groomed, with shining black boots." After signing a formal surrender, Wilck told Corley, "Everything belongs to the Americans that was German." Permitted to bid a brief farewell to his men, the colonel scrambled onto a jeep hood. "I am speaking to you at a painful moment," he said. "The American commander has told me that I cannot give you the *Sieg Heil* or *Heil Hitler*. But we can still do it in our hearts." As Wilck climbed down for removal to the cages, he added, "I don't believe in miracles any longer."

Nearly twelve thousand Germans had been captured by the 30th and 1st Divisions, with many hundreds killed. American casualties approached six thousand, among them hundreds treated for combat exhaustion. Joe Dawson, wholly spent, was evacuated to the United States later in the month. "These bitter tragic months of terrible war leave one morally as well as physically exhausted," he wrote his family. Also sent home was General Corlett, the XIX Corps commander, whom Hodges removed ostensibly on grounds of failing health. Corlett, who called his relief "just plain heartbreak," told his staff as he departed, "Anyone who sasses the army commander and disobeys an order ought to be relieved.… This is the price one must pay." He was replaced by the capable Major General Raymond S. McLain, who had commanded the 45th Division artillery in Sicily and Italy before taking over the 90th Division in Normandy. A former Oklahoma National Guard soldier with a sixth-grade education, McLain was the only Guardsman to command an Army corps during the war, as well as the only officer without at least a modicum of higher education.

* * *

No one would take the waters in Aachen for quite some time. Visitors piled up metaphors to convey the desolation. The city was "as dead as a Roman ruin," an intelligence officer declared, "but unlike a ruin it has none of the grace of gradual decay." The reporter Iris Carpenter wrote that Aachen was "as dead as yesterday." By one calculation, 83 percent of Aachen's houses had been destroyed or damaged. Most streets were impassable except on foot. A horse carcass sprawled in the Palast porte-cochère, and medics laid German dead from the hotel and spa on the beaten grass in Farwick Park. An old woman flagged down passing GIs and asked, "Can you tell me, please, when they will take the dead from my house?" A soldier shook his head and said in a Texas drawl, "These ruins. These people."

A plump, sooty man wandering the streets proved to be the bishop of Aachen. An inspection of his cathedral found the graveyard uprooted and the stained glass shattered. But an Allied bomb that pierced the apse had failed to detonate, and six pious boys had formed a fire brigade to extinguish flames on the roof. Charlemagne's bones lay unmolested though hardly undisturbed. GIs erected a large sign bearing a paraphrase from Hitler, and the English translation: *"Gebt mir fünf Jahre und ihr werdet Deutschland nicht wiedererkennen."* Give me five years and you will not recognize Germany again.

"We can force the Boche to their knees if we go about it the right way," Collins wrote. But what was the right way? Just as Aachen had offered a proving ground for modes of destruction, now this first German city to be captured would serve as a laboratory for military occupation policies. A curfew was imposed from nine P.M. to six A.M., no one could travel more than six kilometers from home without permission, and gatherings of more than five people were prohibited, except for worship services—a fine irony given the battered condition of the churches. The use of cameras, binoculars, and carrier pigeons was banned. Lists of known pigeoneers in western Germany were compiled—it was said that Heinrich Himmler himself, the Reichsführer-SS, was a pigeon fancier—and "clipping details" visited local lofts to snip the birds' flight feathers, leaving them earthbound until their next molt. As an added precaution, a "falconry unit" in England stood ready to deploy to the Continent if enemy agents showed signs of clandestine avian communication.

"We come as conquerors, but not as oppressors," Eisenhower had declared in late September. Even before the broken glass was swept from the cathedral nave, however, complications arose that would perplex the conquerors to the end of the war and beyond. The Combined Chiefs, for example, decreed that "it is not intended to import food supplies into Germany," yet that would consign millions to starvation. The chiefs also ordered the exclusion from office of "active Nazis" and "ardent Nazi sympathizers," but to identify such scoundrels proved difficult, and to run Germany without them sometimes impossible. During the first occupation months, more than fifty key city employees in Aachen were party members, including the only man still alive who understood the region's electrical grid.

An Army study also concluded that two blunders made during the assault had had unintended psychological consequences: an ultimatum had been issued to the commander of a besieged city without affording him an "honorable" way to capitulate, thus prolonging his resistance; and that ultimatum had been made public without recognizing the mortal threat of Nazi reprisals against the families of surrendering soldiers. Indeed, it was in an effort to forestall such retribution that Colonel Wilck had insisted that his capitulation document include a clause attesting to the exhaustion of German food and ammunition stocks.

Still, Aachen was theirs, the "first German city to be taken by an invading army in over a hundred years," Drew Middleton noted. Yet no soldier picking a path through the drifted rubble needed to be told that a hundred more German cities remained untaken—and a thousand towns, and ten thousand villages, each potentially as dead as yesterday.

"Do Not Let Us Pretend We Are All Right"

THE autumnal struggles at Arnhem and Aachen leached any undue optimism from the Allied high command, except among those too far from the battlefield to know better. The Charlie-Charlies in October ordered SHAEF to immediately establish direct links with Moscow "in anticipation of [the] approach of Allied and Russian forces within the very near future," even though those forces remained more than five hundred miles apart. George Marshall arrived in France for a visit and proclaimed, "We have them licked. All they have is a thin shell and when we break that, they are finished." Beguiled by dubious intelligence to the effect that organized German resistance was unlikely to last beyond December 1, the Army chief subsequently advocated a full-bore offensive to win the war in Europe by year's end. Marshall proposed "playing everything for a conclusion," even as he began earmarking divisions to fight in the Pacific.

Eisenhower took pains to dampen such expectations. "We have facing us now one of our most difficult periods of the entire European war," he warned Marshall in early October. "Deteriorating weather is going to place an increased strain on morale." To his mother in Kansas, he wrote: "Most people that write to me these days want to know when the war in Europe is going to be over.… I wish I knew. It is a long, hard, dreary piece of work."

Eisenhower now commanded fifty-eight divisions, including those in southern France, yet a month after crossing the German frontier no Allied soldier stood deeper than twelve miles into Germany. Enemy casualties were accruing at four thousand a day, but Allied losses since June 6 equaled a third of a million. Logistics were "in a bad state," the supreme commander told Marshall, "reminiscent of the early days in Tunisia." Half a dozen U.S. divisions remained in the rear because of insufficient means to support them on the battlefront; moreover, SHAEF logisticians calculated that even if the American armies reached the Rhine near the Ruhr, no more than twenty divisions could be sustained in combat.

To further explain his plight, Eisenhower and his logisticians composed a long essay for the Pentagon on combat realities in Europe. Uniforms wore out "at a rate almost incomprehensible to civilians," twice as fast as U.S. clothing manufacturers could make them. Overcoats, shoes, mess kits, and blankets were also consumed at double the War Department's estimates. Food demands through the winter—even if the war ended, soldiers still had to eat—would require the shipment of 3.5 billion pounds from the United States, equivalent to 340 loaded Liberty ships. "Beef requirements for European theater will call for the slaughtering of … approximately 4,000 [cattle] every day," Eisenhower wrote. "Dehydrated egg requirements amount to the equivalent of 2½ billion fresh eggs, or a daily requirement of 6½ million." Tent canvas was short by 100 million square feet. Just the demand for paper was staggering: the U.S. Army since the liberation of Paris had been forced to print ten million maps on the flip side of captured German maps. (Many depicted southern England, having been produced for Operation SEA LION, the aborted 1940 invasion of Britain; sheafs of these had been found in an abandoned enemy depot in Liège.)

The most desperate need was for ammunition, which was expended at a rate exceeding two tons every minute of every hour of every day, despite incessant rationing in the second half of 1944. By late September, fewer than four rounds per day were available for the largest guns, such as the 8-inch howitzer. By early October, ammunition shortfalls were "truly critical" across the front, with many Third Army tubes down to a single shell per day—Patton wanted sixty—and 12th Army Group reported that supplies of artillery ammunition had "reached a state of almost complete collapse." A "silence policy" in V Corps required guns to stand unused for more than a week.

The shortfall partly reflected an inability of U.S. plants to meet demand: a 155mm shell required forty separate manufacturing procedures. The more common 105mm howitzer ammunition was produced and shipped under twelve hundred different lot numbers, each with minor variations in propellant that affected accuracy. (First Army was to spend 25,000 man-hours in the early fall sorting jumbled ammunition to avoid catastrophic short barrages.) Shortages kept American armies largely on the defensive in October—attacking required more firepower than sitting—and Eisenhower blamed a dearth of heavy ammunition for delays in capturing Aachen. He broadcast an appeal to the home front for greater production, and the War Department dispatched veteran gunners to key plants for pep rallies under a program called "Firepower for Eisenhower."

One senior American general believed that a one-third increase in artillery ammunition "would have saved many lives and shortened the war." Yet General Lee's COMZ insisted there was no shortage on the Continent, and indeed thousands of tons were stacked in Normandy depots and aboard several dozen ammunition ships, most of them waiting to unload. Lee had predicted that 150 ships would be discharged in October, but the actual number was less than 100. On October 20, 246 cargo vessels plied Continental waters; the wait for berths in various anchorages often lasted weeks, sometimes months. Entire fleets now served as floating warehouses for munitions and other matériel.

The War Department, trying to supply a global war with limited shipping, grew exasperated: in October, a cable warned SHAEF that "no further commodity-loaded ships" would be sent to Europe until empty ships began sailing home. Eisenhower was horrified, and more than two dozen Liberty ships were sent back to the United States, some before emptying their holds. To encourage stevedores and boost morale, Bronze Stars were handed out to efficient hatch crews, and band concerts serenaded workers on the docks.

* * *

If only Antwerp were free. "We have captured a port which resembles Liverpool in size, but we cannot use it," Montgomery had written in September. "If we could use it, all our maintenance troubles would disappear." Eisenhower stressed freeing the Scheldt and opening the port "as an indispensable prerequisite for the final drive into Germany." Even during MARKET GARDEN, the supreme

commander had summoned twenty-three general officers to Versailles to discuss strategy—pleading the press of battle, Montgomery sent his chief of staff as a proxy—and to emphasize Antwerp "as a matter of urgency." Eisenhower told Beetle Smith a week later, "I am terribly anxious about Antwerp." Yet the supreme commander also insisted that both Montgomery and Bradley "must retain as first mission the gaining of the line of the Rhine north of Bonn as quickly as humanly possible."

Montgomery had assigned clearing the Scheldt to the Canadian First Army, which included a British corps and the Polish 1st Armored Division, for a total of six divisions. Allied air attacks intensified against enemy targets on diamond-shaped Walcheren Island and the Beveland peninsula, which formed the Scheldt's north shore. Allied ground troops squeezed the Breskens Pocket on the southern lip of the estuary, held by a formidable force of eleven thousand Germans, including Eastern Front veterans reinforced with both naval guns and seventy field artillery pieces. "The whole energies of the [Canadian] Army will be directed towards … Antwerp," Montgomery decreed—yet he ordered the Canadians to simultaneously isolate the enemy garrison at Dunkirk and capture the occupied French ports of Boulogne and Calais. The latter ports eventually fell and the Breskens Pocket slowly shrank, but the MARKET GARDEN stalemate south of Arnhem allowed the German Fifteenth Army to shift reinforcements to the Scheldt defenses. With enemies still entrenched on both banks of the estuary, no Allied ship dared venture upstream.

Thus the days and weeks rolled by, and big-shouldered Antwerp remained dormant. "We need this place more than we need FDR," Major General Everett Hughes wrote his wife. Although Montgomery acknowledged the port's primacy, neither he nor Eisenhower demanded that all other tasks be subordinated to this one. Dempsey's Second Army continued to look beyond the Rhine toward the Ruhr; control of a large port was a less urgent matter for the smaller British force. Even Field Marshal Brooke had doubts about Montgomery's priorities. "Antwerp must be captured with the least possible delay," he told his diary in London. "I feel that Monty's strategy for once is at fault." Montgomery would acknowledge as much after the war, conceding "a bad mistake on my part" in demanding too much of the Canadians. "I reckoned that the Canadian Army could do it *while* we were going for the Ruhr," he added. "I was wrong."

But in October 1944, the field marshal displayed no indulgence for those who questioned his judgment. Admiral Ramsay warned that to clear the Scheldt of mines would take weeks, even after German defenders were finally flicked from the banks of the waterway. "I think the army is not taking this operation seriously enough," he told his diary in early October. After another SHAEF meeting, Ramsay wrote, "Monty made the startling announcement that we could take the Ruhr without Antwerp. This afforded me the cue I needed to lambaste him.… I let fly with all my guns at the faulty strategy we had allowed." Montgomery took such criticism badly, and he accused the admiral of undercutting him. "Request you will ask Ramsay from me," the field marshal wrote Eisenhower, "by what authority he makes wild statements to you concerning my operations about which he can know nothing."

No less troublesome than the arcane issues of shipping and logistics were parallel questions of strategy and command. After a brief respite, Montgomery had again hectored Eisenhower over the supreme commander's preference for the broad, multipronged assault on Germany first adopted in May. Even as MARKET GARDEN came unglued, the field marshal had pressed once more for a single axis, preferably that of 21st Army Group, with nine reinforcing divisions from the U.S. First Army also under his command. Montgomery proposed that other Allied forces "stop in place where they are," donating transport and other war stuffs to his expedition. Eisenhower had tried to paper over the dispute by suggesting that his vision and Montgomery's could be reconciled, but in late September the field marshal rebuffed him with a tart cable:

> I can not agree that our concepts are the same.… If you want to get to the Ruhr you will have to put every single thing into the left hook and stop everything else. It is my opinion that if this is not done you will not get to the Ruhr.

Unchastened by the destruction of the 1st Airborne Division and the larger misadventure in Holland, Montgomery now overplayed his hand. During a private conference with George Marshall in Montgomery's tidy caravan in Eindhoven on Sunday, October 8, the field marshal complained about a "lack of grip" since Eisenhower had taken field command of the campaign, with battles that were "ragged and disjointed.… We [have] now got ourselves into a real mess." The chief of staff's icy blue stare implied demurral. "Marshall listened but said little," Montgomery subsequently wrote. "It was clear that he entirely disagreed." Marshall later confessed to nearly losing his famous temper at what he termed Montgomery's "overwhelming egotism."

Eisenhower's patience, too, finally wore thin. On the same Sunday that Marshall visited Eindhoven, SHAEF planners at Versailles warned that in failing to uncork the Scheldt "fifteen divisions are held impotent for lack of success in this relatively small operation. … Our advance into Germany may be delayed into spring." As it happened, high winds that very day ripped up Cherbourg's port and Mulberry B.

"This reemphasizes the supreme importance of Antwerp," Eisenhower cabled Montgomery in an "eyes only" message on Monday:

> Unless we have Antwerp producing by the middle of November our entire operations will come to a standstill. I must emphasize that, of all our operations on the entire front from Switzerland to the Channel, I consider Antwerp of the first importance.

Montgomery would assert that this was the first time Eisenhower had issued clear instructions on the matter, a claim the British official history subsequently judged "hardly justified." More likely, given Eisenhower's reluctance to issue unequivocal orders, it was the first time the field marshal had detected a tone of exasperation or even disapproval. "You can rely on me to do every single thing possible to get Antwerp opened," Montgomery replied promptly, and on the same day he instructed the Canadians in his firmest

directive yet that "the opening of this port will take priority over all other offensive operations." Yet a week would pass before the Canadian army, clearly overmatched by the task at hand, was substantially reinforced, even though Eisenhower drove home his point with another testy cable on Tuesday:

> Nothing that I may ever say or write with respect to future plans in our advance eastward is meant to indicate any lessening of the need for Antwerp, which I have always held as vital, and which has grown more pressing as we enter the bad weather period.

Instead of replying directly, Montgomery that day sent Beetle Smith a caustic sixteen-paragraph memorandum titled "Notes on Command in Western Europe." Beginning with an assertion that "the present organization for command within the Allied forces in Western Europe is not satisfactory," the paper lambasted Eisenhower's generalship and proposed that he either move his headquarters forward to "take direct command of the operations against the Ruhr" or delegate field command in Europe to either Montgomery or Bradley. "I do not believe we have a good and sound organization for command and control," the field marshal wrote.

> It may be that political and national considerations prevent us having a sound organization. If this is the case I would suggest that we say so. Do not let us pretend we are all right, whereas actually we are very far from being all right.

Eisenhower waited three days to reply with his own thirteen-paragraph letter, carefully vetted by Marshall before the chief flew back to Washington on Friday. "The questions you raise are serious ones," Eisenhower wrote. "However, they do not constitute the real issue now at hand. That issue is Antwerp.… The Antwerp operation does not involve the question of command in any slightest degree." After pointing out the "woeful state" of American and French supply, and noting that "by comparison you are rich," Eisenhower again reviewed the reasoning behind his preference for a broad attack arranged by army groups under his command.

Then the master bridge player laid down his trump card:

> If you, as the senior commander in this theater of one of the great Allies, feel that my conceptions and directives are such as to endanger the success of operations, it is our duty to refer the matter to higher authority for any action they may choose to take, however drastic.

The threat could hardly be misconstrued: if a general was to be cashiered, it would not be Eisenhower. Montgomery promptly amended his battle plan so that "the whole of the available offensive power of Second Army will now be brought to bear" in scouring the approaches to Antwerp. To subordinates he cabled, "I must impress on army commanders that the early use of Antwerp is absolutely vital.… We must accept heavy casualties to get quick success." The field marshal directed Second Army's XII Corps to pivot toward the Scheldt from the western flank of the Nijmegen corridor, permitting the Canadians—whose advance had covered hardly a mile a day—to concentrate on the Breskens Pocket and the eastern avenues to Walcheren Island. Montgomery now had the weight of two armies squeezing the seven German divisions that had neutralized Antwerp.

To Eisenhower the field marshal wrote, "You will hear *no* more on the subject of command from me. I have given you my views and you have given your answer. That ends the matter." He closed this pretty fiction with another: "Your very devoted and loyal subordinate, Monty."

* * *

Dwight David Eisenhower turned fifty-four years old on Saturday, October 14. He celebrated with a joyride in his old Cadillac—a newer model from Detroit was somewhere in the hold of yet another ship waiting for a berth. With Kay Summersby behind the wheel, he had traveled from Versailles to Verdun to spend Friday night with Bradley before the two generals pushed on the next morning to the Belgian town of Verviers, twenty miles southwest of the intensifying street battle in Aachen.

The U.S. First Army headquarters encampment rambled through the muddy grounds of a dilapidated three-story château, where an honor guard greeted Eisenhower, Bradley, and his three army commanders—Patton, Hodges, and the new Ninth Army commander, Lieutenant General William H. Simpson—and George VI, who was touring the front. After lunch in a spartan dining hall, Patton sipped his coffee, puffed on a cigar, and entertained the table with war stories from North Africa. "I must have shot a dozen Arabs myself," he told the monarch, provoking derisive hoots of laughter.

Bidding farewell to king and comrades, Eisenhower and Bradley then drove south through the somber Ardennes, past Belgian towns that soon would be all too familiar: Malmédy, St.-Vith, Vielsalm. In bucolic Bastogne, the smell of fresh bread wafted from the cooling racks of a mobile Army bakery. Farmers stacked hay bales for the coming winter and dairymen herded their cows to the barn, hardly glancing at the speeding limousine that carried the most famous general in Europe, if not in all the war-torn world.

This was Eisenhower's third consecutive birthday overseas. A profile in *Time* that month observed that he "has not visibly aged … but he gives a subtle impression of having grown bigger as a man and as a commander. For lack of exercise, he is slightly thicker around the middle and there are often tired lines under his snapping blue eyes.… Even in times of crisis, he is relaxed, genial and confident on the surface—whatever goes on underneath." True enough: he *was* thicker, confident, tired. Certainly he had grown as a commander since his fifty-second birthday, spent on Grosvenor Square in London on the eve of TORCH, when they were all callow and unblooded; or since his fifty-third, passed at the Hôtel St.-Georges in Algiers while reading dispatches from the swollen Volturno

River, where the arduous Allied attack north of Naples suggested what lay ahead for those bent on a winter campaign in Italy.

Yet even *Time*'s omniscience missed nuances in the man and in the general he had become. He seemed transparent and simple but was neither. A reviewer of his published diary fragments long after the war would be struck by a "closed, calculating quality"; the historian Eric Larrabee later described him as "a veiled man" who was "so seemingly forthright, so ready to volunteer his thoughts, yet in the end so secretive, so protective of his purposes and the hidden processes of an iron logic behind them." Every commander wore a mask, and Eisenhower wore his while still conveying sincerity, rectitude, and humanity. "I have a feeling that he was a far more complicated man than he seemed to be," wrote Don Whitehead, "a man who shaped events with such subtlety that he left others thinking that they were the architects of those events. And he was satisfied to leave it that way."

He would never be a Great Captain, and perhaps his war had grown too big for such an archaic figure. Eisenhower was romantic enough to regret this failing: a lifelong admirer of Hannibal, he privately hoped that a double envelopment of the Ruhr would echo the Carthaginian destruction of the Romans at Cannae. He had long recognized that his task was not to be a field marshal, but rather to orchestrate a fractious multinational coalition, to be "chairman of the board"—the phrase was his—of the largest martial enterprise on earth. The master politician Franklin Roosevelt had chosen him as supreme commander from among thirteen hundred U.S. Army generals because he was not only a "natural leader," in the president's judgment, but also a military man with exceptional political instincts. E. J. Kingston McCloughry, a British air vice marshal who worked at SHAEF, wrote that Eisenhower "had a genius of getting along with most people, combining the art of persuasion and of inspiring good will."

He was by temperament a reconciler, an adjudicator, a compromiser; the recent contretemps with Montgomery showed Eisenhower as a man willing, perhaps too willing, to split the difference, to turn the other cheek. Without doubt his orders could be opaque and imprecise, either because he failed to see the battlefield clearly or because he was reluctant to intrude on subordinate prerogatives—as in the Antwerp debacle, or in the incomplete attempts to annihilate the enemy at Messina and Falaise. In addition to his accolade for the supreme commander, Kingston McCloughry also damned with faint praise, deeming him "shrewd without being subtle, and understanding without being profound.… Perhaps Eisenhower's greatest advantage compared with, say, Montgomery, was that he was all too conscious of his own limitations."

And yet who could gainsay the greatness that had begun to enfold him? Churchill recognized that "no one knew better than he how to stand close to a tremendous event without impairing the authority he had delegated to others." Knowing full well how corrosive forces gnawed at every military confederation, from chauvinism to vanity, Eisenhower insisted that an allied commander must "solve problems through reasoning rather than by merely issuing commands." A collaborative forbearance was key to Allied unity, and Allied unity would win the war. This was his catechism, his "iron logic," and it had become the most profound article of faith in his life.

Except in the crow's-feet crinkling his eyes and the deepening furrows on his forehead, few could see the strain from years of decisions that by now had consigned tens of thousands to their deaths. Only in a handwritten reply to a waspish letter from Mamie did he let the mask slip a bit as he began his fifty-fifth year. "We've now been apart for 2½ years and at a time under conditions that make separations painful and hard to bear," he wrote. "The load of responsibility I carry would be intolerable unless I could have the belief that there is someone who wants me to come home—for good. Don't forget that I take a beating, every day."

The miles slid past, and with them the day. At dusk the Cadillac crossed the Belgian border and soon rolled into Luxembourg City. Here Bradley had just shifted the 12th Army Group command post from damp tents in Verdun to steam-heated stone buildings in the grand duchy. Only twelve miles from the German border—hardly enough distance to safely position a regimental headquarters, much less that of an army group—the capital was still reeling from four years of occupation. Overrun in less than a day in 1940, Luxembourg had been integrated into the Third Reich, and relentlessly germanized: the occupiers renamed the country Gau Moselland, changed the street names, banned the local French dialect, and conscripted ten thousand men into the Wehrmacht. Now Adolf Hitler Strasse had once again become the Avenue de la Liberté, and banners above the boulevard proclaimed, "We wish to remain what we are."

Bradley's office on the Place de Metz occupied a brownstone belonging to the state railway, but the limousine continued across the Pétrusse River, where tanneries, breweries, and shoemaker shops lined the bottoms near the ruined buttresses of Count Siegfried's thousand-year-old castle. On the Avenue de la Gare, the two generals climbed out at the Hôtel Alfa, a seven-story building with a mansard roof and balconies overlooking the train station.

Here in the dining room, to Eisenhower's surprise and evident delight, a party had been organized, with martinis, champagne, and an enormous four-star cake baked by a pastry chef in Paris. An orchestra played into the night, dreamy songs from another time they hardly remembered, and for a few sweet hours the war went away, even with the enemy but a dozen miles to the east and still scheming to reclaim Gau Moselland. Happy birthday, they sang, happy birthday, dear Ike, raising their glasses to a man they trusted and admired, the very man who would lead them to victory and then would lead them home.

The Worst Place of Any

IN late October, the U.S. First Army headquarters moved into winter quarters in the Belgian town of Spa. A flourishing resort since the 1500s—Karl Baedeker had called it "the oldest European watering-place of any importance"—Spa reached its zenith in the eighteenth century with visits by Peter the Great and other potentates keen to promenade beneath the elms or to marinate in the sixteen mineral springs infused with iron and carbonic acid. The town declined after the French Revolution, then revived itself, as

such towns do—in Spa's case, by peddling varnished woodware and a liqueur known as Elixir de Spa. Here the Imperial German Army had placed its field headquarters during the last weeks of World War I: in the Grand Hôtel Britannique on the Rue de la Sauvenière, Field Marshal Paul von Hindenburg concluded that the cause was lost. The last of the Hohenzollerns to wear the crown, Kaiser Wilhelm II, arrived here from Berlin in October 1918, to fantasize about unleashing the army on his own rebellious *Volk;* instead he chose abdication and exile in the Netherlands.

Now GIs hauled the roulette wheels and chemin-de-fer tables from the casino on the Rue Royale, replacing them with field desks and triple bunks beneath the crystal chandeliers. "We'll take the 'hit' out of Hitler," they sang. Tests by Army engineers confirmed that every one of the city's eleven drinking water sources was polluted, but a decent black market meal could be had at the Hôtel de Portugal—horsemeat with mushroom caps seemed to be a Walloon specialty in these straitened times. As for the thirsty, each general in First Army received a monthly consignment of a case of gin and half-cases of scotch and bourbon; lesser officers combined their allotments in a nightly ritual to make twelve quarts of martinis for the Hôtel Britannique mess, a grand ballroom with mirrors on three walls and exquisite windows filling the fourth. Headquarters generals also requisitioned the hilltop mansion of a Liège steel magnate as their bivouac; Belgian guests occasionally were invited to movie screenings in a nearby school, where soldiers tried to explain in broken French the nuances of *Gaslight* and *A Guy Named Joe*. Drew Middleton reported that fleeing German troops had left behind in an Italian restaurant a recording of "Lili Marlene"; GIs played the disc incessantly while assuring skeptical Belgians that "the song had been taken prisoner … and could no longer be considered German." Almost hourly, the clatter of a V-1 bound for Antwerp from one of the launch sites in the Reich could be heard in the heavens above Spa.

Lieutenant General Courtney H. Hodges moved his office into Hindenburg's old Britannique suite and settled in to ponder how to wage a late autumn campaign in northern Europe. Hodges was an old-school soldier: he had flunked out of West Point—undone by plebe geometry—and had risen through the ranks after enlisting as a private in 1905. The son of a newspaper publisher from southern Georgia, he was of average height but so erect that he appeared taller, with a domed forehead and prominent ears. Army records described the color of his close-set eyes as "#10 Blue." "God gave him a face that always looked pessimistic," Eisenhower once observed, and even Hodges complained that a portrait commissioned by *Life* in early September made him appear "a little too sad."

A crack shot and big-game hunter—caribou and moose in Canada, elephants and tigers in Indochina—Hodges had earned two Purple Heart citations after being gassed in World War I but tore them up as excessively "sissy." He smoked Old Golds in a long holder, favored bourbon and Dubonnet on ice with a dash of bitters, and messed formally every night, in jacket, necktie, and combat boots. He had been seen weeping by the road as trucks passed carrying wounded soldiers from the front. "I wish everybody could see them," he said in his soft drawl. One division commander said of him: "Unexcitable. A killer. A gentleman." A reporter wrote that even in battle "he sounds like a Georgia farmer leaning on the fence, discussing his crops." Bradley, who as Hodges's subordinate used to shoot skeet or hunt quail with him on Sunday mornings at Fort Benning, later recalled, "He was very dignified and I can't imagine anyone getting familiar with him." Now his superior, Bradley still called him "sir."

First Army was the largest American fighting force in Europe, and Hodges was the wrong general to command it. Capable enough during the pursuit across France, he now was worn by illness, fatigue, and his own shortcomings—"an old man playing the game by the rules of the book, and a little confused as to what it was all about," a War Department observer wrote. "There was little of the vital fighting spirit." Even the Army's official histories would describe his fall campaign as "lacking in vigor and imagination," and among senior commanders he was "the least disposed to make any attempt to understand logistic problems." He was "pretty slow making the big decisions," a staff officer conceded, and he rarely left Spa to visit the front; for nearly two months the 30th Division's General Hobbs never laid eyes on him. Peremptory and inarticulate, Hodges "refused to discuss orders, let alone argue about them," one military officer later wrote. He sometimes insisted that situation reports show even platoon dispositions—a finicky level of detail far below an army commander's legitimate focus—and he complained in his war diary that "too many of these battalions and regiments of ours have tried to flank and skirt and never meet the enemy straight on." He believed it "safer, sounder, and in the end, quicker to keep smashing ahead." "Straight on" and "smashing ahead" would be Hodges's battlefield signature, with all that such frontal tactics implied.

Peevish and insulated, ever watchful for hints of disloyalty, Hodges showed an intolerance for perceived failure that was harsh even by the exacting standards of the U.S. Army. Of thirteen corps and division commanders relieved in 12th Army Group during the war, ten would fall from grace in First Army, the most recent being General Corlett of XIX Corps after Aachen. When the frayed commander of the 8th Division requested brief leave after his son was killed in action, Hodges sacked him. The Army historian Forrest Pogue described one cashiered officer waiting by the road for a ride to the rear, belongings piled about him "like a mendicant. … The sickness of heart was there, and the look of tired, beaten, exhausted helplessness could not be effaced."

Such a command climate bred inordinate caution, suppressing both initiative and élan, and First Army's senior staff made it worse. "Aggressive, touchy, and high-strung," Bradley later wrote of the staff he had created before ascending to 12th Army Group. "Critical, unforgiving, and resentful of all authority but its own." Three rivalrous figures played central roles in this unhappy family: Major General William B. Kean, the able, ruthless chief of staff, who was privately dubbed "Captain Bligh" and to whom Hodges ceded great authority; Brigadier General Truman C. Thorson, the grim, chain-smoking operations officer nicknamed Tubby but also called Iago; and Colonel Benjamin A. Dickson, the brilliant, turbulent intelligence chief long known as Monk, a histrionic man of smoldering grievances.

Not least of First Army's quirks as it prepared to renew the drive toward the Rhine was what one correspondent called a "slightly angry bafflement" at continued German resistance, a resentment that the enemy did not know he was beaten. As this colicky command group settled into Spa and prepared for the coming campaign, they all agreed that they would simply have to take the "hit"

out of Hitler.

* * *

On October 28, Eisenhower reiterated his plan for winning the war. "The enemy has continued to reinforce his forces in the West," he cabled his lieutenants. "Present indications are that he intends to make the strongest possible stand on the West Wall, in the hope of preventing the war spreading to German soil." Antwerp, he declared, remained "our first and most important immediate objective." Canadian First Army troops had captured Breskens a week earlier, and the dwindling enemy pocket on the Scheldt's southern bank seemed certain to collapse within days if not hours. Canadian troops also were advancing along the north edge of the estuary; German defenders trapped on the Beveland Peninsula and Walcheren Island had been reduced to little more than a "White Bread" division comprising soldiers with digestive ailments. Eisenhower finally felt confident that the entire Scheldt soon would be cleansed of Germans, and Antwerp open to shipping shortly thereafter.

With that accomplished, he added, the final battle for Europe would unfold in "three general phases": an unsparing struggle west of the Rhine; the seizure of bridgeheads over the river; and finally a mortal dagger thrust into the heart of Germany. Seven Allied armies would advance eastward apace, arrayed from north to south: the Canadian First; the British Second; the U.S. Ninth, First, Third, and Seventh; and the French First. The enemy's industrial centers in the Ruhr and the Saar remained paramount objectives in the north and center, respectively, with Berlin as the ultimate target.

First Army's capture of Aachen and breach of the Siegfried Line in the adjacent Stolberg corridor left barely twenty miles to traverse before the Rhine. Here lay the most promising frontage on the entire Allied line. Hodges, with assistance from Simpson's Ninth Army, was to sweep forward another ten miles to the Roer River, overrun Düren on the far bank, then press on toward Cologne and the Rhine. Joe Collins's VII Corps would again lead the attack, but first V Corps on his right was to clear out the Hürtgen Forest and capture the high-ground village of Schmidt, providing First Army with more maneuver room and forestalling any counterattack into VII Corps' right flank by enemies who might be skulking in the forest dark.

Four compact woodland tracts formed the Hürtgen, eleven miles long and five miles wide in all. Forest masters for generations had meticulously pruned undergrowth and regulated logging, leaving perfectly aligned firs as straight and regular as soldiers on parade, in what one visitor called "a picture forest." But some of its acreage grew wild, particularly along creek beds and in the deep ravines where even at midday sunlight penetrated only as a dim rumor. Here was the Grimm forest primeval, a place of shades. "I never saw a wood so thick with trees as the Hürtgen," a GI later wrote. "It turned out to be the worst place of any."

The Hürtgenwald had been fortified as part of the Siegfried Line, beginning in 1938. German engineers more recently had pruned timber for fields of fire, built log bunkers with interlocking kill zones, and sowed mines by the thousands on trails and firebreaks; along one especially vicious trace, a mine could be found every eight paces for three miles. The 9th Division in late September had learned how lethal the Hürtgen could be when trying to cross the forest as part of the initial VII Corps effort to outflank Aachen. One regiment took four days to move a mile; another needed five. By mid-October the division was still far short of Schmidt and had suffered 4,500 casualties to gain three thousand yards—a man down every two feet—and no battalion in the two spearhead regiments could field more than three hundred men. More and more of the perfect groves were gashed yellow with machine-gun bullets or reduced to charred stumps—"no birds, no sighing winds, no carpeted paths," Forrest Pogue reported. A commander who offered his men $5 for every tree found unscarred by shellfire got no takers. Pogue was reminded of the claustrophobic bloodletting of May 1864 in another haunted woodland, one in eastern Virginia: "There was a desolation," he wrote, "such as one associated with the Battle of the Wilderness."

Nearly half of the 6,500 German defenders from the 275th Division had been killed, wounded, or captured in checking the 9th Division; reinforcements included two companies of Düren policemen known as "family-fathers" because most were at least forty-five years old. More bunkers were built, more barbed wire uncoiled, more mines sown, including nonmetallic shoe and box mines, and lethal round devices said to be "no larger than an ointment box." Enemy officers considered it unlikely that the Americans would persist in attacking through what one German commander called "extensive, thick, and nearly trackless forest terrain."

That underestimated American obstinacy. The Hürtgen neutralized U.S. military advantages in armor, artillery, airpower, and mobility, but Hodges was convinced that no First Army drive to the Roer was possible without first securing the forest and capturing Schmidt, from which every approach to the river was visible. He likened the menace on his right flank to that posed by German forces in the Argonne Forest to the American left flank during General John J. Pershing's storied offensive on the Meuse in the autumn of 1918. This specious historical analogy—the Germans could hardly mass enough armor in the cramped Hürtgen to pose a mortal threat—received little critical scrutiny within First Army, not least because of reluctance to challenge Hodges. In truth, "the most likely way to make the Hürtgen a menace to the American Army," the historian Russell F. Weigley later wrote, "was to send American troops attacking into its depths."

No consideration was given to bypassing or screening the forest, or to outflanking Schmidt from the south by sending V Corps up the vulnerable attack corridor through Monschau, fifteen miles below Aachen. Senior officers in First Army would spend the rest of their lives trying to explain the tactical logic behind the Hürtgen battle plan. "All we could do was sit back and pray to God that nothing would happen," General Thorson, the operations officer, later lamented. "It was a horrible business, the forest.… We had the bear by the tail, and we just couldn't turn loose." Even Joe Collins, who enjoyed favorite-son status with Hodges, conceded that he "would not question Courtney." After the war Collins said:

> We *had* to go into the forest in order to secure our right flank.… Nobody was enthusiastic about fighting there, but what was the alternative?… If we would have turned loose of the Hürtgen and let the Germans roam there, they could have hit my

flank.

No less regrettable was a misreading of German topography. Seven dams built for flood control, drinking water, and hydroelectric power stood near the headwaters of the Roer, which arose in Belgium and spilled east through the German highlands before flowing north across the Cologne plain and eventually emptying into the Maas southeast of Eindhoven. Five of the seven dams lacked the capacity to substantially affect the river's regime, but the other two—the Schwammenauel and the Urft—impounded sizable lakes that together held up to forty billion gallons. In early October, the 9th Division's intelligence officer had warned that German mischief could generate "great destructive flood waves" as far downstream as Holland. Colonel Dickson, First Army's intelligence chief, disagreed. Opening the floodgates or destroying the dams would cause "at the most local floodings for about five days," Dickson asserted. No terrain analysis was undertaken, nor were the dams mentioned in tactical plans. "We had not studied that particular part of the zone," Collins later acknowledged. "That was an intelligence failure, a real combat intelligence failure."

By late October, as First Army coiled to resume its attack, unnerving details about the Roer and its waterworks had begun to accumulate. A German prisoner disclosed that arrangements had been made to ring Düren's church bells if the dams upstream were blown. A German engineer interrogated in Spa intimated that a wall of water could barrel down the Roer. Inside an Aachen safe, an American lieutenant found Wehrmacht plans for demolishing several dams; by one calculation, a hundred million metric tons of water could flood the Roer valley for twenty miles, transforming the narrow river to a half-mile-wide torrent. A top secret memo to Hodges from Ninth Army's General Simpson on November 5 cited a Corps of Engineers study titled "Summaries of the Military Use of the Roer River Reservoir System," which concluded that the enemy could "maintain the Roer River at flood stage for approximately ten days … or can produce a two-day flood of catastrophic proportions." An American attack over the Roer might be crippled, with tactical bridges swept away and any troops east of the river isolated and annihilated. Obviously neither the First Army nor the Ninth, farther downstream, could safely cross the Roer and make for the Rhine until the dams were neutralized. Simpson proposed to Hodges that he immediately "block these [enemy] capabilities." A flanking attack toward Schmidt from Monschau in the south would also permit capture of Schwammenauel, Urft, and their sisters.

Yet First Army hewed to its plan for a frontal assault, afflicted by what General Thorson later called "a kind of torpor in our operations." Hodges in late October had told Bradley that the Roer reservoirs were half empty—unaware that they were being replenished—and that "present plans of this army do not contemplate immediate capture of these dams." It was assumed that, if necessary, bombers could blow open the reservoirs whenever the Army asked. Bradley would later claim that by mid-October "we were very much aware of the threat they posed" and that the "whole point" of the renewed attack through the Hürtgen was "to gain control of the dams and spillways." That was untrue. Not until November 7 did Hodges order V Corps to even begin drafting plans to seize the dam sites, and not until December 4 would Bradley's war diary note: "Decided must control Roer dam."

By that time another frontal assault through horrid terrain had come to grief, and officers at Spa were reduced to feeble maledictions. "Damn the dams," they would tell one another again and again. "Damn the dams."

* * *

Attacking the worst place of any now fell to Major General Dutch Cota and his 28th Division, still recovering from the September skirmishes that had revived the division's World War I nickname, the Bloody Bucket. The 28th had regained full strength but only with many replacements untrained as infantrymen, under officers and sergeants plucked from antiaircraft units and even the Army Air Forces. Hemingway, who for several weeks would live in a fieldstone house south of Stolberg, suggested that it would "save everybody a lot of trouble if they just shot them as soon as they got out of the trucks."



In late October the Bloody Bucketeers—as they called themselves with sardonic pride—assembled beneath the yellow-gashed firs. GIs heaved logs into the firebreaks in hopes of tripping mines, or probed the ground inch by inch with a bayonet held at a thirty-degree angle or with a No. 8 wire. Dead men from the 9th Division still littered the forest, bullet holes in their field jackets like blood-ringed grommets. After a soldier ran over a Teller mine with his jeep, a lieutenant wrote, "His clothing and tire chains were found seventy-five feet from the ground in the tree tops. It snows every day now." A few men had overshoes; the rest, trying to avoid trench foot by standing on burning Sterno blocks, soon lost any scruples about stripping footwear from the dead.

Foul weather, supply shortages, and the slow arrival of two more divisions caused First Army to postpone VII Corps's main attack toward Düren until mid-November. An offensive in the north by 21st Army Group also was pushed back. But Hodges saw no reason to delay clearing the Hürtgen and seizing Schmidt. On Wednesday, November 1, after lunch in Spa with the V Corps commander, Major General Leonard T. Gerow, Hodges made a rare visit to a division command post. He drove twenty miles to Rott, strode into the two-story *Gasthaus* at 23 Quirinstrasse, where Cota had put his headquarters, and voiced his pleasure that the 28th Division was obviously "in fine fettle, rarin' to go." The battle plan, Hodges informed Cota, was "excellent."

In fact, it was badly flawed. For two weeks across the 170-mile front of the First and Ninth Armies, the 28th Division would be the only U.S. unit launching an attack, attracting the undivided attention of German defenders who already knew precisely where the *Blutiger Eimer* division was assembling. The "excellent" plan, imposed on Cota by V Corps staff officers squinting at a map far from the front, required him to splinter his force by attacking on three divergent axes: one regiment to the north, another to the southeast, and a third to the east, toward Schmidt. Cota's misgivings had been waved away despite his warrant that the attack had no more than "a gambler's chance" of success. A large sign posted in the forest warned, "Front line a hundred yards. Dismount and fight."

At nine A.M. on November 2, a cold, misty Thursday, GIs heaved themselves from their holes like doughboys going over the top. Eleven thousand artillery rounds chewed up German revetments and flayed the forest with steel from shells detonating in the tree

canopy. But the brisk *brrrr* of machine-gun fire from pillboxes on the division's right flank mowed down men in the 110th Infantry Regiment—"singly, in groups, and by platoons," the division history recorded. By day's end the 110th had gained not a yard, and by week's end the regiment would be rated "no longer an effective fighting force."

The attack hardly began better for the 109th Regiment on the left flank. German sappers driving charcoal-fueled trucks had hauled enough mines from a Westphalian munitions plant to lay a dense field in a swale across the road from Germeter to Hürtgen village. The 109th had advanced barely three hundred yards when a sharp *pop!* was followed by a shriek and a GI clutching his bloody foot. More pops followed, more shrieks, more maimed boys. After thirty-six hours the regiment would hold only a narrow, mile-deep salient into enemy territory, a salient almost mirrored by Germans infiltrating the U.S. ranks.

Against such odds, and to the surprise of American and German alike, the division's main attack won through in the center. A battalion from the 112th Infantry was pinned wriggling to the ground by enemy fire near Richelskaul, but seven Shermans churned down the wooded slope from Germeter, each trailing clouds of infantrymen holding a rear fender and trotting in the tank tracks to avoid mines. The Shermans fired four rounds apiece to dismember the church steeple in Vossenack and any snipers hidden in the belfry, and two hundred white-phosphorus mortar shells set the village ablaze. One block wide and two thousand yards long, Vossenack straddled a saddleback two miles from Schmidt, visible through the haze to the southeast. Soft ground, mines, and Panzerfaust volleys wrecked five Shermans, but before noon burning Vossenack belonged to Cota's men, who burrowed into the northeast nose of the ridgeline.

At dawn on Friday, November 3, the attack resumed. From Vossenack the ridge plunged into the crepuscular Kall gorge, a deep ravine carved through the landscape by a stream rushing toward the Roer. Two American battalions in column spilled down a twisting cart track, then forded the icy Kall near an ancient sawmill and emerged from the beeches limning the far ridge to pounce on the drab hamlet of Kommerscheidt. The 3rd Battalion scampered southeast for another half mile and at 2:30 P.M. fell on the astonished garrison at Schmidt, capturing or killing Germans eating lunch, riding bicycles, or nipping schnapps on the street. From rooftops in the sixteenth-century town, the entire Hürtgen swam into view, along with the meandering Roer two miles to the east and the sapphire Schwammenauel reservoir a mile south. A believing man with imagination could almost see the end of the war.

Telephoned congratulations from division and corps commanders across the front poured into Cota's *Gasthaus* in Rott, ten miles to the west. General Hodges himself sent word that he was "extremely satisfied." The plaudits, Cota later said, made him feel like "a little Napoleon."

* * *

The bad news from Schmidt reached Field Marshal Model that same afternoon at Schlenderhan castle in the horse country west of Cologne, hardly twenty-five miles from the battlefield. There by chance Model had just started a map exercise with his top commanders, positing a theoretical American attack near the Hürtgenwald. Sketchy reports indicated that in fact a strong assault against the German LXXIV Corps threatened to overrun the Roer dams that generated much of the electricity west of the Rhine.

Model ordered the corps commander back to his post, but other officers—including two army commanders—were instructed to continue the war game, using dispatches from the front to help orchestrate the battle. Low clouds and fog had impaired Allied fighter-bombers for the past two days; with luck, reinforcements could hasten, unimpeded, on the good roads threading the Roer valley. Confrontation with the Americans would first fall to the 116th Panzer Division, which had fought through Yugoslavia and southern Russia as far as the Caspian Sea before surviving more recent battles in the west, at Falaise and Aachen. The reconnaissance battalion already was galloping toward Schmidt, followed in trace by the bulk of the division and by troops from the 89th Division.

Three isolated American rifle companies and a machine-gun platoon from the 112th Infantry defended Schmidt, unaware of the Wehrmacht high command's keen interest in them but unnerved by snipers and haystacks on a hillside that seemed to move in the moonlight. Exhausted after Friday's trudge through the Kall gorge in heavy overcoats with full field packs, the 3rd Battalion sent out no patrols and scattered sixty antitank mines—delivered during the night by tracked Weasel cargo carriers—on three approach roads without attempting to implant or camouflage them. No panzer counterattack was considered likely given Allied air superiority and the destruction of German armor in the past two months. Oblivious to his men's vulnerability, Cota remained in Rott; not for three more days would he visit the front. Having already committed his only division reserve to help the hard-pressed 110th Infantry in the south, the little Napoléon had lost control of the battle before it really began.

Just before sunrise on Saturday, November 4, German artillery fire crashed and heaved from three directions around Schmidt. A magnesium flare drifted across the pearl-gray dawn, and wide-eyed GIs spied a long column of Panthers and Mk IVs snaking toward them from the northeast, easily swerving around the pointless mines. German machine-gun bullets ripped through foxholes; scarlet tank fire blew the town apart, house by house. Mortar pits were overrun, bazooka rounds bounced off panzer hulls like marbles, and yowling enemy infantrymen raced toward Schmidt from the south, west, and east, some banging on their mess kits in a lunatic tintinnabulation.

At 8:30 an American platoon on the southern perimeter broke in panic, unhinging the defense. Soon the entire battalion took to its heels, Companies I, K, and L scrabbling through gardens and over fences, "ragged, scattered, disorganized infantrymen," in one lieutenant's account. Barking officers grabbed at their soldiers' herringbone collars in an attempt to turn them, but hundreds leaked down the road toward Kommerscheidt, forsaking their dead and wounded. Two hundred others stampeded in the wrong direction—southwest, into German lines—and of those only three would elude capture or worse. By ten A.M., Schmidt once again belonged to the Reich.

* * *

The fight for the Hürtgen had taken a turn, though not for several hours did the command post in Rott get word that an infantry battle had become a tank brawl. Lowering clouds grounded Allied pilots for a third day, and U.S. intelligence was slow to realize that enemy observers with Zeiss optics on Hill 400, just two miles north of Schmidt, could see even a rabbit cross the meadows on either flank of the Kall gorge. Confusion soon turned to chaos, calamity to farce. A tank company trying to negotiate the steep Kall trail managed, with a great deal of winching around the hairpin turns, to get three Shermans across the ravine to help repel an initial German lunge at Kommerscheidt from Schmidt. But five other tanks stood disabled, repeatedly throwing tracks on the treacherous switchbacks and blocking the path, which at nine feet was precisely as wide as a medium tank. After nightfall, in relentless rain and stygian darkness, engineers hacked at the trace with picks and shovels—a bulldozer broke down half an hour after arriving—but even the nimble Weasels seemed clay-footed, and the ammunition trailers they towed had to be unhitched and manhandled around each sharp turn into and out of the gorge.

In Rott, Cota's perplexity only deepened. Radios worked fitfully, and messengers were ambushed or forestalled by descending curtains of artillery. Was the Kall trail open? No, came the reply, then yes, then no. Engineers detonated captured Teller mines in a futile attempt to blow apart a rocky knob blocking a switchback above the pretty stone bridge spanning the creek; three hundred pounds of TNT finally reduced the obstruction. Tank crews showed little sense of urgency—"Everybody appeared to treat the disabled tanks with the same kind of warm-hearted affection an old-time cavalryman might lavish on his horse," the Army's official history acknowledged. Not until 2:30 A.M. on Sunday, November 5, just before moonrise, were the stalled Shermans finally shoved over the brink into the gorge.

A fretful General Gerow, the V Corps commander, drove into Rott a few hours later, clucked at Cota, and soon returned with Hodges and Joe Collins. Pulling on an Old Gold, the army commander also berated Cota and then rounded on Gerow in a crimson tirade—"tougher than I had ever heard him before," Collins later recalled. "He was pushing Gerow awfully hard." Cota was reduced to scribbling another order that might or might not reach the 112th Infantry: "It is imperative that the town of Schmidt be secured at once." He ended the message: "Roll on."

Had the generals seen the battlefield clearly, reclaiming Schmidt would have been the least of their concerns. Enemy forces now crowded the 28th Division on three sides, threatening the Bloody Bucket with annihilation. Nine Shermans and nine tank destroyers had traversed the Kall to reach the remnants of two infantry battalions huddled in what was described as a "covered wagon" defense in Kommerscheidt. Just the rumor of another panzer attack sent spooked riflemen scouring for the gorge, but any illusion of refuge there soon vanished. On Sunday night, reconnaissance troops from the 116th Panzer clattered down the Kall creek bed past an old sawmill, through ferns half as high as a man. Army engineers grooming the trail ran for their lives, as German sappers mined the switchbacks, set up ambushes, and effectively cut off more than a thousand GIs east of the ravine.

Dawn on Monday laid bare the American plight. Panzer drumfire from Schmidt soon reduced nine Shermans to six, and nine tank destroyers to three. GIs unable to leave their flooded rifle pits, described as "artesian wells," were once again reduced to defecating in empty C-ration cans. Those gimlet-eyed German observers on Hill 400 lobbed twenty artillery rounds or more onto each position, shifting guns hole by hole by hole; sobbing men waited in terror as the footfall drew closer.

A relief battalion from the 110th Infantry that had been ordered to huddle together for warmth in Vossenack—"just like cattle do in a storm," as one survivor reported—attracted a thirty-minute artillery barrage. Men were "killed right and left as they were milling around.… Everybody was trying to jump over a bleeding body to find shelter." One company lost 41 of 127 men, another 75 of 140. "Lieutenant, are my legs still there?" a wounded soldier asked his platoon leader. "Please tell the truth."

Soldiers in the claustrophobic forest debated whether they could stave off the enemy long enough to finish smoking the carton of cigarettes they carried, or merely an open pack, or perhaps only the Lucky Strike they had just lighted. Examining a badly wounded man for injuries in the dark woods, a 28th Division medic reported, was "like putting your hand in a bucket of wet liver." A surge in head wounds stirred debate in the ranks about whether German snipers were aiming at the keystone insignia—the bloody bucket—painted on their helmets. "So this is combat," a lieutenant new to the Hürtgen reflected. "I've only had one day of it. How does a man stand it, day in and day out?"

How, indeed? The morning wore on, and the existential crisis sharpened. The 2nd Battalion of the 112th Infantry, whose two sister battalions were trapped in Kommerscheidt, finally broke after four nights of murderous shelling on the exposed nose west of the Kall gorge. An abrupt, piercing scream unmanned Company G, which fled for the rear through Vossenack, and the contagion instantly infected the ranks. "Pushing, shoving, throwing away equipment, trying to outrun the artillery and each other," an officer reported, the men scorched up the ridge toward their original positions at the beginning of the Hürtgen battle four days earlier. A lieutenant who considered the pell-mell flight "the saddest sight I have ever seen," added, "Many of the badly wounded men, probably hit by artillery, were lying in the road where they fell, screaming for help."

Officers managed to rally seventy stouthearts near the ruined Vossenack church—no one had yet seen a single German in the village—and four tank platoons rushed down from Germeter. Cota ordered two road-repairing companies from the 146th Engineers into the line as riflemen. Still in their raincoats and hip boots, the engineers battled infiltrators all night around the church; Germans at one point occupied the tower and the basement while GIs held the nave. On Tuesday morning, November 7, the engineers helped beat back a panzer grenadier assault, keeping Vossenack in American hands except for the eastern fringe, dubbed the Rubble Pile, which the Germans would hold for another month. The 112th Infantry's 2nd Battalion was considered "destroyed as a fighting unit," another unit smashed to pieces.

* * *

"The 28th Division situation is going from bad to worse," First Army's war diary noted on Tuesday. Cota could only agree. A

relief force of four hundred men had fought across a firebreak in the Kall gorge to reach Kommerscheidt on Sunday, but none of the accompanying tanks or tank destroyers could bull through German roadblocks. Artillery and mortar barrages pounded Kommerscheidt through the night, and catcalling enemy infiltrators crept so close in the encroaching draws that Jewish GIs hammered out the telltale "H"—for "Hebrew"—on their dogtags. As the gray skies spat sleet, fifteen panzers and two infantry battalions renewed the attack on Tuesday morning, shooting up farmsteads and garden shacks. By midday the Americans had fallen back to entrenchments along the eastern lip of the gorge, and Kommerscheidt too was lost.

Reeling from lack of sleep and grieving for his gutted command, Cota phoned Gerow to propose that survivors marooned across the ravine retreat to a new line west of the Kall. Shortly before midnight on Tuesday, Gerow called back with permission. Hodges, he added, was "very dissatisfied.… All we seem to be doing is losing ground." Not until three P.M. on Wednesday, November 8, did the withdrawal order reach the battered last-stand redoubt. Soldiers at dusk fashioned litters from tree limbs and overcoats. Others smashed radios, mine detectors, and the engine blocks on four surviving jeeps; three antitank guns were spiked and the only functioning Sherman booby-trapped. Soldiers shed their mess kits and other clattering gear—the senior officer among them mistakenly threw away his compass—and engineers abandoned two tons of TNT with which they had planned to demolish pillboxes in Schmidt.

Come nightfall, American artillery smothered Kommerscheidt with high explosives to hide the sounds of withdrawal, and two columns slipped into the gorge. A smaller group of litter-bearers carried the wounded down the trail, past GI corpses crushed to pulp by the earlier armor traffic, while several hundred "effectives" set out cross-country, each grasping the shoulder of the man in front and moving through woods so dark they produced the illusion of walking into a lake at midnight. Charles B. MacDonald, the author of the Army's official account, described the retreat:

> Like blind cattle the men thrashed through the underbrush. Any hope of maintaining formation was dispelled quickly by the blackness of the night and by German shelling. All through the night and into the next day, frightened, fatigued men made their way across the icy Kall in small irregular groups, or alone.

Of more than two thousand American soldiers who had fought east of the Kall, barely three hundred returned. German pickets in the gorge let some wounded pass; others were detained for two days near a log dugout above the rushing creek, whimpering in agony until a brief cease-fire permitted evacuation. The dead accumulated in stiff piles, covered with fir branches until Graves Registration teams could bear them away.

Eisenhower and Bradley had driven to Rott on Wednesday morning, perplexed at reports of an attack gone bad. In the command post at 23 Quirinstrasse, the supreme commander listened to Cota's account and then said with a shrug, "Well, Dutch, it looks like you got a bloody nose." Hodges and Gerow arrived a few minutes later for a hurried conference. With Germans still entrenched on the high ground at Schmidt, any November offensive to the Rhine now stood in jeopardy.

After Eisenhower left, Hodges gave Cota yet another tongue-lashing. Had the regiments been properly deployed and dug in? If they had been, even under heavy German artillery casualties "would not be high nor would ground be lost." During the battle, Hodges complained, the division staff appeared to have "no precise knowledge of the location of their units and were doing nothing to obtain it." The First Army commander wanted Cota to know that he was "extremely disappointed." Before driving back to Spa, Hodges told Gerow that "there may be some personnel changes made."

The gray weather grew colder. Sleet turned to heavy snow, and winter's first storm was on them. Vengeful GIs rampaged through German houses, smashing china and tossing furniture into the streets. "I've condemned a whole regiment of the finest men that ever breathed," a distraught officer told the reporter Iris Carpenter. "I tell you frankly, I can't take much more of it."

Survivors from the Kall were trucked to Rötgen, where pyramidal tents had been erected with straw floors and stacks of wool blankets. Medics distributed liquor rations donated by rear-echelon officers. Red Cross volunteers served pancakes and beer, and the division band played soldierly airs. "Chow all right, son?" a visiting officer asked one soldier, who without looking up replied, "What the fuck do you care? You're getting yours, aincha?"

* * *

On Thursday, November 9, the 28th Division began planting a defensive barrier of five thousand mines around the cramped salient held in the Hürtgen. Patrols crept through the lines searching for hundreds of missing GIs in the once perfect ranks of trees, now quite imperfect. The week-long battle had been among the costliest division attacks of the war for the U.S. Army, with casualties exceeding 6,000. The Bloody Bucket was bloodier than ever: one battalion in the 110th Infantry was reduced to 57 men even after being reinforced, and losses had whittled the 112th Infantry from 2,200 to 300. "The division had accomplished very little," the unit history conceded. In less than six months, Dutch Cota had gone from a man lionized for his valor at Omaha Beach and St.-Lô to a defeated general on the brink of dismissal: such was war's inconstancy. He was permitted to keep his command partly because so many other leaders had been lost in the division that four majors and a captain led infantry battalions. In mid-November, the 8th Division arrived in the Hürtgen to replace the 28th, which was shunted to a placid sector in the Ardennes for rest and recuperation. To his troops, Cota issued a message of encouragement, which closed with the injunction "Salute, March, Shoot, Obey."

German losses for the week had totaled about 3,000. "We squat in an airless cellar," a German medic wrote his parents. "The wounded lie on blood-stained mattresses.… One has lost most of his intestines from a grenade fragment." Another soldier, with an arm and a foot nearly severed, pleaded, "Comrades, shoot me." On the American side of the line, U.S. quartermaster troops dragged dead Germans feetfirst from a wrecked barn, while a watching GI strummed his guitar and belted out "South of the Border." But the

enemy kept his death grip on the forest. Single American divisions continued to gnaw and be gnawed: attacks in coming days by the 4th and 8th Infantry Divisions, like those by the 9th and the 28th, gained little at enormous cost, with battalions reduced to the size of companies and companies shaved to platoons. “The days were so terrible that I would pray for darkness,” one soldier recalled, “and the nights were so bad that I would pray for daylight.”

In less than three months, six U.S. Army infantry divisions would be tossed into the Hürtgen, plus an armored brigade, a Ranger battalion, and sundry other units. All told, 120,000 soldiers sustained 33,000 casualties in what the historian Carlo D’Este would call “the most ineptly fought series of battles of the war in the West.” A captured German document reported that “in combat in wooded areas the American showed himself completely unfit,” a harsh judgment that had a whiff of legitimacy with respect to American generalship.

As the attack continued to sputter in late November, Hodges himself showed the strain. “He went on and on about how we might lose the war,” Major General Pete Quesada, the commander of IX Tactical Air Command, said after one unhappy conference. Despite the setback, Hodges and his command group soldiered on: at a November dinner party in the Spa generals’ mansion, the table was decorated with the distinctive black “A” of First Army’s shoulder flash, originally adopted in 1918. For dessert, each guest received an individual cake with the officer’s name stenciled in pink frosting, and with coffee the film *Janie* was shown, a romantic comedy starring Joyce Reynolds.

One soldier-poet composed a verse that ended, “We thought woods were wise but never / Implicated, never involved.” Yet in the Hürtgen surely terrain and flora were complicit, the land *always* implicated. An engineer observed that the forest “represented not so much an area as a way of fighting and dying.” A coarse brutality took hold in Allied ranks, increasingly common throughout Europe. Fighter-bombers incinerated recalcitrant towns with napalm, and one potato village after another was blasted to dust by artillery. “*C’est la* bloody goddam *guerre*,” soldiers told one another. Among those sent to the rear for psychiatric examination were two GI collectors, one with a cache of ears sliced from dead Germans and another with a souvenir bag of teeth. Through the long winter, feral dogs in the forest would feed on corpses seared by white phosphorus. “This was my personal Valley of the Shadow,” a medic wrote. “I left with an incredible relief and with a sadness I had never so far known.”

From his fieldstone house near Vicht, furnished with a potbelly stove and a brass bed in the living room, Hemingway rambled about in a sheepskin vest that “made him bulk bigger.” Sometimes on request he ghost-wrote love letters for young GIs, reading his favorite passages to fellow journalists. He would memorably describe the Hürtgen as “Passchendaele with tree bursts,” but not even a Hemingway could quite capture the debasement of this awful place. A soldier asked Iris Carpenter as she scribbled in her reporter’s note pad, “Do you tell ’em their brave boys are livin’ like a lot of fornicatin’ beasts, that they’re doin’ things to each other that beasts would be ashamed to do?” A veteran sergeant who believed the Hürtgen more wretched than anything he had experienced in North Africa, Sicily, or Normandy, quoted *King Lear*, act IV, scene 1: “The worst is not / So long as we can say ‘This is the worst.’”

To a soldier named Frank Maddalena, who went missing in the forest in mid-November, his wife, Natalie, mother of his two children, wrote from New York: “I see you everywhere—in the chair, behind me, in the shadows of the room.” In another note she added, “Still no mail from you. I really don’t know what to think anymore. The kids are fine and so adorable. Right now, I put colored handkerchiefs on their heads and they are dancing and singing.… When I walk alone, I seem to feel you sneaking up on me and putting your arms around me.”

No, that did not happen, would not, could not. This is the worst.

Part Three

7. The Flutter of Wings

A Town Too Small for the Tragedy

A STATELY procession of nineteen cargo ships glided up the gray Scheldt in a pelting rain on Tuesday morning, November 28. Seamen and anxious war correspondents crowded the rails, squinting for mines. Three small coasters had made the run to Antwerp without mishap on Sunday, the first Allied vessels to sail the estuary since 1940; but not until this initial convoy was safely berthed could the port be considered fully open, almost three months after its capture. Photographers and dignitaries lined the wharves, including Belgian worthies and legates from both SHAEF and 21st Army Group. As tugs bullied the Quebec-built merchantman S.S. *Fort Cataraqui* to her pier, a brass band crashed through "Heart of Oak," a spirited naval march with lyrics by the celebrated eighteenth-century actor and impresario David Garrick:

> Heart of oak are our ships, jolly tars are our men,
> We always are ready; Steady, boys, steady!
> We'll fight and we'll conquer again and again.

Stevedores made fast the freighter, then fell on her and her trailing sisters with cranes and cargo slings. From nineteen holds poured war stuffs of every sort, and not a moment too soon: COMZ three days earlier had warned of more dire shortages on the Continent, with "persistently low" ammunition stocks and "no days of supply whatsoever of items such as Prestone [antifreeze], overshoes, sleeping bags, tires, radios, field wire, replacement engines, axles, general purpose and combat vehicles."

A protocol oversight had excluded Canadian army emissaries from the dockside welcoming committee, a lamentable snub: the Canadian First Army had sustained nearly thirteen thousand casualties in winning the Scheldt. The protracted "struggle in the polders" had ultimately required massed flamethrowers, gunfights from windmill to windmill, and the bombardment of ancient Dutch dikes to flush German defenders from Walcheren Island with North Sea floodwaters. Amphibious assaults across the Scheldt and the North Sea to Walcheren in early November included fire support from the 15-inch guns of the battleship *Warspite* and the monitors *Erebus* and *Roberts*. Pipers piped, landing craft beat toward the island from Ostend, and Royal Marines were greeted by a small boy in an orange sash standing on the ruptured dike, waving a Dutch flag and shouting, "Good morning! Good morning!" But not until the German commander was rousted from his bed in Middelburg to surrender the last two thousand defenders was the battle declared won, at noon on November 8.

With enemy shore guns finally silenced, more than two hundred minesweepers in fifteen flotillas had scoured the eighty-mile estuary seventeen times in three weeks under Operation CALENDAR. Each ship's crew painted a white chevron on the funnel for every mine discovered and destroyed. Sweeps mounted on truck beds probed the Scheldt's marshy banks, while divers cleared every square inch of the thousand acres around Antwerp's docks, feeling their way along the silty bottom through the frigid, turbid basins. No mines were found for three days in mid-November, and the Royal Navy proclaimed the Scheldt safe only to rescind the declaration after nine explosions on November 22 and 23 sent the sweepers back to work. Two hundred and sixty-seven mines had been cleared before the *Fort Cataraqui* could lead her convoy up the channel.

Twenty more ships arrived in the next two days, and by mid-December Antwerp would be unloading 23,000 tons a day—half of all U.S. cargo arriving in northwestern Europe, exclusive of Marseille. Day and night, ships steamed in and out of the great port, past endless rows of squat warehouses, bells ringing, whistles tooting, gulls screaming. Six thousand civilian stevedores and nine thousand quay workers swarmed over the docks, complemented by as many military laborers. Unloading began as the first hawser was tossed to waiting hands on the wharf, and typically thirteen hours later the last cargo net rose from the final hold before the empty vessel cast off to make for the open sea. In addition to more than two hundred berths and six hundred cranes, Antwerp boasted the densest rail network in Europe, with nineteen miles of track per square mile; even so, thanks to shortages of rolling stock and COMZ miscalculations, within a fortnight 85,000 tons of matériel was piled high beneath tarpaulins and in sheds behind the quays, awaiting more railcars and the construction of depots in Lille, Mons, and elsewhere. A dozen ammunition ships had been scheduled among the first convoys, but fears that an accidental explosion or a V-weapon would wreck the port more savagely than any enemy saboteur caused delays until the vessels could be diverted to isolated berths in a far corner of the harbor.

Explosions had already become all too commonplace in Antwerp that fall, beginning with the first V-2 rocket to hit the city on October 7, followed by the first V-1 flying bomb four days later. Both V-1s and V-2s struck on October 13, damaging paintings in the Museum of Fine Arts and killing or wounding more than two dozen butchers in the municipal slaughterhouse. ("Something beastly fell in Antwerp yesterday," British intelligence reported.) An orphanage that also served as a hospital was subsequently

demolished, killing thirty-two people, including a surgical team and several orphans crushed beneath a collapsing wall. On November 27, just hours before the first convoy steamed up the Scheldt, a V-2 detonated in Teniersplaats as a military convoy rolled through the intersection, killing 157 and rupturing water mains so that body parts and women's handbags floated in a new downtown lake; the torso of a military policeman was found on a rooftop two hundred feet from the blast.

Barely above sea level, Antwerp lacked subway tunnels and deep cellars for shelter; GIs now called it "the city of sudden death." Sixteen thousand troops assigned to the port had been housed in brick apartment buildings, but the onslaught forced them to tent encampments dispersed outside town. Army engineers took emergency courses on how to extricate buried survivors from collapsed buildings. Window glass became scarce, as it had in London. A V-weapon hit a public toilet, crushing several men beneath heavy porcelain urinals, and streetwalkers could be seen brushing debris from their fur coats after an explosion in the red-light district. The shattering of a fragrance shop perfumed the air for days, "a heavy, incongruous, unwanted smell," the GI magazine *Yank* reported. The revived city opera gamely staged *La Bohème* and then *Carmen;* a naval officer recounted how a V-1 growled overhead during one performance "while the cast continued singing, and not a soul moved from their seats in the packed auditorium."

Hitler had long recognized Antwerp's strategic value, and in mid-October he had ordered all V-2s concentrated exclusively on either the port or London. German launch crews over the course of six months would fling 1,712 V-2s and 4,248 V-1s at Antwerp—usually more than thirty each day, but sometimes fourfold that number. Sixty-seven thousand buildings in greater Antwerp would be damaged or destroyed, including two-thirds of all houses; two cargo ships and fifty-eight smaller vessels would be sunk. Despite the battering of rail lines, roads, quays, and cranes, good fortune and V-weapon imprecision allowed port operations to remain largely unimpaired. Equally important was a stupendous Allied defensive effort involving 22,000 antiaircraft artillerymen who were secretly organized into a unit named Antwerp X. Three parallel defensive belts southeast of the city, each roughly six miles apart, deployed six hundred guns that hammered away around the clock, with new gun barrels and ammunition stocks flown from the United States as needed. Seventy-two searchlights and six thousand miles of new telephone wire strengthened the city's early warning system, and more than three million sandbags helped shield Antwerp against blast.

German V-1 crews in December abruptly opened a new attack azimuth by launching from the northeast, shortening the warning period from eight minutes to less than four. Sometimes as many as eight flying bombs approached Antwerp simultaneously, a U.S. study reported, with "the characteristic roar of the motor in flight, the stream of flame flying to the rear, the cutoff, silent dive, and violent detonation." Yet nimble gun crews proved proficient: by one calculation, 211 V-1s would strike within eight miles of central Antwerp, while 2,200 others were destroyed in midair or crashed in open tracts. Hundreds of others flew far afield, failed to leave the launch rail, or otherwise misfired.

The V-2, of course, was a different beast, and invulnerable against Allied defenses. "The angel of death is abroad in the land," Churchill had said of the missile, "only you can't hear the flutter of his wings."

* * *

Nearly twelve hundred seats were filled in the Rex Cinema on bustling Avenue De Keyser for the Friday afternoon matinee on December 15. During the occupation, only German films were screened, and Belgian moviegoers since Antwerp's liberation in early September had been keen to catch up on years of American and British movies unavailable since the war began. Shortages of film stock—cellulose was also an ingredient in gunpowder—had not prevented Hollywood from producing thirteen hundred films in the past three years. More than a quarter of them were war movies, but today the Rex, which occupied a former pub owned by the Belgian Socialist Party, was showing a classic western: *The Plainsman,* a Cecil B. De Mille melodrama starring Gary Cooper as Wild Bill Hickock and Jean Arthur as Calamity Jane. The film had limited merits as a history of the American frontier—in 113 minutes, De Mille also managed to get Abraham Lincoln, Buffalo Bill Cody, General George Armstrong Custer, and a Cheyenne chief named Yellow Hand onto the screen—but the audience seemed rapt.

At 3:20 P.M., just after Gary Cooper learned of Custer's death at the Little Bighorn, a searing white light flashed across the auditorium as a V-2—unheard and unseen, launched from a new site in Holland—blew through the roof. The one-ton warhead detonated in the mezzanine with a roar audible on the Scheldt, "spewing up the inside" of the theater, as a witness reported. In an instant the huge screen pitched forward, and the balcony and ceiling plummeted onto patrons seated on the main floor.

Two hundred rescuers toiled for a week with cranes, bulldozers, and acetylene torches. One crew freed a GI who had been trapped for hours, *Yank* reported:

> When he stumbled out, he held two dead children in his arms. A Red Cross worker tried to take them away from him, but he savagely refused.… He had been sitting next to their mother whose head had been blown off.… The town is too small for the tragedy.

Recovery teams ultimately retrieved 567 bodies, more than half of them Allied soldiers, Navy gun crews, and merchant mariners. Four were German prisoners paroled for the afternoon. Another 200 servicemen were badly injured. Belgian victims included husbands, wives, and children fused together by the blast. Searchers found a dead girl in the balcony, a *Yank* reporter wrote, "half smiling, with the lipstick and makeup on her face untouched. Next to her was a row of soldiers looking straight ahead as if they were still absorbed in the movie." The city zoo became a morgue, but the stench in the Rex grew so awful that chemical decontamination squads had to spray bodies still pinned in the wreckage before work could continue.

Those who perished before the final reel of *The Plainsman* never saw Wild Bill shot in the back while playing cards in Deadwood, nor a heartbroken Calamity Jane cradling his body at the end of the movie. City officials promptly closed all cinemas and other

theaters for the duration. Carmen would not sing again in Antwerp until peace returned and the angel of death was no longer abroad in the land.

"Faith in a Friendly Universe"

DESPITE the travails of the Hürtgen Forest, Omar Bradley's optimism rebounded, and he assured his lieutenants that Operation QUEEN—the 12th Army Group assault designed to scourge enemy defenses east and north of Aachen—would be "the last big offensive necessary to bring Germany to her knees." Bradley shuttled between Luxembourg City and Spa, consolidating his divisions, encouraging his commanders, and scrutinizing weather forecasts. A successful lunge through the German lines to Düren could carry across the Roer River another twenty-five miles to the Rhine, he believed, replicating the breakout from St.-Lô to the Seine.

Just past the meridian on November 16, twenty-four hundred heavy bombers dropped ten thousand tons of high explosives and incendiaries on targets near Aachen—so much brimstone that a surrendering German confessed, "I feel very good about being captured." Then gusts of white flame leaped from twelve hundred artillery tubes across the front, and shells by the tens of thousands detonated downrange "like yellow blossoms bursting on a gray wallpaper," wrote the correspondent W. C. Heinz. Fluorescent orange sheets draped the decks of surging Sherman tanks, identifying them as friendly to the fighter-bombers swarming overhead, and infantry shock battalions again surged eastward toward the Roer, in that hunched scamper of exposed men trying to make themselves small. The sound of musketry became general, and it was said that the soldiers "all had the same expression because they had no expression at all." In some sectors, sixty-inch searchlights, each like a tiny sun with 800 million candlepower, would point the way through the autumnal gloom, illuminating minefields and bedazzling defenders.

The entrenched enemy quickly stiffened. In Collins's VII Corps, which spearheaded First Army on the right with nine attacking infantry regiments and an armored combat command, some companies managed only eight hundred yards before dusk. Tanks made a modest dent in the Stolberg corridor, but at a price: forty-four of the sixty-four Shermans at the point of the spear. In four days, the 1st Division would advance two miles and lose a thousand men; the next two miles cost another three thousand casualties. The 104th Division, commanded by Major General Terry de la Mesa Allen, who had led the adjacent Big Red One in Africa and Sicily, outflanked the town of Eschweiler, where still-hot food and burning candles evidenced an enemy decamping in haste. But even after a week, General Hodges would find the Roer several miles beyond his grasp, and the battle reduced to a "house-by-house killing match." Nor did Ninth Army on the left fare much better in attacking the plashy, mine-infested crescent between the rivers Wurm and Roer, where fifty stone villages had been converted into Wehrmacht citadels. As of November 22, XIX Corps had advanced three or four miles, fighting not only Model's legions, but mud, despair, and a dozen types of mine.

Thirty days hath November, and only on two of them did it neither rain nor snow. Rainfall was triple the monthly average. Rain grayed the soldiers, as it had in Italy, melding them with the mud until they seemed no more than clay with eyes, as ugly as the beet and cabbage fields in which they fought. Radios and mine detectors shorted out, trucks bogged to the bumpers, and frozen mud made wool coats unbearably bulky. "Men were forced to discard their overcoats because they lacked the strength to wear them," a staff officer noted. "Their hands are so numb that they have to help one another on with their equipment." Riflemen tied kerchiefs around the triggers and bolts of their M-1s in a futile effort to keep them clean; condoms or the waxed paper from ration crackers covered the muzzles. Army ordnance shops and French fabricators made a million or more "duck bills," five-inch steel cleats welded onto tank tracks to widen their purchase and give them better traction in the mud. A single Sherman could wear over three hundred of the things and still get stuck.

This was "thee or me" combat, in a First Army phrase, and it made men sardonic, fatalistic, and deeply sad. A soldier in the 5th Division wrote home, "They say cleanliness is next to Godliness. I say it's next to impossible.… If I am killed and go to hell it can't be any worse than infantry combat." A nineteen-year-old comrade wrote, "With every heartbeat I seemed to hear a voice, relentlessly, and ever louder, saying, 'It's coming, it's coming, it's coming, nearer, nearer.'" A quartermaster soldier almost hit by a German shell told Robert Capa, "That one sounded like, 'You ain't goin' back to Alabama.'" Most soldiers now "didn't bother to button our flies," a GI in the 78th Division reported. "Convenience for frequent emptying of a nervous bladder was preferable to pissing your pants." An intelligence officer who would serve six terms as governor of Arkansas, Major Orval E. Faubus, found that he could no longer recall when the hollyhocks bloomed in his native Ozarks. "One forgets so much," he mused. When his young son wrote that he had just seen *Snow White*, Faubus buckled. "I wonder," he asked, "why I had to love him so much."

Even the best soldiers frayed. Lieutenant Colonel Creighton Abrams, a storied tank commander who eventually would wear four stars, wrote his wife:

> My heart and soul have been torn and seared by so many things already, by losses, by frustrations, by errors.… I haven't been dry, I haven't been warm, except for quick naps I haven't slept for two weeks. There's no time to eat right, there's no time to think—it's attack, attack, attack.

"War happens inside a man," Eric Sevareid concluded. "It happens to one man alone. It can never be communicated.… A million martyred lives leave an empty place at only one family table." Among the empty chairs was that of Captain Thomas F. O'Brien, a New Hampshire boy killed on his birthday in the opening hours of Operation QUEEN. "He did not suffer very long," the company war

diary recorded, “perhaps ten minutes.” Succeeding him in command of the 16th Infantry’s Cannon Company was his best friend, Captain Jack E. Golden, who like many 1st Division veterans battled recurrent malaria contracted in the Mediterranean. “I feel about eighty years old now,” Golden told his family in Texas. He was twenty-two.

> You get so tired you stop doing small things that are important to your safety and if you get tired enough you don’t care whether you live or die.… We gamble life and death. Daddy, you will understand this. Just like in cards you may win night after night but you can’t be lucky always.… I am always scared to death.

As fresh reserves came forward, legions of dead men were removed to the rear. Each field army developed assembly lines to handle five hundred bodies a day; under government regulations, twenty-five sufficed to open a new temporary cemetery. Great pains were taken to identify remains whenever possible. Innovative techniques allowed fingerprints to be lifted from bodies long buried and for hidden laundry marks to be extracted from shredded uniforms. Graves Registration artisans meticulously reconstructed mutilated faces with cosmetic wax so that Signal Corps photographs could be taken to help identify those without dogtags. Reuniting a dead man and his name was the last great service that could be rendered a comrade gone west.

For the living, small pleasures helped pass the time, since, as one soldier told his diary in November, “the process of making history is 90 percent boredom.” Blackjack and poker games raged in muddy beet-and-turnip burrows ten feet square, each illuminated by an old canteen filled with kerosene and a sock wick. During mail call, wrote the soldier-poet Karl Shapiro, “war stands aside for an hour.… A world is made human.” One officer told his wife that he had spent thirty minutes in an abandoned house “pulling the chain of a sit-down latrine and listening to the melodious crashing of water, just like home.”

Even for those who would outlive the war and die abed as old men in the next century, these were the most intense moments they would ever know. “I’ve learned what it means to be alive, to breathe and to feel,” a lieutenant in the 82nd Airborne wrote his sister. “I have seen men do such things, both good and bad, that surely the recording angel in heaven must rejoice and despair of them.” None could doubt that war would transform them, that at least some corner of the soul would never be what it once was. “I can see now,” a soldier in the 84th Division wrote his father on November 26, “how a man changes greatly.”

* * *

Operation QUEEN sputtered and stalled. After more than three weeks, Ninth Army closed to the west bank of the Roer, but not to the Rhine as Bradley had hoped. VII Corps in First Army would not reach the Roer until mid-December, requiring thirty-one days to move seven miles, or fifty feet an hour. Together the two armies suffered 38,000 battle casualties. In the three months since Staff Sergeant Holzinger became the first GI to set foot on German soil, the Allies had nowhere penetrated the border by more than twenty-two miles. Total American losses for the fall—killed, wounded, died of wounds, died of illness, died in accidents, missing, captured, sick, injured, battle-fatigued, imprisoned, suicides—climbed to 140,000.

The face reconstructors and the grave diggers stayed busy. SHAEF in October had set quotas for valor awards lest they be disbursed too promiscuously; each infantry division could give out three Distinguished Service Crosses, thirty-five Silver Stars, and seventy-nine Bronze Stars for every week in combat. Now the quotas seemed niggardly, and Eisenhower ordered the policy revised.

The Roer, already in spate from daily rain, remained susceptible to deliberate flooding. After several postponements for bad weather and at least one mission in which the navigators got lost, the Royal Air Force in early December dropped nearly two thousand tons on the Schwammenauel, the Urft, and other dams. Many direct hits did only enough damage to create a bit of sloshing downstream, and the RAF soon went back to smashing cities. SHAEF censors banned all reference to the dams in press dispatches, as if the enemy might not have noticed the Allies’ belated interest. Had even one of the four Army corps in QUEEN been able to fight on to the Rhine, the German plan for a surprise winter offensive—already far advanced—would no doubt have been disrupted if not undone. But no crossing of the Roer was yet feasible and the Rhine remained beyond reach.

Certainly the enemy had been badly hurt. The initial bombing had pulverized several Roer towns. Various German units disembarking from trains or otherwise vulnerable in Jülich and Düren were butchered. Of eight infantry battalions in one Volksgrenadier division, none could now muster even a hundred men. Twenty-two thousand gallons of napalm encouraged 8,000 Germans to surrender in the Ninth Army sector, among 100,000 prisoners who passed through 12th Army Group cages that fall. Enemy commanders were reduced to throwing clerks, engineers, and even veterinarians into the line. “Great losses,” a German officer added, “were occasioned by numerous frostbites.”

Yet there was no sign that Germany was on her knees, as Bradley had anticipated, and even he felt a resurgent gloom. “It is entirely possible,” he told a War Department visitor, “for the Germans to fight bitter delaying actions until 1 January 1946.”

* * *

Winter always seemed to catch the U.S. Army by surprise. The Americans had been unprepared for winter campaigning in the Atlas Mountains of Tunisia in 1942 and in the Apennines of Italy in 1943, and they were just as unready in 1944. Even before OVERLORD, War Department queries about cold-weather preparations had been mostly dismissed with a resentful scowl by Eisenhower’s provisioners. Arctic clothing tested at Anzio was offered to SHAEF but rejected as unnecessary. The Army’s quartermaster general in mid-August had predicted that “the war would not go into another winter,” and Major General Robert M. Littlejohn, the chief quartermaster in Europe, agreed that “the serious fighting cannot long continue.” In mid-September, Hodges assured his uneasy medical officers, “Don’t you know that this war is going to be over in a few weeks?” A late requisition for winter

clothing was submitted to the War Department "as a precautionary measure," but it included only enough to outfit one army of 350,000 soldiers at a time when four American armies were fighting in western Europe.

The alarming German resilience of late October had inspired Littlejohn to urge Bradley to expedite shipments of cold-weather kit to the battlefront. "General, the weather is getting cold. Soon you will need some winter clothing," the quartermaster told him in Luxembourg City. Bradley waved off the warning, saying, in Littlejohn's recollection, "The men are tough and can take it." Supply-line sclerosis and delays in opening Antwerp aggravated matters, as did the severe wear on all uniforms and equipment: even as theater commanders in late September belatedly requested 850,000 heavy overcoats—double the number contemplated just a month earlier—plus five million sets of wool undershirts and drawers, quartermasters faced a need to reclothe a million ragged U.S. soldiers, as well as 100,000 French troops and throngs of German prisoners. "We can't fight a winter war in the same clothes that we use in the summer," Captain Jack Golden wrote his family. "We should have learned a little last winter in Italy."

Instead, as the Army official history conceded, "front-line troops fought through a large part of the winter inadequately clothed." Far less than half of the requested underwear reached the theater, despite Littlejohn's contention that "wool is essential to combat, as much as ammunition." Shortages of wool socks in medium sizes forced Army laundries to try shrinking size 12 pairs, even as unintended shrinkage remained a galling problem, with a "high failure rate in all woolens." Three field launderings were typically enough to ruin a pair of socks, so the Army had to buy seven million new pairs a month.

The Army listed seventy different articles of winter clothing, guaranteeing a thousand permutations of confusion. Six different field jackets reached Europe, for example, and seven types of trousers. The "jacket, field, M-43" came in nineteen sizes, while the "jacket, field, pile" liner came in only thirteen, thus confounding mathematical efforts to match them. Attempts to develop decent sleeping bags were byzantine. The Harvard University Fatigue Laboratory invented a measuring unit of insulation called the "Clo," with one Clo defined as the protection provided by an ordinary business suit when worn in an Alaskan winter. A single bag of quilted down and waterfowl feathers rated seven Clos, while two layers of Army blankets covered with a cotton windbreaker earned four. More than sixty bag variants were tested, including some made of chopped chicken and turkey feathers, milkweed floss, and reindeer hide, but the materials mattered little if the bags failed to reach the field armies, as, in 1944, they commonly did.

The Army was said to believe that every GI was fashioned from four elements—a belly, genitalia, a bundle of conditioned reflexes, and a pair of feet. Insufficient attention was paid to the last of these components, for among body parts it was the foot that most plagued the American war effort in Europe. Four types of GI footgear were available in late fall, "none of which were entirely satisfactory," as a Pentagon investigation found. Combat boots fitted in warm weather were often too tight to accommodate more than a single pair of socks, and in rain and snow the boot was "nothing but a sponge tied around the soldier's foot," as General Littlejohn acknowledged. Far too few overshoes had been requisitioned, and virtually none larger than size 11 arrived before March 1945; half of the several million pairs eventually shipped to Europe proved too delicate to tug over a combat boot. The "shoepac," a rubber-and-leather boot designed to be worn with two pairs of heavy socks, was ill-fitting and leaky. Until December, only enough were requisitioned for a small fraction of the GIs who needed them, and far too few in widths E, EE, and EEE.

And so the soldier suffered. The first case of trench foot—a crippling injury to blood vessels and tissue caused by prolonged exposure to cold, wet conditions—had been reported on September 27. Within weeks, the syndrome was epidemic. "We are making some progress in the prevention of trench foot," Eisenhower wrote Marshall on November 27. That was untrue. In November and December trench foot and other cold weather health problems hospitalized 23,000 men, nearly all of them combat infantrymen—a loss equivalent to the infantry strength of five and a half divisions. By late November, trench foot accounted for one-quarter of all hospital admissions. In Third Army, where trench foot was particularly virulent, physicians reported that almost none of the afflicted soldiers would return to duty before spring; four in ten eventually were evacuated home as disabled. A 30th Division account described "long lines of cots on which lay soldier after soldier, their feet sticking out from under the blankets, with a little ball of cotton wool separating each toe."

Almost nothing had been learned from the Italian campaign, despite ample warnings after the experience of the previous winter. Nor had the Americans learned from the British or the Germans, who enforced prophylactic measures such as dry socks, foot massages, frequent inspections, and soldier education. Many GIs were told to lace their boots tighter, precisely the wrong advice. Bradley, who acknowledged soldiers "not having their wet shoes off for periods of five to ten days," warned in late November that 12th Army Group could lose a thousand men to trench foot every day. In the event, 46,000 troops would be hospitalized by spring, almost 10 percent of admitted casualties in Europe, an avoidable calamity even worse than the malaria epidemic that had decimated Allied armies in Sicily. By Army regulation, trench foot patients, unlike frostbite victims, were ineligible for the Purple Heart, and some commanders likened the disgrace of trench foot to that of a venereal disease.

As every buck private knew, the weather would get worse before it got better. First Army meteorologists in one forecast put the chance of sunshine at "1 in 1,000." Axle-deep mud caused a soldier to write that he had "never realized its omnipresence, persistency, and mucilaginous qualities. I especially dislike wading through it to get food." Soldiers complained that conditions were so awful that they risked "trench body." Men coped as they could by rubbing peppermint extract on their toes, or wedging newspaper in their shoes and around their genitals, or kneeling rather than standing in foxholes, or building sleeping platforms above warm dungheaps, or fashioning homemade footwear from wool blankets and overshoes. An antiaircraft gunner who noticed Eisenhower's fleece-lined boots during a visit to the front offered five hundred francs for the pair. The supreme commander pulled off the boots and offered them in trade for "one dead Kraut."

* * *

The soldiers' misery contributed to a spike in combat exhaustion, a medical diagnosis coined in Tunisia to replace the discredited

"shell shock" of World War I. The brutal fighting, oppressive conditions, and recognition that the war was far from over took a profound psychic toll, not least among troops said to be "ghosted," haunted by the memory of dead comrades. "Each moment of combat imposes a strain so great that men will break down in direct relation to the intensity and duration of their exposure," the theater surgeon general told Eisenhower. "Thus psychiatric casualties are as inevitable as gunshot and shrapnel wounds in warfare."

Those evacuated from the front with combat exhaustion—some were so badly unhinged they had to be immobilized by tying their boot laces together and lashing gun belts around their arms—were said to be "going back to the kitchen." So many thousands now headed to the kitchen that SHAEF censors banned disclosure of their numbers; the public would not know that the U.S. Army alone hospitalized 929,000 men for "neuropsychiatric" reasons in World War II, including as many as one in four admissions during the bitter fall of 1944. "I can't take much more of this fighting because it is getting the best of me," an infantryman wrote his family. "This nerve business I've been trying to cover up from my own men, but I'm sure they have noticed it because I've noticed it in some of them."

In contrast to the Army's nonchalance about cold-weather injuries, the military had learned much in the Mediterranean about combat exhaustion, and that experience served the ranks well in western Europe. Most patients were treated as temporarily disabled and kept close to the front, to preserve their self-respect and emotional links to their unit. Division clearing stations now usually included a psychiatrist; as in Italy, exhausted patients often were put into a deep sleep, sometimes for days, with "Blue 88s," sodium amytal or nembutal capsules. Of every one hundred exhaustion patients hospitalized in the European theater, ninety returned to duty in some capacity, although many were finished as killer riflemen.

But neither competent treatment nor all the Blue 88s in Europe could efface war's capacity to fracture men's psyches. "Between the physical fear of going forward and the moral fear of turning back, there is a predicament of exceptional awkwardness," an American Civil War veteran had once observed, and that dilemma still obtained. "The only way one could get out of battle," a Canadian psychiatrist wrote, "was death, wounds, self-inflicted wounds, and going 'nuts.'" Lieutenant Paul Fussell, who would narrowly survive the war to become one of its shrewdest expositors, believed that "after five months of combat duty, a frontline officer is used up, neurasthenic beyond saving." Most experts concluded that soldiers wore out for good after 200 to 240 days of battle, although two psychologists monitoring the advance into Germany posited that a GI's combat skills began to decline after a month of fighting, with many "close to a vegetative state" after forty-five days. One soldier who had been wounded for a second time tried to explain in a letter home why he was still hospitalized. "I'm not badly injured," he wrote. "But I guess I'm hurt, Pop. Hurt inside—in my brain."

How to mitigate such psychic battering would remain a quandary, as it had been since Homer's day. "Morale is a darkling plain, littered with dead clichés, swept by pronunciamentos, and only fitfully lit up by the electrical play of insight," an AAF study declared. The Army's surgeon general recommended that frontline infantrymen be relieved for six months after completing two hundred days in combat, but the nation lacked enough replacements to effect such a solution. "Under present policy no man is removed from combat duty until he has become worthless," a report to Eisenhower noted. "The infantryman considers this a bitter injustice." One chaplain was reduced to suggesting that "sound mental health requires a satisfactory life-purpose and faith in a friendly universe." On the battlefields of Europe in 1944, no such cosmology seemed likely.

* * *

George Patton had encamped in a villa with a grilled gateway at 10 Rue Auxerre in Nancy, not far from the World War I battlefields where he had first won glory as a tank commander. Owned by a French coal baron, the mansion was said by one visitor to be "filled with the most impossible bric-a-brac, including gilded angels three feet high and cherubs hanging from the ceilings, cheap and showy statuary lining the halls along with dull green, brown, and purple tapestries." Aides drove to Burgundy on wine-buying sprees, and Willie the timid bull terrier often dozed on a chair by the sideboard. Eleven-inch German rail guns twenty-five miles away had found Third Army's range, occasionally lobbing 600-pound shells into Nancy, including three rounds that broke the windows and doorjambs at No. 10 one night, while wrecking the house across the street.

Patton swanned about Lorraine with studied insouciance, loudly singing the obscene verses of "Lilly from Piccadilly" in his open jeep with its bleating klaxon and three-star insignia front and rear. To one reporter he showed off his famous ivory-handled pistol—"I killed my first man with it"—but he turned down a $250,000 offer for his diary from the Hearst newspaper empire. The discretion was well-advised: recent entries suggested that "Ike is the best general the British have" and that Third Army had been "halted to save Monty's face." Patton also speculated that supply allocations in the field were somehow adjusted to affect electoral politics at home, "a most sinister idea." When Eisenhower ordered fifty thousand men in XV Corps transferred from Third Army to Seventh Army for better logistical support through Marseille, Patton confided to his diary that the new 6th Army Group commander in southern France, Lieutenant General Jake Devers, "is a liar and, by his glibness, talked Eisenhower into giving him the corps.… May God rot his guts."

Incessant rain made Patton even more peevish. Picking up a spoon in the Rue Auxerre dining room during another downpour, he bent it double and grumbled, "How long, O Lord, how long?" To Bea he wrote, employing his unique orthography, "Send me a couple of bottles of pink medicin. When I am not attacking I get bilious.… It is raining like hell—what a country."

Because of the *Westwall*'s eastward bow, which traced the German border, Third Army still had not approached the Siegfried Line. The removal of XV Corps and other large units had shrunk Patton's strength by 100,000 men, to 250,000, although as Bradley's right wing he still mustered six infantry and three armored divisions, along with thirty-eight additional field artillery and fourteen tank destroyer battalions on a seventy-five-mile front. In keeping with Eisenhower's strategy to close on the Rhine along the entire Allied line—the same concept that had spawned Operation QUEEN and the relentless head-butting in the Hürtgen—Third

Army's immediate target remained the industrial Saar and the great river beyond. Yet the Rhine remained 130 miles away. Between here and there stood not only scores of manure-stacked Lorraine villages and obdurate German defensive works, but also one of the most rigorously fortified cities in Europe.

Metz had become an obsession for Patton. His earlier plan to blow past the city on his way to Berlin had been frustrated by supply shortages, unexpected enemy resistance, Allied politics, and those relentless rains that robbed the American Army of its mobility. Now he was determined to reduce this ancient citadel with a double envelopment and a direct thrust across the Moselle, which virtually enfolded Metz and provided a natural breastwork to the west.

Patton claimed that Metz had not fallen to assault since being sacked by Huns in 451, but in fact the Germans had taken it from the French in 1870, only to lose it again after World War I. Fortified and refortified over the centuries—Vauban told Louis XIV that the city was designed to defend not just a province but all of France—Metz was now a sprawling constellation of forty-three forts. Some were built to bolster the interwar Maginot Line, but the most modern works faced west. More than a dozen nineteenth-century redoubts arranged in an inner circle currently served as strongpoints, while a casemated outer ring, built by Germans after the Franco-Prussian War and strengthened upon Hitler's annexation of Lorraine in 1940, included fuming guns nested in rotating steel turrets, deep dry moats sixty feet wide, and interlocking fields of fire that swept all avenues. Mines, barbed wire, and murderous machine-gun nests complemented the concrete bastions. Patton's explanation that "we're using Metz to blood the new divisions" vexed Bradley, although not enough to overrule his army commander. "Leave it alone," Bradley urged. "For God's sake, lay off it.… You are taking too many casualties for what you are accomplishing." Patton ignored the criticism, telling his diary that "the tent maker"—Omar—was "too conservative.… I wish he had a little more daring."

Daring had thus far gained naught. The September fiasco at Dornot was followed by an October debacle at Fort Driant, described by one historian as "probably the most formidable and well-prepared fortification that the American Army attempted to reduce in all of World War II." A three-hundred-acre slab of concrete overlooking the Moselle valley, five miles southwest of Metz, Driant was said by Army intelligence to be "manned by about 100 old men and boys, whose morale is low." Not true: it was stoutly defended by diehards behind walls seven feet thick, with a pentagonal central fort supplied through arterial tunnels. Neither American bombs, nor napalm, nor point-blank artillery salvos by Third Army's biggest guns had any discernible effect; nor did day after day of infantry attacks that included pouring hot oil through Driant's gun embrasures. "We were attempting to assault a medieval fortress in a medieval manner," wrote a reporter with the 5th Infantry Division. Patton ordered his XX Corps to throw every last man at Driant if necessary because, as his chief of staff noted in the command diary, "he could not allow an attack by this army to fail."



It failed anyway. After a week's hard fighting, GIs had reduced only two peripheral barracks outside Driant, while the enemy still held five main casemates. Patton scolded his generals, suggesting that miscreants atone for their failings by personally leading the next attack, "or not come back." But by mid-October the assault had collapsed—Third Army's first substantial reverse. (Efforts were made to keep the bad news out of the papers.) In an October 19 letter to Lieutenant General Jimmy Doolittle, commander of Eighth Air Force, Patton wrote, "Those low bastards, the Germans, gave me my first bloody nose when they compelled us to abandon our attack on Fort Driant in the Metz area." He requested "a revenge bombardment," with "large bombs of the nastiest type, and as many as you can spare, to blow up this damn fort so that it becomes nothing but a hole."

Even the largest, nastiest bombs failed to reduce Driant, and Patton now planned a bigger, broader attack on Metz, the biggest and broadest of his life. After stockpiling ammunition for several weeks, he wrote in his diary on Sunday, November 5:

> Had a bad case of short breath this morning—my usual reaction to an impending fight or match. Went to church.… Had Marlene Dietrich and her troupe for lunch. Later they gave us a show. Very low comedy, almost an insult to human intelligence.

A day later he met with the reporters covering Third Army. "I told you we were going to be stopped for a while, and I was correct," he told them. "Now we are going to start again. You do some lying and say this is simply what we called in the last war 'correcting a line.'" To Bea he confessed, "I am having indigestion and the heaves as I always do before a match. I suppose I would be no good if I did not; it is not fear as to the result but simply anxiety to get started."

Rain fell for a third consecutive day, giving Patton what one correspondent described as "a tired, aged appearance." Two senior commanders arrived at the house on Rue Auxerre at seven o'clock on Tuesday evening, dripping amid the bric-a-brac and the

cherubim peering down from the ceiling. The officers pleaded for a postponement of the attack until the skies cleared and the swollen rivers subsided. Patton refused.

* * *

He woke at three A.M. on Wednesday, November 8, to the thrum of rain on the roof. Patton had deliberately chosen this day to commemorate the TORCH landings in Morocco two years before; now, padding around the bedroom, he reminded himself to forgo the counsel of his fears and thumbed through a copy of Rommel's World War I memoir, *Infantry Attacks*. He was sufficiently consoled by the account of foul weather on the Western Front in September 1914 to once more fall asleep.

Four hundred guns roused him again at 5:15, a sound he likened to "very many doors all slamming at once." Third Army would shoot tens of thousands of shells that day; through the front curtains, this first barrage made the northeastern sky gleam as if kindled by heat lightning. The rain had stopped, and stars sprinkled the heavens above Nancy. "I thanked God for His goodness to me," Patton scribbled in his diary.

Bradley phoned at 7:45 to wish him luck, then put Eisenhower on the line. "I expect great things of you," the supreme commander said. "Carry the ball all the way." At ten A.M., from a XII Corps observation post overlooking the Moselle south of Metz, Patton watched hundreds of fighter-bombers pirouette in the morning sun before blistering enemy command posts and artillery batteries. "I'm almost sorry for those German bastards," he muttered. Smoke screens boiled across the river, at its highest flood stage since 1919, and three infantry divisions from XII Corps lunged forward, to be followed by a fourth in the afternoon. Two armored divisions coiled in the brakes and hollows, ready to exploit any fracture in the German line. The rains returned at five P.M., but Patton sensed momentum in his attack. At supper that night, an aide reported, "for the first time in days he was relaxed and talkative."

Doolittle's air fleets on Thursday brought more of those big, nasty bombs Patton favored—1,300 heavies dumping 2,600 tons on seven Metz forts in Operation MADISON. Dropped through dense overcast by bombardiers relying on murky radar images, more than 98 percent of the payloads missed their targets, often by miles. The infantry soldiered on, resupplied with rations, plasma, ammunition, and toilet paper tossed from the cockpit doors of single-engine spotter planes flying at ten to twenty feet, too low for German antiaircraft crews to depress their 20mm guns. As part of a XX Corps attack north of the city, gutful troops from the 358th Infantry scampered across the roof of Fort Koenigsmacker, blowing open steel doors with satchel charges and dumping gasoline and thermite grenades down ventilation shafts. Though badly flayed by German machine guns, the men rejected an order to fall back, replying by radio, "This fort is ours." Soon it was: almost four hundred Germans emerged with their hands raised, the first Metz bastion to fall.

Almost half a mile wide, the Moselle rose farther until water lapped through villages fronting the river. Floodwaters inundated German minefields, which helped eight battalions from the 90th Division get a purchase on the far bank, but building a bridge to carry tanks took days. Engineers blue with cold and wearing flak jackets struggled to hold bridge pontoons in place against the bully current and crashing artillery. "The air seemed filled with white tracers," a nineteen-year-old soldier in the 5th Division reported. "Men would get up in front of me, head toward the trees and, as a string of tracers would pass through them, [fall] to the ground or into the stream."

"Groans, suffering, and pain. Men shot to pieces," a surgical technician entered in his diary. "All wards were completely filled, also the barber shop, supply tent, pharmacy, and laboratory tents. And finally, the mess tent filled up." A surgeon toiling over the mangled legs of a soldier whose jeep triggered a mine described "bolts, washers, [and] bushings in the muscle, as on a work bench." Another GI was wounded when a shell detonated in a barnyard, "filling his thigh from knee to buttocks with manure, all tightly packed … as into a sausage." Wounded men who had narrowly escaped death lay in silence on the ward cots, the surgeon added, "like somebody rescued from the ledge of a skyscraper." Patton spent his fifty-ninth birthday on November 11 "by getting up where the dead were still warm," as he wrote Bea. "However the enemy must be suffering more, so it is a question of mutual crucifiction [*sic*] till he cracks."

On November 14, nearly a week into the offensive, engineers finished a Bailey bridge north of the city. Early the next morning, the 10th Armored Division rumbled over the Moselle in a spitting sleet storm, threatening a wide envelopment in tandem with the 90th Division, twenty miles above Metz, complemented by a shallower swing in the south by the 6th Armored and 80th Infantry Divisions. As other forces pinched the city's near flanks, the 95th Division battered German garrison forces west of the river; many of these were the overage or infirm troops known as *Halb-soldaten*, half soldiers. Eisenhower arrived for a visit on November 15, tromping about in the mud before dining with Patton on the Rue Auxerre. "It was very jolly," an aide noted, "and the two generals sat up and talked until after two A.M."

Battlefield advances made them jolly. The next day, Patton more than doubled the daily artillery allocation for XII Corps to twenty thousand rounds, explaining, "If we win now we will not need shells later; if we do not use the shells now, we will not win the war." Hitler had twice rebuffed Rundstedt's suggestion to abandon Metz, but Nazi functionaries fled in stolen Renaults and Citroëns. The city water system had been smashed, ammunition was short, and reinforcements were so feeble—including constables armed with ancient French rifles and decrepit supernumeraries wearing brassards in lieu of uniforms—that a Wehrmacht general described them as "drops of water on a hot stone." The phones failed on November 17 as the last German civilians were evacuated to the east by a police escort from Darmstadt. A new garrison commander summoned from the Eastern Front, General Heinrich Kittel, was made to swear an oath to defend the city "to the last man and cartridge," the usual immolation blithely demanded of those in harm's way by those far from it.

At 10:30 A.M. on November 19, the two wings of Third Army completed the encirclement of Metz when soldiers from the 5th

Division met cavalry troopers from the 90th seven miles east of the city, in Retonfey. Patton's two corps now held a line ten to twenty miles east of where they had begun eleven days earlier. In Metz, the end came quickly, with mercifully few room-to-room brawls. Six thousand prisoners were captured; General Kittel was discovered on November 21 in an underground field hospital, suffused with morphine after being badly wounded while fighting in the line. The city formally surrendered at 2:35 P.M. the next day.

* * *

Patton drove into Metz as the conquering hero, sirens wailing to herald his arrival, punctuated by the "steamboat trombone" on his personal jeep. "It was very pleasant to drive into a town which has not been captured for more than 1,300 years," he wrote, still insisting on his fictitious version of history. To Bea he added, "I will be hard to live with. I have been a sort of demi-god too long." He personally interrogated General Anton Dunckern, the bug-eyed security commander for Lorraine, who had been apprehended by a 5th Division patrol while trying to slink out of Metz with an aide. After threatening to turn him over to the French, who "know how to make people talk," Patton told an interpreter, "If he wanted to be a good Nazi, he could have died then and there. It would have been a pleasanter death than what he will get now." When Dunckern protested that he had been captured by Americans and should therefore remain in U.S. custody, Patton snapped, "When I am dealing with vipers, I do not have to be bothered by any foolish ideas. … I understand German very well, but I will not demean myself by speaking such a language."

An honor guard played ruffles and flourishes for the victors. Patton sprinkled medals among his legions, acclaiming what he deemed "one of the epic river crossings of history," and Metz formally returned to French custody. GIs in muddy boots and frayed uniforms stood at attention in a central square, as a military band with colors flying preceded French soldiers in black berets, white leggings, and Sam Browne belts, each with two submachine guns slung over his shoulders.

Little mention was made of the outlying forts, several of which remained defiantly unconquered. Sherman tanks blackened those works with thousands of rounds of French white-phosphorus ammunition, using special firing pins improvised by Third Army armorers. Fort St.-Privat surrendered on November 29, yielding more than five hundred prisoners, scores of whom had phosphorus burns. Fort Driant, that hard nut, would hold out until December 8, and Fort Jeanne d'Arc was the last to fold, on December 13.

By that time Third Army's left wing had finally closed on the Saar River and the Siegfried Line, although Patton's right remained short of the German frontier. The sixty-mile advance in the Lorraine campaign had liberated another five thousand square miles of France, but at a cost in three months of nearly a hundred thousand U.S. battle and nonbattle casualties. Third Army had yet to breach the *Westwall*, much less reach the Rhine, and the long autumn amounted to what one historian would call "Patton's bloodiest and least successful campaign," a season of unimaginative and dispersed frontal attacks of the sort he ridiculed when lesser generals launched them. Unable to resist the prestige of bagging Metz, he had forfeited the single greatest advantage the Americans now held over their adversaries—mobility—by permitting much of his army to be drawn into a sanguinary siege.

In a note to Henry L. Stimson, the secretary of war, Patton proposed that as part of any surrender terms the Germans be required to keep Lorraine, "this nasty country where it rains every day and where the whole wealth of the people consists in assorted manure piles." He also summoned the Third Army chaplain, Colonel James H. O'Neill, to his office in an old French barracks in Nancy. "Chaplain, how much praying is being done in the Third Army?" Patton asked.

"I'm afraid to admit it," O'Neill said, "but I do not believe that much praying is going on."

"We must ask God to stop these rains," Patton said, staring through his high windows at the sopping landscape outside. "These rains are the margin that holds defeat or victory." O'Neill typed out an improvised appeal on a three-by-five card, and engineers reproduced a quarter-million copies to be distributed throughout Third Army. "Restrain these immoderate rains with which we have had to contend," the text asked.

> Grant us fair weather for Battle. Graciously hearken to us as soldiers who call upon Thee that, armed with Thy power, we may advance from victory to victory, and crush the oppression and wickedness of our enemies, and establish Thy justice among men and nations. Amen.

To his diary a week later Patton confided, "It has certainly rained less since my prayer."

To the Land of Doom

FAR above the killing fields, the struggle for command of the skies had long tilted in the Allies' favor, allowing some four thousand Anglo-American heavy bombers flying from England and Italy to get on with what an airman called "the murder business": the gutting of the German homeland with well over one million tons of high explosives, incendiaries, and fragmentation bombs.

Allied hopes for strategic bombing early in the war had proved too optimistic, especially the belief that precision strikes would quickly eviscerate the enemy war economy, and so spare ground forces the blood-letting that had characterized World War I. Imprecise targeting, bad weather, and savage German defenses had forced Allied strategists to use the bomber fleet as a blunt instrument, a bludgeon rather than a scalpel. Terrible aircraft losses in the first three months of 1944, including almost 800 U.S. heavies shot down, had been stanched in the spring by the belated arrival of the P-51 Mustang, a fighter with sufficient range to escort bombers to any target on the Continent. An unexpected surge in German aircraft production, with 10,000 single-engine

fighters built from May through September, had again challenged Allied hegemony; during the summer, another 900 bombers went down from Eighth Air Force alone. But the Luftwaffe now was in a death spiral, having lost 31,000 planes before D-Day and another 13,000 from June through October. By July, novice German fighter pilots typically received less than thirty flying hours in training before being hurled into combat, less than one-tenth the Anglo-American average; the life expectancy of a Luftwaffe pilot could be measured in weeks if not hours. “Each time I close the canopy before take-off,” wrote one airman, “I feel that I am closing the lid of my own coffin.”

Of necessity, antiaircraft flak had become the primary German defense. Flak was credited with destroying 6,400 Anglo-American planes in 1944 and damaging 27,000 others. A standard 88mm flak gun fired a 17-pound shrapnel grenade that climbed thirteen thousand feet in six seconds before bursting into fifteen hundred shards that could perforate any plane within two hundred yards. Fortunately for Allied crews, sixteen thousand 88mm shells were required on average to bring down a single heavy bomber. Flak nevertheless “held an evil, hypnotic fascination,” an American pilot acknowledged. Heavier German guns were deployed to reach high-flying B-17s, and by war’s end 1.2 million Germans would man the Reich’s ground-based air defenses.

British bombers, flying mostly at night, tried to avoid what a BBC reporter over Berlin described as “a wall of light.” A blue-tinted searchlight beam, guided by radar, would fix on an approaching plane, drawing other searchlights into a brilliant cone so that “the bomber appeared to ride at its moving vertex” while gunfire converged on the target. “The only hope,” an RAF crewman said, “was to get clear before the searchlights could form a cone.” American bombers, flying by day, sought to counter German search and fire-control radars with an expanding array of electronic jammers; one study estimated that effective jamming meant that 25 percent fewer planes were destroyed and 50 percent fewer were spared serious flak damage compared to those flying without countermeasures. Still, as the poet-airman Randall Jarrell wrote:

> Six miles from earth, loosed from its dream of life,
> I woke to black flak and the nightmare fighters.
> When I died they washed me out of the turret with a hose.

Air supremacy provided an invaluable advantage to Allied ground forces and spared the lives of many Anglo-American fliers, even if that meant little to those washed out with a hose. The Allied strategic air effort in Europe cost some eighty thousand lives and ten thousand aircraft, and the vast tactical air war in direct support of ground forces added more losses. In the first half of 1944, battle casualty rates for every 1,000 bomber crewmen serving six months in combat included 712 killed or missing and 175 wounded: 89 percent. By one calculation, barely one in four U.S. airmen completed twenty-five missions over Germany, a minimum quota that was soon raised to thirty and then thirty-five on the assumption that the liberation of France and Belgium and the attenuation of German airpower made flying less lethal.

Perhaps less lethal, but hardly less stressful: the seven British crewmen aboard a Lancaster bomber sometimes spoke of being joined by “the eighth passenger”—fear. Of 7,374 Lancasters built, 3,349 would be lost in action. A British airman had just a one-in-five chance of surviving the loss of his plane, in part because the Lancaster had only a single emergency exit. For an American crewman, the chance was three in five. (The B-17 Flying Fortress had four exits.) In British Bomber Command, two of every five fliers did not live to complete a tour of duty, a mortality rate far exceeding that of British infantrymen on the Western Front in World War I.

The simplest missions could be fatal: an American B-24 returning to base from a training flight clipped a tree in Lancashire during a violent thunderstorm, then cartwheeled through the village of Freckleton. A wall of flame one hundred feet high burned for two hours, engulfing the infants’ wing of Holy Trinity School and the Sad Sack Snack Bar, which catered to airmen. Of the sixty-one dead, more than half were children, including some who had been evacuated from London to escape the V-weapon barrage. Bing Crosby, in England on a goodwill tour, found himself too stricken to sing at the sight of the burned children in a local hospital ward. Instead he stood outside in a corridor, crooning “Don’t Fence Me In” and “White Christmas” as elegies to innocence and youth.

High though the war’s cost in men and machines, the U.S. industrial and military base by the fall of 1944 was producing far more planes, pilots, gunners, bombardiers, and navigators than needed to replace combat losses; during the winter, the training of new pilots, which had climbed to more than 100,000 annually, would be cut by over 70 percent. Yet General Henry H. “Hap” Arnold, chief of the Army Air Forces, fretted over reports of “incipient weaknesses” among bomber crews in Europe, which he described as “lack of respect (amounting to near hatred) for certain very senior general officers;… lack of desire to kill Germans; lack of understanding of political necessity for fighting the war; general personal lassitude.” Low morale did plague at least part of the force; a rest-and-recuperation program in Atlantic City, Miami, and Santa Monica was abandoned because the interlude at home seemed to make airmen more resentful of civilians, bellicose toward their officers, and reluctant to return to combat. An officer in the 319th Bombardment Group described a fellow pilot as “so shot that he spills food at the table, jerks all night in his sleep, and is highly irritable.… He’ll kill a whole crew someday and it will be called ‘pilot error.’ Oh well, such is war.” Lieutenant Joseph T. Hallock, a twenty-two-year-old flying in B-17s, told the reporter Brendan Gill, “Sometimes I feel as if I’d never had a chance to live at all, but most of the time I feel as if I’d lived forever.” At precarious moments over Germany, he confessed, he would whisper: “God, you gotta. You gotta get me back. God, listen, you gotta.”

In the airman’s world, those afflicted with “the clanks”—a paralyzing inability to shake a sense of dread—were known as “dead men flying.” Bailing out of a stricken “kite” was called “giving birth,” and “chop girls” were English women shunned by superstitious crews because they had befriended airmen who then went missing in action. Temperatures of minus sixty degrees Fahrenheit left brown frostbite patches on foreheads and buttocks, at least until deployment of the F-3 heated suit, with 250 watts

flowing through wired jackets, trousers, and felt slippers to give eight Clos of insulation. Plastic surgeons learned to rebuild burned-away faces; after sculpting new lips from skin grafted off an arm, they tattooed them red and then added tiny black dots to simulate mustache whiskers.

In the airman's world, a B-17 pilot sat in the five-foot cube of his cockpit with "an oxygen mask full of drool" amid the roar of four engines. He fiddled with 130 switches, dials, gauges, levers, and pedals long enough to dump his payload of bombs—"big ugly dead things," in one officer's phrase—and then fled for home. In this world, Germany was known as "the Land of Doom." In this world, the pilot John Muirhead took pains not to grow close to his Flying Fortress crewmates, because "if I didn't know them, I would not grieve."

* * *

How best to destroy the Land of Doom had perplexed air strategists for years. The Combined Chiefs at the Casablanca conference in January 1943 called for "the progressive destruction and dislocation of the German military, industrial, and economic system" in order to undermine the enemy "capacity for armed resistance." But where was a big modern state most vulnerable? Some analysts studied the U.S. industrial system in search of "instructive hints to what might be German weak points," such as the single plant in Chicago that processed 90 percent of all tantalum, a corrosion-resistant metal critical to radar and radio production. Others scrutinized Germany directly, reviewing thousands of intelligence reports. One conclusion: sustained bombing of enemy steel plants was pointless, because the Reich was using only 20 percent of its steel-making capacity.

But Germany did have an Achilles heel: oil. The Allied powers controlled more than 90 percent of the world's natural oil, compared to just 3 percent for the Axis. German schemes to exploit Soviet oil fields in the Caucasus had been thwarted by battlefield reverses in Africa and Russia. By the spring of 1944, this vulnerability became increasingly evident to Allied intelligence analysts. Shortages impeded the training of some combat divisions, fuel cuts were imposed on the German navy, and fleets of vehicles were converted to wood-burning engines. Nearly all Luftwaffe aviation fuel came from synthetic-oil plants, and German chemists sought energy substitutes in such unlikely European flora as acorns and grapes. An OSS analysis asserted that further reduction of the Reich's oil production would have "rapid and drastic effects upon her military capacity." Ultra intercepts revealed Berlin's alarm at Allied raids on the vast Romanian petroleum facilities around Ploesti and against oil targets in Germany. British intelligence by late May had concluded that sustained air attacks on German oil production would cause disastrous industrial shortages within three to six months. "Oil," warned a decrypted message from Japanese officials in Berlin to Tokyo, "is Germany's problem."

No one believed that more than Lieutenant General Carl A. Spaatz, commander of the U.S. Strategic Air Forces in Europe. Taciturn and unpretentious, with passions for fishing and cribbage, "Tooey" Spaatz was an aviation pioneer who had shot down three German planes in World War I and helped set a world record for staying aloft in 1929 through innovative midair refueling. *Time* claimed that he now kept "the finest poker table in London.… He bets with a heavy hand [and] bluffs outrageously." Uncanny in his ability to draw an inside straight, Spaatz sometimes played with a kitten tucked into his uniform blouse for luck. The need to destroy the Luftwaffe, and Eisenhower's decision to focus on German transportation targets before Normandy, had delayed a full-force blow at the enemy's oil industry. Yet even before D-Day, the supreme commander had heeded Spaatz's pleas by authorizing several oil raids, among them a mid-May attack by nine hundred bombers that also resulted in the destruction of sixty Luftwaffe fighters desperately struggling to defend the target.

No sooner had OVERLORD forces come ashore than Spaatz declared, on June 8, that the "primary strategic aim of United States Strategic Air Forces is now to deny oil to enemy armed forces," a decree that remained in force until the war ended. An estimated 30 percent of German production came from the Ploesti refineries, with another 36 percent from two dozen synthetic plants that converted brown coal to gasoline and aviation fuel. Sixty crude-oil refineries in Germany, Austria, Hungary, Poland, and Czechoslovakia provided the rest. Fifteenth Air Force in Italy would target refineries in Romania, Vienna, and Budapest, along with synthetic-oil plants in Silesia, Poland, and the Sudetenland. Eighth Air Force in England would focus on seven large synthetic plants in central Germany, as well as some twenty refineries mostly in northern Germany. British intelligence in late July posited that oil shortages could cause a German military collapse by the end of 1944.

That estimate was too rosy, but German production did plummet through the summer. Ploesti had been wrecked by bombers even before the Red Army overran the region in August, and of ninety-one oil facilities remaining in Hitler's hands only three were at full production by early fall.

Not everyone subscribed to the oil strategy. A directive from the Combined Chiefs on September 25 gave first priority to enemy petroleum targets, followed by the German transportation system and tank production facilities. But Bomber Command resisted the edict. Its leadership was determined to finish the job of sowing terror and chaos by destroying German cities, a project that had begun with incendiary attacks on the medieval town centers of Lübeck and Rostock in the spring of 1942. The British Air Ministry had long studied the science of "fire-raising," examining the combustible qualities of German pantries, attics, and furnishings, and collecting insurance maps to study firewall patterns in German buildings. Allied bombers would ultimately drop eighty million incendiary sticks, twenty-two-inch hexagonal rods with a magnesium-zinc case that burned for eight minutes at two thousand degrees Fahrenheit. The firestorm that incinerated Hamburg in the summer of 1943, killing 41,000 and "de-housing" nearly a million, "simulated the atmosphere of another planet," a German writer recorded, "one incompatible with life."

Air Chief Marshal Arthur T. Harris, the Bomber Command leader, in late 1943 had sent Churchill a list of forty-seven German cities, of which nineteen were deemed "virtually destroyed" and another nineteen "seriously damaged." Harris argued that Germany would surrender after the destruction of "between 40 percent and 50 percent of the principal German towns," which he believed could happen by April 1, 1944. "We shall take out one German city after another," Harris said, "like pulling teeth." Rumors

circulated through Germany that lime pits already had been dug for future bomb victims in Berlin.

Yet April passed without a surrender, and British bomber losses were dreadful. Allied intelligence found "no grounds for supposing that the effects of area bombing on civilian morale would contribute to Germany's collapse." The Japanese ambassador in Berlin shared that view: he advised Tokyo that "internal collapse will certainly not be brought about by means of air raids."

Harris believed otherwise. Known to subordinates as both "Bomber" and "Butcher," imbued with what Churchill called "a certain coarseness," he was described by one admiring journalist as "a tiger with no mercy in his heart." With a bowling-pin shape that no uniform could flatter, Harris was given to wearing a mulberry-colored velvet smoking jacket and chain-smoking Camels or partaking of ceremonial snuff. Though sometimes saturnine—he bathed his stomach ulcers with Dr. J. Collis Browne's Mixture, which contained peppermint oil and anhydrous morphine—he never tired of showing dinner guests his private "Blue Book," bulging with aerial photos of skeletonized German cities. Often he drove his black Bentley at lunatic speeds, remanding the ostensible chauffeur to the backseat, and he was not above taking a pony trap from his headquarters at High Wycombe to Chequers, the prime minister's nearby country house west of London. When Churchill grumbled, "I'm sick of these raids on Cologne," Harris replied, "So are the people of Cologne."

In the British official history's portrait:

> He had a tendency to confuse advice with interference, criticism with sabotage, and evidence with propaganda. He resisted innovations and was seldom open to persuasion.… Seeing all issues in terms of black or white, he was impatient of any other possibility.

Harris believed that bombers should be clubs to bash the German *Volk*. To a colleague he wrote, "If the Germans were asked today, 'Oil plants or cities?' they would reply, 'Bomb anything you fancy except the cities.'" Accordingly, more than half of Bomber Command's payloads during the war would fall on urban centers. Each morning, in a command center known as the Hole, Harris would decide which German city would suffer that night, each with an ichthyic code name: CATFISH, for Munich; WHITEBAIT, for Berlin. His animating principle, as the official history explained, was "that in order to destroy anything it is necessary to destroy everything." By the late fall of 1944, Harris claimed that forty-five of sixty listed German cities had been "virtually destroyed," at a rate of more than two each month, with a dwindling number awaiting evisceration. These were mostly in the east: Halle, Magdeburg, Leipzig, Dresden. Air Chief Marshal Charles F. A. Portal argued in early November that "the air offensive against oil gives us by far the best hope of complete victory in the next few months." Harris disagreed, and instead urged completion of what he called "the city programme." Portal replied on November 12, "If I knew you to be as wholehearted in the attack on oil as in the past you have been in the matter of attacking cities, I would have little to worry about."

Harris's resolve to crack the enemy's will and effect a surrender with terror raids would be found wanting both militarily and morally. "The idea that the main object of bombing German industrial cities was to break the enemy's morale proved to be totally unsound," he acknowledged in 1947. Yet the postwar U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey concluded that "bombing seriously depressed the morale of German citizens. Its psychological effects were defeatism, fear, hopelessness, fatalism, and apathy." At any given time two thousand Allied aircraft might be above Germany, and as Randall Jarrell wrote:

> In bombers named for girls, we burned
> The cities we had learned about in school—
> Till our lives wore out.

While British Bomber Command believed in leveling entire cities, the Americans considered themselves "precision bombers," a term that implied attacks exclusively against military targets out of revulsion at indiscriminately killing civilians. But because the skies of central Europe were chronically overcast, half of Eighth Air Force's bomb tonnage was dropped using "blind bombing" radar techniques; often, as few as one out of ten bombs fell within half a mile of an obscured target. Even when conditions were ideal for bombardiers—this was the case in roughly one sortie of seven—less than a third of all bombs detonated within a thousand feet of the aiming point. The term "precision bombing," Spaatz conceded, was intended "in a relative, not a literal sense." Bad weather also caused frequent diversions to secondary targets such as rail yards, a practice that amounted to emptying bomb bays over city centers. Such attacks on transportation targets gradually restricted the movement of German war commodities, notably coal, while razing urban precincts. "The way to stop the killing of civilians," Hap Arnold asserted in a memo that could have been dictated by Bomber Harris, "is to cause so much damage and destruction and death that the civilians will demand that their government cease fighting." Eighth Air Force would devote more than 20 percent of its payloads to city bombing, the historian Richard G. Davis subsequently calculated, while making efforts to conceal the extent of such attacks. And press censors blocked any hint that precision bombing was often terribly imprecise.

The Americans were no less intent than the British on refining the techniques of havoc. In the Utah desert, Hollywood set designers and engineers from Standard Oil built two facsimile working-class neighborhoods, one German and the other Japanese, with replicas of furniture, bed coverings, and other household inflammables; repeated fire-bomb experiments led to the development of incendiaries that could punch through stout German roofs. The M-76 Block Burner, another American innovation first used in March 1944, spattered incendiary gel in big, burning gobs. "Aerial incendiaries," a U.S. Army study concluded, "probably caused as much death and destruction as any other weapon used in World War II."

Air Chief Marshal Harris never believed in the oil plan, which he described to Portal as "a faith to which I am not only not a

convert, but against which I have waged … unrelenting opposition." Harris would be condemned both during and after the war for a mulish recalcitrance that impeded a unified assault on the Reich's weakest link, but in his grudging, tardy fashion he did comply with the directives of the Allied high command. Bomber Command's first daylight strategic assaults of the war fell on oil targets in August and September 1944; by November, British and American bombers were flying a comparable number of sorties against oil. Thereafter Bomber Command flew more than twice as many missions as Eighth Air Force, and in the final year of the strategic air war in Europe, Harris's planes would drop nearly 100,000 tons, compared with 73,000 tons for Eighth Air Force. Arguably the British attacked to greater effect since their bombers carried larger payloads and bigger bombs, and frequently dropped those bombs with greater accuracy. Analysts concluded that the Americans attacked petroleum targets with too many small bombs incapable of cracking blast walls, too few incendiaries, and too many bombs—about 14 percent—that proved defective, often because of faulty fuzes.

The inclement fall weather gave Germany a bit of breathing room, as did crash programs dedicated to smoke generation, camouflage, the dispersal of targets, and repair. By late autumn, 350,000 workers—mostly foreign slaves—toiled to repair and hide oil facilities. Defenses became more ferocious: the vast Leuna synthetic-oil plant west of Leipzig, which was attacked twenty-one times at a cost of eighty-two Allied bombers, became the single most heavily defended industrial plant in Germany, bristling with more than five hundred heavy flak guns.

But the die had been cast. For a time in late fall, Rundstedt limited divisions in the west to 1,200 gallons of gasoline a day rather than the standard 7,200. Aviation-fuel production by the end of November had dropped to a quarter of the May level; the Luftwaffe was even forced to minimize aircraft taxiing, and some planes were pulled to the runway by oxen. Attacks on oil-hydrogenation plants also led to dwindling nitrogen stocks, which in turn severely constricted German ammunition production. Likewise, the destruction of synthetic-oil facilities brought the added benefit of impairing production of synthetic rubber, as well as of other chemicals used in explosives.

No industrial disparity during the war had greater importance than the gap between German and American fuel production. From 1942 through 1944, Berlin's refineries and plants generated 23 million tons of fuel; during the same period, the United States produced more than 600 million tons. By the spring of 1945, after more than 500 Allied attacks against some 130 oil targets, German petroleum output would decline to 12 percent of what it had been a year earlier. For want of the commodity most vital in a modern society, the Reich was dying.

* * *

The German people were dying, too. From the Air Ministry rooftop in King Charles Street, while watching London burn after a Luftwaffe raid in 1940, Harris had mused, "They are sowing the wind." Now came the whirlwind: some 131 German cities and towns would be attacked from the air during the war, leaving 400,000 dead and seven million homeless.

For those on the ground, the ordeal always began with the shriek of warning sirens, signaling that it was time to turn off the gas, turn on the radio, fill the bathtub, get out the flashlight. In cinemas the words "*Flieger Alarme*" appeared on the screen. Hurrying to the shelters during daylight raids, citizens craned their necks to look for the bright beads of approaching bombers dragging their white contrails. "People alongside us started counting the tiny silver dots," one German recalled. "They had already got to four hundred, but there was still no end to be seen." At night, civilians wore fluorescent badges to avoid colliding in the dark as they made their way by following the phosphorescent paint slathered on street curbs.

Three thousand municipal air-raid shelters had been built by the regime, far too few even when supplemented by mine shafts and subway tunnels. "I had the feeling of having ended up in an underworld, in filth and disorder," a diarist in Krefeld wrote. "It went well with a sign saying in bright letters, 'The People are grateful to their Führer.'" Shelter dwellers wrapped themselves in wet sheets and covered their eyes with gauze, opening their mouths to protect eardrums against concussion and drawing shallow breaths when the ventilators were closed because of fires raging above. A German medic in Hamm reported, "Children with scarlet fever and diphtheria … keep being found in bunker rooms. Hopefully we will be spared typhus this time."

"In Cologne life is no longer possible," a diarist wrote in an entry that no doubt would have pleased Harris. "No water, gas, or electricity, and no food." Stuttgart's inner city "ceased to exist" after raids in mid-September: "We had to climb over the dead to get away from the sea of fire," one woman recalled. "I couldn't help thinking, 'We've been living through the day of judgment.'" Bombs battered Essen in 39 of the air war's 60 months; 272 raids left only 5,000 of 65,000 buildings undamaged. From the air, an Allied crewman wrote in his logbook, the burning city resembled "an immense pot, boiling over."

The iron and steel center of Duisburg was bombed nearly three hundred times; during one twenty-four-hour period in November, Bomber Command dropped as much tonnage on the city as had fallen on London during the entire war. In Hanover, a man who rode through the charred ruins on his bicycle after one raid wrote, "The night had done its work.… All you could say, over and over, was, 'That too, oh, and that too!'" In Osnabrück, where the ruins were sardonically dubbed "Hermann Göring Square," a single fourteen-minute raid on September 13 dropped 181,000 incendiaries and 2,171 high-explosive bombs; more followed a month later. Five thousand died in Braunschweig in "one great maelstrom of fire" on October 15. Seven thousand died in Heilbronn—one-tenth of the population—during raids in early December. Delay-fuzed bombs kept rescue crews at bay while flames loped through the half-timbered town; among the dead were hundreds in cellars where ventilation pumps had sucked in carbon monoxide. Goebbels told his diary, "A large industrial town ablaze from end to end is a hideous sight." He proclaimed "Politeness Week," urging civic amiability.

Even from the Dutch coast, pilots could see Cologne burning, wrote the novelist and poet W. G. Sebald, like "a fiery speck in the darkness, like the tail of a motionless comet." Names of former residents were chalked on charred apartment walls, with crosses next to those killed; survivors received 210 Reichmarks toward the cost of burying their dead, according to the historian Jörg Friedrich.

Helmut Kohl, a future German chancellor who was fourteen in 1944, described shoveling debris from a destroyed house near Mannheim where residents had suffocated in the basement: "They lay there with blue faces." Police assigned to work in morgues and cemeteries were fortified with alcohol. "Do you still remember when we were in school we read Schiller's 'The Bell'?" a girl in Hanover wrote an SS corporal at the front. "'Many must go into the hostile world.' Then we did not think much about it.… Monotonously and cheerlessly we spend our best years, we bury our youth."

On and on it went, high explosives and incendiaries falling nearly every night and every day by the thousands of tons, week after week, month upon month. Deranged mothers, unwilling to abandon their dead children when evacuating Hamburg, carried away the roasted or asphyxiated corpses in cardboard suitcases. A firefighter in Krefeld reported, "The heat was so great that we could not touch the metal on our helmets." A one-hour RAF attack on Darmstadt ignited a firestorm that drew 3,000 firefighters with 220 engines from across the region. "Burning people raced past like live torches," a witness reported, "and I listened to their unforgettable final screams." Among the dead were knots of human beings so thoroughly fused together by the heat that tools were needed to pry the bodies apart for burial. Nurses soaked the sheets of burn victims in salad oil as a palliative. One survivor wrote, "I saw a man dragging a sack with five or six bulges in it as if he were carrying heads of cabbages. It was the heads of his family, a whole family, that he had found in the cellar."

Here then, the annihilative whirlwind—this vortex, this gyre of flame, this destroyer of worlds. "The destruction will go on," wrote one man in Berlin, "until the world has bled to death."

"Providence Decrees and We Must Obey"

AFTER advancing nearly four hundred miles in the month following the invasion of southern France, the DRAGOON juggernaut had gained hardly fifteen miles in the subsequent six weeks. In mid-November, it remained pinned along the western slope of the Vosges Mountains: as Lucian Truscott had feared, the failure to force the Belfort Gap near the Swiss border had enabled the German Nineteenth Army, spavined though it was, to make a stand. Nine weak enemy divisions straddled the high ground along an eighty-mile front from Switzerland to the Rhine–Marne Canal. Opposing them was the 6th Army Group, formally created in September from two armies: Patch's Seventh on the left, in the north, and De Lattre's French First on the right, in the south. Eisenhower's transfer of XV Corps from Third Army to Seventh—much to Patton's annoyance—gave the Franco-American host four corps, nearly half a million men. They now steeled themselves for what was described as "the first crossing of the Vosges in history under winter battle conditions."

Few could feel optimistic. The Vosges massif loomed like a granite glacis thirty miles deep and seventy miles wide; cleft by few passes, the range was so thickly wooded that a Guadalcanal veteran like Patch was reminded of jungle fighting. "Mountains, woods, and rain are things I do not like anymore, at least in a war," John Dahlquist, the 36th Division commander, wrote his wife in November. "But I will probably see a lot more of them before I am through, so I had better get philosophical about them." Italy veterans in the 36th, 45th, and 3rd Divisions had little stomach for another winter campaign in the uplands, and "alarming mental and physical lethargy" was reported in at least one regiment.

The season had been marked by straggling and desertion; replacements were described as "inept and poorly trained," and the mud was so deep that even airstrips for spotter planes had to be corduroyed with logs painted olive drab. Trench foot, frostbite, mines, and steel-jawed bear traps planted by the Germans added to the misery. The first snow had fallen on October 27, and GIs smeared Vaseline on their tent seams in a vain effort to stay dry. Winter clothing arrived late, despite emergency shipments flown into Dijon aboard B-24s. Six hundred thousand men and almost a million tons of matériel had come through Marseille and Toulon and across the Côte d'Azur beaches by early November. But a long trek to the front, various miscalculations, and a thriving black market in the French ports—20 percent of the cargo unloaded in Marseille was stolen, often by Army freebooters—made for shortages of food, ammunition, and fuel.

"Dear Family," wrote Lieutenant June Wandrey, a nurse in Seventh Army,

> If it wasn't against the family tradition to commit suicide, I'd do it, as wherever I'd go it would be warmer than it is here.… I'm tired of the noises of war, the trauma of war, the sleeplessness of war, the hunger of war.… Our cook was a mortician in civilian life. He embalms all our food.

The season also had been marked by the usual heartbreak, a reminder that even as millions perished in the global conflagration, they died one by one. Among those killed in late October was Dahlquist's aide, Lieutenant Wells Lewis, son of the Nobel Prize–winning novelist Sinclair Lewis. A Harvard graduate named for H. G. Wells, young Lewis died in Dahlquist's arms after being shot in the head by a sniper. "It is over two years since I last saw my son," his mother wrote Dahlquist. "For a soldier to die in his General's arms is in the great tradition, a literary symbol which I know Wells himself would appreciate."

Killed the same week, by antitank fire, was Patch's only son, Captain Alexander M. "Mac" Patch III, a company commander in the 79th Division who had returned to combat four days earlier after recuperating from a bullet wound to the shoulder suffered in Normandy. General Patch ordered Mac's body brought to his headquarters at Épinal. "So long, son," he said at the open grave, then muttered, "Well, he is not cold and wet and hungry."

Two weeks later Patch wrote to his wife, Julia: "I've been dreading my first letter from you after you had heard from me. It came

today." He continued:

> You, and only you, know how deeply hurt I am.… It is our private, strictly private grief. No one else's. My hardest period is over. It was during the period after Mac's death, when I kept getting letters from you—such happy letters.… You would tell me in those letters to please not let him get back to his outfit too soon. And I could hardly stand it, knowing I *had* done just that. I shall never be able to forgive myself.

"I cannot and must not allow myself to dwell upon our irreparable loss," he told her. "As I write, the tears are falling from my eyes.… Providence decrees and we must obey."

The good soldier soldiered on, but Omar Bradley later wrote that "the psychological effect on Patch has been so devastating as to impair his effectiveness as an army commander." Reflecting on Patch's loss, General Dahlquist told his wife, "It is almost beyond comprehension that the human being can stand so much."

* * *

The town of Baccarat had been liberated in late October and its famous crystal works captured intact, including an elegant service ordered by Hermann Göring but instead confiscated by Allied officers from which to sip champagne. Dahlquist also bought 100,000 gallons of beer from a French brewery, and engineers rigged pumps to siphon it to the troops. Many toasts were drunk—to the dead, to the living, to fickle life itself. "Rain has started again," Dahlquist wrote home, "and how I hate it. It makes the job ten times harder."

Perpetual friction with the French made the job harder still. General de Lattre de Tassigny, that animal of action, struggled to whip his quarter of a million men into an army rather than a mob. "Our African soldiers felt lost in the dark forests," De Lattre later wrote. Colonial troops still wearing summer uniforms were "unsuited to the winter climate," he added, and cruelly susceptible to trench foot; some French troops wore wooden shoes. On De Gaulle's orders, many colonials were sent to the rear to make room for untrained FFI irregulars. This *blanchiment,* or whitening, was intended to nurture French national unity; De Gaulle also wished both to relieve the African troops, who had carried a disproportionate burden of France's fight in the Mediterranean, and to bring some 400,000 Resistance fighters—many of them communists—under military control. The colonials had once made up more than half the manpower of the French army; now that share would decline to about one-third. Senegalese and Cameroonians shambled from the Vosges front, handing their rifles, helmets, and greatcoats to white Frenchmen trotting into the line. This "crusade" for French self-respect, as De Lattre called it, would add to the French First Army some 137,000 maquis, a "vibrant and tumultuous force" with thin combat skills and paltry logistical support. De Lattre found himself waging what he called "a battle against shortage, anarchy, and complaisance."

Base 901, the French supply organization, in late fall consisted of twelve hundred men with two hundred vehicles. American logisticians calculated that an eight-division army should have more than 100,000 support troops, but De Lattre would never have even a third of that number. Consequently he relied on the Americans—with all of the pathologies that dependency engendered—for everything from the one-third liter of wine included in French rations to the ten pounds of crushed oats, fourteen pounds of hay, and two ounces of salt needed each day for a mountain mule. For every French soldier in Europe, the U.S. Army billed De Gaulle $6.67 per day in support costs.

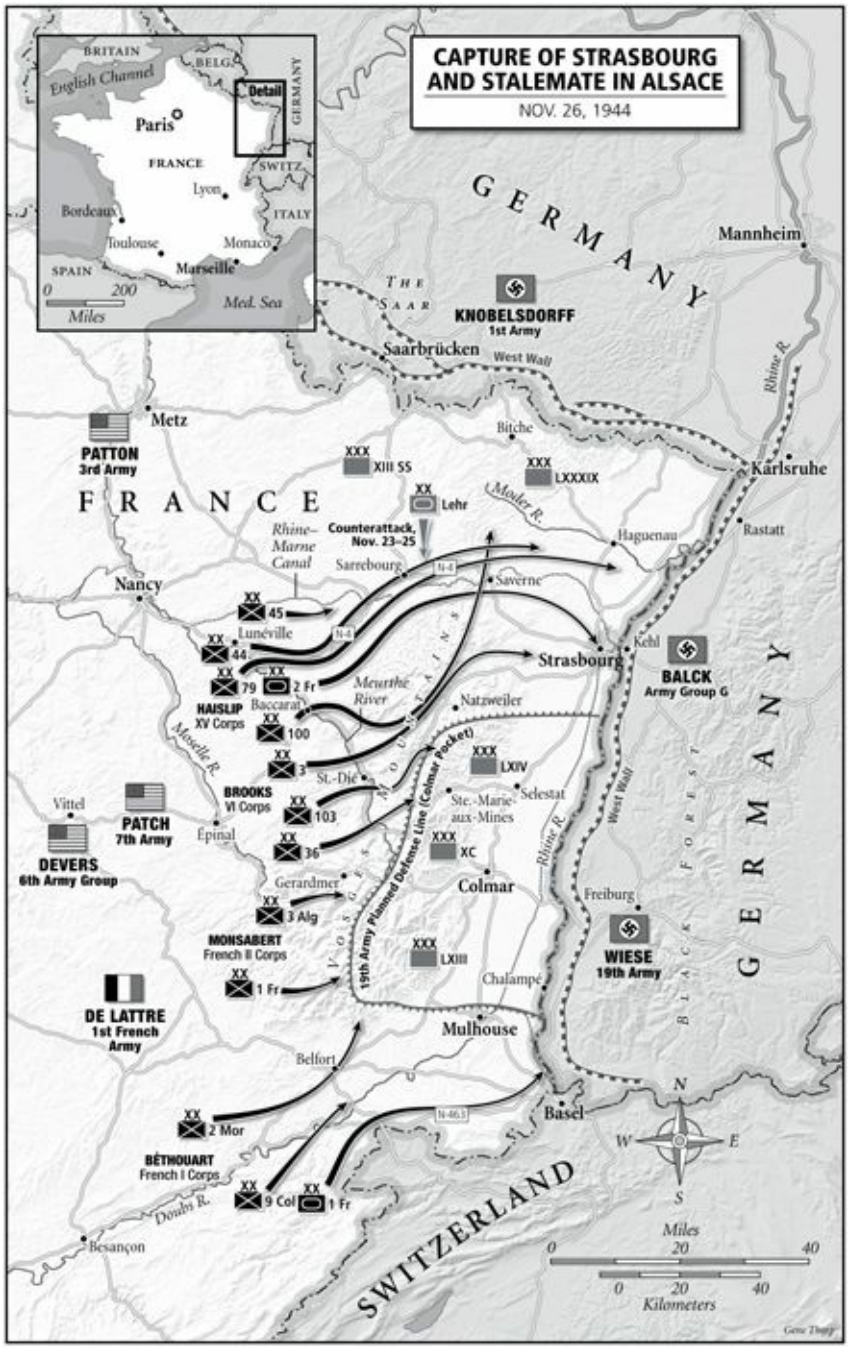
Franco-American frictions intensified as winter approached. When only 25,000 uniforms could be found for French troops, in a Canadian warehouse in Algiers, De Lattre announced that unless his men received wool clothing he would be "forced to withdraw them from combat." To the 6th Army Group headquarters, he wrote: "This army has been discriminated against … in a way seriously prejudicial to its life and to its capabilities for action." The French First Army, he charged, received less than a third of the ammunition, fuel, and rations provided Seventh Army, causing an "asphyxiation of the front line." U.S. quartermasters bitterly denied the allegation and countered that reckless French troops had ruined three thousand pyramidal tents at a time when canvas was "extremely critical." An American general wrote of De Lattre, "He goes into these tirades at least twice a week, at which time he seems to lose his balance." One ill-advised tantrum, launched in the presence of a visiting George Marshall, included allegations that Truscott's VI Corps had pilfered gasoline allocated to the French. The chief of staff walked out. Later, he rounded on De Lattre with pale fury. "You celebrated all the way up the road. You were late on every damn thing. And you were critical of Truscott, who is a fighter and not a talker," Marshall said. The chief finished with the worst epithet he could conjure: "*You* are a politico."

"It was our duty," De Lattre subsequently explained, "to be dissatisfied."

Now Truscott was gone, initially summoned by Eisenhower to organize the new Fifteenth Army as an occupation force—"You won't like it," the supreme commander warned—but then just as abruptly dispatched instead to command Fifth Army in Italy, after General Mark W. Clark took over all Allied forces there. At a farewell ceremony in the Vosges, a band crashed through "The Dogface Soldier" as tears streamed down Truscott's rough cheeks. His successor as commander of VI Corps was Major General Edward H. Brooks, a New Englander who had commanded both the 11th and 2nd Armored Divisions.

With Truscott's departure, the dominant figure on the southern front was the officer who would orchestrate the offensive to breach the Vosges: Lieutenant General Jacob Loucks Devers, the 6th Army Group commander. Now fifty-seven, Devers was the grandson of a blacksmith and son of a jeweler in York, Pennsylvania. There young Jake had climbed a ladder every Sunday with his father to make sure the courthouse clock on East Market Street was correct to the second. A classmate of Patton's at West Point, he played baseball, basketball, and lacrosse, later returning to teach mathematics; the academy yearbook described him as "clever"—always suspect in the Army—and as "an exceedingly earnest youth with rather Puritanical views." A gifted artilleryman and administrator,

Devers, like De Lattre, was among the youngest officers in his army to become a general, jumping over nearly five hundred more senior colonels to win his first star in 1940. As chief of the armored force for two years, he helped modernize a tank arm rife with traditionalists nostalgic for the horse. ("I made a lot of mistakes today," he would tell subordinates during maneuvers. "So did you.") With Marshall and McNair as patrons, in May 1943 he became commander of U.S. forces in Europe until Eisenhower's return to London for OVERLORD, whereupon Devers was bundled off to the Mediterranean as the eventual commander of the forces that now formed the right wing of the Allied armies in northwestern Europe.



Capable and decisive, he had a knack for provoking the enmity of his peers. Perhaps it was his brazen ambition—it was said that when Marshall appointed him to a committee to recommend general officers worthy of further promotion, Devers listed himself first. Perhaps it was his overeager smile, the mien "of a boy who hasn't grown up," as one British general said. He and Mark Clark detested each other to the point of not speaking, and Devers's classmate Patton considered him "a very small caliber man." In Beetle Smith's assessment, "Devers talks too much and doesn't care what he says." Bradley condemned him, with both barrels, as "overly garrulous … egotistical, shallow, intolerant, not very smart, and much too inclined to rush off half-cocked."

Worse yet, according to a recent entry in Patton's diary after a conference in Paris, "Ike hates him." The supreme commander evidently nursed old resentments: Devers's reluctance in 1943 to shift bomber squadrons from England to North Africa had displeased Eisenhower, as did his refusal a year later to release Truscott from the Mediterranean for OVERLORD. "E. says that [Devers] talks a lot but never gets down to facts," Kay Summersby told her diary. Devers brought out the conniver in E., who told Marshall, "I have nothing in the world against General Devers," but allowed that he had previously harbored an "uneasy feeling" about him. When Marshall asked Eisenhower to assess thirty-eight senior American generals in Europe, Devers ranked twenty-fourth on the supreme commander's list and elicited the only pejorative comments of the lot:

Enthusiastic but often inaccurate in statements and evaluations; loyal and energetic.… He has not, so far, produced among the seniors of the American organization here that feeling of trust and confidence that is so necessary to continued success.

Eisenhower sold Devers short. The top U.S. airman in the Mediterranean, Lieutenant General Ira C. Eaker, considered him "the ablest commander I saw in the war." Among other skills, Devers was second only to Eisenhower in his ability to reconcile national differences and forge an effective Allied military coalition. While acknowledging in his diary that De Lattre "is a very difficult man to handle, hears only the things he wants to hear [and is] a temperamental personality who causes more trouble within his own staff and troops than he does with us," Devers showed a sure touch in dealing with a warrior he recognized as "a great inspirational leader"—even if "I never did learn to pronounce that name." De Lattre spoke no English, and French had been Devers's worst subject at West Point, but they shared what Devers called "that common language—the gesture and the smile." More practically, Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr., a former U.S. senator who had been schooled in France and now wore a lieutenant colonel's uniform, served as an able liaison between the two.

As for his compatriots, Devers displayed more than a little naiveté. To his diary in November he described Bradley as "the same fine character as always"; in fact, Devers had modeled his headquarters after that of 12th Army Group, which he admired. Though he brooded, in a letter to his wife, about possible "enemies" at SHAEF and "the undercutting that goes on," he believed Eisenhower and Smith to be friendly, "in their way." But even the bouncy sangfroid and the too-ready smile sometimes slipped a bit as his troops prepared to fling themselves into the Vosges. "Nobody but an utter fool would do what I'm about to do," he told subordinates. "That's the reason why we'll take them by surprise—they won't be expecting us." A staff officer close to Devers concluded, "He's lonely as the devil."

* * *

SHAEF's orders called for 6th Army Group to shield Bradley's southern flank, destroy the enemy in Alsace west of the Rhine, breach the Siegfried Line, and secure river crossings near Karlsruhe and Mannheim, respectively forty and seventy miles northeast of Strasbourg—all in service of Eisenhower's plan to cleanse the Rhine's left bank from Switzerland to Nijmegen before pushing across Germany in 1945. Privately the planners in Versailles expected little from the southern front, given the difficulties of the past six weeks. New, unblooded units now weighted the American force, including the 100th and 103rd Infantry Divisions and the 14th Armored Division, not to mention those callow amateurs flocking to De Lattre's flag.

Devers had grander ambitions. German forces along the Vosges were believed to have a strength equivalent to no more than four infantry and two panzer divisions. The general calculated that an offensive launched in mid-November ought to break onto the Alsatian plain and reach the Rhine in two weeks, before swinging north to isolate the Saar. A vengeful urgency now gripped the French: the Germans had begun scorched-earth reprisals, dragging many able-bodied Alsatians between sixteen and sixty across the Rhine as forced laborers, while SS brigands burned farms, villages, and towns rather than cede winter shelter to the Allies. "Don't get stuck in those mountains," Devers warned his subordinates. "You'll never get out."

De Lattre made the first move, attacking on Tuesday, November 14, after heavy snow created what he described as "a Scandinavian landscape." Various deceptions—including phony command posts and an announcement that French troops would begin holiday leave in mid-November—suggested that the army either had designs on the High Vosges to the north or was moving into winter quarters. Instead, De Lattre sent blacked-out convoys bearing his I Corps along the Doubs River near the Swiss frontier. A two-hour artillery barrage caught the Germans unawares, and French infantrymen surged forward at noon. Two divisions straddling the Doubs hooked north into the Belfort Gap, which sundered the Vosges from the Jura Mountains and Swiss Alps to the south. Moroccan riflemen killed a German division commander who had been trapped along the river by the artillery barrage; his effects included a map and notes detailing defensive positions on the German left flank.

By Thursday, French tanks were "decisive everywhere," De Lattre reported. German gunners firing captured Russian howitzers had little ammunition, and thirty new 88mm antitank weapons arrived without sights and other vital components. Among the few reserves slapped into the crumbling line were riflemen pedaling through the snow on bicycles and an *Ohren-Bataillon* of deaf soldiers. French shock troops swarmed into Belfort town, surprising Wehrmacht bakers at their dough trays. Three French tank columns with lights burning clattered east along Highway N-463, and at 6:30 P.M. on Sunday, November 19, a patrol from the 1st Armored Division reached the slate-blue Rhine, thirty miles east of Belfort and four miles above the Swiss border. Gleeful batteries lobbed a few shells across the river, the first French artillery to fall on German soil since 1940.

Having forsaken a substantial wedge of southern Alsace despite Hitler's order not to yield a centimeter, the Nineteenth Army belatedly stiffened. Confusion in the French ranks helped. While a weak detachment wheeled north up the Rhine toward the bridge at Chalampé, other forces keen to liberate their Alsatian *frères* instead swung toward Mulhouse, seven miles west of the river. Twenty German *Feldpost* workers were captured at pistol-point while sorting the military mail on Monday morning, and sixty other deep sleepers surrendered on their cots. But Waffen-SS troops and a brigade of new Panthers sent straight from the factory in Nuremberg rebuilt the enemy line. Savage brawling in Mulhouse persisted for four days; south of Chalampé, a counterattack on Thursday, November 23, clubbed the French away, just three miles short of the bridge. De Lattre's forces would come no closer for the next two and a half months: having captured fifteen thousand Germans at a cost of nine thousand casualties, the French First Army for the moment was a spent force.

* * *

Hopes for a decisive breakthrough now rested on Seventh Army's eight divisions packed along Devers's left wing. Here, where the High Vosges descended to the Low Vosges, the Saverne Gap provided a topographic counterpoint in the north to the Belfort Gap in the south. Barely a hundred yards wide in spots, the defile carried the main rail line to Strasbourg, as well as the Rhine–Marne Canal and an ancient roadbed, described by an eighteenth-century travel writer as "one of the masterpieces of man." Twelve thousand infantrymen from a pair of Major General Wade Haislip's XV Corps divisions had been gnawing at the western approaches to the gap since November 13, past moldering World War I trenches and conifers bent beneath wet snow. Four German defensive lines lay athwart the gap, manned by a few thousand Volksgrenadiers held in check by the threat of SS reprisals, producing what Seventh Army intelligence called "ersatz morale."

By November 19, American firepower began to tell. Shelling "left little more of the woods than an old man's scraggly beard," and retreating Germans could be seen silhouetted against flaming houses they had put to the torch. On that Sunday, even as De Lattre's men were spitting into the Rhine, the 44th Division rambled for nine miles along Highway N-4, and the 79th Division just to the south broke through to Sarrebourg. Tricolors appeared. French policemen pulled on uniforms hidden away four years earlier. Cries of *"Kamerad!"* could be heard from more surrendering Germans, including artillerymen overrun before they could limber their guns. Rain turned to snow, then back to rain—"as hard as I have ever seen it rain anywhere," Devers told his diary on Monday. But not even the harshest weather would save a German line now cracked beyond repair.

Into the breach pried open by the infantry rode a familiar swashbuckler sporting a kepi and wielding a malacca cane. In August, General Philippe Leclerc's French 2nd Armored Division had captured Paris; now, seconded to XV Corps, Leclerc eyed another enslaved *ville* in need of liberation. During his anabasis in Africa almost three years earlier, he and his warriors had taken a dramatic vow after capturing the Italian garrison at Koufra: "We swear not to lay down our arms until our colors, our beautiful colors, again fly from the Strasbourg cathedral." For the past several days, between catnaps on the drawing-room floor of a forest château, Leclerc had studied maps of the logging tracks and farm paths spilling onto the Alsatian plain, his eyes narrowed and his lips pursed. "Beat the devil," Haislip told him at last. "Leclerc, this is your country. Strasbourg is yours."

En avant then, again. Pursued by French outriders in Sherman tanks, horse-drawn German caissons and gun carriages lurched around one hairpin turn after another, eastward through the Saverne Gap. "The brave horses were galloping as fast as they could," a witness recounted.

> They reached one more bend and then, under the staccato fire of the machine guns, saw themselves abandoned in a second by the German gun crews and drivers. The teams, running wild, were caught up by the armor, which were careful not to immobilize them across the road.

French tankers pulled abreast of the runaways and shouldered fifteen guns and fifty or more draft teams into the ditch in a whinnying moil of equine legs and spinning wagon wheels. As enemy soldiers emerged from the thickets with their hands high, the French detachment commander radioed Leclerc, "Now I am exploiting." Among eight hundred prisoners captured in Saverne town on November 22 was a German general, described as "upright and gloved, in his long leather coat." Frog-marched before Leclerc, he punctuated his sentences with a slight inclination of the torso while insisting, "All is not lost."

Tout au contraire. "Advance without losing a second," Leclerc commanded, and at 7:15 A.M. on Thursday, November 23—Thanksgiving—five columns of Shermans and armored cars swept toward Strasbourg in teeming rain. "We went roaring across the plains," an American liaison officer reported. Sixteen strongholds named for martial demigods like Foch and Ney guarded the city's western approaches, but they were toothless without heavy guns or German reserves. At 10:30 French tanks spilled into downtown Strasbourg, machine-gunning astonished Wehrmacht officers caught packing their sedans or window-shopping with their wives on the boulevards. Booming 75mm fire shattered seven antitank guns near the Parc de la Citadelle before German crews could fire a shot, and trailing French howitzers cut loose from a city park, drawing return fire from enemy batteries across the river that "sent windowpanes tinkling into the streets," according to *The New York Times*. A coded radio message advised Leclerc, *"Tissu est dans iode"*—the cloth is in the iodine. The French vanguard was advancing through Strasbourg toward the Rhine bridges.

As rain drummed off his kepi, Leclerc now made for the city in an open jeep with an escort of light tanks, half-tracks, and seventy men. Through the downpour he soon spied the pink sandstone spire of Strasbourg cathedral, Goethe's "sublimely towering, wide-spreading tree of God," which at nearly five hundred feet had been the world's tallest building for more than two centuries. A tricolor flew from the pinnacle. "Now we can die," Leclerc muttered.

But not yet. A captured German engineer was persuaded to phone his headquarters at noon on Thursday with a French surrender ultimatum; he managed to reach General Hermann Balck, the Army Group G commander, only to be told, "If you don't immediately stop your activities in Strasbourg, your family will land in the concentration camp." Most of the city already was lost to the Reich, and a furious Hitler threatened to demote every officer in Nineteenth Army by one grade. But the Rhine bridge leading to Kehl on the German shore remained in enemy hands. Blockhouses and an effective straggler line, reinforced by mortar and artillery fire, halted the French less than six hundred yards from the river. A stalemated struggle for the western bridgehead settled into what a French officer described as "a solid artillery argument," with the Germans unwilling to retreat the final half-mile into Germany, and Leclerc unable to cudgel them across the Rhine.

"Lots of dead civilians in Strasbourg," an American engineer informed his diary. "Children still playing in the street as though nothing had happened." French and American forces finished mopping up isolated enemy outposts, using city parks and a brewery as detention centers for six thousand Wehrmacht soldiers and fifteen thousand interned German civilians. "One by one," a French account noted, "we captured the human contents of the other forts, barracks, offices, and hospitals."

* * *

Strasbourg's emancipation brought two significant discoveries. Thirty miles southwest of the city, at Natzweiler, GIs overran their first concentration camp. Most of the seven thousand inmates still alive had been evacuated to the east, but ample evidence of atrocity remained. Built in 1941, Natzweiler had housed French *résistants,* Jews, homosexuals, and others deemed socially unfit; many had toiled in nearby granite quarries or munitions factories. A chamber built in an adjacent hotel had been used for poison-gas experiments, mostly against Gypsies imported from Auschwitz, and it was said that victims chosen for extermination were plied with sweets and cakes. Other human experiments involved typhus, yellow fever, and mustard gas. The corpses of gassed Jews were trucked by the score to a Strasbourg anatomy laboratory for dissection or preservation in alcohol as part of an SS study on "racial inferiority." Other bodies were cremated, with families reportedly charged seventy-five Reichmarks to retrieve a clay urn of ashes. Seventeen thousand had died at Natzweiler and its satellite camps.

The second discovery was no less portentous. Close on the heels of Leclerc's armored spearhead was an American intelligence unit code-named ALSOS, carrying secret instructions from the physicists J. Robert Oppenheimer and Luis W. Alvarez on clues to look for in investigating "the Y program"—the German atomic bomb effort. Evidence discovered in Paris and at the Philips factory in Eindhoven pointed to the University of Strasbourg as a key atomic research center. ALSOS agents darted through laboratories, offices, and homes, arresting German physicists and chemists; they retrieved unburned scraps of scientific papers stuck in the chimney of a potbelly stove. Their chief target, the physicist Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker, a close collaborator of the Nobel Prize–winner Werner Heisenberg, was away in Germany, but his papers, computations, and correspondence remained in Strasbourg to be confiscated by the agents.

As Lieutenant General Leslie R. Groves, Jr., the director of the Manhattan Project, later wrote SHAEF, the Strasbourg seizures provided "the most complete, dependable and factual information we have obtained bearing upon the nature and extent of the German effort in our field. Fortunately it tends to confirm our conclusion that the Germans are now behind us." Far behind: top secret assessments found that "the enemy had made practically no progress" in building a bomb, that "the effort is not large," and that "no evidence was uncovered of any uranium work on a production scale." Despite the Y program's supposedly high priority, captured documents showed that German scientists had been forced to file a "certificate of urgency" for permission to buy "two slide rules for carrying out a project of military importance." Colonel Boris T. Pash, the ALSOS commander, reported that interrogations and other evidence confirmed that "the Nazis had not progressed in atomic development as far as our own project had early in 1941."

Leclerc and his lieutenants bivouacked in the ballroom of the nineteenth-century Kaiserpalast, used for four years as the Wehrmacht headquarters and said by a 2nd Armored Division officer to be the only building in Strasbourg to which, "because of its pretentious design, it was pleasant to give a German name." Shopkeepers switched their storefront signage back to French, reversing the changes of 1940, but the process of "dis-annexation" would be protracted and painful. More than half a million residents of Alsace and Lorraine had been deported to Germany as laborers, with another 140,000 forcibly drafted into the German army. Leclerc posted placards warning that "for every French soldier shot down in the city, five German hostages will be shot," a threat promptly disavowed by Devers as a violation of the Geneva Conventions. "There is no question that the French hate with the greatest bitterness," wrote the intelligence officer J. Glenn Gray. "They feed themselves on hatred. It is all strange and horrible."

A ceremony near the cathedral commemorated Strasbourg's return to French sovereignty with ringing bells and the usual bellowing of "La Marseillaise," although the din from antiaircraft guns peppering eight Luftwaffe intruders distracted the celebrants. In a message to De Gaulle, Leclerc proclaimed the vow of Koufra fulfilled.

Hitler in a 1940 visit to Strasbourg had also made a pledge: "We will never give it back." The Führer had kept his promise as well. He had not returned the city. The French had taken it.

* * *

For nearly three months Seventh Army had made ready to vault the Rhine. Two river-crossing schools, on the Rhône and on the Doubs, taught GIs the intricacies of bridge construction, raft and ferry tactics, and the swift-water operation of storm boats. Eight hundred outboard-motor operators were now trained, and engineers had scrutinized the German capacity to generate floods on the river, extracting private assurances from the Swiss that upstream weirs would be safeguarded. SHAEF rejected a proposal to capture a bridgehead with two airborne divisions—MARKET GARDEN had cast a pall over such initiatives—and now eight infantry battalions were charged with seizing the far bank.

Even if the bridge from Strasbourg to Kehl remained standing, that avenue led only to the labyrinthine Schwarzwald, the Black Forest, so Seventh Army planners had long eyed a crossing site at Rastatt, a Baroque German town twenty-five miles farther north. Patrols found few defenders along the river there; Devers, who alarmed his headquarters by vanishing for more than a day while personally questioning scouts in the bottoms above Strasbourg, envisioned an advance from Rastatt to Karlsruhe, then a pivot west *behind* the Siegfried Line bunkers, thus trapping the German First Army between Patch and Patton. Even as Leclerc's tanks cavorted through Strasbourg, convoys thirty-five miles long had begun rolling toward riverfront assembly areas with DUKWs, bridging equipment, and boats stacked on trucks. On Thanksgiving night, Patch's engineers told him they could cross the Rhine on forty-eight hours' notice.

Eisenhower knew almost nothing of Devers's plans. On Friday morning, November 24, he and Bradley drove into the Vosges, following a brief conference with Patton in Nancy. They found Devers and Patch waiting for them in Lunéville at 11:30 A.M.; the small convoy then wheeled down Highway N-4 through spattering rain for thirty miles to the XV Corps command post at Sarrebourg. Devers looked "happy and boyish as usual," wrote Bradley's aide, Major Chester Hansen, although "Patch appeared grave, much

older." After lunch with Haislip, at two P.M. they continued south another thirty miles through Baccarat to the VI Corps command post at St.-Dié, where the *Cosmographiae Introductio*—the book that had first used the name "America" for the New World—had been published in 1507. Now St.-Dié's textile mills, lumber yards, and eleventh-century church lay in ashes, pillaged by German demolitionists with incendiary grenades and dynamite. Residents with "square, impassive Alsatian faces" huddled in the rain along the charred walls that had once been their homes, wrote Hansen. Eisenhower called it "one of the most appalling sights of wanton destruction I've ever seen."

A final forty-mile drive to the west brought the convoy to the 6th Army Group headquarters in Vittel at six P.M. Revived by a boisterous cocktail party with ample scotch, the travelers enjoyed a late dinner at the elegant Heritage Hotel. After coffee, Devers led Eisenhower and Bradley to his penthouse suite, where the three men sat at a table.

The supreme commander wasted no time. Patton that same morning had pleaded for the return of XV Corps from Seventh Army, and Bradley agreed that the transfer of at least two divisions was warranted to reinforce Third Army's seventy-mile front. Despite the capture of Metz, Patton remained roadbound and not yet on the Saar.

"He's in the mud, and he's up against a concrete bastion," Devers said sympathetically.

Eisenhower frowned. New reports of a German counterattack from the north against Haislip's troops were unsettling: seventy tanks from the Panzer Lehr Division had routed cavalrymen eating their Thanksgiving turkey, and only massed artillery and timely help from Patton's 4th Armored Division would blunt the enemy advance. Eisenhower was even more nonplussed to learn that much of Seventh Army was heading for the Rhine at Rastatt. A crossing there, he complained, was "a helluva way to get to Berlin."

"Ike, I'm on the Haguenau river, moving north," Devers said, his voice rising. "I've got everything in the woods there to cross the Rhine. On the other side there are a lot of pillboxes, but they're not occupied."

"Those pillboxes are like hedgerows," Bradley said.

"Brad, we haven't got any hedgerows. We've got pillboxes, and the pillboxes aren't occupied," Devers said. "We can do this with a minimal force—as a raid, really—and this will cause the Germans no end of trouble."

The conversation dragged into the small hours of Saturday morning, the tone ever sharper. Devers noted that SHAEF had encouraged opportunism in seizing Rhine bridgeheads. Why flinch now? Shouldn't Seventh Army be strengthened rather than Third? Was it unreasonable to think that Patton's army should be shifted to the 6th Army Group so that together they could envelop the Saar?

Devers grew shrill. Eisenhower's plan to clear the entire west bank of the Rhine before advancing into central Germany seemed pointless. Was SHAEF intent on destroying the enemy or simply on occupying territory? Yet Devers undercut his own argument by describing the lunge across the Rhine at Rastatt not as a great wheeling movement by an army group, but as a sally that would take only "a matter of hours." Further, he likened it to Patton's effort in August 1943 to loop behind the enemy with an amphibious landing by a single battalion on the north coast of Sicily at Brolo—a misbegotten analogy, since that operation had ended in calamity.

Eisenhower remained immovable, and in truth he had made up his mind days earlier. The advances through Alsace, though welcome and applauded, were "far from the Ruhr," he observed, and a Rhine crossing here led to no "definitely decisive area." Weary of arguing, he gave Devers explicit orders: Seventh Army would immediately pivot northward, west of the Rhine, while the French finished expelling the enemy from Alsace below Strasbourg. Although reportedly "mad as hell" at Devers's obstinacy, Eisenhower offered a compromise, telling him that XV Corps would remain under 6th Army Group and even be strengthened with another armored division.

The trio of generals retired for a few hours' sleep, not a happy man among them. Orders went forth the next morning. Seventh Army Staff Memorandum X-376 on Saturday advised commanders that the plan "has recently been changed. At the present, no crossing of the Rhine River is contemplated and the direction of the advance will turn north astride the Vosges Mountains and generally parallel to the Rhine." Letter of Instruction No. 3 from 6th Army Group ordered the French First Army to extirpate the remaining Germans west of the river, with Leclerc's 2nd Armored Division driving south from Strasbourg under De Lattre's command. SHAEF planners began concocting a collaborative attack by Patton and Patch, while noting that "although the joint Third Army–Seventh Army offensive is not the most important sector of the front, it offers the best chance of quick returns and of getting the main offensive underway once more."

To his diary Devers confided, "The decision not to cross the Rhine was a blow to both Patch and myself, for we were really poised."

* * *

Even the Army official history, published half a century after the event and disinclined to second-guess the high command, found Eisenhower's decision "difficult to understand." The supreme commander "had opted for an operational 'strategy' of firepower and attrition—the direct approach—as opposed to a war of opportunistic maneuver." After encouraging a bloody attack through the Vosges, SHAEF possessed neither a coherent strategic goal for its southern wing nor the agility to exploit unexpected success. Even Patton believed Devers should have jumped the Rhine, yet little thought seems to have been given either in Versailles or in Luxembourg City to using Third Army's tank legions to exploit a bridgehead at Rastatt. In "misusing 6th Army Group," as one Army historian later charged, Eisenhower unwittingly gave the Germans a respite, allowing Hitler to continue assembling a secret counteroffensive aimed at the Ardennes in mid-December. Crossing the Rhine after Thanksgiving might well have complicated German planning for what soon would be known as the Battle of the Bulge.

Surely the supreme commander's personal distaste for Devers informed these events. Some also believed he played favorites with Bradley, his classmate and confidant. Devers emerged from the midnight session in Vittel wondering whether he was "a member of

the same team." In a letter to his wife a day later he scornfully referred to unnamed "great strategists" and lamented not receiving "a little encouragement … to bring the war to a quicker end." In his diary he added, "The tragedy to my mind has been that the higher command has not seen fit to reinforce success on the flank."

Yet Devers made errors of his own—not least, he failed to recognize how feeble the French were. Six of eight German infantry divisions in the Nineteenth Army had been destroyed, leaving a fifty-thousand-man remnant in a rectangular Alsatian pocket that extended for forty-five miles along the Rhine and twenty-five miles west toward the High Vosges. Although Hitler on November 26 decreed that "to give up Alsace is out of the question," Rundstedt estimated that the pocket, which centered on the town of Colmar, could hold out for only three weeks. Devers told his diary, "It is hoped that the French Army will be able to destroy the Germans in their sector by 15 December."

This was not to be. De Lattre would claim that thirty German battalions reinforced the pocket "with the help of darkness and fog," but in fact only a few thousand more troops arrived west of the Rhine in the fortnight after Hitler's decree. French exhaustion, losses among junior officers, and "confusion I have never seen anywhere," as an American general put it, allowed the Germans to cauterize their lines.

Still more disheartening was the internecine bickering among Frenchmen who loathed one another at least as much as they loathed the enemy. Leclerc flatly refused Devers's order to march south from Strasbourg to join De Lattre's command, declaring, "I will not serve with any commanders who previously obeyed Vichy and whom I consider to be turncoats." For their part, De Lattre's men disdainfully refused to use Leclerc's nom de guerre, calling him instead by his antebellum name, Hauteclocque. Paris seemed unable to resolve the bickering, and Devers confessed to his diary, "Having a great deal of trouble keeping the French at their job of closing the pocket." He later added, "This was the only failure in command I ever had in war." Even when reinforced with the U.S. 36th Infantry Division, De Lattre failed to crack the Colmar Pocket; it was to remain an open wound in the Allied flank for months and the source, as an American colonel wrote, of "a great deal of consternation and ill-feeling between Jakey Devers and Eisenhower."

Seventh Army engineers trucked their storm boats back to supply dumps near Lunéville to await a brighter day. German dynamite on December 2 dropped the Kehl bridge into the Rhine with a thunderous splash, and the Strasbourg bridgehead escaped by boat to the Fatherland. Two railroad spans and three pontoon bridges closer to Colmar would keep the pocket victualed through the winter. Vicious sniper and artillery fire regularly swept back and forth across the river. Loudspeaker broadcasts from Kehl warned Alsatians that the Reich would soon return to reclaim Strasbourg.

"SHAEF treats us as bastard children," a Seventh Army officer later wrote his family, "slightly ashamed of our progress." Once again, an apparent battlefield victory was etched with vexation. Perhaps the taste of ashes was the flavor of war itself.


THE SIEGFRIED LINE CAMPAIGN
SEPT. 11–DEC. 15, 1944
North Sea
Waddenzee
Ijsselmeer
NETHERLANDS
Amsterdam
Rotterdam
Arnhem
Nijmegen
Waal R.
Maas R.
Ijssel R.
Ems R.
Münster
STUDENT
Army Group H
Wesel
Lippe R.
Front Line, Dec. 15
West Wall
Meuse R.
Rhine R.
THE RUHR
Ruhr R.
XXXX 1 Cdn
CRERAR
XXXX 2 Br
DEMPSEY
XXXX 1 Prcht
SCHLEMM
Venlo
The Scheldt
Antwerp
Roermond
München-Gladbach
Düsseldorf
GERMANY
Front Line, Sept. 11
MONTGOMERY
21st Army Group
XXXX 15
ZANGEN
Roer R.
Zonhoven
Maastricht
XXXX 9
SIMPSON
Jülich
Cologne
MODEL
Army Group B
Eifft R.
Brussels
BELGIUM
Tongres
Aachen
Düren
Sieg R.
Bonn
Celles
Liège
Verviers
Meuse R.
Chaudfontaine
Monschau
Remagen
Giessen
RUNDSTEDT
OB West
Charleroi
Namur
Huy
Aywaille
Spa
XXXX 6 Pz
DIETRICH
Malmedy
Büllingen
Sambre R.
Foy-Notre Dame
Manhay
Stavelot
Koblenz
Limburg
ADLERHORST
Dinant
Sadzot
Vielsalm
Honsfeld
St. Vith
TAUNUS HILLS
Frankfurt
Givet
Humain
Marche
La Roche
XXXX 1
HODGES
Prüm
XXXX 5 Pz
MANTEUFFEL
Moselle R.
Rhine R.
Bastogne
Bitburg
Wittlich
Mainz
Sauer R.
Our R.
West Wall
XXXX 7
BRANDENBERGER
Neufchâteau
Diekirch
Trier
LUXEMBOURG
Luxembourg City
XXXX 1
OBSTFELDER
Mannheim
BRADLEY
12th Army Group
THE SAAR
Saarlautern
Saarbrücken
BALCK
Army Group G
Verdun
Front Line, Sept. 11
Metz
West Wall
Bitche
XXXX 3
PATTON
Front Line, Dec. 15
Karlsruhe
FRANCE
Rhine R.
DEVERS
6th Army Group
XXXX 7
PATCH
Strasbourg
XXXX 19
RASP
Gene Thorp
N
W
E
S
Miles
0 30 60
0 30 60
Kilometers

8. A Winter Shadow

"We Are All So Human That It Is Pitiful"

NINE million Allied propaganda leaflets fluttered over Germany every day, one thousand tons of paper each month, six billion sheets by war's end, all urging insurrection or surrender. In the early days of this "nickeling," airmen shoveled sheaves of leaflets into the slipstream from B-17 bomb bays thirty thousand feet over Brussels in hopes of littering occupied Paris; many instead drifted as far afield as Italy. Mass production of the T-1 Monroe Leaflet Bomb, beginning in April 1944, greatly improved accuracy: a barometric nose fuze blew open the five-foot-long cylinder two thousand feet above the target, scattering eighty thousand leaflets over one square mile. A single B-24 could sprinkle a million pages over five enemy towns during a single sortie.

Psychological-warfare teams studied previous surrender appeals, such as those used by the Japanese at Corregidor, searching for a key to unlock German intransigence. Many leaflets included a *Passierschein,* a safe-conduct pass, signed by Eisenhower and stressing the humane treatment accorded prisoners—for example, they would get the same food served "the best fed Army in the world." Bradley's army group alone also fired fifteen thousand artillery propaganda shells every month, each packed with five hundred leaflets, and loudspeaker appeals encouraged defection along the front, a practice known as "hog calling." Radio Luxembourg had begun German-language broadcasts in late September, with airtime devoted to composers banned by the Nazis, information programs such as *The Voice of SHAEF,* and dire war news, including street-by-street damage reports of recent bombing raids.

Millions of time-fuze incendiaries were dropped with instructions printed in nine languages to encourage sabotage, particularly by non-German slave laborers. OSS "Field Manual No. 3" offered advice to saboteurs on how to insinuate sawdust, hair, sugar, or molasses into German fuel tanks, preferably one hundred grams for each ten gallons of gasoline. A half-pint of urine or salt water would also do the trick. "Try to commit acts for which large numbers of people could be responsible," the manual advised. "For instance, if you blow out the wiring in a factory at a central fire box, almost anyone could have done it."

Still Germany fought on. Some Allied strategists believed that the insistence on unconditional surrender, announced by Roosevelt at the Casablanca conference in January 1943, was prolonging the war. Joseph Goebbels and other Nazi propagandists claimed that the demand "means slavery, castration, the end of Germany as a nation." A U.S. government analysis warned that most Germans felt they had "nothing to lose by continuing the war." Others argued that the Reich kept fighting out of fear of the Russians and the Gestapo "rather than any phrase coined at a conference," as John J. McCloy, the assistant secretary of war, put it. Proposals for "conditional unconditional surrender," similar to the modified terms under which Italy had capitulated, found no favor with Roosevelt. "I want at all costs to prevent it from being said that the unconditional surrender principle has been abandoned," the president had declared even before OVERLORD. Germans must recognize, he later added, "that the whole nation has been engaged in a lawless conspiracy against the decencies of modern civilization."

Eventual Allied victory had long been an article of faith, of course. Even before the Normandy landings, SHAEF commissioned seventy-two studies on how to govern postwar Germany, under a plan now code-named ECLIPSE. Yet no consensus existed on the construct of postwar Europe, or the political architecture of a future Germany, or, as the experience in Aachen had revealed, the nuances of occupation. Roosevelt inclined toward a hard peace following the hard war—he proposed feeding the eighty million Germans three bowls of soup a day from U.S. Army vats, a gesture of largesse given that he had at first suggested just one bowl daily. In this the president reflected his people: polls showed that more than four in five Americans supported unconditional surrender and the reduction of Germany to a third-rate power. SHAEF in the summer of 1944 drafted a "Handbook for Military Government in Germany," recommending enlightened benevolence in rebuilding the postwar economy and administrative apparatus. "This so-called Handbook is pretty bad," Roosevelt wrote Secretary of War Stimson. "All copies should be withdrawn." So they were, notwithstanding a SHAEF officer's lament that "nobody ever reads handbooks anyhow"; no revision was issued until December. Even Eisenhower's decree that "we come as conquerors, but not as oppressors" proved problematic when translated into German, because *Eroberer*—conqueror—implied plunder and annexation *auf Deutsch*. The issue eventually reached the War Department's top linguist, who substituted *ein siegreiches Heer*—a victorious army—as less inflammatory.

The victorious Red Army in the east helped focus the Anglo-Americans on postwar matters when Washington and London realized that Soviet troops could soon occupy Germany as far west as the Rhine. A War Department analysis prophesied:

> The defeat of Germany will leave Russia in a position of assured military dominance in eastern Europe and in the Middle

East, [bringing] a world profoundly changed in respect to relative national military strengths, a change more comparable indeed with that occasioned by the fall of Rome than with any other change occurring during the succeeding fifteen hundred years.… The British Empire will emerge from the war having lost ground both economically and militarily.

Winston Churchill also perceived that his nation's empire was imperiled and he sought to stave off decline in his own fashion. In mid-October, during a private meeting in Moscow with Stalin, the prime minister had jotted a few notations on a sheet of paper in proposing an allocation of postwar influence between Moscow and London in southeastern Europe. He suggested 90 percent for the Soviets in Romania, a similar British preponderance in Greece, 75 percent for Moscow in Bulgaria, and an even split in Yugoslavia and Hungary. Stalin penciled a blue tick mark on the paper and told Churchill to keep what the prime minister called his "naughty document." Although the "percentages agreement" had no legal force and proved a poor forecast of subsequent events, the Americans were incensed upon eventually learning of this nefarious sidebar arrangement, which contravened Roosevelt's antipathy toward spheres of influence in postwar Europe.

That fall, a separate controversy had come to dominate the discussion of Germany's future. The disavowal by the White House of SHAEF's handbook emboldened the U.S. treasury secretary, Henry Morgenthau, Jr., to propose that Germany be dismembered and that the constituent pieces be reduced to neutered agricultural states incapable of armed aggression. Roosevelt waxed enthusiastic at this scheme. As the historian Warren F. Kimball later wrote, the president and Morgenthau, "like the two Jeffersonian gentlemen farmers they pretended to be," proposed scrubbing stains from the German character by "starting them out again as farmers." Morgenthau's explanation of his plan at an Anglo-American strategy conference convened in Quebec in mid-September had drawn baleful stares from Churchill, who called it "unnatural, unchristian, and unnecessary." But when Morgenthau predicted that to eradicate German competition for coal and steel markets would guarantee British prosperity for twenty years, the prime minister changed his tune virtually overnight, endorsing "the re-creation of an agricultural state as had existed in the last quarter of the nineteenth century" by shuttering the Ruhr and the Saar. As for the Germans, Churchill added, "They brought it on themselves."

Others in the Anglo-American brain trust were appalled. Anthony Eden, the British foreign secretary, "flew into a rage," while his American counterpart, Cordell Hull, called Morgenthau's proposal "a plan of blind vengeance." Stimson warned of "enormous general evils" from such a "Carthaginian peace," not least because the raw materials for Europe's antebellum livelihood had derived largely from the Ruhr and the Saar. Plans were also afoot to deed a vast swatch of farmland in eastern Germany to Poland, which left unanswered the question of how the Germans could live as farmers if the land became Polish. Even George Marshall bridled at Morgenthau's vision, particularly his proposal to summarily shoot Nazi leaders upon capture.

Predictably, the scheme soon leaked. "The papers have taken it up violently," Stimson noted with satisfaction. An editorial in London called Morgenthau's Germany "a ruined no-man's land in which no wheels turn," and the British cabinet denounced the treasury secretary's "unwisdom," adding, "A policy which condones or favors chaos is not hard; it is simply inefficient." Roosevelt deftly disavowed the plan, telling Stimson with a grin, "Henry Morgenthau pulled a boner." The German newspapers also took it up violently, warning of "a life and death struggle" against Anglo-American "cannibals," whose "satanic plan of annihilation" was, needless to say, "inspired by the Jews." Even six billion leaflets could go only so far to persuade Germans that a tolerable peace would follow from surrender.

This contretemps cooled Roosevelt's enthusiasm for postwar strategizing. "I dislike making detailed plans for a country which we do not yet occupy," he told Hull in late October, while publicly assuring the Germans that they would not be enslaved. Precisely how the occupation would be configured was put off until another season, along with ancillary questions of military governance. An early proposal had considered carving the Reich into as many as seven disparate states; a more practical agreement drafted by the British Foreign Office in early 1944 posited three occupation zones, with the Soviet Union given the eastern 40 percent of the country except for Berlin, which would be administered jointly by the Allied victors. Roosevelt for months had resisted a proposed American occupation sector contiguous to France; his distrust of De Gaulle ran very deep. But at Quebec the president at last conceded that the concentration of U.S. forces on the right of Eisenhower's line argued for an American zone in Bavaria and the German southwest, with guarantees of access to North Sea ports in the British sector.

No formal ratification of this plan, or any other, was forthcoming. Eisenhower initially believed postwar Germany should be administered under a single Allied commander, but more recently he had conceded that "the Russians will … take exclusive responsibility for administering the eastern portion of Germany." Some U.S. strategists continued to advocate occupation zones converging on Berlin like pie slices, rather than placing the German capital deep within the Soviet sector; the U.S. ambassador to Britain, John G. Winant, denounced such a proposal as "not having any faith in Soviet intentions."

With postwar politics unresolved, military planners could only continue to sketch big arrows across their maps, aimed at Berlin. Roosevelt had shied away from Morgenthau's draconian solution, but he remained ardently committed to unconditional surrender. As for the rest, the president had told Churchill: "Something 'big' will come out of this war: a new heaven and a new earth."

* * *

Montgomery's promise to Eisenhower that "you will hear *no* more on the subject of command from me" had hardly been made before it was broken. Those big arrows on war room maps may have pointed toward the Ruhr and beyond, but his sharpest darts were aimed at the supreme commander. In private rants to his British colleagues, the field marshal continued to disparage Eisenhower, his plan, and his generalship. "He has never commanded anything before in his whole career," Montgomery wrote Brooke in mid-November. "Now, for the first time, he has elected to take command of very large-scale operations and he does not know how to do it." In another note, on November 21, he added, "There is a feeling of optimism at SHAEF. There are no grounds for

such optimism." Brooke, who should have known better, fed these disloyal tantrums, replying to Montgomery on November 24, "You have always told me, and I have agreed with you, that Ike was no commander, that he had no strategic vision, was incapable of making a plan or of running operations when started." On a visit to London two days later, Montgomery added, "Eisenhower is quite useless.… He is completely and utterly useless."

On Tuesday afternoon, November 28, the blind, callow, useless Eisenhower arrived for an overnight visit at the 21st Army Group headquarters in the Belgian town of Zonhoven, east of Antwerp. Here he heard more of the same from Montgomery directly, albeit in more diplomatic language. Strutting and frowning amid the wall maps in his office trailer, pinching his cheek between thumb and forefinger, the field marshal for several hours railed about lack of progress on the Western Front and urged that a single commander oversee the Allied main effort against the Ruhr. As Eisenhower, exhausted, prepared for bed, Montgomery's aide Lieutenant Colonel Christopher C. "Kit" Dawnay brought the supreme commander a whiskey and soda, then repaired to Montgomery's office, where the field marshal dictated a note to Brooke. "We talked for three hours," Montgomery reported. "He admitted a grave mistake has been made" and agreed that "I should be in full operational command north of the Ardennes with Bradley under me."

An astonished Dawnay interjected, "Ike does *not* agree, sir."

"Send that message," Montgomery snapped. The next morning, following more tedious palaver before Eisenhower pressed on to inspect British, Canadian, and Polish troops, Montgomery told Brooke in a postscript, "He thinks Bradley has failed him as an architect of land operations. There is no doubt he is now very anxious to go back to the old set-up we had in Normandy … and to put Bradley under my operational command."

Montgomery evidently had second thoughts about his interpretation of Eisenhower's comments, because on Thursday, November 30, he sent him a "personal and confidential" cable "to confirm the main points that were agreed on during the conversations." Earlier in the fall, he wrote, Eisenhower had consented to place the main Allied weight in the north, to eradicate the enemy west of the Rhine, and to seize bridgeheads across the river.

> We have achieved none of this; and we have no hope of doing so. We have therefore failed; and we have suffered a strategic reverse.… We must get away from the doctrine of attacking in so many places that nowhere are we strong enough to get decisive results.

The Belgian Ardennes naturally divided the Western Front, he added; the two sectors, north and south, should each have separate commanding generals.

> Bradley and I together are a good team. We worked together in Normandy, under you, and we won a great victory. Things have not been so good since you separated us. I believe [that] to be certain of success you want to bring us together again; and one of us should have the full operational control north of the Ardennes; and if you decide that I should do that work—that is O.K. by me.

On Friday, December 1, Eisenhower's Cadillac circled south across the Pétrusse River in Luxembourg City, where he found Bradley bedridden with the flu in the Hôtel Alfa, his face badly swollen with hives. Clutching Montgomery's message in his fist, a scarlet flush creeping up his neck, "Ike was as angry as I had ever seen him," Bradley later recorded. This missive from the field marshal could only be interpreted as a condemnation of his leadership; Montgomery even had the temerity to propose another strategy session from which all others would be excluded except the two chiefs of staff, Smith and De Guingand, "who must not speak."

After a splenetic diatribe to which the disfigured Bradley could do little more than sniffle, Eisenhower calmed himself long enough to dictate a fifteen-paragraph reply, again demonstrating his remarkable ability to turn the other cheek with composure and equanimity. "There are certain things in your letter [with] which I do not concur," he began.

> I am not quite sure I know exactly what you mean by strategic reverse.… I do not agree that things have gone badly since Normandy, merely because we have not gained all we had hoped to gain. In fact, the situation is somewhat analogous to that which existed in Normandy for so long.

He reminded Montgomery that British logistics in the north had been so stretched that merely providing five hundred extra tons of supplies each day "cost Bradley three divisions," by stripping them of motor transport in order to feed and arm 21st Army Group. "Had we not advanced on a relatively broad front we would now have the spectacle of a long narrow line of communication, constantly threatened on the right flank."

> I have no intention of stopping Devers and Patton's operations as long as they are cleaning up our right flank and giving us capability of concentration.… It is going to be important to us later on to have two strings to our bow.

Only in reply to the suggestion of muzzling the chiefs of staff did Eisenhower offer the back of his hand. "It makes no difference to me whether your chief of staff attends or whether Bradley's does. Mine will be there unless some unforeseen circumstance prevents.… I will not by any means insult him by telling him that he should remain mute."

He finished by subtly suggesting that only one of them could see the horizon.

> I most definitely appreciate the frankness of your statements, and [the] usual friendly way in which they are stated, but I beg of you not to continue to look upon the past performances of this great fighting force as a failure merely because we have not achieved all that we could have hoped.… We must look at this whole great affair stretching from Marseille to the lower Rhine as one great theater.

As was now amply evident, Montgomery simply could not play the loyal, stalwart lieutenant. Subordination held little appeal for a solipsist. Even the king's equerry had noted in his diary that "such canalized egotism, though maybe necessary to a successful general … makes a man an exacting companion.… Sometimes I wonder whether Monty's undoubted genius does not occasionally bring him to the verge of mental unstability." If that was overdrawn—self-involvement need not imply imbalance—nevertheless Eisenhower's biographer Stephen E. Ambrose later wrote of Montgomery: "He had no competence in the fine art of persuasion. He was accustomed to working on a problem alone, then handing down a solution.… He could not get his ideas across without appearing either patronizing or offensive, or both."

A British official who watched Montgomery in a meeting described how he "sat up like a little bird with his head on one side, sharp as a needle, and with very bright eyes.… A most striking man with his bright eyes and long beaky nose [but] a bit *naif* in political matters." Brooke confided to his diary that Montgomery "goes on harping over the system of command in France. He has got this on the brain.… He cannot put up with not being the sole controller of land operations."

But others in the highest British circles took up his twin themes of abject failure in the west and Eisenhower's manifest deficiencies. "We have of course sustained a strategic reverse on the Western Front," Churchill told the South African soldier and statesman Jan Smuts on December 3. To Roosevelt, the prime minister cabled three days later, "We have definitely failed to achieve the strategic object which we gave to our armies five weeks ago. We have not yet reached the Rhine in the northern part." The president replied with sanguine assurances—"a decisive break in our favor is bound to come"—but even Admiral Ramsay, who was among Eisenhower's staunchest allies, told De Guingand that he saw "no prospect of Ike getting any wiser."

Some of Montgomery's partisans were more savage. Brooke noted that during a luncheon at SHAEF's new forward headquarters in Reims, Kay Summersby had been "promoted to hostess, and sat at the head of the table.… Ike produced a lot of undesirable gossip that did him no good." In subsequent diary entries, Brooke added, Eisenhower "is detached and by himself with his lady chauffeur on the golf links at Reims.… I think he is incapable of running the war even if he tries."

The fairways at Reims were in fact carpeted with SHAEF tents, rendering them unfit for sport, and Eisenhower's British military assistant, Lieutenant Colonel James F. Gault, later attested that during their long wartime association the supreme commander never swung a golf club. Yet the calumny continued. "Eisenhower completely fails as supreme commander.… The war is drifting in a rudderless condition," Brooke wrote. "We must take the control out of Eisenhower's hands."

* * *

At Montgomery's request, another high-command conclave was scheduled for Thursday morning, December 7, in Maastricht, the first Dutch city to be liberated in September and, it was asserted, the oldest town in the Netherlands, a claim bitterly disputed by Nijmegen. Here the Romans had quarried limestone and bridged the Maas, and here blessed Saint Servatius had placed his bishopric in the fourth century. Here too a four-month siege by Spanish brigands in 1579 ended in plunder and eight thousand locals put to the sword; another siege a century later, under Louis XIV, ended when that ubiquitous French military engineer, Vauban, reduced the Maastricht citadel by digging parallel trenches ever closer to the fortifications, a technique embraced by besiegers for the next two centuries. The Dutch could take solace only in having killed the celebrated French captain of musketeers Charles d'Artagnan, who was felled by a musket ball to the throat and subsequently immortalized in the novels of Alexandre Dumas.

Eisenhower and Tedder spent Wednesday night at the Hôtel Alfa in Luxembourg City with a still-ailing Bradley before the trio drove together to Maastricht. In a conference room at U.S. Ninth Army headquarters, Eisenhower—smartly tailored in the waist-length uniform jacket that came to be named for him—opened the session by applauding the Allied butchery of enemies during the fall, which had inflicted attrition "very much greater than our own." SHAEF intelligence had estimated that current operations were chewing through twenty German divisions a month, while only a dozen could be newly formed each month, and five eviscerated divisions refitted. Yet with the Rhine in spate from autumn rains, Eisenhower added, "it might not be possible to effect a major crossing until May." Since the beginning of November, the British Second Army had advanced less than ten miles.

At Eisenhower's request, Montgomery then took the floor to tender his views. "The master plan," as the field marshal called it, must cut off the Ruhr and force the enemy into mobile warfare to further strain German supplies of fuel and other matériel. The only suitable region for mobile combat, he believed, lay north of the Ruhr. "We must, therefore, concentrate the whole of our available effort on the drive across the Rhine north of the Ruhr, operations on the rest of the front being purely containing ones."

Eisenhower agreed, then disagreed. True, it was vital to isolate the Ruhr and force the enemy to move; the crux of his strategy was to provoke the Germans to give battle so they could be decisively defeated. But converging Allied attacks from disparate points would require Rundstedt to shift his forces across a wider front: an invasion avenue from Frankfurt toward Kassel, now in Patton's sights, appeared "quite practicable."

Montgomery begged to differ. He could "not agree that a thrust from Frankfurt offered any prospect of success." This, he added, was a fundamental disagreement between his vision and Eisenhower's.

Round and round they went, "another long and tedious affair," in Bradley's phrase. Montgomery again argued for separate

commands north and south of the Ardennes. Eisenhower countered that he intended to make command arrangements based on operations yet to come, "not by geographical factors" already behind the Allied line. The Ruhr, he pointed out, offered an obvious demarcation, with 21st Army Group to the north and 12th Army Group to the south. Again Montgomery disagreed. This, he said, was "a second fundamental difference of view."

The session ended with the supreme commander attempting to reconcile the irreconcilable. In what Bradley called "a classic Eisenhower compromise," Montgomery's drive in the north was affirmed as the main Allied attack; the field marshal would be reinforced, with up to ten divisions from the U.S. Ninth Army placed under his command. Bradley would retain command of Hodges's First Army and Patton's Third, respectively north and south of the Ardennes, protected on the right flank by Devers's army group. The broad-front strategy was upheld once more, with all seven Allied armies in action. The Ruhr would be devoured by a double envelopment from north and south, much as Hannibal had devoured the Romans in 216 B.C. at Cannae, a legendary battle of annihilation that had long kept an excessively powerful grip on Eisenhower's imagination.

"The meeting was affable on the surface but quite unproductive," Tedder subsequently wrote Air Marshal Portal. "Monty's almost contemptuous way of refusing to discuss or hear of anything except only his particular ideas makes real discussion quite impossible. … Ike depressed about it last night and wondered what was the use of having such meetings."

Others also were disheartened. "Another balls up," Montgomery told Tedder. "Everything has been a balls up since September 1." To Brooke on Thursday night he wrote:

> I personally regard the whole thing as quite dreadful. We shall split our resources and our strength, and we shall fail.… You have to get Eisenhower's hand taken off the land battle. I regret to say that in my opinion he just doesn't know what he is doing. And you will have to see that Bradley's influence is curbed.

Bradley a few days later wrote of Montgomery, "He refused to admit that there was any merit in anybody else's views except his own … largely colored by his desire to command the whole show." Should 12th Army Group ever fall under Montgomery's command, Bradley told Eisenhower, he would interpret the arrangement as "an indication that I had failed" and would ask to be relieved. Eisenhower's confidant General Everett Hughes wrote his wife from Paris, "We are all so human that it is pitiful. We never grow up."

A churlish, dolorous mood had taken hold, belying their station as the winning generals of winning armies in a winning, righteous cause. As so often happens in battle, exhaustion and strain had got the best of them, and a thousand fraught decisions from which dangled lives by the tens of thousands gnawed at every commander with a beating heart. War, that merciless revealer of character, uncloaked these men as precisely as a prism flays open a beam of light to reveal the inner spectrum. Here they were, disclosed, exposed, made known, and if rectitude was to obtain, they would have to fight their way to that high ground just as surely as they would have to fight their way across the Rhine.

Staking Everything on One Card

AN iron sky roofed the gray-green Taunus Hills on Monday morning, December 11, as a motorcade carrying Adolf Hitler and a fifty-man entourage of staff officers and SS bodyguards rolled across the Hessian landscape toward another of those remote boltholes the regime had built for itself in better days. The convoy sped south from the Giessen train station toward Frankfurt for fifteen miles before climbing west, past the heel-clicking sentries outside the neo-Gothic Schloss Ziegenberg; the cars traveled a final mile beneath a camouflage canopy suspended from trees above the narrow roadbed. With a crunch of tires on gravel, the convoy pulled to a stop and the Führer climbed from the rear seat of his limousine, his face puffy and spectrally pale.

To the unschooled eye, the seven half-timbered buildings of the Adlerhorst—the Eagle's Eyrie—resembled a farm hamlet, or perhaps a rustic hunting camp. Several houses had wooden porches with flower baskets. Interior furnishings included oak floor lamps and tasseled shades; deer-antler trophies hung on the knotty-pine paneling. But a closer look revealed the cottages to be bunkers with thick concrete walls and reinforced roofs; the architect Albert Speer had designed them in 1939 as a field headquarters for campaigns in the west, including the drive on Dunkirk so long ago. Outbuildings were disguised as haystacks or barns, and a maze of subterranean passages with heavy metal doors and peepholes linked one sector to another. Artificial trees supplemented the native conifers to thwart aerial snooping. Hidden antiaircraft batteries ringed the compound. A concrete bunker half a mile long and masked as a brick retaining wall led across a shallow glen to Schloss Ziegenberg, with its single stone tower dating to the twelfth century. After centuries of neglect the castle had been refurbished in the 1800s, and in recent years it had served as a rehabilitation hospital for wounded officers.

Hitler shuffled into his private chalet, known as Haus 1. Since his meeting with Rundstedt and Rommel at Margival in June, the Führer, like his empire, was even more diminished. His limp was pronounced. Doctors had recently removed an abscess from his vocal cords, and the long overnight trip from Berlin to Giessen aboard the Führer train, *Brandenburg*, had further worn him. "He seemed near collapse," one officer later wrote. "His shoulders drooped. His left arm shook as he walked." In a few hours he would unveil to his field commanders his planned masterstroke for snatching victory from his enemies, much as Frederick the Great had when Prussia faced certain defeat by her European adversaries in the winter of 1761–62. "Genius is a will-o'-the-wisp if it lacks a

solid foundation of perseverance and fanatical tenacity," Hitler had recently told an aide. "This is the most important thing in all human life." Destiny had brought him to this moment, to this dark wood, and he was ready, as General Alfred Jodl, his operations chief, put it, "to stake everything on one card." But first he needed rest.

* * *

Even a delusional megalomaniac could sense that the Third Reich faced obliteration. Soviet armies now coiling in Poland and the Balkans stood within a bound of the German homeland. Romania, Bulgaria, and Finland had departed the Axis, with German possessions in Hungary, Yugoslavia, Albania, and Greece imperiled. Gone were Belgium, Luxembourg, half of Holland, and all of France but for the Alsatian enclave and a few besieged ports. In Italy, Field Marshal Kesselring struggled to hold the Gothic Line, the last defensive position across the peninsula short of the Po valley.

German war production was likewise attenuated. The Wehrmacht in September fired seventy thousand tons of explosives, but factories produced only half that amount. From January through October, 118,000 military trucks had been lost and just 46,000 new ones built, although dwindling gasoline stocks often immobilized vehicle fleets anyway. Allied bombardment of the Ruhr nearly halved steel production from October to November, and by December electrical power generated in Germany had plunged by one-third. Mountains of coal accumulated in the Ruhr, even as profound shortages afflicted other regions because those mountains could not be moved. The regime had imposed a sixty-hour industrial workweek with holidays abolished, except in tank and aircraft factories: there, workers toiled seventy-two hours a week. "Heroes of National Socialist Labor" received extra food, vitamins, and vacations in the Tyrol as incentives; defeatism and sabotage were rewarded with firing squads. Seven million prisoners-of-war and foreign workers, many of them slaves, provided a quarter of the country's labor force for farms, mines, and factories.

To shore up a military now losing almost fifty thousand killed in action each month, Hitler had mustered another three-quarters of a million men by lowering the draft age to sixteen, raising it to fifty, and ordering what he deemed "rear-area swine" combed from the home front. (A nurse's aide described hospitalized soldiers tearing open their wounds at night to delay healing, "out of sheer terror of being sent back to the front.") A reserve of more than thirty divisions, including Volksgrenadier and panzer units, had been built to preserve an offensive strike force, even as German armies retreated on all fronts. In October, a home guard dubbed the Volkssturm—People's Storm—also was created under Himmler's SS; the joke went around that retirement homes now bore the sign "Closed because of the call-up." The levy robbed German industry of skilled workers, but by December Hitler's armies comprised 243 divisions with 3.6 million soldiers, of whom 2 million were older than thirty. If imposing in number and ideological fervor, the force was a pale shadow of the earlier Wehrmacht. Fewer and fewer companies had more than one officer, and some units were so poorly kitted out for combat that they were known as "bow and arrow infantry."

Secret weapons always beguiled the Führer, and never more so than now. Some were as simple as a rifle that could shoot around corners—tests reportedly showed fair accuracy at four hundred meters. Others required the mobilization of a nation hard-pressed to make even gasoline and electricity. The first jet aircraft had taken to the skies in the fall, flying, as one pilot put it, "as if an angel were pushing." The Luftwaffe by year's end would receive more than five hundred Me-262s and Ar-234s, but they remained mostly ineffective in combat—a warplane is only as good as its pilot—and susceptible to accidents, fuel shortages, Allied air raids, and production snafus, including blade fractures in the engine turbines.

No less innovative were new "electro" U-boats with streamlined hulls and increased battery capacity intended to allow longer submersion and far greater underwater speeds than conventional submarines. German yards by November were turning out a new boat every couple days, but these too were bedeviled by defects—mostly discovered after the submarines were delivered to the navy—as well as by Allied sea mines and bomb damage to boats and bases. Well into 1945, German submarines continued to attack Allied ships in waters as distant as the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the U.S. Eastern Seaboard. But scarcely any vessels would be sunk by the new U-boats, and the entire German submarine fleet sent fewer than one hundred Allied and neutral ships to the bottom in the final nine months of the war.

The miracles of the German jet, the electro-boat, and the gun that shot around corners proved to be no miracles at all. If German arms were to forestall the nation's imminent defeat, the enemy must be crushed by soldiers conventionally outfitted with rifles, howitzers, and tanks. That killing blow, Hitler had concluded, must be struck in one great, bold, and unexpected attack.

* * *

Dusk enfolded the Taunus Hills at five P.M., when two buses arrived at Schloss Ziegenberg. Heavy rain dripped from the pine boughs as a clutch of senior officers queued up to board. Many believed they had been summoned to the castle to toast Rundstedt's sixty-ninth birthday on Tuesday, but a terse request that each man surrender his sidearm and briefcase in the Ziegenberg cloakroom suggested a less festive occasion. For half an hour the buses lurched this way and that through the forest, as corps and division commanders chatted quietly or stared out the rain-streaked windows. The circuitous route, intended to obscure that they were traveling barely a kilometer across the glen, ended at Haus 2, the Adlerhorst officers' club, which a covered walkway connected to the Führer's Haus 1.

A double row of armed SS guards formed a cordon from each bus to the club's main door; a steep flight of steps, now ringing beneath the heavy footfall of black boots, led to a subterranean situation room. As directed, each officer took his seat around a long rectangular table, with an SS man at port arms behind each chair in an attitude of such scowling intimidation that one general later admitted fearing "even to reach for a handkerchief." Rundstedt and Model, the two senior German commanders in the west, sat impassively elbow to elbow.

Ten minutes later Hitler hobbled in and sat with a grimace behind a small separate table at the head of the room, flanked by Jodl

and the tall, monocled Wehrmacht chief, Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel. Field generals privately referred to the pair as *Nick-Esel*, the nodding donkeys, part of the larger circle of *Jaleute*, yes-people. The Führer's hands trembled as he pulled on his spectacles and picked up a manuscript. Those who had not seen him since the July 20 assassination attempt were stunned by his appearance; one general wrote that he looked like "a broken man, with an unhealthy color, a caved-in appearance … sitting as if the burden of responsibility seemed to oppress him." Manipulating his dangling left arm with his right hand, "he often stared vacantly, his back was bent, and his shoulders sunken," another officer reported.

Then he spoke, and color flushed into the pallid cheeks. The dull eyes once again seemed to kindle from within. For the first fifty minutes he delivered a soaring harangue on history, fate, and how he had battled against "the policy of encirclement of Germany," devised by Churchill with "international world Jewry behind it."

> Never in history was there a coalition like that of our enemies, composed of such heterogeneous elements with such divergent aims. Ultra-capitalist states on the one hand; ultra-Marxist states on the other.… Even now these states are at loggerheads.… These antagonisms grow stronger and stronger from hour to hour. If now we can deliver a few more heavy blows, then at any moment this artificially bolstered common front may suddenly collapse with a gigantic clap of thunder.

As the Allies approached each other from east and west, the strain on this unholy alliance would grow insuperable. Canada, he predicted, would be the first to yank its troops from the theater. "World historical events have their ups and downs," the Führer declared.

> Rome would not be thinkable without a Second Punic War.… There would be no Prussia without the Seven Years' War.… The palm of victory will in the end be given to the one who was not only ablest, but—and I want to emphasize this—was the most daring.

Toward that end he had a plan, originally code-named WACHT AM RHEIN, Watch on the Rhine, but recently renamed HERBSTNEBEL, Autumn Mist. This he would now disclose on pain of death to any man who betrayed the grand secret.

* * *

It had come to him as in a fever dream, when he was bedridden and yellow with jaundice in September. Brooding over what Jodl called "the evil fate hanging over us," the Führer had again been hunched at his maps when his eye fixed on the same unlikely seam through the Ardennes that German invaders had already ripped twice in this century. A monstrous blow by two panzer armies could swiftly reach the Meuse bridges between Liège and Namur, carving away Montgomery's 21st Army Group in the north from the Americans in the south, and eradicating the enemy threat to the Ruhr. Destroying thirty divisions in the west would wipe out a third of the Anglo-American force, requiring Churchill and Roosevelt to sue for peace; conversely, exterminating thirty Bolshevik divisions in the east, among more than five hundred, could hardly deal a decisive blow. Therefore Germany's destiny must, he proclaimed, be "sealed in the West." As for the offensive's ultimate objective, Hitler in a conference with his senior generals had abruptly blurted out a single word: "Antwerp."

The naysayers promptly said nay. Rundstedt, who would command this great offensive, had learned of the plan only after it coagulated in Hitler's imagination; the Führer's order came as a "great surprise." The field marshal favored strategic defense—"no offensive under any conditions," as one lieutenant put it. Yes, he had led the vanquishing German armies through the Ardennes in 1940, but then he had commanded seventy-one divisions altogether, more than double the force allotted to HERBSTNEBEL, and those units were far stronger than the current Wehrmacht divisions. The invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941 had included 123 divisions and 2,500 attack planes, five times the strength of the force available for this offensive. Given the strained supplies of fuel, ammunition, and manpower, and with little Luftwaffe support, Rundstedt concluded that the force was "much, much, *much* too weak" to sustain a winter attack across 125 miles to Antwerp.

Although uncertain why the Allied drive across Europe had stalled, Rundstedt within the sanctity of his sitting room had told trusted aides, "The soldier can do nothing but buy time for the political leader to negotiate." His chief of staff, General Siegfried Westphal, wrote that "the distant objective of Antwerp cannot be reached with the forces available, for then impossibly long flanks would be exposed on both sides of the attacking wedge.… The entire planning of this offensive strikes me as failing to meet the demands of reality." Hitler brushed aside the objections, telling Rundstedt, "I think I am a better judge of this than you are, Field Marshal. I have come here to help you."

Even Model, who claimed to love those who craved the impossible, also demurred, calling the Führer's scheme "damned moldy." The Army Group B commander would provide most of the forces for HERBSTNEBEL, and like Rundstedt he considered Antwerp far too ambitious. Both men favored a truncated plan—dubbed "the small solution," in contrast to Hitler's grandiose "large solution"—with a wheeling movement north around Aachen that would cut off the U.S. First and Ninth Armies and destroy ten to fifteen divisions. The two army commanders anointed by the Führer to lead the attack, Generals Hasso von Manteuffel and Sepp Dietrich, had also endorsed the small solution in a six-hour conference with Hitler at the Reich Chancellery in Berlin on December 2. Not only was the small solution better suited to the force available, they argued, but Wehrmacht soldiers would fight desperately to reclaim the swatch of Germany now held by the Americans.

The Führer was unmoved. Only a brutal drubbing would achieve the political objective of forcing the Anglo-Americans to the

bargaining table. Only a victory as dramatic as the Reich's recapture of Antwerp could convince the enemy that the campaign was bootless, endless, hopeless. He promised thirty-eight divisions for the attack, supported by two thousand planes—an enduring fantasy that had taken on a life of its own even as autumn fighting further whittled away German strength. The final attack blueprint approved by Hitler on December 9 was virtually unchanged from the vision he had revealed earlier in the fall. A copy sent to Rundstedt was annotated by the Führer: "Not to Be Altered."

* * *

And thus was the plan fixed: three armies under Model's Army Group B would attack across a hundred-mile front. The first echelon alone included two hundred thousand men in twenty divisions with two thousand artillery pieces and nearly a thousand tanks and assault guns. A second wave carried five more divisions and hundreds of additional panzers. A fourth field army, the Fifteenth, was positioned north of the assault area with six infantry divisions to tie up American forces near Aachen. In all, Model had thirty or more divisions for HERBSTNEBEL.

With the possible exception of the Vosges, no more rugged terrain existed between the North Sea and the Alps than the coniferous Ardennes, a shaggy, corrugated tableland less than 2,500 feet high but fissured with deep stream beds across the sixty miles between the German border and the Meuse. The French belief that it was an "almost impenetrable massif" had been disproved in August 1914, when four German armies with more than a million men eventually poured through the Ardennes. Between wars, the governments of Belgium and Luxembourg, keen to exploit automobile *tourisme*, built ten all-weather roads that led westward from the German frontier across many stout stone bridges. Still, the delusion of impermeability prevailed until May 1940, when the Germans shoved a mechanized host through the region in three days, nearly twice as fast as predicted even in Wehrmacht march tables, with young Rommel's panzer division grabbing the first bridgehead across the Meuse at Dinant.

Hitler had been consumed for weeks by the minutest details of HERBSTNEBEL, from the provision to each shock trooper of at least three blankets to the banishment of Alsatian troops from frontline units as security risks. Of all the German armored vehicles built in November, 1,345 were shipped to the west, only 288 to the east. Divisions in Norway had been required to divert many of their motor vehicles to the Western Front. Campaign planners intended to replicate 1940, one officer said: "to hold the reins loose, and let the armies race." Jodl wanted German forces on the Meuse within forty-eight hours; field commanders believed four to six days was a more realistic timetable. No significant interference was expected from Montgomery's 21st Army Group until the panzer vanguard had reached Brussels. Vague plans called for summoning Wehrmacht reinforcements from Italy, Denmark, and Norway after Antwerp fell.

Two tank armies would form the point of the spear: on the right wing, in the north, the main blow would be delivered by Sixth Panzer Army under Dietrich, a squat former butcher's apprentice with an underslung jaw, a harpoon nose, and a taste for schnapps. A tank sergeant in World War I and a favorite of Hitler's since the early 1920s, Dietrich had once led the Führer's Mercedes-mounted personal guard, which he armed with revolvers and hippopotamus whips. More recently he had commanded SS troops in France, Yugoslavia, Greece, and Russia, reportedly boasting in 1943 that of his original 23,000 men, only 30 remained alive and uncaptured. He was accused in one hideous episode of ordering more than four thousand Russians shot in retaliation for six German deaths. Rundstedt deemed Dietrich "decent but stupid," yet accepted him as the paramount tactical commander for HERBSTNEBEL. Dietrich would lead nine divisions with more than 1,000 guns and 120,000 soldiers, a third of them in Waffen-SS units. His lead echelons included five hundred tanks and assault guns, many of which were to funnel into Belgium through the five-mile-wide Losheim Gap —an upland passage exploited by German horse cavalry in 1914 and by Rommel in 1940—then hurry down five roads to reach the Meuse near Liège before wheeling northwest toward Antwerp.

On the left, Fifth Panzer Army with seven divisions was to sweep to the Meuse through southern Belgium and Luxembourg, shielding Dietrich's flank against counterattack from the southwest. Manteuffel, the Fifth Panzer commander, an elfin five-foot-two and 120 pounds, was a veteran of both Russia and Africa, tormented by migraines but described in one efficiency report as "a daredevil, a bold and dashing leader." His army had received a thousand artillery tubes and ample ammunition, but Manteuffel fretted more about fuel: hilly terrain and icy roads, he warned, required two to five times the standard petrol allocation. Model's logisticians had calculated that four and a half million gallons would suffice to reach the Meuse, plus another four million to seize Antwerp; only three million gallons had been delivered to the armies so far, much of it stockpiled far to the rear, in the Rhine valley. "If you need anything," Model advised, "take it from the Americans." Even more strapped was the German Seventh Army, positioned with seven divisions on the far left wing as another shield against counterattack from the southern flank; Hitler ordered Himmler to round up two thousand horses to enhance its mobility.

A thousand trains beginning in early December had hauled the HERBSTNEBEL legions across the Rhine, where they disembarked at night between Trier and München-Gladbach before marching in darkness toward the front. Security remained paramount. No open fires were allowed; to minimize smoke, only charcoal could be used for cooking. Any officer initiated into the plan took multiple secrecy oaths and then was forbidden to travel by airplane lest he be shot down and captured. Gestapo agents sniffed for leaks. Manteuffel personally started a rumor—by means of loud, theatrical dinner conversation at a restaurant—that his army intended to attack through the Saar in January.

Maps remained sealed until the eleventh hour. No motor vehicles could approach within eight kilometers of the front line, a restriction that hampered reconnaissance and artillery coordination. To forestall deserters, only on the final night would shock troops move into their assault trenches. Storch planes buzzing low overhead provided "noise curtains" to conceal engine sounds. The attack, originally scheduled for late November and then postponed until December 10, had been delayed again for nearly a week to stockpile more fuel and permit further positioning. *Null Tag*—Zero Day—now was fixed for Saturday, December 16, the date

celebrated as the birthday of that most exquisite German, Ludwig van Beethoven.

* * *

In the club's cellar Hitler brought his two-hour oration to a close, eyes still bright, voice still strong. He would repeat the performance again the following night to a second tranche of senior generals.

"The army must gain a victory.… The German people can no longer endure the heavy bombing attacks," he told them. "We have many exhausted troops. The enemy also has exhausted troops, and he has lost a lot of blood." Reich intelligence estimated that the Americans alone "have lost about 240,000 men within a period of hardly three weeks." (This figure bore no relation to reality.) "Technically," he said, "both sides are equal."

The central weather office in Berlin predicted poor flying weather over the Ardennes for a week; that would negate Allied air superiority. "Troops must act with brutality and show no human inhibitions," Hitler said. "A wave of fright and terror must precede the troops."

> War is of course a test of endurance for those involved.… Wars are finally decided when one side or the other realizes that the war as such can no longer be won. Our most important task is to force the enemy to realize this. He can never reckon upon us surrendering. Never! Never!

Finally spent, Hitler ended his monologue. Rundstedt rose slowly from his chair, the field-gray apotheosis of Prussian dignity. On behalf of his generals, he pledged loyalty to the Führer and vowed that they would not disappoint him. Hardly a month earlier, the field marshal had voiced "grave doubts" about this desperate scheme. Now he proved that he too was one of the *Jaleute*, the yes-men. He too was a nodding donkey.

The Light Line

FOR three months after her glorious liberation, Paris suffered. "She was largely without light or gas or heat," wrote Alan Moorehead. "There were still no buses in the streets, no taxis. Every boulevard was a river of bicycles." Shortages of soap and warm water resulted in an epidemic of ugly leg sores. "You could more easily take a bath in champagne than in hot water," Martha Gellhorn added. "Since there was no leather for shoes, women clattered about the streets on platform soles made of wood, sounding like horses' hooves." Restaurant patrons dined in their overcoats on carrot-and-turnip soup.

The small fuel ration was restricted to adults over seventy-five, children under three, and the certifiably sick. A cord of black-market firewood sold for $120, or 6,000 francs at official exchange rates. The rich sometimes bought sawdust by the ton to burn in their stoves; they also purchased black-market gasoline for the trucks that delivered it. An American officer wrote home that his flat was "cold as charity," and another soldier, assigned a dank, sepulchral room, reported that "on many nights we opened the windows and slept in sleeping bags." A SHAEF officer who attended the opera described heavily muffled musicians, and patrons in formal dress swaddled in lap robes. "Like opening a refrigerator door," he wrote, "a cold wave rolled out on us from backstage as the curtain was lifted." Isaiah Berlin wrote a friend that the city seemed "empty and hollow and dead, like an exquisite corpse." As for actual corpses, the Paris crematorium received only enough gas to operate for two hours a day, so bodies were burned quickly or not at all.

By late November conditions began to brighten and the city "was again alive," according to Forrest Pogue. Tacticians defined the "light line" as the boundary between Allied field armies and the far rear; west of the line, nighttime blackouts no longer were mandatory. Paris again became *la ville lumière*, not least because the great coal fields around Valenciennes had been liberated intact and were soon disgorging the seven thousand tons a day needed to keep city utilities operating and the subway running. By mid-December, SHAEF reported that "electricity consumption in Paris is 94% of the peacetime figure," with "an unnecessary amount of lighting used."

For liberators behind the light line, life was good, and for the brass in Paris, life was splendid. A PX open only to general officers stocked perfume, bracelets, fountain pens, and new Zippos. General Everett Hughes described hunting partridge near Versailles, with "all the farm hands for miles around acting as beaters." General Lee, the COMZ commander, ensured that fresh milk, butter, and fruit filled Eisenhower's larder, and the White House even sent the supreme commander a bushel of Chesapeake oysters. Frontline troops groused about "all those goddamned chair-borne infantry at the Hôtel Majestic," where Court House Lee kept his headquarters. "The COMZ set-up is shocking," wrote Pogue. "Working on a schedule of 8:30–5:30 (more nearly 4:30); off one afternoon a week." Denizens of the Majestic messed in a swank three-story café on the corner of the Champs-Élysées and Rue de Berri, where French waitresses served meals on starched tablecloths and a GI orchestra played from a mezzanine balcony.

The Majestic was hardly unique. Fifty-one generals lived in the George V, by Lee's careful count, and more filled the Hôtel Palais Quai d'Orsay, where desk clerks and porters wore frock coats. SHAEF's offices in the city occupied the J. P. Morgan bank on the elegant Place Vendôme, near the house where Frédéric Chopin died and opposite Napoléon's column, made from melted-down enemy cannons captured at Austerlitz. SHAEF officers dined in the Hôtel Meurice, that last-ditch redoubt of General Choltitz, where the cupboards still smelled of Wehrmacht boot leather. A ditty percolating through the ranks advised:

Don't go forward of army group,
Your proper place is SHAEF.
Don't mind a bit
If you're called a shit,
Just say, "Thank God I'm safe."

The British occupied twelve hotels in Paris, the Canadians two; Americans filled well over three hundred. Champagne cost 300 to 600 francs a bottle—$6 to $12 at official exchange rates, $1.20 to $2.40 at black market rates—although imbibers were required to turn in two empty bottles to get a full one, and stoppers were at a premium because of Spanish cork shortages. A December 2 memo from COMZ, titled "Whiskey and Gin for General Officers," allocated a total of six cases for each army commander through January, with four cases permitted corps commanders, three cases for division commanders, and two cases for every brigadier general. Aides could retrieve the tipple from a warehouse at the Belgium Exposition Grounds in Brussels.

For GIs without stars on their shoulders, Paris seemed a fantastic sanctuary, the ne plus ultra of life outside the combat zone. The Army's first leave center opened in Paris in late October. That was followed by the first of fifty-one GI clubs on the Continent. Located in the Grand Hotel on Boulevard des Capucines, the initial club in Paris charged 30 cents a night for a bed; Major Glenn Miller's orchestra played each evening, even after the band leader disappeared in mid-December during a foul-weather flight over the English Channel. Soon ten thousand soldiers a day poured into the city on forty-eight-hour passes. "Just returned from a trip to Paris," a Seventh Army soldier wrote his wife. "It was wonderful, but I slept on the floor because the bed was just too much like sleeping in butter." A woman working for the OSS described fleets of *vélos*, odd contraptions like "canvas-covered bathtubs and drawn or propelled by motorcycles or bicycles," carting around GIs "who little count the cost in their exuberance at being alive." The writer Simone de Beauvoir concluded that "the easygoing manner of the young Americans incarnated liberty itself."

Troops packed movie theaters along the Champs-Élysées, and two music halls featured vaudeville shows. Post Number One of the American Legion served hamburgers and bourbon, and bars opened with names intended to entice the homesick, like The Sunny Side of the Street and New York. Army special services organized activities ranging from piano recitals to jitterbug lessons, while distributing thousands of hobby kits for sketching, clay modeling, and leather craft. The Bayeux Tapestry, long tucked away for safekeeping, reemerged in an exhibit at the Louvre, with the segment depicting the Norman defeat of the Anglo-Saxons in 1066 tactfully folded from sight.

In early December, Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas returned to Paris from exile in southern France with their dog, Basket, and the Red Cross arranged GI tours of their apartment. Soldiers organized in groups of fifty, often bearing gifts of cigarettes and soap, also visited Picasso in his studio on Rue des Grand Augustins, where Hemingway had left behind a box of grenades. Callers to the atelier were "stratified," wrote one observer: "on the ground floor there were GIs and American journalists; then came communist deputies and prominent party members who showed signs of impatience; then came old acquaintances; and finally one came to Picasso." When the artist—who sometimes received guests in his underwear—was shown photos of war damage in London, he exclaimed, "*C'est épouvantable!* And that is happening all over the world?"

For many soldiers, of course, culture was the least of their interests. From deuce-and-a-half truck beds rumbling toward the Tuileries came shouts of "We're all going to get laid, French-style!" COMZ counted at least 230 brothels in the city, plus six thousand licensed prostitutes working the streets. Another seven thousand were unregistered, according to Paris police estimates, and of the unregistered more than a third carried venereal disease. A typical transaction cost three packs of Chesterfields, and a survey found that among soldiers who spent two days or more in Paris, two-thirds had intercourse at least once, often in what were called "Where am I?" rooms. In Pigalle, solicitations from aggressive streetwalkers—known as "body snatchers"—could be heard from every corner. "Come along, ba-bee," they cooed, "come along." Soldiers replied, "*Coushay avec?"* or simply, "Zig zig?" One quartermaster private disclosed on his required "VD contact form" that he picked up nine different women around the same Parisian intersection, took them to six different hotels, and essayed seven "sexual exposures," all within eight hours. "Our soldiers," an American officer wrote, "were devastated by aphrodisiac dreams."

They were devastated by more than dreams. The venereal-disease rate in the European theater quickly doubled, and more than two-thirds of all infections acquired in France originated in Paris. The U.S. Army, which had tracked VD in the ranks since 1830, considered a rate below 30 cases per 1,000 troops annually to be "acceptable"; by mid-October the rate in Europe was twice that. It doubled again among the Army Air Forces, and—at 222 per 1,000—was sevenfold the "acceptable" figure in COMZ's Loire encampments. Confronted by another threat to Allied strength, Eisenhower counterattacked by declaring "all brothels, bordellos and similar establishments" off-limits.

Twenty-nine prophylactic dispensaries sprouted across Paris, with huge signs declaring, "Pro Station Here." Mandatory "short-arm" inspections by medical "pecker checkers" increased sharply. Naval commanders at a hotel on the Avenue Marceau barred entry to any woman unless she produced "proof of chastity." A December issue of *Army Talks* warned, "Don't forget the Krauts were fooling around France a long time before we got here.… So any dame you get now is plenty second-hand."

Still the VD rate climbed. Soldiers excused from duty while being treated for syphilis or gonorrhea were said to be "whores de combat," and the Good Conduct ribbon became known as the "No-Clap Medal." Women who swapped sex for rations or chocolate were called "Hershey bars," while a brothel was a "house of horizontal refreshment." The French Foreign Ministry asked SHAEF to consider "assigning a certain number of houses of prostitution for the Allied nationals' use" because of "a noteworthy recrudescence of clandestine prostitution" and increasing VD among French civilians. Eisenhower declined. When Patton proposed providing bordellos with penicillin because "it is futile to attempt to go against human nature," the supreme commander replied tartly, "I most

emphatically do *not* agree.… To run the risk of being short in this important drug merely in order that brothels in France may be supplied with it is absolutely unacceptable to me." Patton for once held his tongue.

* * *

Paris soldiered on, or perhaps sashayed. Vendors near the Eiffel Tower sold pinwheels and balloons, and among pitched stalls at the stamp market, collectors by the hundreds examined specimens with magnifying lenses. French communists tossed clenched-fist salutes to British officers in red-banded uniform caps, mistaking them for Soviets, and young women bicycled down the boulevards with billowing skirts and big hats, a vivid apparition that brightened everyone's morale. In November, De Gaulle's government had closed public dance halls as unseemly, since some two million French citizens remained incarcerated in German labor camps or prisons. But surreptitious dancing continued across Montmartre, and cabarets and nightclubs remained open. Among them was the Sphinx, which Bill Mauldin described as "jammed with French civilians, all smoking [black market] Camels" and served by waitresses who "wore lace caps and high-heeled shoes, with absolutely nothing between."

A lively tableau could also be found in the Hôtel Scribe, abode of many of the nearly one thousand journalists accredited to SHAEF, including the likes of William Shirer, George Orwell, and Robert Capa. "It was an American enclave in the heart of Paris," De Beauvoir wrote. "White bread, fresh eggs, jam, sugar and Spam." (The bar, always crowded, featured a medley of intoxicants called the Suffering Bastard.) Collectively the correspondents filed more than 100,000 words from Paris each day, plus hundreds of photographs and thousands of feet of movie film. Two dozen SHAEF censors sat in a suite on the second floor of the hotel, scrutinizing the copy while occasionally glancing at a long list of "hot stops"—details not to be publicly disclosed, such as troop movements and unit strengths—scrawled in colored chalk on a blackboard. The triple bleating of buzzers in the Scribe lobby announced a new press release, according to the Australian reporter Osmar White, and wire services hired "nimble French youths to race from the briefing room to the dispatching office on the first floor with 'flashes.'"

Sporadic privation would beset Paris for the duration, including shortages of milk, bread, and even government stationery. Reams embossed with the Vichy letterhead were reused, with *"État Français"* struck out and *"République Française"* typed in. Particularly alarming to GIs was a theater-wide cigarette shortage: U.S. Army soldiers alone smoked more than a million packs a day in Europe, and COMZ put the total need for December at 84 million packs. A two-month supply—along with more than one million blankets and sleeping bags—was discovered aboard offshore cargo ships, unable to berth for weeks because priority was given to ammunition and fuel. Until the crisis eased, cigarettes were diverted from rear-echelon troops behind the light line to the front, and Eisenhower began rolling his own as a gesture of solidarity with his men.

Not least among the problems for Court House Lee and others attempting to victual the Allied host was a virulent and ingenious black market. Coffee, gasoline, tires, blankets, boots, soap, and morphine were bought and sold in staggering volume at enormous profit. A pack of Lucky Strikes that cost a nickel at the post exchange on the Champs-Élysées could be peddled on the sidewalk outside for $2. A twenty-pound can of coffee or fifty D-ration chocolate bars brought $300, and the standard soldier musette sack became known as a "black market bag." British Commandos financed their stay at the Ritz by peddling a two-hundred-pound keg of Danish butter for one hundred pounds sterling. An entire train with three engines and forty boxcars full of cigarettes and other PX supplies vanished without a trace during a journey from Normandy to Paris, despite a prolonged search by agents in Cub spotter planes. The distribution of five thousand captured German horses to French farmers was halted in the fall to prevent their diversion to black-market butchers, which did not stop Osmar White from enjoying a "superbly camouflaged horse steak with vintage Château Latour" at an illicit restaurant off Rue du Faubourg St.-Honoré.

Eisenhower's provost marshal estimated that in December eighteen thousand American deserters roamed the European theater, plus another ten thousand British absconders. The equivalent of a division of military fugitives was believed to be hiding in the Parisian demimonde, often joining forces with local black marketeers to peddle K rations for 75 cents from the tailgates of stolen Army trucks—hundreds of such vehicles vanished every day—or simply selling the entire deuce-and-a-half for $5,000. Eventually four thousand military policemen and detectives worked the streets of Paris. From September through December they arrested more than ten thousand people, including French civilians caught selling marijuana to soldiers. A five-story French army barracks on the Boulevard Mortier became a detention block capable of holding more than two thousand miscreants, while the merely AWOL were rounded up and trucked back to the front in lots of sixteen under MP guard. Many soldiers in an Army railway battalion in Paris were arrested and court-martialed en masse for pilferage; nearly two hundred of them drew prison sentences, some as long as fifty years—later commuted for those who agreed to combat duty. Still, the malfeasance and misconduct would thrive through the end of the war, to the point that Paris, the city of light, the city of learning, the city of love, earned yet another nickname: "Chicago-sur-Seine."

* * *

Shortly before six P.M. on Tuesday, December 12, at roughly the hour that Hitler was meeting his second group of HERBSTNEBEL generals at the Adlerhorst, Eisenhower rode in a limousine through the dim streets of London toward 10 Downing Street for a meeting with Churchill and *his* military brain trust. After flying from Versailles the previous day, the supreme commander had kept busy with appointments in his high-windowed corner office overlooking Grosvenor Square, followed this afternoon by a courtesy call on Ambassador Winant at the U.S. embassy down the street.

As his car sped southeast across Piccadilly toward Whitehall, Eisenhower could see that London, unlike Paris, showed little evidence of revival. Blackout restrictions remained in force, and the few cars on the road were described by one visitor as "little points of blue light dragging darkness after them but leaving blackness behind." At Claridge's, a doorman flashed his torch to guide patrons across the sidewalk. Toy and cake shops stood empty a fortnight before Christmas, and even potatoes were in short supply.

The city's most popular diversions included a new film adaptation of *Henry V* starring Laurence Olivier and a waxwork exhibit depicting German atrocities. "Horrors of the Nazi Concentration Camps. Come inside and see real Nazi tortures," the marquee beckoned. "Children's amusement section no extra charge."

A national ban on making ice cream had been lifted in November, and, with the threat of German invasion now gone, the antique Home Guard stood down with a fine parade. But what would be the coldest winter in fifty years had set in, its miseries exacerbated by millions of broken windows and missing roof tiles. The homeless and unnerved still retreated to shelters and subways at dusk with their deck chairs and rugs—"cave dwellers getting their cave ready for the night," an American airman recorded—sometimes sleeping five deep on steel shelves erected across the platforms. Much of the Tate Gallery collection had been stored in unused Underground stations on the Piccadilly and Central Lines; the Elgin Marbles now resided in an empty tunnel under Aldwych. An all too familiar sight on London's streets was a telegram delivery boy carrying bad news past twitching parlor curtains as he sought the proper address. "This is a priority," the messengers were told as they set out. "It's death."

As in Antwerp, death could also arrive directly, as a consequence of Hitler's decision to concentrate his V-2 rockets almost exclusively on the Belgian port and the British capital. Churchill in mid-November had finally confirmed that those mysterious detonations since early September were *not* exploding gas mains. More than one thousand of the rockets would fall on British soil, about half in greater London. Like the V-1, the V-2, dubbed Big Ben, would have little military impact; according to official German calculations the effort invested by Berlin in the V-weapons was roughly equivalent to that of producing 24,000 fighter planes. Further, the V-2 rocket—a hundred times more expensive to build than the V-1—proved less effective than the flying bomb as a terror weapon. Not least among the reasons was the very futility of defending against a missile streaking across the heavens at Mach 5. Since they afforded no protection anyway, neither Allied antiaircraft batteries nor fighter squadrons were tied down, as they had been during the V-1 onslaught.

Radar usually detected V-2 launches from the Netherlands, but warning sirens were deemed pointless; only transport authorities got a minute or two of notification to close subway floodgates beneath the Thames. "You just strolled along, daydreaming, till you were hit," one witness said. Because the odds against shooting down a V-2 with ground fire were considered as high as a thousand to one, dupery had to suffice as a countermeasure. False intelligence about where the Big Bens hit, fed that fall to the Germans through agents controlled by British counterintelligence, persuaded enemy rocketeers that they were overshooting central London. Soon the mean point of impact migrated eastward, a shift that by war's end was credited with sparing an estimated 1,300 British lives, 10,000 other casualties, and 23,000 houses.

That was cold comfort for the nearly three thousand Britons killed by V-2s, or the tens of thousands whose homes were obliterated. "Never have I seen buildings so cleanly swept away, and these are 3- or 4-story tenement houses," a survivor reported. One of the worst attacks occurred shortly after noon on November 25 in the working-class borough of Deptford, where a Saturday sale on saucepans had drawn a long queue at the local Woolworth's. A young mother outside the store described "a sudden airless quiet, which seemed to stop one's breath, then an almighty sound so tremendous that it seemed to blot out my mind completely." A survivor recalled that as the smoke cleared:

> A horse's head was lying in the gutter. There was a pram hood all twisted and bent and there was a little baby's hand still in its wooly sleeve. Outside the pub there was a crumpled bus, still with rows of people sitting inside, all covered in dust and dead. Where Woolworth's had been, there was nothing.

The blast killed 168 and injured even more. "The slogan of 'London can take it' will prevail," a British government official wrote Harry Hopkins, Roosevelt's close aide. "But there may be quite a lot to take."

* * *

No V-weapons fell on Whitehall during Eisenhower's Tuesday night visit, but the specter was never farther away than the nearby gutted shops and blown-out windows patched with beaverboard. At six P.M., Churchill welcomed the supreme commander to his map room, where they were joined by Tedder, Brooke, and several other senior British officers. Brooke, as part of his conspiracy with Montgomery to "take the control out of Eisenhower's hands," had tried to arrange a direct meeting with George Marshall; the Army chief declined the invitation and instead told Eisenhower to make his own case in London.

Eisenhower now commanded sixty-nine divisions on the Western Front, a force he expected to expand to eighty-one divisions by February. Using the prime minister's huge wall maps, upon which various battlefronts were delineated with pushpins and colored yarn, the supreme commander once again reviewed his campaign scheme: how Montgomery's 21st Army Group, bolstered by the U.S. Ninth Army, would angle north of the Ruhr, while Bradley's 12th Army Group swung farther south, shielded on the right flank by Devers's 6th Army Group. The twin envelopment would exploit Allied mobility and force the enemy to burn his dwindling fuel stocks by defending a wide, perilous front.

Brooke—his narrow raptor face as intent as the visage of a peregrine watching a pigeon—told his diary later that night:

> Ike explained his plan, which contemplates a double advance into Germany, north of Rhine and by Frankfurt. I disagreed flatly with it, accused Ike of violating principles of concentration of force, which had resulted in his previous failures. I criticized his future plans and … I stressed the importance of concentrating on one thrust.… Ike does not hope to cross the Rhine before May!!!

Two years earlier, under similar circumstances in Casablanca, Brooke had assailed Eisenhower over a proposed offensive across Tunisia. Unprepared and intimidated, Eisenhower had mounted a halfhearted defense before retreating in disarray from the room. This time he held his ground, parrying Brooke's objections and explaining his rationale with patience and coherence. Closing to the Rhine from Holland to Alsace would give Allied forces the "capability of concentration" for an eventual double thrust. Winter flooding along much of the river now precluded attacks farther east anyway. The fighting in October and November had been grim indeed—Allied troops still occupied only five hundred square miles of Germany—but Wehrmacht divisions were bleeding to death, and with them, the Reich.

"Ike was good," wrote Admiral Andrew Browne Cunningham, the first sea lord. "Kept an even keel. He was obviously impressed by [Brooke's] arguments but refused to commit himself." The debate continued over cocktails and dinner, quickly becoming the same tautological gyre that characterized so many Anglo-American strategic conversations.

The evening ended in stilted silences and muzzy talk about postwar Allied unity, to which the supreme commander pledged to devote "the afternoon and evening of my life." Brooke grew so frustrated that he contemplated resigning, particularly after Churchill chimed in to endorse Eisenhower's broad-front concept. In his diary Brooke conceded that he had "utterly failed … in getting either Winston or Ike to see that their strategy is fundamentally wrong." A day later, the prime minister asserted that he had simply been acting the gracious host in refusing to gang up on the only American at table.

Eisenhower flew back to Versailles on Wednesday morning, weary and hardly less dispirited than Brooke. "Field Marshal Brooke seemed disturbed by what he calls our 'dispersion' of the past weeks of this campaign," he cabled Marshall. To Mamie he admitted craving a three-month vacation on a remote beach. "And oh, Lordy, Lordy," he added, "let it be sunny."

* * *

Eisenhower knew that more was at stake in this tedious contretemps than the march routes of armies. Every additional day of war left Britain weaker and less capable of preserving the empire or shaping the postwar world.

"I greatly fear the dwindling of the British Army is a factor in France as it will affect our right to express our opinion upon strategic and other matters," Churchill had cabled Montgomery. German intelligence believed that fourteen British divisions still awaited deployment to the Continent, but the prime minister and Brooke knew otherwise. Indeed, Britain was so hard-pressed that even after cannibalizing two existing divisions to fill the diminished ranks in other units, commanders faced "an acute problem in the next six months to keep the army up to strength," as one staff officer in London warned. Wastage in infantry riflemen especially was running at a rate higher than the War Office could make good: a British rifle-company officer who landed in France on June 6 had nearly a 70 percent probability of being wounded by the end of the war, and a 20 percent chance of being killed.

Nor was Britain's plight unique. "All of us are now faced with an unanticipated shortage of manpower," Roosevelt had written Churchill in October. The American dearth was even more problematic, if only because U.S. troops provided the preponderance of Eisenhower's strength. In December, the American armed forces comprised twelve million, compared with five million for the British, but insatiable and competing global demands pressed even that multitude. A million Army troops were now in the Pacific, while the Army Air Forces had requested 130,000 men to fly and maintain the new B-29 bomber—beyond the 300,000 workers already building the Superfortress. Almost five million American men had been granted occupational deferments, and many soldiers were being furloughed to work in hard-pressed critical industries. In December, 2,500 were sent home to make artillery ammunition and another 2,000 to make tires; thousands more went to foundries, toolmakers, and other plants. Even now Marshall felt pressure from Congress to trim Army manpower so that the production of consumer goods, from toasters to Buicks, could resume.

To swell the ranks, Selective Service exemptions for fathers were belatedly abolished: one million would be drafted in 1944–45. The average age of draftees had climbed from twenty-two in 1940 to twenty-six in 1944, and many new privates were over thirty-five. A ban on shipping eighteen-year-olds overseas was rescinded in August. Induction standards for "physically imperfect men," already loosened, were further relaxed in October. Draft examiners were advised that "such terms as 'imbecile' and 'moron' will not be used," but 330,000 inductees, some of whom could fairly be classified as at least dull-witted, were subsequently discharged for sundry mental defects. A three-page primer advised examiners how to detect malingering, including feigned epilepsy, bed-wetting, and tachycardia "induced by ingestion of drugs such as thyroid extracts." Would-be draft dodgers "may shoot or cut off their fingers or toes, usually on the right side.… Some may put their hands under cars for this purpose."

The need for more soldiers—fit or unfit, willing or unwilling, whole or maimed—grew ever more acute as the fall months passed. U.S. battle casualties in Europe had doubled from October to November, to two thousand a day; on December 7, the figure hit three thousand. The trench foot epidemic caused nonbattle casualties to also double in November, to 56,000. Consequently, even as the last of the U.S. Army's eighty-nine divisions prepared for deployment to Europe, and even though more than three hundred thousand individual replacement troops had arrived since D-Day, Bradley's 12th Army Group reported in December that every division already in the theater was below its authorized strength. "The life expectancy of a junior officer in combat was twelve days before he was hit and evacuated," Bradley asserted. Patton advised his diary on December 3, "Our situation is bad; 11,000 short in an army of three armored divisions and six infantry divisions."

* * *

All combat arms felt pinched—the "handling and delivery of armored replacements has been a colossal failure," an Army investigator wrote—but none more than the infantry, that breed apart, described by one private as "a black line on a war map." Using obsolete data from World War I and from other World War II theaters irrelevant to Europe, the War Department had predicted that infantry losses would amount to 64 percent of all casualties. The forecast was a botch: by December, the actual figure was 83 percent,

and even higher for divisions that saw especially intense fighting. In January 1944, the Army had estimated a need for 300,000 replacement infantrymen worldwide that year. The eventual number was nearly double, 535,000.

Of more than eight million soldiers in the Army as the year ended, barely two million were serving in ground units. That was simply not enough, particularly since the Navy, Marines, and Air Forces tended to get a disproportionate share of the smartest and most physically able young men. The severest shortage was of that priceless creature known as a "745," the rifleman, so called for his military occupational specialty number. An infantry division might have more than 14,000 soldiers, with another 24,000 troops sustaining the division in ancillary support units, but the point of the spear comprised just 5,200 riflemen in twenty-seven rifle companies. (Others manned mortars and machine guns, cookstoves and radios, stethoscopes and bulldozers and clerical desks.) "We find ourselves totally out of infantry rifle replacements because of the War Department's inability to ship the numbers that are necessary," Bradley's personnel chief warned. As casualties mounted, the shortages grew more desperate and the combat soldier's fatalism deepened. As one veteran wrote, "Nobody gets out of a rifle company. It's a door that only opens one way, in. You leave when they carry you out." Lieutenant Paul Fussell believed that "no infantryman can survive psychologically very long unless he's mastered the principle that the dead don't *know* what they look like."

Frantic efforts were made to muster more riflemen into battle. The Army already had culled privates and noncommissioned officers from forty divisions while they were still training in the United States. Seventeen of those divisions had lost at least two-thirds of their infantry privates and countless junior officers, who then were sent overseas as individual replacements while new recruits filled the ranks behind them. Not only were the original divisions devastated by this turnover—the 65th Division reported that some platoons had churned through as many as sixteen platoon leaders even before leaving the United States—but also many GIs found themselves in battle without sufficient training. "We had to take them over behind a hill right in the middle of the action and show them how to load their rifles," one warrant officer complained.

Crash programs to convert quartermaster soldiers and other support troops into riflemen also began in late November. These so-called "miracle men," or "retreads," often proved wanting, and at least one regiment trying to rebuild after the Hürtgen bloodletting refused to accept hundreds of infantry novices. "State of mind of men being converted into riflemen is, on the whole, not good," an inspection report advised. A survey of infantry divisions found that nearly three-fourths of respondents agreed that "the infantry gets more than its share of the men who aren't good for anything else." Lieutenant Fussell wrote that the implicit message to an infantryman was: "*You* are expendable. Don't imagine that your family's good opinion of you will cut any ice here."

Even the deployment of intact divisions was beset with snafus. Under a plan known as the "Red List," twenty-nine divisions that were ostensibly "fully equipped and ready for combat within fifteen days after landing" arrived overseas beginning in September. In the event, tanks and other heavy equipment meant for these divisions were routed to embarkation ports through a warehouse complex in Elmira, New York, which was already inundated with thousands of military railcars each month. Congestion and confusion led to chaos—thirty workers in Elmira toiled full-time just to strip off erroneous shipping labels—and the Army conceded that an "inability to keep up with paperwork eventually bogged down the entire operation." As a result, many units arrived in Europe without critical combat gear, including three divisions that docked in Marseille so bereft of communications equipment that SHAEF spent months making up the shortages.

The Red List was a paragon of efficiency compared to the Army's individual replacement system. Tens of thousands of soldiers were disgorged onto the Continent woefully unprepared for combat; as Eisenhower conceded, each arrived with the "feeling of being a lost soul … shunted around without knowing where he is going or what will happen to him." Many lacked mess kits, bayonets, or even rank insignia; replacement lieutenants and captains used adhesive tape to simulate the bars on their shoulders. So many also lacked weapons that the War Department shipped fifty thousand World War I–vintage rifles to Europe. "We left Fort Meade with no rifles, we arrived in Scotland with no rifles, we arrived in France with no rifles, [and] we arrived in Belgium with no rifles," a soldier recalled.

Replacements traveled for days in unheated French "forty-and-eight" boxcars, considered suitable for forty men or eight horses, although as Eisenhower wrote Marshall, "We have reduced the figure to thirty-five enlisted men per car in order that by tight squeezing men can at least lie down." They then spent weeks or months in replacement centers known as "stockage depots," often sleeping on straw in flimsy tents, waiting to join a unit even as their physical fitness and combat skills deteriorated. A *Stars and Stripes* exposé reported that "many replacements had not bathed in thirty days."

"We want to feel that we are a part of something," one GI in a stockage depot explained. "As a replacement we are apart from everything.… You feel totally useless and unimportant." Inactivity, *Stars and Stripes* added, became "a form of mental cruelty." The Army attempted to mitigate the fears of novice troops headed for combat by segregating "salt waters"—new replacements arriving from the United States—from wounded or sick soldiers just out of the hospital. "The battle veterans," a battalion commander explained, "scared the pants off the green boys."

Court House Lee proposed on December 1 that the word "replacement" be supplanted by "reinforcement." "'Replacement,'" he told Bradley, "carries a cannon fodder implication that we could overcome by using another term." The change would take effect shortly after Christmas, but no euphemism could obscure the fact that "the morale of our officers and enlisted men coming though the replacement system is completely shot," an inspector general's report warned. Even so, U.S. ground forces in Europe since June 6 had received almost half a million replacements, most of them "salt waters," and for all its flaws and indignities the system had kept the field armies reasonably strong for seven months.

Now the Army's ability to replenish its ranks was in jeopardy. SHAEF on December 8 predicted a shortage of 23,000 riflemen by year's end, enough to preclude any attack into Germany. After returning from London, Eisenhower on December 15 ordered rear-echelon units to comb out more combat troops, and an eight-week course to convert mortar crews and other infantrymen into 745s

was truncated to two weeks. At least a few officers wondered whether the time had come to allow black GIs to serve in white rifle companies, but for now that radical notion found few champions in the high command.

No one was more fretful than Omar Bradley, whose army group numbered 850,000 men and almost four thousand tanks, yet mustered less than 80 percent of its authorized strength in riflemen. He contemplated breaking up newly arriving divisions to cannibalize infantry as the British had, despite what he conceded would be "tremendous wastage." So irked was Bradley at the Pentagon's failure to provide enough trigger-pullers—"Don't they realize that we can still lose this war in Europe?" he had asked Eisenhower—that he told SHAEF he planned to fly to Versailles from Luxembourg City to explain his troubles in detail. The conference was scheduled for Saturday morning, December 16—Beethoven's birthday.

"Go Easy, Boys. There's Danger Ahead"

TO be sure, there were clues, omens, auguries. Just as surely, they were missed, ignored, explained away. For decades after the death struggle called the Battle of the Bulge, generals, scholars, and foot soldiers alike would ponder the worst U.S. intelligence failure since Pearl Harbor and the deadliest of the war. Only from the high ground of history could perfect clarity obtain, and even then the simplest, truest answer remained the least satisfying: mistakes were made and many men died. What might have been known was not known. What could have been done was not done. Valor and her handmaidens—tenacity, composure, luck—would be needed to make it right. The trial ahead would also require stupendous firepower and great gouts of blood in what became the largest battle in American military history, and among the most decisive.

Allied intelligence first recognized in September that the Germans had created Sixth Panzer Army under a swashbuckling commander, Sepp Dietrich. Also that month, an intercepted message to Tokyo from the Japanese ambassador in Berlin described Hitler as intent on amassing a million new troops for combat in the west, "probably from November onwards." Ultra decrypts in late October revealed that the Luftwaffe was stockpiling fuel and ammunition at eleven airfields north of Aachen; subsequent intelligence showed German aircraft strength in the west quadrupling, to perhaps 850 planes, reversing a policy of concentrating squadrons defensively in the Fatherland. Prisoner reports and a captured German order indicated that the celebrated enemy commando leader Otto Skorzeny—the man who had freed Benito Mussolini from a mountaintop jail—was collecting soldiers who could "speak the American dialect," perhaps for an infiltration mission. The U.S. First Army had flown 361 reconnaissance sorties over western Germany since mid-November, spotting unusual processions of hooded lights on both banks of the Rhine, as well as hospital trains west of the river and canvas-covered flatcars apparently carrying tanks or trucks. In early December, Allied intelligence reported nearly two hundred troop trains moving forward.

None of this suggested an enemy offensive, at least not to the minds of those scrutinizing the evidence. The Sixth Panzer Army and the added Luftwaffe planes were seen as a counterattack force designed to shield the Ruhr but unable to mount "a true counter-offensive"—in SHAEF's judgment—because of fuel shortages and the German military's general decrepitude. An intercepted Luftwaffe order for aerial reconnaissance of the Meuse bridges, a site curiously far afield for those only protecting the Ruhr, was deemed a ruse. A rumor of German intentions to recapture Antwerp was dismissed in a 21st Army Group intelligence review on December 3: "The bruited drive on Antwerp … is just not within his potentiality." After all, hundreds of confirmed reports portrayed a battered, reeling foe.

Those nearest the front—the tactical units splayed along the Siegfried Line—proved no more prescient. U.S. V Corps officers interviewing German prisoners in early December discounted reports of intensified training in infiltration techniques and assault tactics. Tanks maneuvering west of the Rhine were assumed to be green units undergoing seasoning, much as novice American units were seasoned in the Ardennes. A woman interrogated on December 14 described the forest near Bitburg as jammed with German equipment, and four Wehrmacht soldiers captured on December 15 reported more combat units arriving at the front; but these and various other clues provoked little alarm. None of the seven First Army divisions around the Ardennes foresaw an enemy offensive; the 99th Division instead averred that "the entire German army [is] disintegrating."

Several factors fed this disregard, including a failure to recognize that Hitler rather than the prudent Rundstedt was directing German field armies in the west. "The war from the military side would now seem to be in the hands of soldiers," a 21st Army Group analysis stated, "a change making the enemy easier to understand but harder to defeat." No sensible field marshal was likely to risk losing the Sixth Panzer Army—the Reich's last mobile reserve in the west—in a winter offensive. In imagining their German counterparts, Forrest Pogue observed, American commanders believed that because "*we* would not attack under these conditions, therefore *they* would not attack under these conditions." To assume otherwise required the ability "to forecast the intentions of a maniac," Bradley's intelligence chief later wrote.

Top Allied officers also had become overly enchanted with Ultra, as they had before Kasserine Pass in 1943. By late 1944, the cryptologists at Bletchley Park were daily providing about fifty intercepted German messages detailing troop movements and unit strengths. "They had become so dependent on Ultra that if it wasn't there," a SHAEF officer said, "then there wasn't anything there." Montgomery's intelligence chief, Brigadier E. T. Williams, agreed. "Instead of being the best, it tended to become the *only* source," he wrote soon after the war ended. "We had begun to lean: that was the danger of Ultra." Intercepts had provided provocative clues—about those Luftwaffe planes on western airfields, for instance—and also raised troubling questions for those inclined to be troubled. Why was the Italian front required to ship one thousand trucks to Rundstedt? Why was Hitler's personal guard moving toward the Western Front? Why were Sixth Panzer Army troop trains so far forward, if Dietrich's mission was to protect the Ruhr?

But ruthless German security about HERBSTNEBEL and strict radio silence by the units committed kept the inner secret from reaching Allied ears.

Some would later claim clairvoyance. Colonel Monk Dickson, the tempestuous First Army intelligence chief, wrote in Estimate No. 37, issued on December 10, that "the continual buildup of forces west of the Rhine points consistently to his staking all on the counteroffensive." But Dickson placed the expected German blow in the wrong place—north of the Ardennes, "between the Roer and the Erft"—and at the wrong time, "when our major ground forces have crossed the Roer River." Further, his fractious relations with SHAEF and 12th Army Group intelligence officers, who considered him a windy alarmist, undermined Dickson's vague warning, as did his subsequent departure from Spa for a four-day holiday in Paris.

A suggestion in early December by Eisenhower's intelligence chief, Major General Kenneth W. D. Strong, that the Sixth Panzer Army could possibly attack through the Ardennes sufficiently aroused Beetle Smith that he bundled off Strong to see Bradley. In a forty-five-minute meeting in Luxembourg City, either Strong failed to convey a sense of alarm or Bradley refused to take counsel of his fears. The U.S. Army's VIII Corps was spread thin along the border highlands, Bradley acknowledged, but ample reinforcements had been positioned behind the front if needed. Bradley had apparently persuaded himself that the enemy here lacked fangs: during a recent drive through the Ardennes he had mused, "I don't think they will come through here. At least they can't do much here. Don't believe they will try." Back in Versailles, Strong recounted the conversation to Smith, who chose not to trouble Eisenhower with the matter.

Perhaps the only genuine prescience could be found farther south, where Patton and his Third Army intelligence officer, Brigadier General Oscar W. Koch, sensed what others did not: that a dangerous, desperate enemy remained capable of wreaking havoc. Koch insisted that the German reversal in recent months "has *not* been a rout or a mass collapse." Hitler, he believed, was "playing for time." On December 7, he noted a "large panzer concentration west of the Rhine in the northern portion of Twelfth Army Group's zone of advance"; two days later, he pointed out the vulnerability of VIII Corps in the Ardennes. On December 14, Koch cited the persistent mystery over the location of at least fourteen German divisions, most of them armored, which together could spearhead a counteroffensive. An attack near Aachen might be more likely than one through the Ardennes, he added; but Patton's intuition suggested otherwise. "The First Army is making a terrible mistake in leaving the VIII Corps static," he had told his diary, "as it is highly probable that the Germans are building up east of them."

Yet in other Allied high councils a confident swagger prevailed, a conviction that no German reserves would be committed west of the Siegfried Line. A "sudden attack in the West may with some certainty be said to have lapsed," British air intelligence concluded on December 6. Chagrined that so few officers seemed to be reading his turgid reports, Brigadier General Edwin L. Sibert, Bradley's intelligence chief, dragooned the *New Yorker*'s former managing editor, now in uniform, to punch up the prose in his December 12 assessment. Full voice was given 12th Army Group's optimism. "Attrition is steadily sapping the strength of German forces on the Western Front," the analysis declared, "and the crust of [German] defense is thinner, more brittle and more vulnerable." An abrupt enemy collapse seemed quite possible, and "given time and fair weather we can make progress against him anywhere."

Montgomery needed no ghostwriter to affirm his views. On December 15, he wrote that Hitler's plight was so dire "that he cannot stage major offensive operations." That same day, the field marshal scribbled Eisenhower a note requesting leave to return to Britain for Christmas. Montgomery included an invoice for a five-pound bet wagered in October 1943, when he had challenged Eisenhower's prediction that the war would end by Christmas 1944.

"I still have nine days," the supreme commander replied, "and while it seems almost certain that you will have an extra five pounds for Christmas, you will not get it until that day."

* * *

Marlene Dietrich cut a wide swath through the Ardennes in mid-December. Dressed in a tailored wool uniform with drop-seat long underwear, blond tresses peeking out beneath her helmet brim, she bounced in a truck from encampment to encampment with her USO troupe, changing three or four times a day into the nylons and sequined gown suitable for crooning "Falling in Love with Love" and "See What the Boys in the Back Room Will Have." Sipping calvados to ward off the cold, she handed out postcard photos of herself affixed with lipstick autographs and collected weapons given her by smitten soldiers; her baggage eventually included eleven pistols. Sometimes she told jokes about Hitler, whom she called "an embittered vegetarian." She blamed the war on "his thwarted love life," explaining that "unfortunately for the world, the first girl laughed." It was said that at the Ritz in Paris earlier that fall she had paraded down a corridor wearing a chic chapeau and nothing else, asking, "Don't I look cute?" It was also said, by her, that she had slept with Patton, who gave her the code name LEGS. When the film director Billy Wilder asked about rumors of an affair with Eisenhower, she replied, "But, darling, how could it have been Eisenhower? He wasn't even at the front!"

On a rainy Thursday evening, December 14, Dietrich performed in the tidy Belgian town of Bastogne, headquarters of VIII Corps. She tried not to scratch at the lice as she sang "Lili Marlene." A night later she was in northern Luxembourg, at Diekirch, hardly six miles from her native Germany, singing in a smoky, crowded hall for hundreds of GIs in General Dutch Cota's 28th Division, still recuperating after their trial in the Hürtgen Forest. The troops stamped and whistled and could have listened all night, but reveille would come early, and on Saturday she was booked to entertain the 99th Division back in Belgium. *Underneath the lantern by the barrack gate*, the soldiers sang to themselves as they crawled into their bedrolls. *Darling, I remember the way you used to wait.*

The U.S. Army's *Guide to the Cities of Belgium* assured soldiers that the Ardennes was a fine place to "practice your favorite winter sport"; the region was said to have become a "quiet paradise for weary troops." "Dear Mom and Dad," a GI had recently written. "It is a wonderfully crisp and sunny day—much like you'd see this time of year in the Adirondacks. Plenty of snow." A soldier who dined on fried chicken and French fries in a warm bivouac wrote his mother, "I'll be getting fat if this deal lasts." In

Honsfeld, a few miles from the Losheim Gap, soldiers waiting for La Marlene's appearance on Saturday watched a movie with a defective sound track, shouting their own invented dialogue. Farther west, GIs in Vielsalm received another USO troupe, including a comedian who sang while eating crackers. For $10, a soldier at the front could wire home Christmas flowers, but the bouquets and accompanying telegrams terrified more than a few mothers who mistook the gifts for death notifications.

Among visitors to the First Army headquarters in Spa on Friday, December 15, was a delegation of professional baseball players, including Mel Ott and Bucky Walters. They found few senior officers in the command post: most were on leave either in Paris, like Colonel Dickson, the G-2, or in London, like the G-3 operations officer, the G-4 logistician, and the top artillery, ordnance, and antiaircraft officers. General Hodges, the army commander, politely chatted up the guests for half an hour, then excused himself and returned to his billet, worn down by fatigue and a bad cold. Visiting the 106th Division at the same hour was a soldier named Theodore Geisel, known professionally as Dr. Seuss. Geisel, who was making a propaganda film with director Frank Capra, later composed a bit of doggerel to commemorate his experience of the next couple days: "The retreat we beat was accomplished with a speed that will never be beaten."

Ten thousand Belgian civilians had been evacuated from the border areas north of the Losheim Gap, not least because many were ethnic Germans of whom Hitler claimed, "Inwardly they have always remained connected with Germany." A few farmers were permitted to harvest late potatoes and tend the dairy herds, but the unmilked cows made such a racket with their lowing that butchers set up ten slaughter pens; Army trucks then hauled the beef to quartermaster depots in Brussels and Antwerp. Another roundup was scheduled for Saturday morning in Bütgenbach, command post for the 99th Division. Along the front, where conifers grew in such precise rows that they were described as a "cornfield forest," company radios tuned into Axis Sally, the propagandist whose signature line GIs loved to mimic: "Go easy, boys. There's danger ahead."

Of the 341,000 soldiers in the U.S. First Army, 68,822 were in VIII Corps, anchoring the army's right flank with three divisions in the line. They held an eighty-five-mile front—three times the length advised for a force of such strength under Army tactical doctrine—that snaked down the Belgian border through Luxembourg to Third Army's sector. At two spots, the corps line extended across the border into Germany's Schnee Eifel, a snowy hogback that was a topographical extension of the Belgian Ardennes. Intelligence officers calculated that 24,000 enemy soldiers currently faced VIII Corps, so few that First Army in recent days had ordered a deception program to feign an American buildup in the Ardennes; the intent was to lure more Germans, weakening Rundstedt's lines to the north and south. Some VIII Corps troops wore phony shoulder flashes, drove trucks with bogus unit markings, broadcast counterfeit radio traffic, and played recordings of congregating tanks—all to suggest a preponderance that did not exist. In reality, some infantry regiments that typically should have held a 3,500-yard front in such broken country—two miles—now were required to hold frontages of six miles or more.

For much of the fall, four veteran U.S. divisions had occupied this region, mastering the terrain and rehearsing both withdrawal and counterattack plans. But in recent weeks they had been supplanted by two bloodied divisions from the Hürtgen—those weary troops seeking a quiet paradise—and the newly arrived 106th Infantry Division, which was not only the greenest Army unit in Europe but also the youngest. The first division into combat with substantial numbers of eighteen-year-old draftees, the 106th was plunked onto the Schnee Eifel and across the Losheim Gap, echeloned a mile or so west of the Siegfried Line like an ill-fitting stopper in a bottle.

As with so many newer divisions, the 106th had trained diligently for months at home only to be ripped apart by levies from other units shipping overseas first. By August 1944, more than seven thousand men had been transferred out of the division, including many aggressive infantrymen who were replaced by rear-echelon converts with suspect combat skills. After arriving at Le Havre on December 6, the 106th had been trucked across France to reach the Ardennes front at seven P.M. on December 11, "numb, soaked, and frozen," as the military historian R. Ernest Dupuy later wrote. Man for man, foxhole for foxhole, across a twenty-eight-mile sector, they replaced troops of the 2nd Infantry Division, who bolted for showers and hot food in the rear.

Few soldiers of the 106th had ever heard a shot fired in anger, and some failed to zero their rifles to ensure accurate marksmanship. Radio silence precluded the testing and calibration of new sets. Battalions reported shortages of winter clothing, maps, machine-gun tripods, and mortar, antitank, and bazooka ammunition. Trench foot soon spiked when green troops neglected to dry their socks properly. Despite orders to mount an "aggressive defense," few patrols ventured forward, and German war dogs terrorized those that did.

Go easy, boys. There's danger ahead.

"The woods are of tall pines, dark and gloomy inside. After a snow it is all in black and white," an artilleryman wrote his wife from an outpost near Losheim. "This was the Forest of Arden from Shakespeare's *As You Like It.*" In the bard's comedy, the forest is a pastoral refuge for characters who choose to devote themselves to love. Few soldiers trying to stay warm in an Ardennes copse in mid-December found such lyricism in the landscape. V-1 flying bombs launched from western Germany rattled overhead day and night, angling toward Antwerp. Forward strongpoints—a few dozen men consigned to the low ground of crossroads villages—were sardonically dubbed "sugar bowls" because of their topographic vulnerability.

A departing 2nd Division colonel told his 106th replacement, "It has been very quiet up here and your men will learn the easy way."

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Straw and rags muffled gun wheels and horses' hooves as twenty German divisions lumbered into their final assembly areas on Friday night, December 15. Breakdown crews with tow trucks stood ready along roads that now carried only one-way traffic, and military policemen were authorized to shoot out the tires of any vehicle violating march discipline. For the last kilometer leading to

the line of departure, soldiers portaged ammunition by hand or on their backs. Quartermasters issued ration packets of "special vitalizing and strengthening foods," including fifty grams of genuine coffee, grape-sugar tablets, chocolate, fruit bars, and milk powder. "Some believe in living but life is not everything!" a soldier from the 12th SS Panzer Division wrote his sister. "It is enough to know that we attack and will throw the enemy from our homeland. It is a holy task."

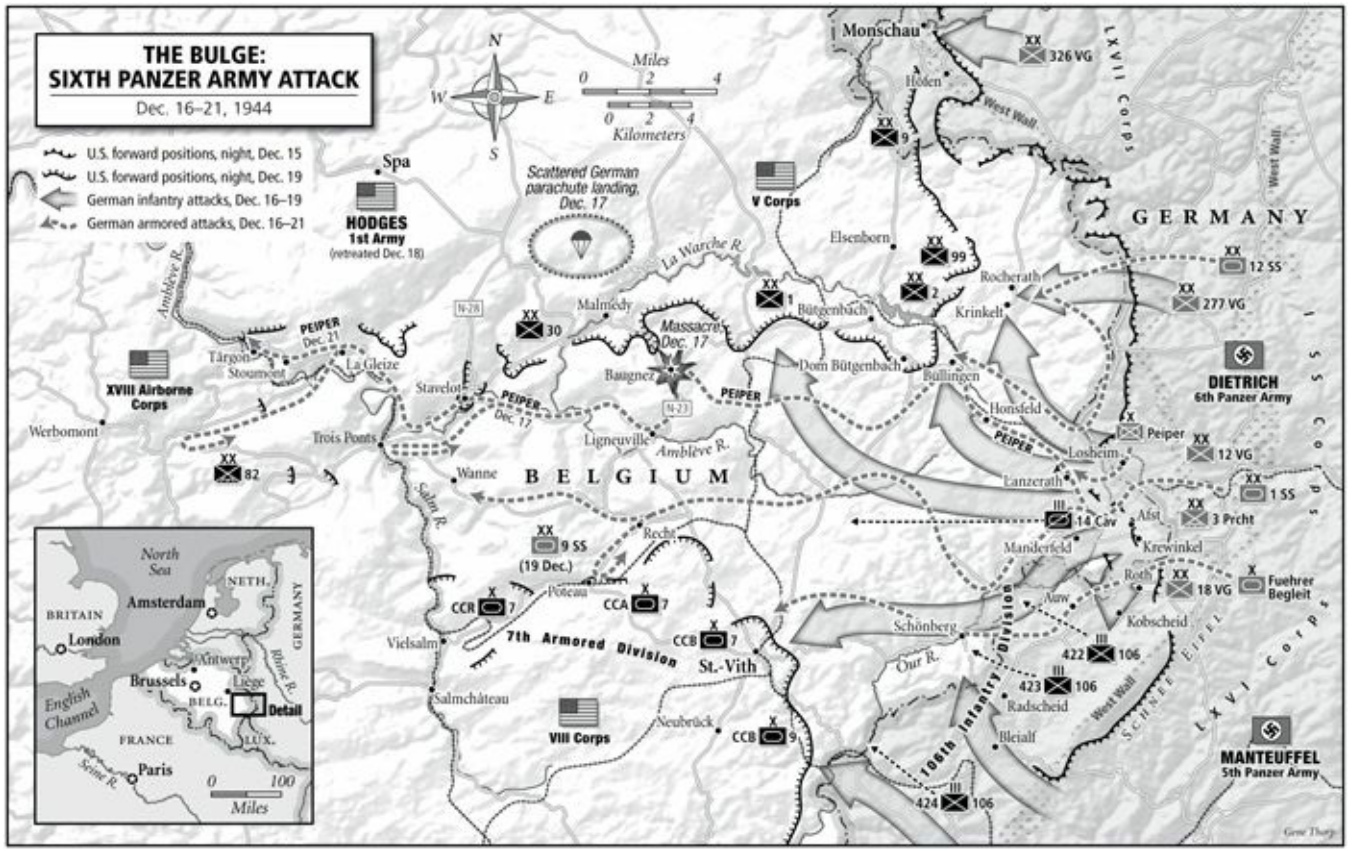
Two hundred thousand assault troops packed into an assembly area three miles deep. The initial blow by seven panzer divisions and thirteen of infantry, bolstered by almost two thousand artillery tubes and a thousand tanks and assault guns, would fall on a front sixty-one miles wide. Five more divisions and two heavy brigades waited in the second wave, giving the Germans roughly a five-to-one advantage over the opposing U.S. forces in artillery and a three-to-one edge in armor. The best of Rundstedt's divisions had 80 percent of their full complement of equipment, others but half. Panzer columns carried enough fuel to travel one hundred miles under normal cruising conditions, which existed nowhere in the steep, icy Ardennes. Few spare parts or antitank guns were to be had, but for a holy task perhaps none were needed.

Hitler had indeed staked the future of his Reich on one card. The final OB West war diary entry on Friday night declared, "Tomorrow brings the beginning of a new chapter in the campaign in the West."

* * *

In the red-roofed Belgian army barracks that served as the VIII Corps command post in Bastogne, champagne corks popped on Friday night to commemorate the anniversary of the corps's arrival in Britain a year earlier. The commander, Major General Troy H. Middleton, had reason to be proud of his men's combat record in Normandy and in the reduction of Brest. A Mississippian who had enlisted as a private in 1910, Middleton by November 1918 was the youngest American colonel in World War I and, in George Marshall's judgment, "the outstanding infantry regimental commander on the battlefield in France." Leaving the Army in 1937 to become dean and then vice president of Louisiana State University, Middleton returned to uniform in 1942, commanding the 45th Division through the Sicily and Salerno campaigns before taking corps command as an Eisenhower favorite. Now he drank a final toast to battles past and future before retiring to his sleeping van.

A few miles to the east, the faint clop of horses and a growl of engines in low gear drifted to American pickets along the Our River, demarcating Luxembourg from Germany. Their report of disturbing noises in the night ascended the chain of command from one headquarters to the next, with no more heed paid than had been paid to earlier portents. Middleton's command post in Bastogne issued a weather forecast for Saturday—"Cloudy, snow beginning around 1300. Visibility 2 miles"—and a three-word battle summary for the Ardennes: "Nothing to report."


THE BULGE:
SIXTH PANZER ARMY ATTACK
Dec. 16–21, 1944
U.S. forward positions, night, Dec. 15
U.S. forward positions, night, Dec. 19
German infantry attacks, Dec. 16–19
German armored attacks, Dec. 16–21
N
W
E
S
Miles
0 2 4
0 2 4
Kilometers
Spa
HODGES
1st Army
(retreated Dec. 18)
Scattered German parachute landing, Dec. 17
V Corps
Monschau
326 VG
Höfen
West Wall
LXVII Corps
GERMANY
Elsenborn
99
Rocherath
12 SS
277 VG
Krinkelt
Bütgenbach
Malmedy
30
Massacre Dec. 17
Baugnez
Dom Bütgenbach
Bullingen
DIETRICH
6th Panzer Army
Honsfeld
Losheim
Peiper
12 VG
Lanzerath
1 SS
14 Cav
3 Prcht
Afst
Krewinkel
Manderfeld
Roth
18 VG
Fuehrer Begleit
Kobscheid
Schönberg
422 106
423 106
Radscheid
Bleialf
424 106
106th Infantry Division
Our R.
SCHNEE EIFEL
LXVI Corps
MANTEUFFEL
5th Panzer Army
Gene Thorp
La Warche R.
Amblève R.
PEIPER
Dec. 21
Targon
Stoumont
La Gleize
XVIII Airborne Corps
Werbomont
82
Stavelot
PEIPER
Dec. 17
Trois Ponts
Wanne
Salm R.
Ligneuville
Amblève R.
PEIPER
PEIPER
BELGIUM
9 SS
(19 Dec.)
Recht
Poteau
CCR 7
CCA 7
CCB 7
7th Armored Division
St.-Vith
Vielsalm
Salmchâteau
VIII Corps
Neubrück
CCB 9
North Sea
NETH.
Amsterdam
BRITAIN
London
Antwerp
Brussels
Liege
BELG.
Detail
English Channel
FRANCE
LUX.
Paris
Seine R.
Rhine R.
GERMANY
0 100
Miles

9. The Bulge

A Rendezvous in Some Flaming Town

SHEETS of flame leaped from the German gun pits at precisely 5:30 A.M. on December 16. Drumfire fell in crimson splashes across the front with a stink of turned earth and burnt powder, and the green fireballs of 88mm shells bored through the darkness at half a mile per second as if hugging the nap of the Ardennes hillcrests. The Screaming Meemie shriek of Nebelwerfer rockets echoed in the hollows where wide-eyed GIs crouched in their sugar bowls. Then enemy machine guns added their sawmill racket to the din, and rounds with the heft of railroad spikes splintered fir boughs and soldiers' bones alike. The thrum of panzer engines now carried from the east, along with a creak of bogey wheels, and as the artillery crashed and heaved, a rifleman in the 99th Division reflected, "You'd think the end of the world is coming."

For some, yes, soon enough. A pearly dawn leaked down the slopes, hurried by hissing German flares that glazed the snow with metallic tints of red and silver. Through the trees the infantry emerged as bent shadows, some in snow suits or white capes, others in greatcoats of *Feldgrau* with flanged helmets or duck-bill caps, shouting and singing above the whip-crack of rifle fire. One GI, hiding in a barn among cows now excused from the Saturday-morning slaughter, whispered, "The whole German army's here." Along the thin American line, men dug in deeper, scratching furrows with helmets and mess tins. Others scuttled to the rear, past the first dead men, who wore the usual deadpan expressions. Only the living were surprised.

The battle was joined, this last great grapple of the Western Front, although hours would elapse before American commanders realized that the opening barrage was more than a feint, and days would pass before some generals acknowledged the truth of what Rundstedt had told his legions in an order captured early Saturday: *Es geht um das Ganze*. Everything is at stake. The struggle would last for a month, embroiling more than a million men drawn from across half a continent to this haunted upland. The first act of the drama, perhaps the most decisive, played out simultaneously across three sanguinary fields scattered over sixty miles—on the American left, on the American right, and in the calamitous center. "Your great hour has struck," Rundstedt had also declared. "You bear in yourselves a divine duty to give everything and to achieve the superhuman for our Fatherland and our Führer."

* * *

No man embraced the field marshal's sentiments with greater fervor than the slender young SS lieutenant colonel barking at the jammed traffic northwest of Losheim on Saturday morning. Joachim Peiper's great hour had indeed struck, yet he was already late. A highway bridge across a rail cut had been demolished in September by retreating German troops, but engineers assigned to repair the span could not get past the mule wagons, horse-drawn artillery carriages, and Tiger tanks clogging the narrow approach road. A stalled column of tanks and personnel carriers snaked for miles back into Germany.

As commander of the 1st SS Panzer Regiment, proudly wearing the death's-head insignia above the visor of his peaked cap, Peiper had been given the specific divine duty of streaking across Belgium with a task force of almost six thousand men and seventy-two tanks to seize the Meuse crossings at Huy, between Liège and Namur. Although only twenty-nine, he was an obvious choice as the *Spitze*—the point—of Sixth Panzer Army's attack and indeed all of HERBSTNEBEL. A Berliner born into a military family, fluent in English and French, and handsome in the approved Aryan mode, Peiper in 1938 had served as Heinrich Himmler's personal adjutant, even marrying one of his secretaries shortly before the invasion of Poland. Much of his war had been spent in the east, burning villages and slaughtering civilians with such abandon that his unit was nicknamed the Blow Torch Battalion. Two brothers, also SS men, were now dead, but Peiper's devotion to the Reich was undimmed. With Allied bombers terrorizing German cities, he did not question Hitler's orders to wield fear and terror as weapons.

In early December, after a test run in a Panther near Bonn, Peiper reported that a tank regiment could cover eighty kilometers in a single night, "if I had a free road to myself." But when assigned his route to the Meuse in December he had complained that "these roads were not for tanks but for bicycles." The Saturday chaos proved his point, and although he urged his young troopers to "run down anything in the road ruthlessly," most of *Null Tag* had slipped past before the column finally found a detour through Losheim at 7:30 P.M.

More troubles awaited. Both German and American mines cost Peiper five tanks before the task force reached Lanzerath at midnight; an hour later, he ordered two Panthers to take the point, guided through the tenebrous woods by troops waving white handkerchiefs. Shortly before 6 A.M. on Sunday the *Spitze* clattered into Honsfeld to find American vehicles parked in doorways and exhausted GIs slumbering inside. Here the atrocities commenced. Eight soldiers rousted outside in their underwear and bare feet,

shouting *"Kamerad"*—comrade, I surrender—were lined up in the street and murdered with a machine gun. Five others emerged from a house with a white flag; four were shot, and the fifth, pleading for mercy, was crushed beneath a tank. Four more Americans, also carrying a large white banner, were shot, too. Peiper's men stripped boots from the dead and pressed on to Büllingen, two miles northwest.

German intelligence had correctly identified Büllingen as a likely fuel dump, and SS crews, after raking a dozen parked spotter planes with gunfire on an airstrip outside town, seized fifty thousand gallons of gasoline by ten A.M. Several American soldiers hiding in a cellar strangled their pet dog to keep her from barking, but two hundred other men were rounded up. Before being marched to prison cages in the rear, GIs were forced to fuel the panzers with jerricans in the treeless square that in happier days had served as the town cattle market. Already many hours behind schedule and still sixty miles from Huy, with orders to ignore his exposed flanks and all diversions, Peiper now pivoted southwest—unwittingly giving the Americans a priceless tactical reprieve. Had he swung northwest a few miles to Bütgenbach and then Elsenborn, where the 12th SS Panzer Division was attacking from the east, he likely would have encircled as many as thirty thousand GIs in the beset 2nd and 99th Divisions, who were struggling to fall back to defensible ground.

This serendipity proved catastrophic for Battery B of the 285th Field Artillery Observation Battalion, which early that morning had hurriedly decamped from Germany with orders to move to Luxembourg. At 11:45 A.M., 140 men in thirty-three vehicles stopped for a Sunday lunch of hash, peas, and pineapple outside the Walloon town of Malmédy, ten miles west of Büllingen. An hour later the march south resumed, past Army engineers taping TNT to ash trees to be blown down as roadblocks if necessary. As the convoy sped through Malmédy on Highway N-23, Belgian civilians gestured ahead, yelling, *"Boches! Boches!"*

Boches there were, and in a particularly foul mood after clumping down a muddy farm trace barely passable even by tracked vehicles. Three miles below Malmédy, at the crossroads hamlet of Baugnez, Peiper's SS column collided with Battery B shortly before one P.M. For two minutes German machine-gun and tank fire peppered the American convoy until Peiper, furious at the destruction of fifteen fine Detroit trucks, managed to call a cease-fire. A few GIs had been killed, a few others escaped through the woods or hid in a ditch, but more than one hundred surrendered, some with white rags tied to their rifle barrels. As Panthers shoved the burning chassis off the road, prisoners were herded with hands high into eight rows on a snowy field, where their captors stripped them of rings, cigarettes, watches, and gloves. Peiper watched for a few minutes from his personnel carrier, then pushed on down the N-23 toward Ligneuville behind his vanguard.

No one would ever be certain which German soldier fired the first shot, but at 2:15 P.M. an abrupt fusillade from two panzer machine guns chewed into the ranks of prisoners still standing with their hands raised. "At the first outburst of fire everyone fell to the ground, including myself," recalled Private First Class Homer D. Ford, an MP who had been captured while directing traffic at the crossroads. For two minutes gunfire tore into the writhing, bleating ranks. Then SS men stalked through the bloody pile, kicking groins and—with the fatal verdict *"Da kriegt noch einer Luft,"* This one's still breathing—firing pistol shots into the skulls or hearts of those yet alive. Ford lived to bear witness:

> I was wounded in the left arm while the group was being sprayed on the ground.… I was laying in the snow … and I was afraid they would see me shivering but they didn't.… I could hear them pull the trigger back and then the click.

For twenty minutes executioners prowled the field, bellowing in English, "You sons of bitches!" An American medic permitted to attend a wounded soldier was then shot along with his patient. A dozen GIs who had fled into a scruffy café at the crossroads were flushed when the building was set ablaze, and shot down as they scattered. For the next two hours, passing SS convoys fired into the mounded bodies until even the SS tired of the sport. The faces of the dead quickly assumed a deep claret color as the blood in their capillaries froze.

Unaware for the moment that his minions had just committed one of the most infamous battlefield crimes of the war, Peiper arrived at Ligneuville in midafternoon. He was disappointed to find that American officers had just fled, but he spent thirty minutes wolfing down the lunch they left behind in the dining room of the Hôtel du Moulin, a three-story hostel with a wrought-iron balcony. Here a German sergeant led eight U.S. prisoners out back to dig graves for three dead Germans; he then shot the Americans in the head, killing seven. The eighth fled bleeding through the forest only to be later captured again and sent to a camp.

The *Spitze* pushed westward that Sunday as winter's blue shadows grew long. In empty Belgian schoolhouses, Christmas decorations covered walls now perforated with bullet holes; a French lesson chalked on a blackboard read, "God made me to know Him, to love Him, and to serve Him in this world, and to be happy with Him in the next." Twilight had fallen when Peiper reached the wooded bluff above Stavelot on the Amblève River. A single squad of American combat engineers held the town, but when three panzers rushed the only bridge, a mine crippled the lead tank, giving Peiper pause. Perhaps the defenders were stronger than he realized. His march column, strung out for fifteen miles across Belgium, would have to close ranks for an assault into Stavelot, and after three nights of little sleep his men desperately needed rest. He gave the order: they would halt until dawn, still forty-two miles from the Meuse.

Behind him, near Malmédy, more than eighty corpses lay in the snow with their ruddy death masks. But at least a dozen GIs had feigned death for more than two hours and now they rose as if resurrected to pelt through the woods. Soon word of the massacre passed from foxhole to foxhole and up the chain of command, reaching First Army headquarters in Spa even before Peiper decided to stop for the night. Vows to give no quarter spread through the ranks; there were formal decrees in at least two regiments. "American troops are now refusing to take any more SS prisoners," the Ninth Army war diary would note, "and it may well spread to include all German soldiers." *Es geht um das Ganze*. Everything is at stake.

* * *

Peiper had bored a small, vicious hole through the American left flank, but that aperture would have to be widened considerably if the bulk of Sixth Panzer Army was to ram through. Much of the weight of General Dietrich's attack fell on the 99th Division, another neophyte unit that had been wedged by V Corps into a twenty-mile swatch of the Ardennes front, between Monschau in the north and Lanzerath in the south. By Sunday morning, various battalions had been chopped to pieces in what Captain Charles P. Roland called "a red nightmare," and much of the division reeled west in confusion. Soldiers siphoned gasoline from wrecked jeeps to ignite flame pits across forest trails, but the enemy came on, bayoneting GIs in their holes and firing point-blank through cellar windows.

"One of our young lieutenants danced a rubber-legged jig as he twisted slowly, making the blue bullet hole between his eyes visible," Roland later wrote. Artillerymen spiked their guns with thermite grenades, and drivers opened radiator petcocks before abandoning their trucks to flee on foot through the woods. Signalmen smashed switchboards, adjutants burned secrets, and skittish soldiers shot one another by mistake, including one clutch of GIs who accidentally killed their own major, then wounded a captain trying to calm them down. In the Bütgenbach villa where he kept his command post, the division commander, Major General Walter E. Lauer, played a piano in the living room with studied insouciance even as one frightful dispatch arrived after another; his casualties would climb to two thousand and keep climbing. Lieutenant Richard H. Byers, a lanky gunner from Cleveland, watched tracers flicker overhead in neon sheets and recalled lines written by the poet Alan Seeger before he was killed in France in 1916: "I've a rendezvous with death / At midnight in some flaming town."

Two towns, actually: three miles from the German border, the twin Belgian villages of Krinkelt and Rocherath stood in the path of the 12th SS Panzer Division. The Murder Division, responsible for liquidating so many Canadian prisoners in Normandy, had been rebuilt with more Hitler Youth teenagers and 130 tanks and assault guns. Two panzer grenadier battalions probed the villages on Sunday only to butt against veterans from the U.S. 2nd Infantry Division who had been hustled into the line so quickly that some had Christmas packages from home dangling on their belts and rifle barrels; one witness thought they looked "more like postmen than soldiers."

A full-throated German assault at first light on Monday failed to win through, and fighting swept from house to house, room to room, alley to muddy alley, with grenades, knives, tank destroyers, and artillery salvos called by American officers onto their own heads. Smoke spiraled in thick braids above the mêlée as men from both sides were captured, freed, and recaptured. Antitank guns and skulking bazooka teams, along with almost thirty thousand artillery rounds, knocked out so many Panthers and other tracks that a German officer called the villages "a perfect panzer graveyard." An enemy gambit to outflank the American line by attacking through Höfen, ten miles north, ended with a battalion of Volksgrenadiers littering the snow like gray stepping-stones. Burial details counted 554 German bodies, for only a dozen U.S. casualties.

At dusk on Tuesday, with the last remnants of the 99th Division bundled to the rear except for stouthearts fighting with the 2nd Division, the Americans slipped from Krinkelt and Rocherath in thick fog, abandoning those flaming towns for better ground a thousand yards west—a boomerang crest two thousand feet high, running from southwest to northeast and unmarked on Belgian military maps. American commanders named this high ground after a nearby village: Elsenborn Ridge. Here Major General Gerow, the V Corps commander, believed the German attack could impale itself.

Corps gunners muscled hundreds of tubes into the lee of the ridge, along with 90mm antiaircraft guns to be used as artillery. Troops shoveled dirt into empty wooden ammunition boxes for field fortifications and burrowed down in the shale slope, roofing the hollows with pine logs and doors ripped from their hinges in a nearby Belgian barracks. Riflemen from the 2nd Division filled the ridgeline on the right and those from the 99th held the left, braced by the veteran 9th Infantry Division taking positions below Monschau in the north. An officer described a command post near Elsenborn as "a Gilbert and Sullivan opera … a big crowd of officers, all with map cases, binoculars, gas masks, etc., milling about. Nobody knew anything useful, even where the enemy was." Loony rumors flitted about, including reports of Tiger tanks being dropped by parachute. "I want to throw back my head and give voice to that empty feeling with a long animal howl," Lieutenant Byers wrote his wife. Then a colonel walked in and proclaimed, "You need worry no longer. The 1st Division is here."

Just so. At a moment when artillery prowess was most in demand, no better gunner was to be found in the U.S. Army than the owlish, bespectacled pipe-smoker known as Mr. Chips: Major General Clift Andrus, who a week earlier had taken command of the 1st Division when General Clarence Huebner became Gerow's deputy at V Corps. Andrus soon would orchestrate time-on-target fire missions from as many as thirty-five battalions—more than four hundred guns shooting at a single target simultaneously. Also welcome was the arrival of the division's 26th Infantry Regiment to straddle the trunk road from Büllingen to Malmédy.

Here for three days and nights German paratroopers and the 12th SS Panzer smashed against the defensive bulkhead again and again. One message to Andrus's headquarters advised, "Attack repulsed. Send litters." Then: "Much happening out there. We are killing lots of Germans."

The heaviest blows fell on the 26th Infantry's 2nd Battalion, commanded since the battle of El Guettar in Tunisia by Lieutenant Colonel Derrill M. Daniel, a Ph.D. entomologist wise in the ways of insect pests. A night attack from Büllingen by twenty truckloads of whooping, dismounted German infantry supported by panzers churning through deck-deep mud was repulsed with white phosphorus and antitank guns firing high-velocity British sabot ammunition at exhaust flames and engine noises. Hours later eight Panthers punched through the battalion line in a rampage of machine-gun and 75mm fire until bazooka teams and scorching antitank volleys threw them back. Thursday brought worse yet, with a three-hour cannonade before dawn by German howitzers and Nebelwerfers; then two battalions of paratroopers and SS panzer grenadiers spilled from a piney wood in the west, trailed by thirty panzers. The 2nd Battalion's right flank crumbled, and SS tanks wheeled up and down the line, crushing GIs in their foxholes.

"Get me all the damned artillery you can get," Daniel radioed. Ten thousand rounds in eight hours—among the fiercest

concentrations in the European war—kept enemy infantry at bay, but panzers closed to within a hundred yards of the battalion command post in a farm compound called Dom Bütgenbach. For much of the day Daniel and his staff crouched in a cellar with the wounded, burning classified papers and massing fires as tank and machine-gun rounds blistered the four-foot stone walls. Sleeting counterfire from Shermans and new 90mm tank destroyers finally winkled out the last attackers from behind a barn by shooting right through it; only one panzer escaped. An eerie silence descended with the night.

Army patrols reported enemy dead "as common as grass," and grave diggers would count nearly 800 bodies, along with the wrecked hulks of forty-seven panzers and self-propelled guns. Daniel took 250 casualties—this just three weeks after ruinous losses in the Hürtgen—and during the protracted fight at Elsenborn Ridge 5,000 others were killed or wounded or went missing in the 2nd and 99th Divisions alone.

But the American line held. Here Sixth Panzer Army reached its high-water mark, on what would become known as the north shoulder of the Bulge. Dietrich needed an eight- to twelve-mile cushion on his right flank to keep German assault columns unmolested by American artillery as they lumbered toward the Meuse. Instead, the juggernaut was forced to shear away from the main road through Bütgenbach to seek secondary avenues farther south; three routes allocated to the I SS Panzer Corps remained blocked, with others under fire. An attack farther north near Monschau failed abjectly when one German division arrived late to the battle and the other was knocked back. Only Peiper's foray showed clear promise in this sector. The 12th SS Panzer Division had been mauled, again, and other SS units seemed muscle-bound and clumsy.

The Americans by contrast demonstrated agility and a knack for concentrating firepower. Sixty thousand fresh troops had been shuttled into the Ardennes on Sunday, December 17, among the quarter-million reinforcements who would arrive within a week. Four U.S. infantry divisions clotted the north shoulder so effectively that OB West's war diary acknowledged "the Elsenborn attack is gaining only quite insignificant ground," while Army Group B lamented "slower progress than anticipated." The tactical fortunes of Dietrich and his lieutenants seemed increasingly doubtful, to the point that Rundstedt and Model, watching the offensive come unstitched, agreed to abruptly shift the German main effort from Sixth Panzer Army to Manteuffel's Fifth Panzer Army in the south. With northern routes denied or constricted, a new urgency obtained on the German left, and the roads leading through Luxembourg toward Bastogne and thence to the Meuse were now more vital than ever.

* * *

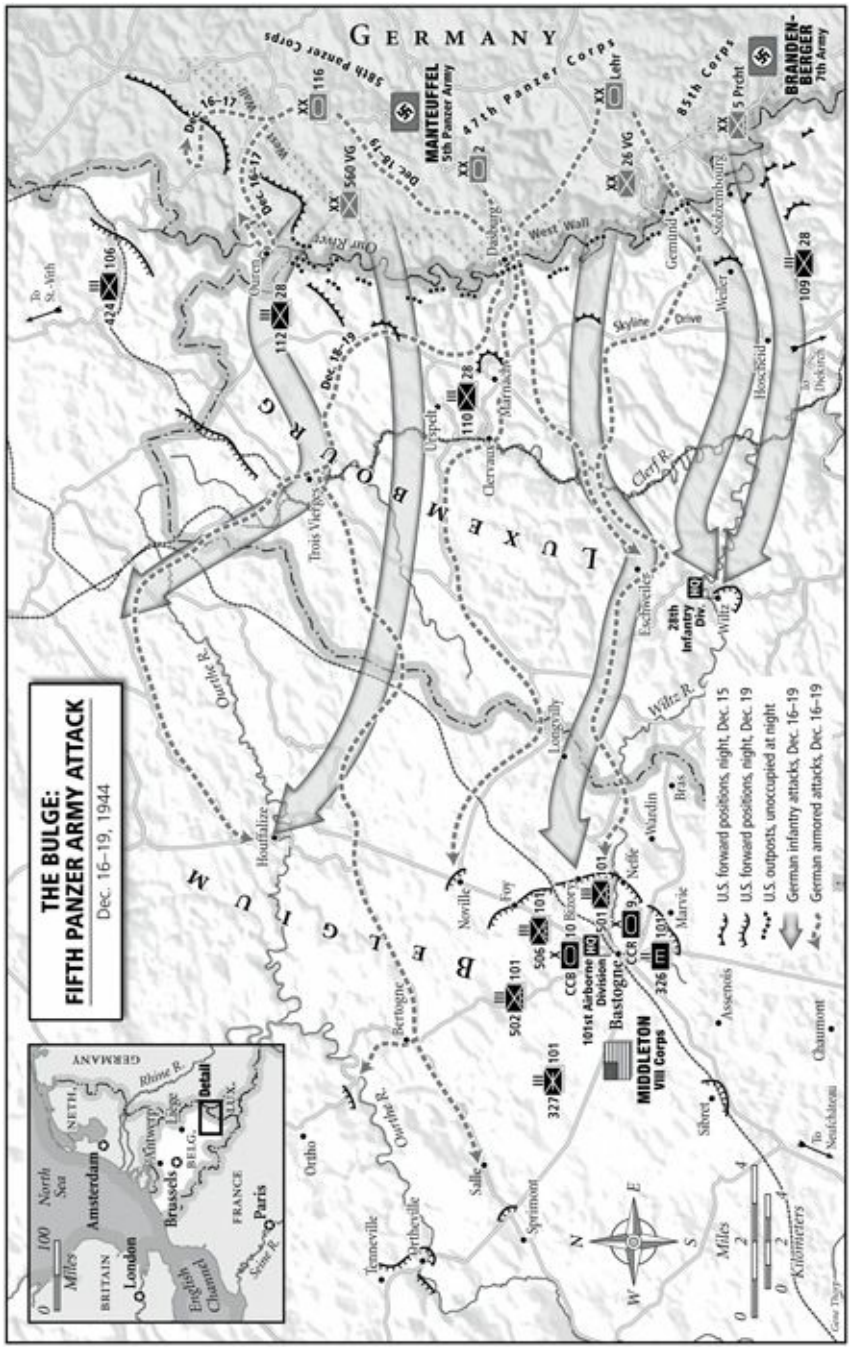
Two armored corps abreast had come down like wolves on the fold in Manteuffel's Saturday-morning attack, each corps falling on little more than an American regiment at an unnerving ratio of ten wolves for each sheep. Cota's 28th Division, still recuperating from six thousand Hürtgen casualties, held an impossibly wide twenty-five-mile front along the Our River, with all three infantry regiments on line. Instead of facing two German divisions across the river, as Army intelligence had surmised, Cota's men found themselves fighting five, plus heavy enemy reinforcements.

As artillery and mortar barrages shredded field-phone wires and truck tires, German infiltrators forded the Our in swirling fog to creep up stream beds behind the American pickets. Forward outposts fell back, or perished, or surrendered. "While I was being searched they came across my teeth wrapped in a handkerchief in my pocket," a captured engineer recorded. "These they kept." German shock troops soon rushed American gun lines illuminated by flares and by searchlights ricocheting off the low clouds; howitzer crews fired over open sights before spiking their tubes. An American armored column rushing down a ridgetop road known as Skyline Drive blundered into a German ambush: eleven light tanks were destroyed in as many minutes, "like clay pipes in a shooting gallery." From his command post in Wiltz, a brewing and tanning town ten miles west of the Our, Cota repeated orders from General Middleton at the VIII Corps headquarters in Bastogne, another ten miles farther west: "Hold at all costs." A soldier scribbled in his diary, "This place is not healthy anymore."

Yet as in the north, frictions and vexations soon bedeviled the German attack. A bridge for the 2nd Panzer Division collapsed into the Our after only ten tanks had crossed. Engineers eventually built two spans stout enough to hold a Panther, at Gemünd and Dasburg, but steep, hairpin approach roads, pocked by American artillery, reduced traffic to a crawl. Although Cota's flank regiments yielded ground in the face of flamethrowers and panzer fire, they imposed a severe penalty on the German timetable.

Along the American right, where four infantry divisions from the enemy's Seventh Army formed HERBSTNEBEL's southern lip, the 109th Infantry over three days would fall back slowly for four miles to Diekirch before joining forces with part of the 9th Armored Division. Another Hürtgen convalescent, the 4th Infantry Division, helped parry an enemy sweep into the American rear. On Cota's left, two battalion kitchens in the 112th Infantry were quickly overrun, but cooks fought with rifles and Manteuffel's LVIII Panzer Corps bled badly in getting a foothold across the Our. By Sunday night, the weight of metal and numbers won through for the Germans, but the 112th withdrew in good order to the northwest, largely intact although now splintered away from the rest of the 28th Division. With Cota's permission, the regiment continued sidling north to help defend the Belgian town of St.-Vith.

That left Cota a single regiment, the 110th Infantry, holding an eleven-mile front in the division center. Here Manteuffel swung his heaviest blow, with three divisions in XLVII Panzer Corps instructed to rip through to Bastogne, specifically targeted for quick capture under a Führer order. By midday Sunday the 110th was disintegrating, though not without a scrap. In the medieval town of Clervaux, various nobles for nine centuries—notably, John the Blind and the House of Burgundy—had occupied a feudal castle on a rocky spur overlooking the road to Bastogne. Now one hundred GIs, including clerks and bakers, barricaded themselves inside, firing from arrow slits in the Tower of the Witches at Germans in long leather coats scampering below. Wailing pleas for salvation rose from the dungeon, where dozens of women and children had taken refuge.



A mile up the road, in the three-story Hotel Claravallis, the flinty regimental commander, Colonel Hurley E. Fuller, advised Cota by radio of his peril: at least a dozen panzers on the high ground firing into Clervaux; the castle besieged; ammunition short; artillery overrun or retreating. “Hold at all costs,” Cota repeated. “No retreat. Nobody comes back.”

At 7:30 on Sunday evening, Fuller was again on the radio to division headquarters, likening his predicament to the Alamo, when a staff officer rushed in to report enemy tanks on the street outside. “No more time to talk,” Fuller told one of Cota’s lieutenants, and then slammed down the handset just before three shells demolished the hotel façade. He bounded to the third floor to grab his carbine and coat, only to find ten terrified soldiers crouched in Room 10. As the sound of German voices carried up the stairway, an explosion blew in the window. Glass, plaster, and steel sprayed the room, killing a lieutenant and wounding five other men. Hurriedly bandaging the eyes of a blinded soldier, Fuller led him by the hand to Room 12, where an iron ladder extended from the window across a fifteen-foot gap to crude steps cut into a shale cliff behind the hotel. Out and up they climbed, one by one, the blind man clutching Fuller’s belt from behind. Reaching the bluff above the ruby glow of burning Clervaux, Fuller set a course west for Bastogne, but to no avail: chaos and gunfire soon scattered the absconders. Within hours Fuller had been captured in a thicket near Wiltz, to be bundled off by boxcar to a prison camp near Leipzig.

The castle too was burning. Flames danced from the tower roof and black smoke stained the whitewashed inner walls. A final radio call went out Monday morning, December 18, before a panzer battered down the heavy wooden gates. At one P.M. the little garrison hoisted a white flag in surrender. Silence settled over Clervaux but for crackling fires and the shatter of glass from German looting. In a small inn that once housed the Red Cross club, a sign in the front window still proclaimed, “Of course we’re open.”

Not far from Clervaux, frightened civilians in another Luxembourg town wielded hammers and axes to demolish a huge sign erected in the fall to welcome the Americans. On the heels of the retreating 109th Infantry, three thousand men, women, and children fled Diekirch in bitter cold at midnight on Tuesday, abandoning four hundred others too old, infirm, or stubborn to leave. On Cota’s

order, undelivered Christmas packages and letters were piled in a Wiltz courtyard, doused with gasoline, and burned; the division command post pulled out Tuesday, first to Bastogne, then to Sibret, and eventually to Neufchâteau. A gaggle of Army bandsmen, engineers, paymasters, and sawmill operators fought as a rear guard until overrun by whistle-blowing German paratroopers, who reduced Wiltz with machine pistols and forty panzers.

"This was the end," the official Army history recorded. "Shots, blazing vehicles, and screaming wounded." Some GIs escaped by night in groups of ten with map scraps and radium-dial compasses. Several hundred others were captured, including one young officer who described being propped on a German staff car as a hood ornament, legs dangling over the grille, and driven east through march columns of Wehrmacht reinforcements who were "laughing at me as the trophy."

The 110th Infantry had been annihilated, with 2,500 battle casualties. Sixty American tanks were reduced to smoking wreckage. Yet once again space had been traded for time, a few miles for forty-eight hours, and once again that bargain favored the defenders. The southern shoulder was jammed almost as effectively as the northern. Fifth Panzer Army now marched on Bastogne, true enough, but the stumbling, tardy advance by three bloodied divisions hardly resembled the blitzkrieg of Hitler's fever dream.

* * *

Only in the center of the German onslaught did HERBSTNEBEL find unalloyed success. Here many of the fourteen thousand green soldiers in the 106th Division sheltered in captured Siegfried Line pillboxes, as enemy spearheads to the left and right tried on Saturday to envelop them in a pincer movement around the Schnee Eifel hogback. General Manteuffel hoped to capture St.-Vith within a day; the five main roads and three rail lines converging on that Belgian market hub, sixteen miles to the west, were vital given the hazards of moving cross-country through the Ardennes. On no segment of the Western Front were GIs more outnumbered, yet sharp firefights that morning imperiled the German timetable here as elsewhere. After one enemy column was slapped around, a German soldier shouted, in English, "Take a ten-minute break. We'll be back." A GI answered, "Fuck you, we'll still be here."

Not for long, at least on the left flank. Here about half of the sixteen hundred troopers in the 14th Cavalry Group plugged the Losheim Gap with flimsy armored cars and a few tank destroyers in eight sugar-bowl strongpoints under the group commander, Colonel Mark A. Devine, Jr., a beetle-browed disciplinarian with a penchant for telling Belgian mayors, "Your damn town is dirty. Clean it up." Facing paratroopers from the southern edge of Sixth Panzer Army and Volksgrenadiers from the northern edge of Fifth Panzer Army, the cavalry buckled. "Front lines still intact. Things well in hand," Devine reported from Manderfeld, but German shock troops gobbled up the sugar bowls one by one: Krewinkel, Afst, Kobscheid. A final radio message from Roth—"Tanks seventy-five yards from command post. Firing direct fire. Out"—was followed by silence. At four o'clock on Saturday afternoon, after an enemy shell wounded a staff officer and knocked Devine to the floor of his command post, he received permission from the 106th Division headquarters in St.-Vith to pull back two miles. Troopers put Manderfeld to the torch and retreated to the next ridgeline, blowing up eight of a dozen tank destroyers to forestall capture.

Devine's behavior now grew odd; perhaps he was suffering effects from the concussive blast. As his troopers dug in, he drove to St.-Vith, where for hours he loitered around the hectic 106th Division offices, eating bread, cheese, and then a breakfast of hot cakes and coffee. One officer thought his demeanor unremarkable, but the assistant division commander found him "almost incoherent.… He was nervous, could barely control his actions." The chief of staff described him as "excited and anxious." The division commander, Major General Alan W. Jones, anxious himself, offered scant advice other than to hold tight.

Instead, at daybreak on Sunday Devine returned to his men and, though there was little enemy pressure, ordered them to fall back farther, this time without authorization. He again drove to St.-Vith early in the afternoon, bursting into Jones's office. "The Germans are right behind us!" he warned, his face flushed. "They've broken through in the north. My group is practically destroyed." Sent back to his cavalrymen, the colonel ordered yet another retreat contrary to orders, now to Poteau, *west* of St.-Vith and seventeen miles from the original front.

At dusk on Sunday, Devine set out once more for St.-Vith, this time driving southeast with his executive officer and entire senior staff in a convoy of three jeeps and an armored car, each burning blackout lights. Thwarted by torrents of traffic crawling west, the little procession turned around in the dark only to hear a sharp command of *"Halt!"* a mile east of Recht. As an approaching German picket did a double take at the white star insignia on the armored car, an officer in the lead jeep pulled a pistol and shot the enemy soldier in the face. A sergeant then unleashed a cackling burst from a .50-caliber machine gun, and in the ensuing gunfight the Americans scattered through the woods. At midnight a disheveled, incoherent Devine appeared in the Poteau tavern serving as his command post, where he told a subordinate, "I want you to take over"; at four A.M. Monday, he was evacuated to Vielsalm by the unit dentist. A battalion surgeon later found Devine in La Roche with "a wild gleam in his eye," directing traffic and urging passersby to counterattack immediately. Six grams of sodium amytal put him into a deep sleep and removed him from the front.

The damage had been done, but even a stalwart stand by the 14th Cavalry likely would not have long postponed the catastrophe that followed. With the American left flank abruptly unhinged, German paratroopers on Sunday had cantered through Manderfeld to Lanzerath, brushing sleeves with Colonel Peiper's SS column and further pressuring the 99th Division to the north as well as imperiling the 106th Division in the south.

In St.-Vith, General Jones, a stocky native of Washington State with brilliantine hair and a Clark Gable mustache, sought counsel from the VIII Corps commander, General Middleton. Except for an engineer battalion, virtually all division reserves had been hustled into the fight. Should the 106th's infantry regiments, entrenched along a twenty-eight-mile front, pull back?

"You know how things are up there better than I do," Middleton said in a phone call from Bastogne. "But I agree it would be wise to withdraw them." In one of those mischances so common in war, a brief disruption on the line apparently kept Jones from hearing the second sentence. He hung up, telling his staff in St.-Vith, "Middleton says we should leave them in," even as Middleton told

subordinates in Bastogne, “I just talked to Jones. I told him to pull his regiments off the Schnee Eifel.” The 106th would stand pat, despite howling barbarians on both flanks. “He felt that he could hold,” Middleton later observed. “He made a mistake.… He had a fighting heart.”

Jones also believed that help was on the way. VIII Corps promised that combat commands from both the 7th and 9th Armored Divisions would soon arrive, perhaps within hours. That optimism failed to account for the “indescribable confusion” of double- and triple-banked traffic “hurtling to the rear,” in one major’s description. “It was a case of every dog for himself … the most perfect traffic jam I have ever seen.” Another officer conceded, “It wasn’t orderly, it wasn’t military, it wasn’t a pretty sight.” A tanker plowing against the exodus at one mile per hour reported that “the fear-crazed occupants of the vehicles fleeing to the rear had lost all reason.”

By midday on Sunday, only the advance guard from Combat Command B of the 7th Armored Division had arrived in St. Vith. The commander, a newly promoted brigadier general named Bruce C. Clarke, had been preparing to leave for Paris to undergo gallstone surgery when word came that “Alan Jones is having some trouble at St. Vith.” Clarke, a craggy engineer from upstate New York, found that General Jones’s trouble included Germans on three sides, a disintegrating cavalry group, and fretful anxiety over his son, a lieutenant somewhere on the Schnee Eifel. Division staff officers stomped about, burning maps and flinging equipment into truck beds for evacuation. At one P.M., Jones phoned Middleton again, telling the corps commander, “Things are looking up.… We are going to be all right.” After ringing off he told an astonished Clarke that Middleton had “enough troubles already” without worrying about the 106th Division.

The crackle of small-arms fire sent both generals hurrying to the third floor of the division command post in steep-roofed St. Josef’s Kloster, where the devout had long cared for the sick, schooled the young, and bathed the bodies of the dead. Muzzle flashes twinkled along a bluff just east of town. “I’ve thrown in my last chips,” Jones said, turning to Clarke. “I’ve got nothing left. You take it now.” And with that General Jones soon joined the frantic exodus to the west.

* * *

Jones’s stand-fast decision had left two infantry regiments, the 422nd and 423rd, and five artillery battalions exposed to entrapment on the Schnee Eifel. On Sunday the trap snapped shut when German columns from north and south converged in Schönberg, just across the Belgian border east of St.-Vith. South of town a third regiment, the 424th Infantry, had earlier that day managed to beat back the enemy envelopment and thus escape entrapment, but by dusk nine thousand other GIs were surrounded on a bleak, snowy German moor. An icy west wind soughed through the fir stands, carrying the fateful whine of panzer engines from the American rear. GIs huddling for warmth in foxholes along the West Wall listened impassively, displaying, one officer recorded, “absolutely no expression.”

At 2:15 on Monday morning, a radio message from General Jones at last ordered the two regiments to retreat toward Schönberg, where an armored spearhead from St.-Vith would help them break out. Ammunition, food, and water were to be dropped by parachute. Colonel George L. Descheneaux, commander of the 422nd Infantry, bowed his head. “My poor men,” he said. “They’ll be cut to pieces.”

Cooks made towering stacks of pancakes, then destroyed their kitchens. In dense fog at dawn the anabasis began, a serpentine column of battalions trudging through the snow, vaguely following a compass azimuth of 270 degrees, while a parallel procession of trucks, jeeps, and towed artillery bumped along cow paths and game trails. Men listened for V-weapons overhead and sought to follow the sound westward. Even Descheneaux muttered, “Where the hell are we?” Huge orange panels were readied to mark a drop zone, but no drop came. Bad weather and “command incoordination,” as the AAF later termed the confusion, kept some planes grounded in England, while two dozen others shuttled emergency supplies between airfields in Belgium and France, futilely seeking information about the besieged regiments.

By midday the Germans had found them though Allied pilots could not. Artillery and mortar salvos fractured the columns, killing or wounding hundreds and scattering regiments, battalions, and companies across the tableland. Unsure where to shoot, given enemy fire falling from at least three directions, gunners began to spike their guns. With mortar ammunition gone and many riflemen reduced to just a few rounds, wet, cold, hungry troops crawled down ravines or sheltered among the firs and waited for dark. Another radio message from General Jones, now in Vielsalm, advised that no armored relief column was likely to appear. He added:

> Attack Schönberg. Do maximum damage to enemy there. Then attack toward St. Vith. This mission is of greatest importance to the nation. Good luck.

At daybreak on Tuesday, three battalions from the 422nd Infantry, quite lost but still game, moved out abreast only to be lacerated by German tank and machine-gun fire. Mortars walked through the ranks with a heavy footfall. GIs again went to ground, although not before unleashing a five-minute fusillade against shadowy figures in a nearby stream bed who proved to be comrades from the 423rd Infantry. Their commander, Colonel Charles C. Cavender, leaned against a tree, a study in dejection. “Well, Colonel,” the regimental chaplain said, “this isn’t exactly as we planned, is it?” Cavender shook his head. “No, Chaplain, it isn’t.”

By one P.M., at least one battalion had been pared to just fifty men. Relentless cannonading flayed the pastures between Radscheid and Auw. An icy breeze stirred the hair of helmetless boys sprawled on their backs, pupils fixed and sightless, “their skin that yellow-white of the newly dead,” one lieutenant noted. Benny Goodman and Artie Shaw records blared from German loudspeakers, interspersed with promises of “showers, warm beds, and hotcakes.” A GI sobbing in a ditch shouted, “Go blow it out your ass, you German son of a bitch!” Spirits soared for a moment when a clanking Sherman appeared on the Schönberg road; then enemy

crewmen inside the captured tank opened fire, and all hope perished.

At 2:30 P.M., with two thousand of his men now packed into a last-stand perimeter four hundred yards across, Colonel Descheneaux summoned his subordinates. “We’re still sitting like fish in a pond,” he told them. “I’m going to save as many men as I can, and I don’t give a damn if I’m court-martialed.” The order filtered through the ranks: “Destroy all weapons and equipment. We are about to surrender.” As soldiers smashed their rifles against tree trunks and tossed the last ammunition clips into a creek, a major knotted together two white handkerchiefs and set off in search of parley. Descheneaux sat on the lip of a slit trench, weeping. Half a mile away, Colonel Cavender had reached the same conclusion, giving his regiment thirty minutes to destroy all weapons and fling away any German souvenirs. An artillery officer stood on an ambulance waving a snow cape, bellowing, “We surrender.”

A few diehards lay low or scampered into the forest, but rank upon rank marched forward with hands raised. More than seven thousand would surrender, in the worst reverse for American arms in the European theater and the greatest U.S. mass capitulation of the war excepting Bataan. “I’ve lost a division quicker than any division commander in the U.S. Army,” General Jones lamented. Two days later, having been relieved of command, he collapsed from a heart attack and was assigned to the “Detachment of Patients” near Paris; “evacuation order no. 13” authorized his return to Washington with a government per diem of $7.

Long columns of prisoners plodded toward Germany, Jones’s son among them, past wounded men wailing for help from the snow meadows. Wehrmacht reinforcements tramped by, trundling machine guns in wheelbarrows and catcalling about how panzers had already crossed the Meuse. In that gray tide making for St.-Vith, a captured gunner observed “tanks towing other tanks; tanks towing buses without engines; buses and trucks with red crosses all over them loaded down with ammo and troops.”

“Do not flee,” the German guards called out. “If you flee, you will be machine weaponed.” Many GIs had lost their overcoats and blankets, and at night they lay back to belly for warmth. Some chewed wax candles to ward off hunger, or wolfed down potato skins found in hog troughs. Through Rhineland towns they marched, pelted with stones and maledictions. “The Germans made us take off our overshoes and give them to the civilians,” a squad leader from the 423rd Infantry told his diary; in Koblenz, he added, a man in a business suit “hit me in the head with his briefcase. Guard said he was upset over recent bombing.”

Among those transported by train into captivity was a twenty-two-year-old private first class named Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., bound for a Dresden work camp. “Bayonets aren’t much good against tanks,” the future novelist wrote his family in Indiana.

> The supermen marched us, without food, water or sleep to Limburg … where we were loaded and locked up, sixty men to each small, unventilated, unheated box car.… The floors were covered with fresh cow dung.… Half slept while the other half stood.

More than a hundred miles east of the battle, at the Adlerhorst compound in the Taunus Hills, adjutants and headquarters clerks sorted through the latest reports on the Ardennes fighting. Given the disappointments on both flanks of his offensive, Herr Hitler took heart at field dispatches from the Schnee Eifel. The Meuse, Antwerp, victory—all remained in play. To his generals the Führer proclaimed, “Success—complete success—is now in our grasp.”

“Why Are You Not Packing?”

A LEADEN overcast in Luxembourg City had prevented Omar Bradley from flying to Versailles on Saturday morning to press his case for more infantry reinforcements. A driver instead stocked the commanding general’s Cadillac hamper with Coca-Cola, and at eight A.M. he headed west on roads glazed with ice, skipping the morning war-room briefing that would have alerted him to the German attack. A flattering portrait of Bradley had just appeared in *Time*, his second cover story in six months, but wrapped in a fur-trimmed arctic coat and nursing a bottle of soda in the limousine’s rear seat, he looked worn and tired. Five hours later he stopped for lunch at the Ritz in rainy Paris, noting the “lifeless chimneys” around the Place Vendôme. The first rumor of troubles to the east circulated through the hotel dining room; before long, Hemingway, feverish from the flu in his book- and bottle-strewn suite upstairs, would appear in the lobby to proclaim, “There’s been a complete breakthrough. This thing could cost us the works.… Load those clips. Wipe every cartridge clean.”

Shortly before three P.M., a SHAEF colonel tiptoed into Eisenhower’s office in the Trianon Palace Hotel in Versailles, where Bradley and four others had just settled around a conference table with the supreme commander. The officer carried a sketchy dispatch from the front suggesting “strong and extensive attacks” in the Ardennes; an alarming number of German divisions already had been identified. Scrutinizing a map that showed blows against the U.S. V and VIII Corps, Major General Strong, the SHAEF intelligence chief, wondered aloud if the enemy had designs on the Meuse and then Brussels. Beetle Smith indelicately recalled recent warnings to 12th Army Group of resurgent strength in Sixth Panzer Army, but Bradley remained skeptical. This was likely nothing more than a spoiling attack, he said, intended to disrupt the Allied assault toward the Rhine; the rumpus would soon peter out. As the meeting broke up, Strong cautioned that “it would be wrong to underrate the Germans.”

Eisenhower and Bradley dined that night at the supreme commander’s handsome stone villa in St.-Germain-en-Laye, previously occupied by Rundstedt. Despite sour tidings from the Ardennes, they were in a celebratory mood: word had just arrived from Washington of the president’s decision to nominate Eisenhower for a fifth star. After spending sixteen years as a major, Eisenhower had ascended from lieutenant colonel to general of the Army in forty-five months. The two friends shared a bottle of champagne, and

then nipped from a fifth of Highland Piper Scotch while playing five rubbers of bridge.

Eisenhower in a subsequent cable to Marshall would confess that "all of us, without exception, were astonished" at the strength of HERBSTNEBEL, and nearly a week would elapse until SHAEF intelligence confirmed German ambitions of cleaving the Allied armies in half. Yet the supreme commander sensed on the battle's first day that the trouble in the Ardennes went beyond a spoiling attack. Before repairing to St.-Germain for the evening, he had insisted that Bradley phone his headquarters to shift the 7th Armored Division to St.-Vith from the north, and the 10th Armored Division from the south toward Bastogne. When Bradley replied that Patton would resent the latter order, Eisenhower snapped, "Tell him that Ike is running this damn war."

Other moves quickly followed. SHAEF's only experienced combat reserve consisted of the 101st and 82nd Airborne Divisions; both had hoped for another month to recuperate from MARKET GARDEN and the harsh subsequent weeks near Nijmegen, but neither would get another day. Army tactical doctrine, learned in World War I, called for containing an enemy salient by first crimping the shoulders of any incursion. Paratroopers from both divisions were ordered to the Ardennes posthaste to help crimp. The deployments of one armored division and three infantry divisions from Britain to the Continent would be accelerated, as would troopship sailings to France from the United States. Commanders at the front were told that Meuse bridges were to be held at all costs, or blown into the river if necessary. Patton also was instructed to prepare to swing north, and to take Middleton's beleaguered VIII Corps under his wing. "By rushing out from his fixed defenses," Eisenhower added in an order to subordinates, "the enemy may give us the chance to turn his great gamble into his worst defeat." Supply dumps would be defended, evacuated, or burned as required, and defenses around Paris strengthened. Even so, a French officer visiting Versailles on Monday asked General Strong, "Why are you not packing? Aren't you making any preparation to leave?"

In a message to Marshall, Eisenhower assured the chief that "in no quarter is there any tendency to place any blame upon Bradley"; he had "kept his head magnificently." Yet only grudgingly did Bradley acknowledge his peril. While returning to his headquarters—this time in an armored limousine escorted by MPs—he turned his practiced bird hunter's eye to the passing landscape and cheerfully pointed out pheasants in roadside fields. Upon learning in Luxembourg City that at least fourteen German divisions were attacking, he muttered, "Where in hell has this son of a bitch gotten all his strength?" With the fighting front barely a dozen miles away, his room in the Hôtel Alfa was moved to the rear of the building as a precaution against stray artillery, and he now avoided the front door, entering through the kitchen. Aides removed the three-star insignia from his jeep and covered those on his helmet. Frequent air-raid sirens and booming antiaircraft guns woke him repeatedly despite the sleeping sedatives he took. During a brief moment of panic, staff officers buried secret documents in the headquarters courtyard, disguising the cache as a grave and marking it with a wooden cross and dog tags.

Still Bradley affected nonchalance. Logisticians and engineers were told to continue working on the army group's "Rhine crossing plan." After supper on Monday, December 18, upon studying a map that showed at least four U.S. divisions retreating westward and others threatened with encirclement, he told an aide, "I don't take too serious a view of it, although the others will not agree with me."

* * *

Among those who no longer agreed was Courtney Hodges. At his headquarters in Spa, the First Army commander had shared Bradley's defiant attitude of denial for more than a day after the German attack began. An engineer company was sent to work as usual on a rail bridge in Bütgenbach on Sunday, and Hodges initially refused to suspend an attack toward the Roer. At a Christmas party a staff officer who was said to have once sung professionally belted out "Oh, what a beautiful mornin' / Oh, what a beautiful day," from *Oklahoma!* Reporters threw their own party in Room 6 of the Hôtel Portugal in Spa on Sunday, marching with glasses raised, as one correspondent wrote, "briskly up, over, and across the bed, and around the room, with everybody bellowing a quite unprintable ditty, beginning with 'Monday I kissed her on the ankle.'"

Fourteen First Army divisions held a 165-mile front from Aachen to Luxembourg, and with most of Hodges's senior staff still on leave in London or Paris, deep unease began roiling the Hôtel Britannique command post as Sunday wore on. Church bells pealed to signal a civilian curfew from six P.M. to seven A.M. Mortar crews outside Spa scattered tin pans and crockery around their pits as a makeshift alarm against infiltrators. Cooks, press censors, and Belgian fusiliers rallied to perimeter strongpoints. Birds were mistaken for German paratroopers, and improvised patrols of Army lawyers and accountants scrambled off in pursuit. Soldiers in muddy boots tromped through the Britannique cocktail lounge, hauling out dental chairs and sick-bay instruments from behind the mahogany bar. Fearful of German reprisals, Belgian gendarmes freed twenty-one jailed collaborators; MPs rounded them up again. "Thermite grenades were issued with which we could destroy our papers," Forrest Pogue informed his diary, and among those building bonfires in Spa on Sunday night was Major General Pete Quesada, the tactical air commander. Tunisia veterans reminisced about the surprise German offensive in February 1943, when the Army had retreated eighty miles through Kasserine Pass.

Perhaps the prospect of a similar debacle discomfited General Hodges, for at midday on Sunday he closed his office door in the Britannique, sat at his desk, and laid his head on his arms. He took no calls, and for the better part of two days showed symptoms of incapacitation. The precise combination of fatigue, illness, and despair would never be clarified; Major General Ernest N. Harmon, among the Army's toughest combat commanders, later claimed that Hodges was "probably the most shaken man I have ever seen anywhere who pretends to have the carriage necessary for high command." Rumors reached Luxembourg City that the First Army commander "almost went to pieces"; Eisenhower and Bradley apparently considered relieving Hodges, by one account, but chose to wait while General Ridgway's XVIII Airborne Corps rushed to reinforce the front. First Army's capable if autocratic chief of staff, Major General Bill Kean, effectively took command until late Monday, December 18, when Hodges recovered his balance enough to order Spa evacuated.

Officers fussed over how to pack newly pressed pinks-and-greens and whether to take their liquor cabinets until reports put German panzers first at six miles, then just two miles from Spa. Both sightings proved false, but they accelerated the evacuation. “I imagine that the Germans felt like [this] when they had to leave Paris,” Pogue wrote. Belgian schoolchildren assembled on a playground to sing “The Star-Spangled Banner” while their parents ripped down American flags and photos of President Roosevelt. Sobbing, a Jewish woman begged the headquarters to “take my child where the Germans can’t hurt him.” Twelve hundred patients and medicos emptied the 4th Convalescent Hospital within ninety minutes, bolting for Huy. By ill fate, V-1s hit two fleeing convoys, killing two dozen GIs and leaving charred truck chassis scattered across the road.

When Hodges tarried at the Britannique on Monday, one officer whispered to him, “Save yourself, General. It’s bad enough if we get overrun without your getting captured.” At ten P.M. the command group pulled out for Chaudfontaine, near Liège, where a new headquarters opened at midnight in the Hôtel des Bains. Left behind in Spa were secret maps, and food simmering on the stove. An officer entering the Britannique on Tuesday morning found tables set for breakfast, trees decorated for Christmas, and papers strewn everywhere.

A British liaison officer reported to Montgomery that Hodges was “completely out of touch”—First Army officers flagged down passing truck drivers in Chaudfontaine to ask what they knew about the fighting. Though no longer paralyzed, Hodges remained isolated and ill-informed: not until a week into the German offensive would he visit any unit in the field, and many subordinates were uncertain where the First Army command post had gone. “We can’t lose three months’ gains in three days very often,” a captain wrote his family, “or we’ll be beating out a reverse invasion.”

Evacuation of the vast supply dumps in eastern Belgium seemed far more ambitious than the abandonment of a headquarters hotel, but the task was capably done. Some stockpiles were beyond either removal or destruction—for instance, the eight million rations around Liège. Quartermasters in Paris also calculated that even if the biggest depots along the Meuse were captured, enough stocks could be found in the rear to last ten days or more, until emergency shipments arrived from the United States. But smaller supply depots, hospitals, and repair shops were ordered to move west of the river. With help from 1,700 First Army trucks and 2,400 railcars, some 45,000 tons of matériel and 50,000 vehicles would be shifted out of harm’s way, along with a quarter-million rear-echelon soldiers, patients, and supernumeraries.

Three miles of primacord was used to blow up grenades, mines, and bangalore torpedoes—as well as twenty tons of sugar, rice, and flour—in an exposed dump near Malmédy. Most critical was the 3.5 million gallons of gasoline within ten miles of Lieutenant Colonel Peiper’s SS spearhead, largely in five-gallon cans grouped in thousand-can stacks. Near Stavelot, where the fuel dump covered several square miles of woodland, 800,000 gallons of gas and 300,000 gallons of grease and oil were spirited away beginning Sunday night, as Peiper approached the town; another 134,000 gallons was ignited in a roadblock conflagration on Highway N-28. More than two million additional gallons were quickly evacuated from Spa using ten-ton tractor-trailers and railcars rushed to a nearby siding. Except for several minor caches captured by the Germans, Rundstedt’s tanks and trucks would be forced to rely on their own dwindling fuel stocks.

* * *

Crows or starlings might have been mistaken for German parachutists near Spa, but more than a thousand actual airborne troops were due to be dropped north of Malmédy on *Null Tag* to further disrupt American defenses.

Nothing went right for the enemy. Airdromes designated for training proved not to exist, half the Ju-52 pilots had never flown in combat, and many paratroopers were either novices or had not jumped since the attack on Holland in 1940. “Don’t be afraid. Be assured that I will meet you personally by 1700 on the first day,” General Dietrich had told the mission commander, Colonel Friedrich von der Heydte. “Behind their lines are only Jewish hoodlums and bank managers.” After confusion and blunders delayed the jump for a day, a howling crosswind on Sunday morning scattered paratroopers up to fifty kilometers from the drop zone. Two hundred jumpers were mistakenly dropped near Bonn, and American gunners shot down several planes. With a single mortar, little ammunition, and no functioning radios, von der Heydte rounded up three hundred men, who stumbled into a losing firefight before fleeing in small groups for the Fatherland; the colonel surrendered after briefly hiding outside Monschau. Two-thirds of the original thousand were killed or captured. That was the end of what proved the last German airborne operation of the war.

Operation GREIF, or “condor,” proved no more competent. Under the flamboyant Viennese commando officer Otto Skorzeny, 2,000 men had been recruited into the 150th Armored Brigade for behind-the-lines sabotage, reconnaissance, and havoc. Their motor fleet included a dozen Panthers modified to resemble Shermans, German Fords painted olive drab, and a small fleet of captured U.S. Army trucks, jeeps, and scout cars. Some 150 men who spoke English—only 10, mostly former sailors, were truly fluent in the vernacular—would lead raiding parties X, Y, and Z to seize three Meuse bridges. They were issued captured or counterfeit identification documents, as well as GI uniforms, many of which had been purloined from American prisoners under the pretext of disinfection. To mimic American cigarette-smoking techniques and other mannerisms, the men studied Humphrey Bogart in *Casablanca*.

All for naught. Sixth Panzer Army’s troubles on the north shoulder disrupted Skorzeny’s timetable, and a set of GREIF orders discovered on a dead German officer alerted the Americans to skullduggery. First Army MPs on Monday, December 18, stopped three men in a jeep near Aywaille who were unable to give the day’s password; a search revealed German pay books and grenades. Four others on a Meuse bridge in Liège included a GI imposter who carried both the identification card of a Captain Cecil Dryer and the dogtags of a Private Richard Bumgardner. He and his comrades were found to be wearing swastika brassards beneath their Army field jackets. In all, sixteen infiltrators were swiftly captured in American uniforms and another thirty-five were killed without effecting a single act of sabotage on the Meuse. Most of Skorzeny’s brigade eventually was dragooned into battle as orthodox

infantry near Malmédy, where inexperience and a lack of artillery led to heavy casualties. Skorzeny himself suffered a nasty head wound.

The sole accomplishment of GREIF was to sow hysteria across the Western Front. A voluble, imaginative German lieutenant captured in Liège claimed to be part of a team sent to kill Eisenhower. Colonel Skorzeny, he said, had already infiltrated American lines with 60 assassins. The ostensible figure quickly grew to 150, and rumors flew that they could be posing as GIs escorting several captured German generals to SHAEF headquarters. Soon hundreds of jeeps carrying suspected killers and blackguards had been reported crisscrossing France; more than forty roadblocks sprang up around the Café de la Paix in Paris, where Skorzeny and his henchmen were expected to rendezvous. Police bulletins described Skorzeny as six feet, eight inches tall—a considerable exaggeration—with "dueling scars on both cheeks," supposedly incurred while brawling over a ballerina in Vienna. It was said that some infiltrators carried vials of sulfuric acid to fling in the faces of suspicious sentries; that many spoke English better than any GI; that they recognized one another by rapping their helmets twice, or by wearing blue scarves, or by leaving unfastened the top button of a uniform blouse. It was said that some might be costumed as priests, or nuns, or barkeeps. The Army official history dryly recorded that "Belgian or French café keepers who for weeks had been selling *vin ordinaire*, watered cognac, and sour champagne to the GIs were suddenly elevated by rumor, suspicion, and hysteria to captaincies in the Waffen SS."

MPs at checkpoints sought to distinguish native English speakers from frauds with various shibboleths, including "wreath," "writhe," "wealth," "rather," and "with nothing." Some asked the identity of the Windy City, since an intelligence report advised that "few Germans can pronounce Chicago correctly." Other interrogatories included: What is the price of an airmail stamp? What is Sinatra's first name? Who is Mickey Mouse's girlfriend? Where is Little Rock? Robert Capa, burdened with a Hungarian accent and an ineradicable smirk, was arrested for failing to know the capital of Nebraska. Forrest Pogue, when asked the statehouse location in his native Kentucky, carefully replied, "The capital is Frankfort, but you may think it is Louisville." When the actor David Niven, serving as an officer in 21st Army Group, was asked, "Who won the World Series in 1940?" he answered, "I haven't the faintest idea. But I do know that I made a picture with Ginger Rogers in 1938."

Cooks, bakers, and clerks were tutored in the mysteries of bazookas, mortars, and mines. Trigger-happy GIs gunned down four French civilians at a roadblock, and an Army doctor was shot in the stomach after answering a sentry's challenge with, "You son of a bitch, get out of my way." Promiscuous gunfire could be heard in Versailles near the Trianon Palace, now entombed in concertina wire, and a fusillade behind Beetle Smith's house one night brought the chief of staff out in his pajamas, cradling a carbine. "We deployed into the garden and began shooting right and left," Robert Murphy, a visiting diplomat, later recounted. "The next morning a stray cat was found in the garden riddled with bullets."

With Skorzeny and his cutthroats presumed to be still at large, Eisenhower reluctantly agreed to move from the St.-Germain villa to smaller quarters near his office. Each day his black limousine continued to follow the usual route to and from SHAEF headquarters, but with the rear seat occupied by a lieutenant colonel named Baldwin B. Smith, whose broad shoulders, prominent pate, and impatient mien made him a perfect body double for the supreme commander.

* * *

The real Eisenhower, traveling with Tedder in a bulletproof Cadillac first used in Africa, arrived in Verdun for a war council on Tuesday morning, December 19. At an ancient French army barracks within a muddy quadrangle, he soon was joined by Bradley, Jake Devers, and Patton, who drove up smoking a cigar in a jeep with plexiglass doors and a .30-caliber machine gun mounted on a swivel. At 11:30 A.M. they climbed upstairs to a dank stone squad room with a single potbellied stove, a large table, and a map unfurled across a wall. Bradley, already in a testy mood, pointed to a red arrow labeled "20 German tanks" approaching Namur on the Meuse, farther west than previously reported. "What the hell is this?" he demanded. An intelligence officer hurried to the map, snatched off the errant marker, and apologized for the error.

"The present situation is to be regarded as one of opportunity for us and not of disaster," Eisenhower said, settling into his chair. "There will be only cheerful faces at this conference table." From the other end, Patton chimed in, "Let's have the guts to let the bastards go all the way to Paris. Then we'll cut 'em off and chew 'em up."

Two staff officers reviewed the battlefront in detail. At least seventeen German divisions had joined the attack already; the identities of most were known. The heaviest pressure could be felt at St.-Vith and Bastogne, two vital road centers. Atrocities had been documented. Daily Luftwaffe sorties over St.-Vith had declined sharply from six hundred on Sunday, although a persistent overcast also had grounded Allied planes. Seven French infantry battalions would help defend the Meuse, along with half a dozen COMZ engineer regiments. American strength in the Ardennes had doubled since Saturday, to about 180,000 troops in ten infantry and three armored divisions. More would soon follow.

Eisenhower then spoke. Devers's 6th Army Group would assume the defensive in Alsace, he said, and contribute reserves for the Ardennes. Scattered forces must be pulled together for "positive concerted action." Holding the high ground south of Liège would keep supply depots outside enemy artillery range. By squeezing the shoulders of the German salient, shoring up the Meuse, blunting the enemy advance, and creating "a supply desert," they could smash Rundstedt's bulge—as it was now called—with an American counterblow again aimed at the Rhine. Third Army, which currently held an eighty-mile front with three corps facing the Saar, would pivot north to knife into the exposed German left flank.

Peering down the long table at Patton, Eisenhower asked in his booming voice, "George, how soon can you get an attack off?"

"On December 22," Patton replied, "with three divisions—the 4th Armored, the 26th, and the 80th."

Leaning forward, Eisenhower quickly calculated space, time, and divisions on his fingers. The maneuver required making a sharp left turn with a full corps, then moving nearly a hundred miles over winter roads. "Don't be fatuous, George. If you try to go that

early, you won't have all three divisions ready and you'll go piecemeal," he said. "I'd even settle for the 23rd if it takes that long to get three full divisions."

"I'll make a meeting engagement in three days," Patton said, "and I'll give you a six-division coordinated attack in six days." Someone chuckled. The uneasy shuffle of boots could be heard on the bare floor. Glancing at a staff officer for confirmation, Patton added, "We can do that."

Before leaving the barracks, Patton phoned his headquarters to issue various movement orders: XII Corps was to wheel toward Luxembourg in tandem with the III Corps drive into Belgium. "Everyone is a son-of-a-bitch to someone," he told his staff by way of encouragement. "Be better sons-of-bitches than they are."

Eisenhower declined Bradley's invitation to stay for lunch; he would eat a sandwich in the Cadillac on the way back to Versailles. Turning to Patton before getting into the car, Eisenhower said, "George, every time I get promoted I get attacked."

Patton chuckled. "Yes, and every time you get attacked I bail you out."

They shook hands, Eisenhower smiling broadly. He seemed not only sanguine, but brimming with a "great expansive exuberance," as Major Chester Hansen, Bradley's aide, noted in his diary.

"There's something about the guy, the way he brushes along, the way he breaks out in a big grin, the way his voice, harsh and loud, cracks out, that disarms all within his vicinity," Hansen had concluded. "That's the way he is, gay, loud, democratic, dynamic, thinking fast, acting fast, spreading confidence."

* * *

Eisenhower had urged his lieutenants in Verdun "to avoid any discouragement or feeling of disappointment in the changed situation." However, a new development left Bradley not only discouraged and disappointed but also furious.

British intelligence on Tuesday evening concluded that the road to Namur was in fact vulnerable, and that if German shock troops crossed the Meuse there they could reach Brussels within hours. Montgomery confided to Brooke that he had told SHAEF's deputy operations officer, Major General J. F. M. Whiteley, "that Ike ought to place me in operational command of all troops on the northern half of the front. I consider he should be given a direct order by someone to do so." In Versailles, Whiteley and Major General Strong, also British, agreed that the Ardennes battlefield would best be managed by two commanders—Montgomery in the north and Bradley in the south—rather than by 12th Army Group alone.

Bradley's subordinate generals to the north were frustrated by their commander's isolation, which allowed only fitful telephone and radio contact; they also complained that not a single staff officer from the army group had visited First Army, Ninth Army, or their affiliated air forces since the offensive began on Saturday. When Eisenhower had proposed that 12th Army Group shift its headquarters to a more central locale, Bradley absurdly replied, "That would startle the people of Luxembourg too much. They would think we were defeated and *had* to get out."

Roused from his bed by Whiteley and Strong on Tuesday night, Beetle Smith listened to their proposal to expand Montgomery's role and their warnings of "further deterioration" at the front. Then he rounded in anger on the staff officers. Clearly these two Britishers did not consider the Yanks capable of handling the crisis, Smith charged. Where did their loyalties lie? Such faithless impertinence was intolerable. Both men should consider themselves relieved of their duties, and return to England immediately.

As Whiteley and Strong slunk away in the face of this tirade, Smith phoned Eisenhower, finding the supreme commander still in his office at eleven P.M. Fuming, Smith described the bifurcation proposal while grudgingly conceding that it had merit: among other benefits, Montgomery would more likely commit British reserves to the battle if he commanded them. Eisenhower, staring at a huge wall map, promptly agreed. With a grease pencil he drew a line on the map from Givet on the Meuse east through the Ardennes to Prüm in Germany. St.-Vith fell north of the line, Bastogne south.

While the supreme commander pondered this demarcation, Smith phoned Bradley in Luxembourg City:

> Ike thinks it may be a good idea to turn over to Monty your two armies in the north and let him run that side of the Bulge from 21st Group.… It seems the logical thing to do. Monty can take care of everything north of the Bulge and you'll have everything south.

Bradley answered cautiously. He noted that no hint of this scheme had arisen in Verdun that morning. Although three enemy armies were now interposed between his command post and the bulk of his army group to the north, he considered his communication difficulties insignificant. "I'd question whether such a changeover is necessary," he added.

By Wednesday morning, when Eisenhower called personally to confirm the reconfiguration, Bradley had worked himself into a seething distemper. "By God, Ike, I cannot be responsible to the American people if you do this. I resign." General Strong, who had been grudgingly pardoned by Smith and was listening to the phone conversation in Eisenhower's office, watched a deep flush creep up the supreme commander's neck. "Brad, I—not you—am responsible to the American people. Your resignation therefore means absolutely nothing." Bradley continued to protest, if in a lower key, until Eisenhower ended the conversation with a peremptory, "Well, Brad, those are my orders." He then phoned Montgomery at his command post in Zonhoven. "We've now got two battles, two separate battles," Eisenhower said, bellowing into the receiver. "I think you'd better take charge of the northern one, and leave Bradley to deal with the southern one."

At 12:52 P.M., a SHAEF log entry confirmed that "Field Marshal Montgomery has been placed in charge of the northern flank." He would command the U.S. First and Ninth Armies, as well as his own army group; Twelfth Army Group was left with only Patton's Third Army. An officer in Bradley's headquarters reported that he was "absolutely livid. Walked up and down and cursed Monty."

Schadenfreude, as Montgomery now demonstrated, was by no means an exclusively German trait. Amid the dogs, goldfish, and singing canaries in his Zonhoven encampment, he had written Brooke just before midnight on Tuesday that "it looks as if we may now have to pay the price for the policy of drift and lack of proper control."

> There is great confusion and all signs of a full scale withdrawal. There is a definite lack of grip and control, and no one has a clear picture.… Everyone knows something has gone wrong and no one knows what or why.… The general situation is ugly as the American forces have been cut clean in half and the Germans can reach the Meuse at Namur without any opposition.

Little of this was true. The Americans had *not* been cut in half, no full-scale withdrawal had begun, and no German was near Namur, except perhaps a few lost paratroopers. But First Army surely needed help, and once given the opportunity the field marshal threw himself into battle with, as one writer later observed, "the energy and verve that were as characteristic as his peacockery." Having been alerted to the impending command change at 2:30 Wednesday morning, he had dispatched a major to Chaudfontaine for a "bedside conference" with Hodges, who was roused from sleep to learn that four British divisions were moving toward the Meuse to secure the riverbanks and bridges. Roadblocks also had been built on the Brussels highway with vehicles and piled carts.

The field marshal himself arrived in Chaudfontaine at 1:30 P.M. on Wednesday in a green Rolls-Royce flying a Union Jack and five-star pennant from the front fenders, accompanied by outrider jeeps with red-capped MPs. As usual he was dressed without orthodoxy in fur-lined boots, baggy corduroy trousers, and as many as eight pullovers. "Unwrapping the bearskin in which he was enveloped," Iris Carpenter reported, "he picked up his box of sandwiches, his thermos jug of tea, and his situation map all chalked over with his grease pencil, and marched inside." An American officer described him as "a monkey on a stick jumping up and down … a pompous conquering hero," but as he stalked into the Hôtel des Bains he seemed to a British officer "like Christ come to cleanse the temple." Neither image did Montgomery justice. Politely declining Hodges's offer of lunch—"Oh, no, I've got my own"—he propped his map on a chair and said calmly, "Now let's review this situation.… The first thing we must do is tidy up the battlefield."

Three hours later they had both a plan and an understanding. Hodges and his staff appeared tired and dispirited, British officers later reported, but determined to hold fast. Although Hodges feared that two First Army divisions had been surrounded—in fact, only two-thirds of the star-crossed 106th was lost—he stoutly resisted Montgomery's proposal to withdraw the north shoulder, perhaps as far as the Meuse. The field marshal for now relented: First Army would dig in where it could and, with help from General Simpson's Ninth Army, assemble a strike force to counterattack the Germans from the north, complementing Patton's blow from the south. Dempsey's Second Army would continue to feed forces down from Holland, and British stocks would help make good American losses, including 100 25-pounder guns with 300,000 rounds of ammunition; 20,000 snow suits; 2,000 trip flares; and 350 Sherman tanks with duck-bill cleats affixed for better traction. By nine o'clock that evening, all Meuse bridges would be rigged for demolition, and, as the British XXX Corps soon reported, "the enemy's hopes of bouncing the Meuse crossings have almost vanished."

As he returned to Zonhoven, Montgomery considered relieving Hodges; but whatever ailed the First Army commander appeared to have passed. "Hodges is not the man I would pick," Montgomery reported, "but he is much better." Eisenhower concurred in a private cable to the field marshal: "Hodges is the quiet reticent type and does not appear as aggressive as he really is. Unless he becomes exhausted he will always wage a good fight."

SHAEF ordered the new command arrangement to remain secret. Censorship, already tightened to prevent full disclosure of the HERBSTNEBEL reverses, also ensured that Americans at home would be spared knowing that much of the U.S. Army in Europe now was led by a wee Brit in a black beret. "They seemed delighted to have someone to give them orders," Montgomery told Brooke, with some justification. Brooke warned him not to gloat, but the field marshal could not help himself. "The Americans have taken a 1st Class bloody nose," he wrote a friend in London. "I am busy sorting out the mess."

As for Bradley, Eisenhower proposed awarding him a Bronze Star as a sop for losing two-thirds of his command. He also asked Marshall to consider giving him a fourth star. "I retain all my former confidence in him," Eisenhower wrote the chief. "It would have a fine effect generally."

War in the Raw

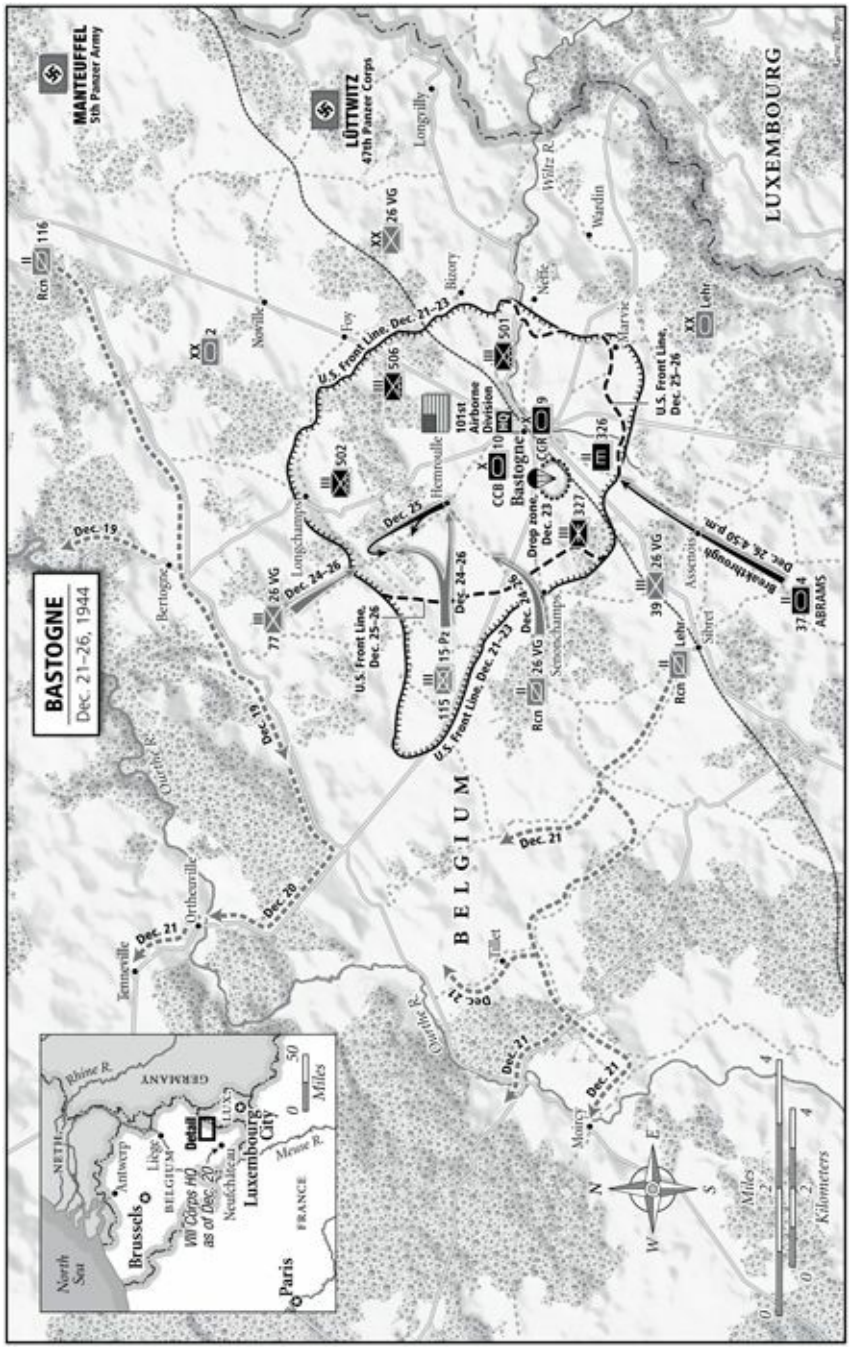
CIVILIAN refugees with woeful tales of burning villages and Germans in close pursuit tumbled into Bastogne, "an ancient town in the dreariest part of the Ardennes," as a tourist guidebook had once described it. Dray carts piled high with furniture and scuffed baggage clogged the main square despite Army placards warning that "unattended vehicles will be impounded by military police." Shops along the Grand-Rue pulled tight their shutters after the power failed on Sunday, and by midday Monday, December 18, the grumble of artillery could be heard even in the cellar corridors of the Sisters of Notre Dame, a boarding school where hundreds took refuge.

The first paratroopers from the 101st Airborne arrived at dusk on Monday after a sleet-spattered hundred-mile drive from Reims. XVIII Airborne Corps under General Ridgway had been directed to help seal the twenty-mile gap between V Corps and VIII Corps, with Gavin's 82nd Airborne making for Werbomont, southwest of Spa, and the 101st bound for Bastogne. Sergeants had trotted through the troop barracks the previous night, bawling, "Get out of the sack. You ain't reserve no more," and officers interrupted a

ballet performance in mid-jeté to order paratroopers in the audience to assemble for battle.

Since leaving Holland in November the 101st had been plagued with several dozen AWOL incidents each week, as well as the usual drunken brawls; troopers held contests to see who could punch out the most windows in Reims. Worse yet, many of the division's senior leaders were absent. They included the commander, Major General Maxwell D. Taylor, who had flown to Washington; his assistant commander, who was in England with seventeen officers to lecture on MARKET GARDEN; and the chief of staff, who had killed himself with a pistol a week earlier. That left command to the division artillery chief, a short, genial brigadier general from Washington, D.C., named Anthony Clement McAuliffe. Having graduated from West Point at the end of World War I, McAuliffe had risen slowly through the ranks of the interwar Army as a gunner with an interest in both technological and sociological innovation: before joining the 101st, he had worked on development of the jeep and the bazooka, and on a study of race relations in the service. He had parachuted into Normandy and landed by glider in Holland; now he drove to Bastogne at the head of a division he led by default.

Several thousand replacement troopers who had received barely a week of field training jammed into open cattle trucks behind him—"like olives in a jar," as one account noted. Some, without helmets or rifles, pleaded for both from the retreating GIs who clogged every road west of Bastogne. COMZ dispatched an emergency convoy hauling five thousand entrenching shovels, two thousand sets of wool drawers, and five thousands pairs of arctic overshoes, sizes six to fourteen. Through Monday night and early the next morning, twelve thousand cold, sodden paratroopers and glidermen poured into Bastogne, where the American predicament was described as "fluid and obscure." By ten A.M. on Tuesday, all four regiments had arrived, accompanied by a few disoriented artillery and armor units press-ganged along the way. General McAuliffe put his command post in the Hôtel de Commerce, facing the train station, and his first wounded into a local seminary. Early Wednesday morning, after a few parting words of encouragement, General Middleton decamped in his Packard for a new VIII Corps headquarters in Neufchâteau, eighteen miles southwest.



Bearing down on Bastogne were three divisions from Fifth Panzer Army, well aware of U.S. reinforcements thanks to careless American radio chatter. Little in the battle had unfolded according to the German master plan, starting with that nettlesome resistance by Cota's 28th Division in Luxembourg. Fuel shortages pinched harder with each passing hour. Panzer tracks chewed up byroads so severely that wheeled vehicles by the score were abandoned in mud sloughs; with few engineers to clear mines, tank crews took up the task with harrows and rollers found in farm sheds. Foot soldiers slouching westward almost outpaced Manteuffel's motorized columns, and Field Marshal Model now privately doubted that HERBSTNEBEL could achieve even the modest goals of the so-called small solution, much less the seizure of Antwerp.

Bastogne and its seven radial roads assumed ever greater importance—"an abscess on our line of communication," in a German commander's phrase—and field-gray spearheads smashed into the feeble roadblocks east of town, setting Army half-tracks ablaze with tracer rounds, then picking off GIs silhouetted against the flames. Two straggling artillery battalions at Longvilly fired over open sights at two hundred yards before the survivors stumbled back into Bastogne, half their howitzers lost. Forty Sherman tanks were demolished in a single night, and defenders in Neffe retreated under showers of incendiary grenades. "We're not driven out," one officer radioed, "but burned out." Under the onslaught of those three divisions—2nd Panzer, 26th Volksgrenadier, and Panzer Lehr—the American defenses buckled and bent.

But did not break. The Longvilly gunfight cost the Volksgrenadiers four precious hours of daylight on Tuesday. Farther north on the same day, U.S. combat engineers dynamited culverts and bridges, felled trees, and laid abatis with such obstructive skill that the frustrated LVIII Corps countermarched up various blind alleys in search of easier routes west.

* * *

No less vital in delaying the enemy was a combat command from the 10th Armored Division, which Middleton on Monday night had ordered to defend a trio of strongpoints outside Bastogne. An especially vicious brawl unfolded in Noville, a foggy sinkhole four miles north of town, where fifteen Sherman tanks and other armor arrived in time to confront much of the 2nd Panzer Division. A murky dawn on Tuesday brought the telltale rattle of German tank suspensions, followed by vague gray shapes drifting from the east. The Americans answered with artillery—aimed "by guess and by God" because of map shortages—and even pistol fire. Soon the fog lifted like a raised curtain to reveal German armor and grenadiers spread thickly across a slope half a mile distant. American tank destroyers ripped into nine panzers, leaving three in flames. German infantrymen turned and fled, pursued by bullets.

All morning and through the afternoon the battle raged. A battalion of 101st paratroopers from Bastogne attacked on a dead run at two P.M., colliding in a brutish mêlée with another German assault just beginning to boil across a smoky ridgeline. Enemy barrages pounded Noville to rubble, killing the paratrooper commander and badly wounding his 10th Armored counterpart; only artillery counterfire kept grenadiers on three sides from overrunning the American redoubt.

At midday on Wednesday, December 20, a radio message to the Hôtel de Commerce advised, "All reserves committed. Situation critical." McAuliffe authorized survivors to fall back into Bastogne at five P.M., cloaked in smoke and darkness; for want of a tank crew, paratroopers drove one of the four remaining Shermans. American casualties exceeded four hundred men, but the 2nd Panzer had lost over six hundred, plus thirty-one panzers and at least two days in the division's drive toward the Meuse. A few hours after Noville fell, Gestapo agents murdered seven Belgians who had survived the siege, including a schoolmaster and the village priest.

Strongpoints east of Bastogne, now reinforced by the 501st Parachute Infantry, proved just as formidable for Panzer Lehr and the 26th Volksgrenadier. Barbed wire and musketry near Neffe snared German skirmishers in what paratroopers called a "giant mantrap." "We took no prisoners," a captain reported. "We mowed them down as if they were weeds." Renewed enemy attacks on Wednesday ran into "a dam of fire" laid by scores of guns firing from Bastogne.

Little profit had been found in frontal assaults, and belatedly the Germans revised their tactics. Manteuffel urged 2nd Panzer to press westward past the Ourthe River despite gasoline shortages so severe that the division wasted a day waiting for fuel trucks. Panzer Lehr would leave a regiment to besiege Bastogne with the 26th Volksgrenadier, but most of the division now sidled to the left to bypass the town on the south.

Among the few heartening reports to reach Fifth Panzer Army on Wednesday was the annihilation of a 101st Airborne medical detachment, which had failed to post sentries at a crossroads encampment west of Bastogne. Shortly before midnight a German patrol of six panzers and half-tracks raked the medical tents and trucks with gunfire—"the bullets were so close that I thought I would have to brush them off," one private reported. Within minutes the division surgeon had been captured, along with ten other medical officers, more than a hundred enlisted men, and litters, wounded patients, surgical instruments, and penicillin.

* * *

"Above all," Middleton had instructed McAuliffe, "don't get yourself surrounded." Precisely how eighteen thousand Americans, under orders to hold Bastogne at all costs against forty-five thousand Germans, should avoid encirclement was not clear, particularly in weather so dismal that Allied aircraft on Wednesday flew a total of twenty-nine sorties in Europe, only nine of them over the Ardennes. A day later, on Thursday morning, December 21, an enemy column severed the last open road south, and Bastogne was indeed cut off. Resurgent optimism flared through the German chain of command.

At 11:30 on Friday morning, a delegation of four Germans carrying a white flag appeared in a spruce copse dusted with new snow southwest of Bastogne. "We are *parliamentaires*," an English-speaking captain told an American officer, then presented a note composed on a captured American typewriter, with each umlaut inserted by hand, and addressed "*an den amerikanischen Kommandeur der eingeschlossen Stadt Bastogne.*" An appended translation to the American commander of the surrounded city of

Bastogne explained:

> The fortune of war is changing.… There is only one possibility to save the encircled U.S.A. troops from total annihilation: In order to think it over, a term of two hours will be granted beginning with the presentation of this note. If this proposal should be rejected, one German artillery corps and six heavy AA battalions are ready to annihilate.… All the serious civilian losses caused by this artillery fire would not correspond with the well-known American humanity.

The note had been authorized by Lieutenant General Heinrich von Lüttwitz, commander of XLVII Panzer Corps.

At 12:25 P.M. the ultimatum reached McAuliffe in his smoke-stained command post, which reeked of cordite from a bombing raid the previous night. Encircled or not, the 101st remained almost at full strength; only five battalions among the four regiments had so far seen intense combat. Six hundred stragglers, mostly from the 28th Division, had been fed a hot meal and mustered into Team Snafu, a quick-reaction battalion. The Bastogne arsenal included forty Shermans; armor officers mimeographed useful tips on tank tactics for their infantry brethren. Six artillery battalions were arrayed in circular gun pits to allow each battery to shoot at every compass point, although McAuliffe, a field artilleryman for a quarter-century, had advised his cannoneers not to fire "until you see the whites of their eyes." Vehicles were slathered with whitewash for camouflage, and Belgian linen closets provided sheets for snow capes. The men now received only two meals a day, but cooks had whipped up excellent flapjacks from doughnut flour discovered in a Red Cross pantry.

Perhaps inspired by the legendary epithet uttered by a French general when asked to surrender at Waterloo—"*Merde!*"—McAuliffe offered a one-word answer to the ultimatum: "Nuts." A paratrooper officer then handed it to the "*parliamentaires,*" whereupon a baffled German officer asked, "Is the reply negative or affirmative?"

"The reply is decidedly *not* affirmative," the American said. "If you don't understand what 'nuts' means, in plain English it is the same as 'go to hell.' … We will kill every goddamn German that tries to break into this city."

"We will kill many Americans. This is war."

Only after the event did an irate Manteuffel learn of Lüttwitz's gambit. "This is crazy," he told the corps commander. "Now we must find the artillery and bomber force to make good your threat and level the town."

* * *

As Bastogne was a poisonous thorn in General Manteuffel's left flank, St.-Vith had become an irksome nettle on his right. The town had been named for Saint Vitus, a Sicilian boy martyred during the reign of Emperor Diocletian, and the holy patron of dancers, dogs, and chronic oversleepers. Various unpleasantries had befallen St.-Vith since its founding in the twelfth century, including pillages in 1543, 1602, and 1689, but none was uglier than the battle that engulfed the town in December 1944. Despite swift destruction of the 106th Division on the Schnee Eifel, the German plan to occupy St.-Vith by six P.M. on December 17 fell short, and Manteuffel's frustration grew longer day by day.

Gunfights had erupted around the town on December 18 and 19, but German lunges were thrown back, first by two engineer battalions, then by General Clarke's Combat Command B from the 7th Armored, bolstered on his right by remnants from the 106th and a combat command from the 9th Armored Division. Now the easternmost U.S. redoubt of any size in the Ardennes, St.-Vith in three days had become a breakwater, with a "German tide rushing past on the north and south and rising against its eastern face," in the description of the Army official history.

With supply lines cut, howitzers were limited to seven rounds per gun each day. Gunners rummaged for ammunition in abandoned dumps; some batteries reported firing "old propaganda shells just to keep projectiles whistling around German ears." Riflemen on December 20 were told that "for every round fired, a corpse must hit the ground." In St.-Vith's pinched streets, broken glass crunched beneath the hooves of cattle fleeing a burning slaughterhouse. Exhausted officers gobbled amphetamines, and greasy smoke blackened the faces and uniforms of soldiers trying to stay warm over sand-filled tins soaked in gasoline. One soldier later described mounting a local counterattack with a "cold, plodding, unwilling, ragged double line plunging up to their knees in snow." A survivor from the 106th wrote, "Here I was to grow into an old man and die over and over again."

Manteuffel on December 20 ordered two Volksgrenadier divisions to finish off the town, supported by SS tanks. On Thursday, December 21, German artillery tree-bursts lacerated American trenches, as gray waves of infantry swept through the dense woods and Panthers fired flat-trajectory flares to blind Sherman crews. "Goddamn it," a company commander radioed at 7:35 P.M. "They're blasting my men out of their holes one at a time." Half an hour later, Clarke's line had been punctured in three places. At ten P.M. he ordered his troops to fall back onto high ground a kilometer west of town, but nearly a thousand GIs had been killed or captured, and twenty thousand others remained vulnerable in a shrinking salient east of the Salm River.

General Hodges had given XVIII Airborne Corps responsibility for all First Army forces south of Stavelot, and Matt Ridgway now struggled to control a corps front that abruptly tripled in width from twenty-five miles to eighty-five. If the 101st Airborne could continue to fight effectively while surrounded, Ridgway wondered why a comparable combat force in the Salm salient could not do the same. But by early Friday, December 22, that force showed signs of disintegration: patrols simply vanished; an entire battalion staff at Neubrück, three miles south of St.-Vith, had been killed or captured; Clarke reported that his combat command had lost half its strength and would soon be supine.

"This terrain is not worth a nickel an acre," Clarke added, and urged withdrawal. The 7th Armored Division commander, Brigadier General Robert W. Hasbrouck, now encamped at Vielsalm, twelve miles west of St.-Vith, warned that fuel and ammunition

shortages had become dire. Just after eleven A.M., Hasbrouck told Ridgway in a message, “If we don’t get out of here … before night, we will not have a 7th Armored Division left.” To an old friend, Brigadier General William M. Hoge, whose combat command in the 9th Armored also faced dismemberment, Ridgway said, “We’re not going to leave you in here to be chopped to pieces.… We’re going to get you out of here.” Hoge replied plaintively, “How can you?”

Reluctantly, Ridgway in midafternoon on Friday ordered Hasbrouck to withdraw all U.S. forces across the Salm. Montgomery, who had watched the St.-Vith drama with mounting anxiety, rejoiced. “They can come back with all honor,” he said. “They put up a wonderful show.”

Fourteen hours of December darkness and a cold snap that froze the mud on Friday night allowed most to escape, narrowly averting a catastrophe even worse than the Schnee Eifel surrender. A radio dispatch to a field commander instructed, “Your orders are: Go west. Go west. Go west.” GIs urinated on frozen M-1 rifle bolts to free them, then tramped single file on forest trails and farm tracks, each man gripping the belt or pack straps of the comrade ahead. Others flattened themselves onto tank hulls beneath a scorching fretwork of enemy tracers. German artillery searched roads and junctions, and only the late arrival of a ninety-truck convoy lugging five thousand shells permitted prodigal counterfire by gunners west of the Salm. “Wrapped in scarves and mufflers, only their eyes showing,” as one lieutenant wrote, retreating troops made for the bridges at Salmchâteau and Vielsalm; Hasbrouck stood on a road shoulder to welcome his men to safety. An 82nd Airborne trooper south of Werbomont called to a passing column, “What the hell you guys running from? We been here two days and ain’t seen a German yet.” A weary voice replied, “Stay right were you are, buddy. In a little while you won’t even have to look for ’em.”

Ridgway estimated that fifteen thousand troops and one hundred tanks escaped. As many tanks were lost, and casualties east of the Salm approached five thousand, atop losses incurred on the Schnee Eifel. Clarke and Hasbrouck would long resent Ridgway for delaying the withdrawal, but the fighting retreat meant that nearly a week went by before Fifth Panzer Army controlled St.-Vith and the radiant roads that Manteuffel had hoped to take in two days. “Nobody is worried down here,” Ridgway told First Army by phone at nine P.M. Friday night. “We’re in fine shape.”

German troops ransacked St.-Vith yet again “in a kind of scavenger hunt,” snarling traffic so profoundly that both Model and Manteuffel dismounted and hiked into town from Schönberg. The field marshal even stood at a crossroads with arms flailing to wave tanks and trucks westward. “Endless columns of prisoners,” a Volksgrenadier officer wrote. “Model himself directs traffic. He’s a little, undistinguished-looking man with a monocle. Now the thing is going.… All the advancing units are picking up American vehicles to become motorized.”

Looting was best done quickly: beginning on Christmas Day, Allied bombers would drop seventeen hundred tons of high explosives and incendiaries on St.-Vith, obliterating the train station, St. Josef’s Kloster, and the fourteenth-century Büchelturm stone tower. The raids reduced most houses to stone dust and ash, entombing hundreds of Belgian civilians. With roads smashed by the bombs, German engineers routed traffic through the rail yards and along a circuitous dirt track to let the conquerors of St.-Vith continue their pursuit. “We shall throw these arrogant big-mouthed apes from the New World into the sea,” a German lieutenant wrote his wife. “They will not get into our Germany.”

* * *

A GI shivering in an Ardennes foxhole asked, after his first glimpse of a German Me-262 jet streaking overhead, “How come *we* don’t ever have any secret weapons?” Yet thousands of enemy troops now sensed what many American soldiers still did not know: that a secret weapon no bigger than a radio tube was being used in ground combat for the first time across the Bulge, enhancing the killing power of U.S. artillery with what one enthusiast would call “the most remarkable scientific achievement of the war” except for the atomic bomb.

The new weapon’s origin dated to 1940, with a recognition that on average 2,500 antiaircraft artillery shells would be needed to bring down a single enemy plane. Both field artillery and antiaircraft rounds exploded either on contact or when a fuze detonated the shell after a preset flight time; neither technique offered killing precision. Scientists and engineers instead sought a fuze that could sense proximity to the target, causing a shell to blow up not when it randomly reached an altitude of ten or fifteen thousand feet, but rather when it detected an airplane within the kill radius of exploding fragments. Such a fuze would have to withstand the stupendous strain of cannonading, including a g-force of twenty thousand upon leaving a gun muzzle and the centrifugal forces of a shell spinning at five hundred rotations per second. It would also have to be simple enough to build by the millions on an assembly line, and sufficiently miniaturized to squeeze into a shell nose roughly the size of an ice cream cone.

The resulting device, eventually known by the code designations “VT” or “T-98,” and by the code name “pozit,” contained a tiny radio transmitter, which broadcast a signal in flight. When the beam bounced off a solid object, a receiver in the fuze detected the reflected signal and tripped a firing circuit that detonated the shell. A 5-inch pozit shell, fired by U.S.S. *Helena* in the South Pacific, had for the first time brought down a Japanese plane in January 1943. But for eighteen months the fuze could be used only over open water or friendly territory, for fear that if the enemy retrieved a dud, Axis engineers could copy the design. Pozit shells were secretly used against V-1s aimed at London—British officials considered them up to five times more effective than time-fuzed rounds—and to defend Cherbourg harbor and the Mulberries off Normandy. More recently, British Lancaster bombers had flown an emergency consignment of pozit fuzes from a Cincinnati plant to Antwerp for use against German flying bombs.

Pozit variants had been developed for the field artillery, using radio signals bounced off the approaching ground to detonate shells fifty or seventy-five feet up. Experiments in North Carolina showed that regardless of terrain, weather, or darkness, even entrenched targets were highly vulnerable to a lethal spray of steel shards from such airbursts. One senior Army general called it “the most important new development in the ammunition field since the introduction of high explosive projectiles.”

With approval from the Charlie-Charlies, SHAEF in late fall fixed Christmas as the day gunners in Europe could open fire with pozit shells. More than a thousand commanders and staff officers were briefed on the secret, with firing demonstrations in six Allied armies. Hitler hastened the day: when HERBSTNEBEL began, Eisenhower moved up the release by a week. A gunner in the 99th Division described "piles of shells with many men using wrenches and hammers to bang off the one [fuze] and install the other." Within days of the first use by field artillerymen, reports described "the slaughter of enemy concentrations east of Bastogne and interdictions of the principal enemy supply routes west of St. Vith." Twelfth Army Group cheerfully reported that the pozit fuze "is a terror weapon." SHAEF concluded that "the enemy has been severely upset."

Three hundred American companies would soon mass-produce nearly two million fuzes a month at $20 each. "The new shell with the funny fuze is devastating," Patton wrote the Army's ordnance chief in late December. "The other night we caught a German battalion, which was trying to cross the Sauer River, with a battalion concentration and killed by actual count 702." Such exaggerations—and Patton's tallies often proved inflated—were common, and many unsubstantiated claims of pozit lethality would emerge from the Bulge. In the event, fewer than 200,000 pozit rounds were fired by 12th Army Group in the Battle of the Bulge: a modest fraction of the total, although it did include one-quarter of the Army's heaviest shells. Nor was the new technology flawless. Tall trees, chimneys, steeples, and straying spotter planes could cause premature detonations.

Yet the pozit would prove as demoralizing to German troops as it was heartening to GIs. Some enemy officers called it the "electro shell" or "magnetic igniter," believing that terrestrial magnetism triggered the fuze. "It hangs in the air until it finds just the right place to explode," one captured soldier insisted. Shell fragments were said to slice through thick logs atop enemy bunkers, and a single 155mm airburst reportedly could shred every square foot within a seventy-five-yard diameter. Such mayhem was "pure manslaughter," another German prisoner complained. "The devil himself could not escape."

* * *

But what of the devil's henchmen? No better target could be found for pozit fire than Lieutenant Colonel Peiper's homicidal *Spitze* at the head of the 1st SS Panzer Division, and for several days American gunners had been shooting the new shells at the column as it tacked across Belgium.

Peiper's drive toward the Meuse seemed ever more quixotic. After halting for the night outside Stavelot following the killing spree near Malmédy, the SS spearhead had turned southwest toward Trois-Ponts, unaware of the huge Allied fuel dumps just to the north. U.S. engineers blew all three bridges in Trois-Ponts, including one with German soldiers atop the span. Thwarted and desperate for gasoline, Peiper swung north through broken terrain along the Amblève, harried by both P-47 fighter-bombers—at least two panzers and five half-tracks were demolished from the air—and artillery. Gunners from the 30th Division fired 3,000 rounds at one bridge approach, cooling their red-hot tubes with cans of water.

More spans were demolished by American defenders or were too frail for sixty-ton Tiger tanks. Probes toward Werbomont and Târgnon proved bootless, as did a German scheme to drop fuel cans into the Amblève in hopes that Peiper would recover a few of them downstream. A two-day fight engulfed the St. Edouard Sanatorium, perched on a hill in Stoumont, while 260 convalescent Belgians cowered in the cellar. Panzers fired point-blank through the windows, counterattacking Shermans did the same, and grenades clattered back and forth down the corridors. A priest gave general absolution to his terrified flock when part of the roof collapsed, but the Germans finally withdrew without a single civilian badly hurt.

Peiper had traveled some sixty miles, but sixteen more still separated him from the Meuse. With the risk of encirclement growing, at dusk on Thursday, December 21, he ordered his men to fall back four miles from Stoumont to La Gleize, a hamlet of thirty houses hemmed in by hills. Here his fifteen hundred survivors and two dozen remaining tanks dug in with more than a hundred American prisoners in tow. That night in a farmhouse cellar, Peiper took time to explain himself to a captured battalion commander, Major Hal D. McCown. "We're eliminating the communist menace," the young lieutenant colonel said in his excellent English. "We will keep what is best in Europe and eliminate the bad." The "bad" evidently included Belgian civilians murdered in recent days, along with more defenseless GIs.

By late Friday, American machine guns, tanks, tank destroyers, and artillery had so battered La Gleize that SS troops called it *der Kessel*, the cauldron. Self-propelled guns fired point-blank over open sights from a nearby château. Gripping a machine pistol, Peiper dashed between rubble piles, shouting encouragement while his adjutant burned secrets in the cellar. Luftwaffe transport planes at eight P.M. dropped gasoline and ammunition to the besieged men, but GIs recovered most of the supplies except for a few bundles containing cigarettes, schnapps, and a crate of Luger pistols. Army Air Forces bombers targeting La Gleize hit Malmédy instead, an error that would be repeated twice, killing more than three dozen GIs and many Belgians.

"Position considerably worsened. Meager supplies of infantry ammunition left," Peiper radioed early Saturday morning. "This is the last chance of breaking out." Not until two P.M., as the Americans pressed nearer, did permission to retreat arrive in a coded message from I SS Panzer Corps. White-phosphorus and pozit shells carved away the La Gleize church, where German troops sheltered under choir stalls. A soldier caught removing the SS runes from his uniform was placed against a broken wall and shot for desertion. Peiper used the bombardment to mask the sound of explosives scuttling his last twenty-eight panzers, seventy half-tracks, and two dozen guns.

At two A.M. on Sunday, December 24, the SS men crept south from the village in single file, led by two Belgian guides. Major McCown was prodded along at gunpoint, although more than 300 wounded Germans and 130 other American prisoners remained behind in the La Gleize cellars. Crossing the Amblève on a small bridge, the column snaked down a ridgeline near Trois-Ponts into the Salm river valley. At daybreak, when spotter planes appeared overhead, Peiper hid his men beneath tree boughs and parceled out provisions: four biscuits and two swigs of cognac each. During a brief firefight with an American patrol, McCown slipped away,

whistling “Yankee Doodle” as he wandered through the woods until challenged by pickets in an 82nd Airborne outpost.

At a ford in the frigid Salm, the tallest SS troops formed a human chain to help the column cross the forty-foot water gap. Early Christmas morning, Peiper would reach the German line at Wanne, a few miles southeast of La Gleize. Of his original 5,800 men, 770 remained. Hurried along by more gusts of American artillery, their uniforms stiff with ice, they left a blood spoor across the snow. Peiper and some of his henchmen were later accused of murdering 350 unarmed Americans and 100 or more Belgian civilians in their weeklong spree. But for now justice would be deferred, and a day of reckoning delayed until after the war.

* * *

Across the Ardennes, heavy snow had been followed on Saturday, December 23, by killing cold in the continental weather phenomenon known as a Russian High. Alan Moorehead described a “radiant world where everything was reduced to primary whites and blues: a strident, sparkling white among the frosted trees, the deep blue shadows in the valley, and then the flawless ice blue of the sky.” Radiators and even gas tanks froze. Airborne troopers refused to allow grave diggers to collect frozen German corpses, which were stacked like sandbags around infantry redoubts. GIs donned every scrap of clothing they could scavenge, including women’s dresses worn as shawls. “Everyone seems about the same age,” wrote Martha Gellhorn, “as if weariness and strain and the unceasing cold leveled all life.”

Troops fashioned sleds from sheet metal, and olive-drab vehicles were daubed with camouflage paint improvised from lime wash and salt. Belgian lace served for helmet nets, and mattress covers, often used as shrouds for the dead, made fine snow suits. Inflated surgical gloves dipped in paint decorated hospital Christmas trees, but “in this cold the life of the wounded is likely to go out like a match,” wrote the paratrooper Louis Simpson. GIs suffering from head and chest wounds filled one ward, in a nurse’s description, “with breathing giving a rattle that sounds like an untuned radio going through the tent.”

Clumsy skirmishes and pitched battles flared along the front, without deference to the holiday season. Peiper’s repulse and Sixth Panzer Army’s shortcomings had extinguished hopes for a breakthrough on the German right; 237,000 American mines, 370 roadblocks, and 70 blown bridges further impeded the north shoulder. In the far south, faltering progress by Seventh Army had exposed Manteuffel’s left flank even as Fifth Panzer Army tried to lance the Bastogne abscess. So desperate were shortages of spare parts and gasoline that new panzers in the Rhine valley were being cannibalized to avoid burning fuel by sending them intact into battle.

But west of St.-Vith, in the German center, grenadiers vaulted the Salm and Ourthe Rivers, and by December 23 panzer spearheads approached Marche, more than twenty miles beyond Vielsalm and a short bound from Dinant, on the Meuse. Model had shoehorned a dozen divisions along a twenty-five-mile battlefront. Although plagued with fuel and ammunition shortages, they remained a potent killing force on the march.

New anxiety beset First Army headquarters, which had again fallen back, to Tongres, near Maastricht, only hours before German bombs demolished the Hôtel des Bains in Chaudfontaine. Ridgway evinced his usual grit, telling his division commanders by phone at six A.M. on December 24:

> The situation is normal and entirely satisfactory. The enemy has thrown in all of his mobile reserves, and this is his last major offensive effort in the West in this war. This corps will halt that effort, then attack and smash him.

Others were far less sanguine, yet the Russian High brought clear skies for the first time since the German attack began, and Allied aircraft took wing in great flocks. In a campaign known as “processing the terrain,” twelve thousand offensive sorties were flown in the two days before Christmas, battering highways, airfields, and bridges, as well as rail centers in Koblenz, Trier, and Cologne. Whooping GIs craned their necks as wave upon wave of Marauders and Fortresses, Liberators and Lancasters appeared from the west in the heaviest attacks of the war. “The bombers have fine, feathery white streams of vapor streaked across the sky,” a 99th Division soldier wrote his wife, “and the fighters scrawl wavy designs as they try to murder each other.” Ice and deep snow entombed German convoys west of the Rhine; horse-drawn plows could hardly clear enough routes for three attacking armies. Model’s resupply and reinforcement echelons offered fat targets for Allied fighter-bombers, known as “Jabos” to enemy soldiers. “We prefer to walk instead of using a car on the main highway,” a German lieutenant near St.-Vith told his diary. “The American Jabos keep on attacking everything that moves on the roads.… [They] hang in the air like a swarm of wasps.”

* * *

Clear skies also permitted resupply of Bastogne, besieged but unbowed after the rejected surrender ultimatum. Shortly before noon on Saturday, the first C-47s dropped parachute bundles originally intended for the doomed 106th Division on the Schnee Eifel. By four P.M., more than 240 planes had delivered 5,000 artillery shells, almost as many mortar rounds, 2,300 grenades, a dozen boxes of morphine, 300 units of plasma, and 1,500 bandages. Jeeps tore around the drop zone on the western edge of Bastogne, where paratroopers scooped up the bundles and hauled ammunition directly to gun batteries and rifle pits. More sorties the next day would bring rations, a quarter-million machine-gun rounds, and almost one thousand radio batteries. General McAuliffe also had the invaluable services of Captain James E. Parker, a fighter pilot who had arrived several days earlier as an air support officer with enough radio crystals in his pocket to talk directly to the P-47 squadrons now bound for Bastogne. Swarming wasps by the hundreds attacked fast and low with napalm and high explosives, vectored by Parker to Manteuffel’s panzers, trucks, and assault guns. Tracks in the snow made them easy to find.

Bastogne was reprieved but hardly delivered. German attacks from the west and southwest grew so intense on Saturday night that despondent American officers shook hands goodbye. Despite aerial replenishment, the garrison was reduced to five hundred gallons of gasoline and a day's rations; 101st Airborne gunners who had been rationed to ten rounds daily heeded McAuliffe's advice to look for the whites of enemy eyes. With a defensive perimeter only sixteen miles in circumference, every corner of Bastogne came under fire. The town, one major wrote, "seemed to have been sandblasted with steel filings."

More than three thousand civilians remained trapped with the Americans, and carbolic acid sprinkled in cellars did little to relieve the stench of excrement. Several hundred wounded GIs lay in sawdust on a church floor; others languished in a Belgian army garage ripe with the odor of gas gangrene. Dust grayed their hair, a witness observed, and "their faces were old with suffering and fatigue." Two surgeons toiled by flashlight in a tool-room operatory, lopping off limbs. The moribund lay along a wall reserved for the hopeless; other buildings served as a morgue and a ward for trench-foot victims. The walking wounded filled a roofless structure formerly used as an indoor rifle range. Scavengers found coffee and Ovaltine in an VIII Corps warehouse, as well as a cache of sugar hidden behind a wall. This booty went to the wounded, along with cognac and crème de menthe served as analgesics. Two thousand burlap bags discovered in a storeroom were used by troopers in foxholes to wrap their boots.

Napalm fires ringed the town, and the chatter of machine guns carried on the wind as the short day faded. A chaplain in vestments held Christmas Eve services with a portable field organ and candles guttering on an improvised altar. "Do not plan, for God's plan will prevail," he advised. "Those who are attacking you are the enemies of Christ." In a vaulted seminary chapel, where tattered canvas covered holes in the stained glass, soldiers sang "O Little Town of Bethlehem." In the whitewashed Belgian barracks that served as the 101st headquarters, a GI clerk sat at a switchboard humming, off-key, "Santa Claus Is Coming to Town." A coded message from Patton that afternoon had promised, "Xmas eve present coming up. Hold on." Yet no sign of a relief column from the south had been reported. McAuliffe hid his disappointment from the men, but told General Middleton in a phone call, "We have been let down."

At 5:10 P.M., an intrepid pilot in an L-4 Grasshopper, guided by flashlights, landed on a snowy field with a crate of penicillin. That was the last good thing to happen in Bastogne on Christmas Eve. Barely two hours later, beneath a brilliant moon that silvered the streets, German bombers struck the town in the first of two raids. One bomb landed on an aid station near the Neufchâteau road, caving in the roof, burying twenty soldiers, and killing a civilian nurse. Flames crackled around the Hôtel de Ville. Several patients burned to death on their litters, and the smell of charred flesh added to the other stinks that wafted through Bastogne on this holiest of holy nights.

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Patton attended a candlelight communion service on Christmas Eve in the crowded, frigid Episcopal church in Luxembourg City, ensconced with Bradley in a pew once reserved for the German kaiser. A Red Cross volunteer described Patton's "brick-red face, with its round, receding forehead sparsely framed by silvery-white hair.… I saw a tired, aging man, a sorrowful, solitary man, a lonely man, with veiled eyes behind which there was going on a torment of brooding and introspection." She may have misread her man: even if the Ardennes had worn him down, battle lightened his heart as nothing in this world.

Scanning the starry sky outside, Patton muttered, "Noel, noel, what a night to give the Nazis hell." Careering about in an open jeep, one pistol holstered outside his parka and another tucked into his waistband, blue eyes watering from the cold, he barked at MPs to keep the convoys moving, and he personally challenged sentries to ensure that they knew the day's password. This was a moment to "root-hog or die," he told his staff. "If those Hun bastards want war in the raw, then that's the way we'll give it to them." He had asked God for fair weather, just as Achilles petitioned Zeus to lift the fog before the walls of Troy. The Almighty had heeded his supplication, he informed his diary—"a clear cold Christmas, lovely weather for killing Germans."

Patton had made good on his brash promise at Verdun to attack north with three divisions by December 22. The feat was prodigious, requiring most of Third Army to swing sharply left while keeping the Saar front secure. The maneuver also required distributing fifty-seven tons of new maps, uprooting and reinstalling an extensive signal-wire network, and stockpiling fuel and ammunition, including shells for twelve hundred guns in the army's 108 artillery battalions. No SS prisoners were to be taken alive, Patton told his staff. At his urging, an extra skin of armor plate was welded to the front of some Sherman hulls, for a total thickness of four inches, and these "Jumbo" tanks were to lead the columns churning north. "Drive like hell," Patton urged. "We have an opportunity of winning the war."

Both commander and commanded had also made missteps. Poor MP radio security allowed German eavesdroppers to track Third Army troop movements by route, unit, and destination; a surprise dagger thrust would soon become a plodding frontal assault on a thirty-mile front. Tank crews that failed to sweep the snow off their fluorescent recognition panels were strafed by P-47s. The hard freeze permitted cross-country mobility for the first time since October, but ice caused many a skidding wreck. When the 4th Armored Division was seven miles south of Bastogne, Patton ordered a perilous night attack that gained only four hundred yards and left one tank battalion with just fourteen Shermans. A German ambush in Chaumont—an "ugly, manure-strewn hell of a village"—smacked a combat command back more than a mile at a cost of eleven more Shermans and thirty-six hours. "The troops built little fires of anything that would burn," an armored officer wrote. "The dead lay frozen and stiff and when the men came to load them in trucks, they picked them up and put them in like big logs of wood."

"This was probably my fault, because I had been insisting on day and night attacks," Patton confessed to his diary. Even now, after almost four decades as a soldier, he reflected on how "it takes a long time to learn war … to really learn how to fight." He had predicted that Third Army would reach Bastogne on December 24, but with 4th Armored making little progress—German paratroopers kept infiltrating back into cleared villages—Patton twice phoned an irate Eisenhower to apologize for delays. "This snow

is God-awful," he said. "I'm sorry." To a subordinate Patton added, "I am unhappy about it."

In search of a seam through enemy defenses, Combat Command R early Christmas morning looped thirty miles from 4th Armored's right flank to the division's far left, near Neufchâteau. Reduced to twenty Shermans, the 37th Tank Battalion led the attack north under Lieutenant Colonel Creighton W. Abrams, Jr., the thirty-year-old son of a New England railroad mechanic and among sixty men in the West Point class of 1936 who would eventually earn generals' stars. When a blown bridge halted the battalion, Abrams, chewing a cigar and eating aspirin by the handful, ordered a bulldozer to demolish a stone wall and push the debris into the creek as a causeway.

On Monday afternoon, December 26, the battalion crested a ridge three miles southwest of the Bastogne perimeter. Thirteen artillery batteries fired more than five hundred rounds into the farm village of Assenois. With friendly shells falling close enough to wound several GIs, Shermans and half-tracks charged through streets darkened by smoke and dust, as Volksgrenadiers poured from the cellars in what the official history would call a "shooting, clubbing, stabbing melee." Before surrendering with five hundred other defenders, a German officer reported by telephone, "They are through Assenois and going to Bastogne."

Five Shermans and a half-track raced north under Lieutenant Charles Boggess. Gunfire ripped through the fir trees, shooting down surprised Germans standing in a mess line, and three tank shells killed a dozen more in a concrete blockhouse. Boggess spotted colored parachutes scattered in a field and foxholes flanking the road ahead. "Come here!" he yelled, standing in his turret. "This is the 4th Armored." Several helmeted figures in olive drab emerged from their holes, and at 4:50 P.M. the siege of Bastogne was over. Twenty minutes later, McAuliffe greeted Abrams with a polite "It's good to see you, Colonel."

"Kilroy Was Stuck Here," someone had chalked on the charred wall of a ruined barn. Now that ubiquitous, sardonic liberator had himself been liberated. Seventy ambulances and supply trucks soon rolled into the smoldering town, and seven hundred enemy prisoners marched out; a 101st Airborne sergeant scrutinized their footwear, smashing his rifle butt onto the toes of any German wearing GI boots. The eight-day defense of a drab market town in Belgium had cost more than two thousand American casualties. Losses in the 4th Armored added another thousand to the tally, and the division's tank strength hardly equaled that of a battalion. But Rundstedt's chief of staff would later list the "failure to conquer Bastogne" first among seven factors that caused HERBSTNEBEL to fail.

Patton had his own assessment. Never averse to historical grandiosity, he told reporters a few days later that the battle at Bastogne would be considered "just as important as the battle of Gettysburg was to the Civil War."

"Glory Has Its Price"

TIME in the last week of December chose Eisenhower as its "Man of the Year." A flattering cover portrait depicted the supreme commander flanked by American and British flags, with legions of soldiers and tanks stretching behind him into the middle distance. The honor rang a bit tinny given the current German salient in Allied territory, which now measured forty miles wide by sixty miles deep. U.S. losses in the last fortnight of December included almost 600 tanks, 1,400 jeeps, 700 trucks, 2,400 machine guns, 1,700 bazookas, 5,000 rifles, and 65,000 overcoats. The enemy had accumulated such a large American motor pool that pilots were ordered to bomb any column that included both Allied and German vehicles.

Of greater concern was a German armored spearhead ripping a seam between the U.S. VIII Corps in the south and XVIII Airborne Corps in the north. Fatigue, dispersion, empty fuel tanks, and ammunition shortages impaired the enemy drive. In some instances, half a German brigade towed the other half, and ordnance trucks often had to make a four-night round-trip drive to Bonn for artillery shells. But on Christmas Day the 2nd Panzer Division was only five miles from Dinant, soon drawing near enough to the Meuse to draw fire from British tanks. Four divisions in Joe Collins's VII Corps, now nearly 100,000 strong, were ordered to counterpunch on a fifty-mile front, with Major General Ernie Harmon's 2nd Armored Division smashing into the enemy vanguard after a seventy-mile road march from the Roer River that took less than a day.

Savage fighting raged from the Salm to the Meuse for three days. As Typhoons and Lightnings screamed over the treetops at Foy–Notre Dame, just east of Dinant, Harmon's tanks rumbled through a wood in nearby Celles, destroying or capturing 142 vehicles and taking nearly five hundred prisoners. On December 26, Manteuffel authorized survivors from 2nd Panzer to flee on foot, abandoning equipment from six battalions. Farther east, a British flame-throwing tank persuaded two hundred Germans to emerge with raised hands from a last-stand château in Humain, while thirteen artillery battalions drove the 2nd SS Panzer out of Manhay. In confused fighting at Sadzot—known to GIs as Sad Sack—enemy crews mortared their own platoons; the engagement turned out to be Sixth Panzer Army's last sally before Model ordered Dietrich onto the defensive.

Eisenhower for the past week had been looking for counteroffensive opportunities that would trap the overextended Germans and fulfill his ambition of annihilating enemy forces west of the Rhine. An Ultra intercept decoded just after Christmas revealed that Model's army group was fast running short of serviceable tanks and assault guns; despite recent losses, the U.S. First, Third, and Ninth Armies alone had almost four thousand tanks. But disagreement over when and where to strike back divided Allied commanders.

Patton favored driving from the south through the base of the German salient, toward Bitburg and then east, in hopes of bagging the entire enemy pocket. Collins, in a memorandum on Wednesday, December 27, laid out three options and endorsed "Plan No. 2," a strong attack from the north toward St.-Vith, complemented by Third Army's lunge from the south. Montgomery hesitated, suspecting that Rundstedt had enough combat strength for another attack that could punch through the Americans to Liège. Collins thought not. "Nobody is going to break through these troops," he told Montgomery. "This isn't going to happen." If the Allies failed

to attack closer to the base of the salient, they risked leaving a corridor through which retreating Germans could escape, he told the field marshal. "You're going to push the Germans out of the bag," Collins added, "just like you did at Falaise."

Falaise could hardly be blamed solely on Montgomery, who through much of the European campaign had evinced a bold streak—in MARKET GARDEN, for instance, and in encouraging the Americans to blow past the Brittany cul-de-sac. But now he turned cautious, perhaps discouraged by First Army's early drubbing. He had doubted Patton's ability to reach Bastogne or impede Manteuffel, and he doubted that the poor roads leading south toward St.-Vith would support Collins's scheme. Rather than gamble on an attempt by First and Third Armies to sever the forty-mile base of the salient, he thought a more prudent counterstrike would aim the two armies' main blows across the waist of the bulge at Houffalize, north of Bastogne, shooing away the enemy rather than trapping him, and only after the German offensive had, as he put it, "definitely expended itself."

Eisenhower chafed at Montgomery's caution. When he learned on Wednesday that the field marshal was at last ready to consider counterattacking, the supreme commander exclaimed sarcastically, "Praise God from whom all blessings flow!"

"Monty is a tired little fart," Patton informed his diary the same day. "War requires the taking of risks and he won't take them." Yet others were just as circumspect as Montgomery. Beetle Smith in a staff meeting on Wednesday suggested telling "our masters in Washington that if they want us to win the war over here they must find us another ten divisions." Bradley also favored pinching the enemy at Houffalize, not least because Eisenhower had promised to return First Army to his command when the town fell. First Army planners agreed that poor roads precluded hitting the base of the Ardennes salient, and Monk Dickson, the intelligence chief, endorsed Montgomery's view that Rundstedt could strike again; he counted seventeen uncommitted German divisions. Deteriorating weather further encouraged prudence: a five-day spell of clear skies ended on Thursday, December 28, and with it the comfort provided by Allied air fleets.

Montgomery later asserted that he had left selection of the northern attack azimuth to Hodges, who after the high anxiety of HERBSTNEBEL much preferred the more conservative route toward Houffalize. Perhaps the last straw for Hodges came when another V-1 detonated three hundred yards from the First Army headquarters in Tongres, breaking most of the windows; sixty-five men were wounded by flying glass. In the First Army command diary, an aide wrote, "Hodges has had enough of exposed flanks for the last two weeks."

* * *

Delayed by fog, snowbanks, and further reports of assassins afoot, Eisenhower's command train on early Thursday afternoon pulled into a rail siding in the Belgian town of Hasselt, five miles south of Zonhoven. Bodyguards bounded through the station, searching for potential malefactors, and machine-gun crews crouched on the platform to lay down a suppressive cross fire, as needed. Montgomery hopped aboard at 2:30 P.M. to find Eisenhower in his study, eager to discuss a counteroffensive that would turn the tables in the Ardennes once and for all. While Smith and De Guingand, the two chiefs of staff, waited in an unheated corridor, Montgomery sketched the plan: four corps would squeeze the enemy salient from the north and northwest, complementing the three already attacking from the south under Patton. The two wings would plan to meet in Houffalize, halfway down the length of the bulge.

Yet the field marshal was vague about precisely when this cataclysmic counterblow would fall. Building a combat reserve was vital, Montgomery said. His own direct observation and the reports of his "gallopers"—young British liaison officers who reported to him personally from far corners of the battlefield—led him to conclude that First Army still lacked the strength to confront an enemy force that included at least seven panzer divisions, with enough residual power to launch "at least one more full-blooded attack." Better to let the enemy first impale himself with a final futile lunge toward the Meuse. Then, deflecting Eisenhower's impatient request for a date certain, Montgomery urged development of a "master plan for the future conduct of war," one in which "all available offensive power must be allotted to the northern front," preferably with a single commander who "must have powers of operational control."

With this ancient theme again resurrected, Eisenhower brought the meeting to a close and showed Montgomery to the platform. Machine-gunners folded their tripods, bodyguards reboarded, and the train chuffed back to Versailles via Brussels. Despite Montgomery's insistence that the necessary conditions fall in place before an Allied counterblow was launched, the supreme commander believed that he had extracted a commitment for an attack from the north to begin in four days, on Monday, January 1.

That was incorrect. Montgomery returned to his Zonhoven field camp and cabled Brooke that Eisenhower was "definitely in a somewhat humble frame of mind and clearly realizes that the present trouble would not have occurred if he had accepted British advice and not that of American generals." He further believed, after a recent conference with Bradley, that the later also finally recognized the limitations of his generalship. "Poor chap," Montgomery had written Brooke, "he is such a decent fellow and the whole thing is a bitter pill for him." But 21st Army Group had put the cousins back on track. "We have tidied up the mess," he told the British chief, "and got two American armies properly organized." Montgomery also wanted the War Office to know that although he cabled London about his operations each night, no such report went to SHAEF. "You are far better informed, and in the picture, than is Ike," he confided.

And then, with the chronic nescience of a political naïf, he overplayed his hand, again. In a note to Eisenhower on Friday, December 29, Montgomery wrote:

> We have had one very definite failure.… One commander must have powers to direct and control the operation; you cannot possibly do it yourself, and so you would have to nominate someone else.

He enclosed a proposed order for Eisenhower to issue to both 12th and 21st Army Groups, decreeing that "from now onwards full operational direction, control, and coordination of these operations is vested in the [commander-in-chief of] 21 Army Group." In summation, he told the supreme commander, "I put this matter up to you again only because I am so anxious not to have another failure." However, he added, without "one man directing and controlling … we will fail again."

By chance, Montgomery's note arrived just before a personal message to Eisenhower from George Marshall, who noted that "certain London papers" were calling for the field marshal to command "all your ground forces." The chief added:

> Under no circumstances make any concessions of any kind whatsoever. You not only have our complete confidence but there would be a terrific resentment in this country following such action.… Give them hell.

Precisely who should get hell was ambiguous, but Eisenhower settled on Montgomery. "They are all mad at Monty," Kay Summersby told her diary on Friday, subsequently adding, "Bedell [Smith] and E. agree that Monty has changed considerably since the day in Italy over a year ago when he said he wanted to join the team."

The supreme commander's patience finally snapped when the agreeable De Guingand arrived in Versailles on Saturday, December 30, with the disagreeable news that no offensive would be launched from the north until at least January 3, leaving Patton to fight alone in the south against a ferociously reinforced enemy. Convinced that he had been deceived, Eisenhower stormed about his office, ordering staff officers to find the message confirming Montgomery's commitment to a January 1 attack—a futile search, De Guingand assured him, because "knowing Monty, the last thing he would do is commit himself on paper."

"All right, Beetle," Eisenhower said, turning to his chief of staff as the familiar scarlet flush crept up his neck. "I'm going to send a telegram … to the Joint Chiefs of Staff that I've had trouble with this man and it's either they can relieve me if they'd like to—that would be perfectly all right—but one of the two of us has to go."

Now fully alive to Montgomery's peril, and aware both of Marshall's stern note and the thinly concealed American yen to have Harold Alexander command 21st Army Group, De Guingand proposed driving immediately to Zonhoven. "Won't you please hold up that telegram 'til I get back?" he asked Eisenhower.

"All right, Freddie, I'll hold this up until tomorrow morning. But I don't think you ought to try and get up there, not tonight, because the weather is so bad."

After De Guingand hurried out to begin the treacherous two-hundred-mile drive to Montgomery's camp, Eisenhower dictated a frosty cable to the field marshal:

> I do not agree that one army group commander should fight his own battle and give orders to another army group commander.… You disturb me by predictions of "failure" unless your exact opinions in the matter of giving you command over Bradley are met in detail. I assure you that in this matter I can go no further.… We would have to present our differences to the CC/S [Combined Chiefs of Staff].

Already in fragile health, De Guingand arrived in Zonhoven at midnight, as Alan Moorehead later told Forrest Pogue, "nearly exhausted, a little hysterical, full of whisky.… He said to Monty, 'I must see you at once.'" As the chief of staff described the surly mood in Versailles, Montgomery paced around his caravan.

"If you keep on, one of you will have to go," De Guingand said, "and it won't be Ike."

Montgomery scoffed. "Who would replace me?"

"That's already been worked out," De Guingand said. "They want Alex."

Montgomery's bluster abruptly dissolved, precisely as it had when the battle of Mareth turned against him in March 1943. "What shall I do, Freddie?" he asked. "What shall I do?"

De Guingand had already drafted an apology to Eisenhower, which he now pulled from his battle dress. "Sign this," he said. Montgomery scratched his signature and summoned an orderly to have the message delivered, eyes only:

> Dear Ike … Whatever your decision may be you can rely on me one hundred percent to make it work and I know Brad will do the same. Very distressed that my letter may have upset you and I would ask you to tear it up. Your very devoted subordinate, Monty.

The crisis passed but the scars would linger. Soon after sending his apologetic note to Eisenhower, Montgomery privately cabled Brooke, "The general tendency at SHAEF and among the American command is one of considerable optimism.… I cannot share this optimism." Eisenhower thanked Montgomery for "your very fine telegram," but the incessant friction with the field marshal kept him awake at night. "He's just a little man," he would say after the war. "He's just as little inside as he is outside."

* * *

No sooner had Eisenhower suppressed this insurrection on his northern flank than his southern flank erupted, first with insubordination by 6th Army Group, then in a German attack hardly less cheeky than HERBSTNEBEL.

Although he commanded ten French and eight American divisions, General Devers had accomplished little in Alsace since Eisenhower's refusal in late November to permit the Rhine crossing near Strasbourg. The U.S. Seventh Army's combat power had

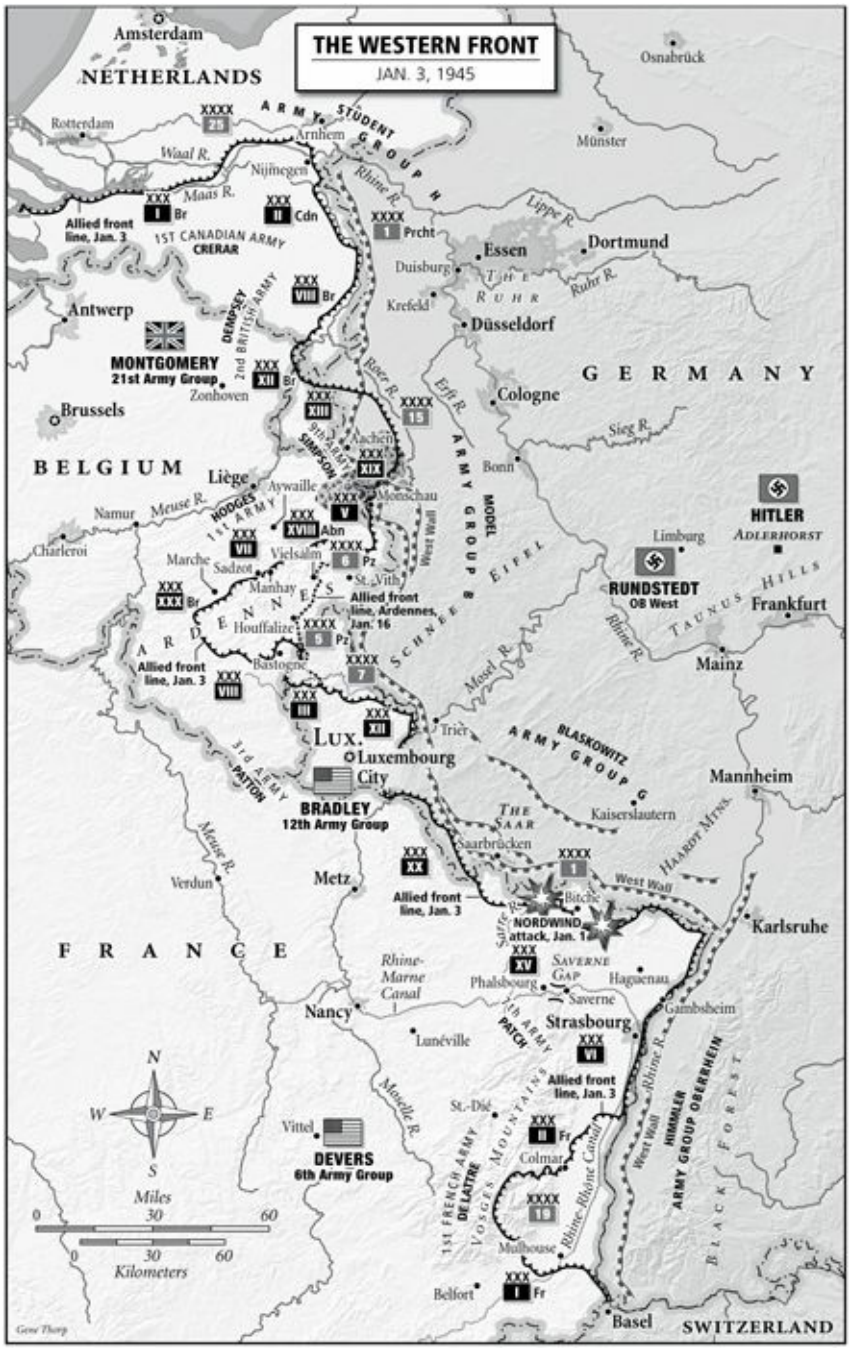
been dissipated by the requirement to move in two opposite directions: north, to shore up Bradley's flank, and south, to help General de Lattre eradicate the enemy salient around Colmar. Neither gambit yielded conspicuous success. After punching half a dozen holes through the German border to the north, GIs found the Siegfried Line impenetrable; they were reduced to tacking up latrine placards along the West Wall that read, "Shit on Hitler's Home."

The Colmar Pocket, as wide as the Bulge in Belgium and about half as deep, also proved unyielding. General Dahlquist's 36th Division, attached to De Lattre's First Army, reported that their French brothers-in-arms showed little interest in completing the liberation of Alsace, even as German forces aggressively shored up the salient. "The enemy attacked on three fronts today," Dahlquist told his diary in mid-December, later adding, "The French left our division holding the bag for almost two weeks." Squabbling between rival French factions persisted, aggravated by General Leclerc's declaration that neither he nor his 2nd Armored Division cared to serve under a Vichy traitor like De Lattre. "I have now two problem children, Leclerc and De Lattre," Devers wrote George Marshall.

At Verdun on December 19, Eisenhower had ordered 6th Army Group to help Bradley in the Bulge by contributing troops and shifting to the defensive. Three days later, Devers halted further attacks against the Colmar Pocket, leaving Hitler still master of 850 square miles of France. But Eisenhower was willing to cede much more: a SHAEF staff officer on December 26 brought Devers a map drawn by the supreme commander personally, which made plain that the Franco-American armies were to fall back nearly forty miles to an ostensibly more defensible line along the Vosges, abandoning Strasbourg and the Alsatian plain. Devers on December 27 flew to Versailles to argue that a retreat from the Rhine would anger the French, embolden the Germans, and bring the hard-won Saverne Gap within range of enemy artillery. Eisenhower stood fast, spooked by intelligence reports of German legions massing across from the U.S. Seventh Army. The 6th Army Group, he told Devers, must move "back to the Vosges line and hang on" until the Ardennes struggle subsided. Supply dumps were to be shifted into the mountains, and Devers was to sequester two U.S. divisions, one armored and one infantry, as a SHAEF reserve west of the Vosges. Devers told his diary:

> The Germans undoubtedly will attack me now.… The position I give up is much stronger than the one to which I go.… Giving up the town of Strasbourg is a political disaster to France.

De Gaulle thought so too: on December 28, he sent General Alphonse Juin, now the French military chief of staff, to Versailles to make inquiries about a rumored retreat in Alsace. A gallant Algerian, distinguished by his Basque beret and left-handed salute—his right arm had been maimed in 1915—Juin cornered Beetle Smith, who told him that no firm decision had been made and that SHAEF's action was "simply the study of a plan." In truth, Smith had drafted the final order that morning. Juin motored back to Rue St.-Dominique and warned De Gaulle, "They are up to something."



While Smith prevaricated, Devers temporized. He moved his command post seventy miles west, to Vittel, but ordered his staff to prepare plans for three intermediate fallback positions leading to a final line along the eastern face of the Vosges. When General Patch was told to ready his Seventh Army for withdrawal, he winked at a staff officer and said, “Ain’t going to do it. We aren’t that bad off.” De Lattre was even more recalcitrant, decrying “a psychosis of retreat” that would force the Allies to capture the same ground twice. He took two days to translate Devers’s withdrawal directive into his own General Order No. 201, which on December 30 instructed French subordinates “to maintain the integrity of the present front” by yielding not a single square centimeter of Alsatian soil. Devers cabled Eisenhower that falling back to the Vosges could take two weeks.

Once again the supreme commander’s neck flushed deep red. “Call up Devers and tell him he is not doing what he was told,” he barked at Smith. “Tell him to obey his orders and shorten his line.” In a phone call from Vittel, Devers feebly claimed that Eisenhower’s earlier instruction had been discretionary. “I won’t go to him with that story,” Smith snapped. “He thinks you’ve been disloyal.” Another written order from Eisenhower left no wiggle room:

> The political pressure to retain French soil, which you are undoubtedly experiencing, must be resisted if it leads to any risk of your losing divisions.… You must not endanger the integrity of your units east of your main position, the Vosges. You must be prepared to accept the loss of territory east of the Vosges and all its political consequences.

Devers capitulated, telling subordinates that all forces would have to retreat to the Vosges no later than January 5. “Eisenhower,” he advised his diary, “has given me no alternative.” As for the supreme commander, he was now so vexed at a man whom he had long disliked that he considered sacking Devers and giving command of his army group to Patch.

“You can kill a willing horse by overdoing what you require of him,” Devers wrote in his diary. “SHAEF has given me too much

front, and taken away too many of my troops. This is unsound." A message from De Gaulle through Juin urged the Allies not to surrender Strasbourg "but to make it a Stalingrad."

The final day of the year ticked by with fresh snow and more omens. A reconnaissance flight at last light detected German artillery lumbering forward into new gun pits. Seventh Army placed all troops on high alert and canceled holiday celebrations. A reporter who insisted on toasting the departure of 1944 declared, "Never was the world plagued by such a year less worth remembering." Devers's diary entry for December 31 was just as cheerless: "Patch called me.… He was sure he was going to be attacked during the night."

* * *

The attack indeed fell that night, the last substantial German offensive of the war in western Europe. Hitler had given another Adlerhorst pep talk to commanders in Army Group G, conceding failure in the Ardennes, but offering another chance to thrash the Americans in Operation NORDWIND, North Wind. A lunge by eight divisions southwest down the Vosges axis would recapture the Saverne Gap and link up with Nineteenth Army troops occupying the Colmar Pocket; in addition, the attack would force Patton to withdraw from Bastogne to parry this new threat. French troops in Alsace were weak and disorganized, the Führer promised, and the U.S. Seventh Army was overextended along a 126-mile perimeter.

The Americans were also alert and entrenched. Ultra intercepts provided no specific enemy attack order, but ample intelligence revealed the German order of battle and unit boundaries below Saarbrücken. Patch had little doubt that the main attack would come against the Seventh Army left, west of the Haardt Mountains, with a complementary attack to the east between the mountains and the Rhine.

"German offensive began on Seventh Army front about 0030 hours," Patch's chief of staff wrote in a diary entry on Monday, January 1. "Krauts were howling drunk. Murdered them." Shrieking Waffen-SS troops, silhouetted by moonlight that glistened off snowfields near the Sarre River, hardly dented the American left wing. A single .30-caliber water-cooled machine gun, slewing left and right with long, chattering bursts, was credited with slaying more than one hundred attackers. Volksgrenadier corpses piled up in a kill sack soon dubbed "Morgue Valley." "Gained only insignificant ground," the Army Group G war diary recorded; then, by nightfall on Tuesday: "The attack has lost its momentum."

The most flamboyant German sally occurred on New Year's Day, an attack by nine hundred Luftwaffe planes flying at treetop altitude across the Western Front. Operation BODENPLATTE, Baseplate, also known as the "Hangover Raid," included pilots said to be wearing dress uniforms with patent-leather shoes and white gloves after celebrating the arrival of 1945. The raiders caught seventeen Allied airfields by surprise, destroying 150 parked planes and damaging more than 100 others. Montgomery's personal aircraft was among those wrecked. But German losses approached 300 planes, some shot down by their own antiaircraft gunners who, for reasons of secrecy, had not been informed of BODENPLATTE. Worse still was the loss of 237 German pilots, including veteran airmen, instructors, and commanders. "We sacrificed our last substance," one Luftwaffe officer said.

Even as NORDWIND collapsed on the German right, an ancillary New Year's attack ten miles to the east spilled from old Maginot Line bunkers to gain traction through corrugated terrain below Bitche. Bypassing American strongpoints in the Low Vosges, the 6th SS Mountain Division bent the Seventh Army line sufficiently to alarm SHAEF and terrify Strasbourg, thirty miles southeast. Propaganda broadcasts from Radio Stuttgart reported German shock troops assembling to seize the city, with reprisals certain to fall on Alsatians who had helped the Allies. Rumors of Seventh Army detachments packing to leave along the Rhine "spread like a powder fuze and caused a general panic," according to a French lieutenant.

Lowered tricolors and the sight of official sedans being gassed up added to the dread. Journalists reported that roads west were clogged with "women pushing baby carriages [and] wagons piled high with furniture," as Strasbourg steeled itself for yet another reversal of fortune. One soldier spied inverted dinner plates laid across a road in the thin hope that they sufficiently resembled antitank mines to delay, at least briefly, the Hun's return.

* * *

Charles de Gaulle, once again referring to himself in the third person, declared that the abandonment of Strasbourg would not only be "a terrible wound inflicted on the honor of the country," but also "a profound blow to the nation's confidence in de Gaulle." On Tuesday, January 2, he told De Lattre in a handwritten note, "Naturally the French Army cannot consent to the abandonment of Strasbourg.… I order you to take matters into your own hands." At nearly the same moment, Devers cabled De Lattre to pull his left wing back toward the Vosges no later than Friday morning, necessarily exposing the city. The American order had "a bomb-like effect" in the French army headquarters, one staff officer observed, and it provoked an anguished *"Ça, non!"* from De Lattre, now confronted by conflicting orders from two masters in what he called "a grave problem of conscience."

De Gaulle saw no dilemma. When De Lattre proposed waiting "until the Allied high command has given its consent" to defend Strasbourg, De Gaulle replied, "I cannot accept your last communication." De Lattre's sole duty, De Gaulle added, was to France; it was said that at an afternoon reception in Paris, Madame de Gaulle snubbed Madame de Lattre. Strasbourg's mayor sent the army commander a photograph of the spectacular cathedral with an inscription, "To General de Lattre, our last hope." Confined to his cot by residual lung inflammation from a World War I gassing, the long-suffering De Lattre now suffered more.

At nine P.M. on Tuesday, General Juin appeared at Beetle Smith's office in Versailles, tossed his left-handed salute, and then spent five hours warning of "extremely grave consequences" that would cause "the supreme commander to be severely judged" should Strasbourg be abandoned. After repeating himself incessantly, Juin at two A.M. pulled from his pocket a letter in which De Gaulle threatened to withdraw French forces from SHAEF command. "We are dependent on them," De Gaulle had told Juin, "but inversely

they are dependent on us."

"Juin said things to me last night, which, if he had been an American, I would have socked him on the jaw," a bleary-eyed Smith told Eisenhower during a staff meeting Wednesday morning, January 3. For more than an hour in the supreme commander's office, joined by Strong and Spaatz, they debated their course. Smith still believed that withdrawal to the Vosges was imperative; 6th Army Group reported pressure across the entire front from NORDWIND. Devers had now accepted Eisenhower's order "to forget Strasbourg," but to forsake the city would threaten Allied unity. Strasbourg's military governor had warned Patch, "You will cover the American flag with ineradicable shame," and dispatches from the city at five that morning predicted "terrible reprisals" and "mass massacres." Evacuation plans had already been drafted, beginning with a thousand civil servants that afternoon although only two hundred railcars were available to transport at least a hundred thousand civilians. Buffeted by contradictory demands, De Lattre appeared to have fallen in step with De Gaulle by ordering the 3rd Algerian Division to prepare for deployment to Strasbourg.

"Next to the weather," Eisenhower would tell George Marshall, the French "have caused me more trouble in this war than any other single factor. They even rank above landing craft." The art of command at times requires tactical retreat for strategic advantage, in a headquarters no less than on a battlefield, and by midday on Wednesday the supreme commander sensibly recognized that in the interest of Allied comity he would have to yield. De Gaulle had requested a meeting at three P.M., but before formally acceding to French demands Eisenhower intended to land a punch or two.

Smith phoned Devers to ask how close German forces were to the Alsatian capital.

"About thirty miles," Devers replied.

"Well, keep them as far away as you can," Smith said. "It looks now as if you will have to hold Strasbourg."

* * *

The crowded stage in this melodrama grew more congested at 2:15 P.M. with the arrival of Churchill and Brooke after a turbulent flight from England in filthy weather. Eisenhower whisked them from the airfield to his house for a quick lunch, and then to a conference room in the Trianon Palace. De Gaulle soon appeared, stiff and unsmiling, with Juin on his heels. The men settled into armchairs arranged in a circle around a situation map spread across the floor, and De Gaulle handed Eisenhower a copy of his letter ordering De Lattre to defend Strasbourg.

Eisenhower gestured to the map of Alsace, which showed three German corps bearing down from the north, as well as half a dozen enemy divisions threatening attack from the Colmar salient. "In Alsace, where the enemy has extended his attack for two days, the Colmar pocket makes our position a precarious one," he said. The long front exposed French and American soldiers alike. Moreover, Devers not only had no reserves, he had been told to forfeit two divisions to reinforce the Ardennes, where fighting remained savage.

"Alsace is sacred ground," De Gaulle replied. Allowing the Germans to regain Strasbourg could bring down the French government, leading to "a state bordering on anarchy in the entire country."

"All my life," Churchill said pleasantly, "I have remarked what significance Alsace has for the French."

Even so, Eisenhower said, he resented being pressured to amend military plans for political reasons. The threat to pull French forces from SHAEF command seemed spiteful, given all that the Allies had done for France; the Combined Chiefs already had agreed to equip sixteen French divisions, and De Gaulle had recently asked for a total of fifty. Should *le général* choose to fight independently, SHAEF would have no choice but to suspend supplies of fuel and munitions to the French army. This crisis could have been averted, Eisenhower added, had De Lattre's troops fought well and eradicated the Colmar Pocket, as ordered.

By now the supreme commander's face had grown beet red. De Gaulle stared down his great beak. General Eisenhower, he said, was at "risk of seeing the outraged French people forbid the use of its railroads and communications.… If you carry out the withdrawal, I will give the order to a French division to barricade itself inside Strasbourg and before the scandalized world you will be obliged to go in and free it."

The prime minister chose this moment to gently lower himself from his chair to the floor with feline grace. Laying an index finger on the map, he murmured, "Strasbourg, this point."

Having lost his composure, Eisenhower now regained it. Very well, he conceded, Strasbourg would be defended. Sacred Alsace would remain French, the withdrawal order to Devers canceled. Ringing for tea, he confided to De Gaulle in a low voice, "I am having a lot of trouble with Montgomery."

The conference ended. "I think you've done the wise and proper thing," Churchill told Eisenhower. Buttonholing De Gaulle in a corridor outside, the prime minister said, in his sibilant, fractured French, that Eisenhower was "not always aware of the political consequences of his decisions," but was nonetheless "an excellent supreme commander." De Gaulle said nothing, but before Eisenhower bade him adieu at the front door of the Trianon Palace, Deux Mètres told him, "Glory has its price. Now you are going to be a conqueror." To a dinner companion the next night, De Gaulle said, "Imagine, asking us to withdraw our troops from Strasbourg. Could you believe it?" The contretemps, he said, revealed that "these Americans … equate politics with sentiment, the military art with logic."

As the happy news of salvation spread through Strasbourg late Wednesday afternoon, jubilant crowds belted out "La Marseillaise." A tricolor rose again before the Caserne de Gendarmerie, and a Seventh Army loudspeaker truck rolled through the city, urging calm. Eisenhower authorized Devers to keep the new SHAEF reserve for his own use; Strasbourg was to be defended "as strongly as possible"—primarily by French troops—but without risking "the integrity of your forces, which will not be jeopardized."

* * *

NORDWIND would drag on, with three more attacks against the Americans of at least corps size, and another against the French up the Rhine–Rhône Canal from Colmar. Seventh Army's right wing bent back ten miles and more, particularly along the Rhine near Haguenau, and enemy troops ferried across the river at Gambsheim closed to within a few miles of Strasbourg before being cuffed back. But these paltry territorial gains, which cost 23,000 irreplaceable German casualties, carried little strategic heft; Patch held the Saverne Gap and the Rhine–Marne Canal, and Patton was not diverted from the Ardennes. Hitler denounced as "pessimistic" reports from Alsace that NORDWIND had failed for want of sufficient infantry. Yet he was reduced to using Volksgrenadiers who had trained together for barely a month, among them recruits from eastern Europe who spoke no German, and a convalescent unit known as the "Whipped Cream Division" because of its special dietary needs.

"We must believe in the ultimate purposes of a merciful God," Eisenhower had written Mamie after his confrontation with De Gaulle. "These are trying days." Rarely had the burden of command weighed more heavily on him. Bodyguards still shadowed his every move, he found no time for exercise, and despite his regular letters home his wife chided him for not writing often enough.

He had new worries, too: recent intelligence suggested the Germans might soon use poison gas, and it was also said that enemy scientists were developing a ray capable of stopping Allied aircraft engines in flight. Further, he suffered yet another significant loss: on January 2, ice on the wings combined with pilot error during takeoff had caused the crash of a twin-engine Hudson at airfield A-46, five miles south of Versailles. The fiery accident killed Admiral Ramsay—among Eisenhower's staunchest and most valued advisers—who was flying to Brussels for a conference with Montgomery about the defenses at Antwerp. On Sunday, January 7, a French naval band played Chopin's funeral march as a gun carriage bore Ramsay's coffin to a hillside grave above the Seine. The supreme commander joined mourners in the shuffling cortège.

Later that afternoon, Eisenhower's office calendar recorded: "E. leaves office early, 4:30 & goes home. He is very depressed these days."

The Agony Grapevine

SHAEF on January 5 confirmed an American press report that the U.S. First and Ninth Armies now fought under British command. The statement from Versailles claimed that the arrangement had been made "by instant agreement of all concerned," but failed to explain that the reconfiguration was only temporary. Smug accounts in London newspapers began describing GIs as "Monty's troops"; privately encouraged by the field marshal, the press clamored for a "proper" chain of command in northwestern Europe, under a single battle captain.

"We have nothing to apologize for," Bradley told his staff. "We have nothing to explain." Major Hansen wrote in his diary, "Many of us who were avowed Anglophiles in Great Britain have now been irritated, hurt, and infuriated by the British radio and press. All this good feeling has vanished."

On Saturday, January 6, Montgomery cabled Churchill that he planned to summon reporters to explain "how [the] Germans were first 'headed off,' then 'seen off,' and now are being 'written off.'" He also intended to rebut any suggestion of American failure in the Ardennes. "I shall show how the whole Allied team rallied to the call and how national considerations were thrown overboard.… I shall stress the great friendship between myself and Ike."

On the same day, he wrote a confidant in London, "The real trouble with the Yanks is that they are completely ignorant as to the rules of the game we are playing with the Germans." When Brigadier Williams, the intelligence chief, asked why he intended to hold a press conference, Montgomery explained that Eisenhower's generalship had been impugned, and "I want to put it right." Williams offered two words of counsel: "Please don't." Others in his headquarters, smelling condescension, also sought to dissuade him. Alan Moorehead pleaded with De Guingand to muzzle Montgomery, lest he "make some bloody awful mistake."

"That's a funny position for a newsman to take," De Guingand said.

"I want to win the war," Moorehead replied.

In a double-badged maroon beret and a parachute harness—"dressed like a clown," in Moorehead's description—the field marshal appeared before a gaggle of correspondents in Zonhoven on January 7. No doubt he meant well. Praising the American GI as "a brave fighting man, steady under fire, and with that tenacity in battle which stamps the first-class soldier," he also saluted Eisenhower as "the captain of our team," declaring, "I am absolutely devoted to Ike. We are the greatest of friends." No mention was made of Bradley, and an assertion that British troops were "fighting hard" exaggerated their role as reserves very much on the fringe of the battlefield.

Much of the recitation, however, was devoted to describing the field marshal's own brilliance upon taking command almost three weeks earlier. "The first thing I did," Montgomery said, "was busy myself in getting the battle area tidy—getting it sorted out":

> As soon as I saw what was happening I took certain steps myself to ensure that if the Germans got to the Meuse they would certainly not get over that river. And I carried out certain movements so as to provide balanced dispositions.… I was thinking ahead.… The battle has been most interesting. I think possibly one of the most interesting and tricky battles I have ever handled.

Montgomery likened "seeing off" the enemy to his repulse of Rommel in Egypt in 1942. He closed by declaring, without a

scintilla of irony, “Let us have done with the destructive criticism that aims a blow at Allied solidarity.”

“Oh, God, why didn’t you stop him?” Moorehead asked Williams as reporters scattered to file their stories. “It was so awful.” Many British officers agreed. The field marshal had been “indecently exultant,” as one put it, displaying “what a good boy am I” self-regard, in De Guingand’s phrase, and conveying what another general called his “cock on a dunghill mood.” A headline in the *Daily Mail*—“Montgomery Foresaw Attack, Acted ‘On Own’ to Save Day”—captured the prevailing Fleet Street sentiment, although Churchill’s private secretary told his diary, “Monty’s triumphant, jingoistic, and exceedingly self-satisfied talk to the press on Sunday has given wide offense.” A mischievous German radio broadcast mimicked the BBC with a phony news flash that quoted Montgomery as describing the Americans as “‘somewhat bewildered.’ … The battle of the Ardennes can now be written off, thanks to Field Marshal Montgomery.”

“He sees fit to assume all the glory and scarcely permits the mention of an army commander’s name,” the Ninth Army war diary complained. “Bitterness and real resentment is [*sic*] creeping in.” No one was more bitter or resentful than Bradley, whose “contempt had grown into active hatred” for Montgomery, reported one British general at SHAEF. Air Marshal Tedder informed his diary that cooperation between Bradley and the field marshal was now “out of the question.”

Bradley twice called Versailles on Tuesday, January 9, “very much upset over the big play up Monty is getting in the British press,” Kay Summersby noted. He, too, summoned reporters, using a map and a pointer to render his own version of events, which included the dubious assertion that American commanders had consciously taken “a calculated risk” in thinning out defenses in the Ardennes. Privately he denounced Montgomery’s “attempt to discredit me so he could get control of the whole operation.” The field marshal, he asserted, wanted to “be in on the kill, and no one else.”

In another call to Eisenhower, Bradley warned, “I cannot serve under Montgomery. If he is to be put in command of all ground forces, you must send me home.”

Eisenhower assured him that he had no plans to expand the field marshal’s authority, then added, “I thought you were the one person I could count on for doing anything I asked you to do.”

“This is one thing I cannot take,” Bradley replied.

Once again Eisenhower sought to mollify, to mediate, and to keep his temperamental subordinates concentrated on the task at hand: evicting Rundstedt from the Bulge and resuming the march on Germany. But in a note to Brooke he admitted, “No single incident that I have encountered throughout my experience as an Allied commander has been so difficult.”

* * *

Heading off, seeing off, and writing off the Germans proved more problematic than Montgomery’s facile catchphrases implied. Rundstedt in late December had reported that both panzer armies in HERBSTNEBEL “are forced completely into the defensive.” Some German strategists urged Hitler to shift his armor to the Eastern Front—the Soviets had encircled Budapest in late December—but the Führer replied that the east “must take care of itself.” Twenty infantry and eight panzer divisions remained committed to the Bulge in early January. Such a host would not be easily expelled, even though German infantry regiments were half the size of their American counterparts and U.S. armored divisions on average mustered more than twice as many tanks as their German equivalents. The “German soldier is fighting with great determination and bravery,” a SHAEF assessment concluded. “Desertions few.”

Yet many enemy commanders had been killed or wounded, and some Volksgrenadier companies near Bastogne had fewer than thirty men. Mortars and antitank guns were muscled to the rear for want of ammunition. German rations would be cut twice in January, to eleven ounces of bread and an ounce of fat per day. Potatoes and vegetables ran short. Motorcycle scouts combed the countryside for gasoline, which OB West allocated virtually drop by drop. One division traveled by bicycle for more than a week. In a schoolhouse hospital, a German doctor asked a shrieking, wounded *Landser*, “Are you a soldier or a pants-crapper?”

“Ten shells for their one,” a U.S. Third Army soldier told the journalist Osmar White. “That’s the secret of it.” Work details of German prisoners were forced to break stone for road repairs, with a GI guard yelling, “Get along there, you cocksucking sonofabitch.” They were the fortunate ones: to his diary, Patton disclosed “some unfortunate incidents in the shooting of prisoners. (I hope we can conceal this.)” Others were executed legally, among them eighteen of Skorzeny’s saboteurs, convicted by military commissions within days of their apprehension and sentenced to be “shot to death with musketry.” Three of the condemned requested that captured German nurses in an adjacent cell serenade them with Christmas carols. “We had to stop them after a while,” an Army captain reported. “They were disturbing our troops.” The reporter W. C. Heinz witnessed the firing-squad execution of the trio. “I looked at the ground, frost-white, the grass tufts frozen, the soil hard and uneven,” Heinz wrote. “This view I see now, I told myself, will be the last thing their eyes will ever see.” Trussed and then blindfolded, with paper circles pinned over their hearts, “the three stood rigid against the posts like woodcuts of men facing execution” until the fatal volley left them limp and leaking blood.

A final German lunge at Bastogne lingered into the second week of January, with fighting as fierce as any seen in the Ardennes. The number of German divisions battling Third Army increased from three to nine. Dreadful weather again grounded much of the Allied air force and forced American gunners to use blowtorches and pinch bars to free frozen gun carriages. Patton had hoped to seize Houffalize in a one-day bound of seventeen miles; instead, his drive north with III and VIII Corps averaged barely a mile a day. First Army’s attack from the north, finally launched by Montgomery on January 3, moved no faster. Fog, snow, mines, rugged terrain, blown bridges, and a stubborn enemy reduced Collins’s VII Corps to a crawl and cost five thousand casualties in the plodding advance on Houffalize. On January 8, Hitler authorized Model to at last abandon the western half of the Bulge, but not for three days did GIs see signs of a general withdrawal, yard by grudging yard. The Führer on January 14 rejected a plea from Rundstedt and Model to pull back to the Rhine; the retreat instead must halt at the West Wall, whence the offensive had begun.

At 11:40 A.M. on Tuesday, January 16, a cavalry patrol from the north met an armored infantry patrol from the south outside

Houffalize to link the First and Third Armies. One thousand tons of Allied bombs and countless pozit shells had "completely removed" the Walloon market town, Patton wrote. "I have never seen anything like it in this war." Waiting for bulldozers to plow a path through the rubble, he composed a snatch of doggerel:

> Little town of Houffalize,
> Here you sit on bended knees.
> God bless your people and keep them safe,
> Especially from the RAF.

A day later, Eisenhower returned First Army to Bradley. Hodges sent Montgomery five pounds of coffee as thanks for his ministrations, and on January 18 moved the army headquarters back to the Hôtel Britannique in Spa. The place was largely intact except that the furniture had been upended and a Christmas tree, denuded of ornaments, was "tilting drunkenly in one corner." Ninth Army for now would remain under British command, despite carping from Bradley, who finally took SHAEF's hint by shifting his command post from isolated Luxembourg City to Namur, a riverine city once famed for fine knives. There in ducal splendor he and his staff occupied a baroque château with marble floors, velvet drapes, and full-length oils of Belgian nobility. A crystal chandelier dangled above his desk, and smirking cherubs looked down on the twenty-foot map board, propped against the wall frescoes. Bradley was billeted in the posh Hôtel d'Harscamp—"Whore's Camp" to GIs—from which a magnificent vista gave onto Namur's cathedral and the Meuse valley beyond. Once again was he sovereign of all he surveyed.

Village by village, croft by croft, American soldiers reclaimed what they had lost. Middleton deployed his VIII Corps headquarters back to Bastogne, where 101st Airborne paratroopers gave him a receipt certifying that the town was "used but serviceable" and "Kraut disinfected." The 7th Armored Division reentered ruined St.-Vith on January 23, capturing a German artillery officer whose latest diary entry read, "The battle noises come closer to the town.… I'm sending back all my personal belongings. One never knows."

Hitler had already decamped, leaving the Adlerhorst at six P.M. on January 15 and returning to Berlin the next morning aboard the *Brandenburg*. There would be no jackboots in Antwerp or even across the Meuse, no sundering of Allied armies, no petitions for peace from Washington and London. "I know the war is lost," he said, according to his Luftwaffe adjutant. "The superior power is too great. I've been betrayed." Still, he had extracted his armies from the Ardennes at a deliberate pace and in good order. Manteuffel abandoned fifty-three tanks along the roadside on a single day for want of fuel or spare parts, but many others escaped. In the south alone, thirteen divisions from Fifth Panzer Army and Seventh Army crossed five bridges thrown over the Our. The enemy, Eisenhower admitted to the Charlie-Charlies, "will probably manage to withdraw the bulk of his formations." Nearly two weeks would pass after the capture of Houffalize before the retreating Germans slammed the last steel door in the West Wall.

The east, meanwhile, could no longer "take care of itself." The Red Army had massed more than 180 divisions and nine thousand aircraft north of the Carpathians for a winter offensive; launched on January 12, the attack threatened the Reich from Hungary to the Baltic as never before. On January 22, Hitler ordered Sixth Panzer Army to Hungary to protect approaches to the few oil fields still in German possession. For weeks, Dietrich's weary divisions trudged across the Fatherland at a clopping pace to save gasoline. Tractors towed vehicles by the hundreds. The Eastern Front, a German historian later wrote, "showed itself again to be a suction pump which weakened other fronts."

In the west the war receded, this time for good. Once again Belgium and Luxembourg had been liberated. Children shrieked with joy while sledding near a stone quarry in Luxembourg, oblivious to the heckle of Thunderbolt cannons above the skulking enemy just to the east. The milky contrails of bombers bound for Cologne or Duisburg or Berlin etched the sky from horizon to horizon. Across the Ardennes women stood in their doorways, eyeing the olive-drab ranks tramping by. "Are you sure?" they asked. "Are you sure they have really gone for good?"

* * *

The dead "lay thick," wrote Martha Gellhorn as the guns fell silent, "like some dark shapeless vegetable." For weeks the iron ground precluded burials except with earth-moving equipment and air compressors; many of the three thousand civilians killed in the Ardennes were wrapped in blankets and stored in church crypts to await a thaw. At the American cemetery in Henri-Chapelle, fifteen miles east of Liège, grave diggers with backhoes worked around the clock to bury as many as five hundred GIs a day. Each was interred in a hole five feet deep, two feet wide, and six and a half feet long, but only after their overshoes had been removed for reuse. One dog tag was placed in the dead man's mouth, the other tacked to a cross or a Star of David atop the grave. Those whose tags had been lost first went to a morgue tent for photographs and dental charting. Fingertips were cleaned and injected with fluid to enhance prints, while technicians searched for laundry marks, tattoos, and other identifying clues, all to avoid conceding that here was yet another mother's son known but to God.

Among the dead gathered by Graves Registration teams combing the Bulge were a few score murdered by Peiper's men near Malmédy, recovered in two feet of snow when the Baugnez crossroad was recaptured in mid-January. Investigators carried the frozen corpses, stiff as statuary, to a heated shed. There field jackets and trouser pockets were sliced open with razor blades to inventory the effects, like those of Technician Fifth Grade Luke S. Swartz—"one fountain pen, two pencils, one New Testament, one comb, one good-luck charm"—and Private First Class Robert Cohen, who left this world carrying thirteen coins, two cigarette lighters, and a Hebrew prayer book.

An Army tally long after the war put U.S. battle losses in the Ardennes and Alsace from December 16 to January 25 at 105,000,

including 19,246 dead. Thousands more suffered from trench foot, frostbite, and diseases. Even as American losses in the Pacific spiraled, roughly one in ten U.S. combat casualties during World War II occurred in the Bulge, where 600,000 GIs had fought, fourfold the number of combatants in blue and gray at Gettysburg. More than 23,000 were taken prisoner; most spent the duration in German camps, living on seven hundred calories a day and drinking ersatz coffee "so foul we used to bathe in it," as one captured officer later recalled. Families of soldiers from the obliterated 106th Division organized the "Agony Grapevine," conceived by a Pittsburgh lumberman whose son had gone missing on the Schnee Eifel. Volunteers with shortwave radios kept nightly vigils, listening to German propaganda broadcasts that sometimes named captured prisoners.

Of more than sixty thousand wounded and injured, those who had come closest to death often lay wide-eyed on their hospital cots, as one surgeon wrote, "like somebody rescued from the ledge of a skyscraper." Many would need months if not years to recover; a wounded officer described a jammed hospital courtyard in March filled with broken men on stretchers, "like the scene of the aftermath of the Battle of Atlanta in *Gone With the Wind*." A soldier wrote his parents in Nevada of narrowly surviving a gunfight on January 13, when a German shell scorched past him. "I looked down and my rt. hand was gone.… Dad, you'll have to be patient with me until I learn to bowl left-handed."

* * *

German losses would be difficult to count with precision, not least because the Americans tended to inflate them. (Patton at times concocted figures from whole cloth, or assumed that enemy casualties were tenfold the number of prisoners taken.) A U.S. Army estimate of 120,000 enemy losses in the month following the launch of HERBSTNEBEL was surely too high, and Bradley's claim of more than a quarter-million was preposterous. One postwar analysis put the figure at 82,000, another at 98,000. The official German history would cite 11,000 dead and 34,000 wounded, with an indeterminate number captured, missing, sick, and injured.

Model's success in extricating much of his force structure—in late January, Germany still listed 289 divisions, the same number counted by SHAEF on December 10—belied the Reich's true plight. "He bent the bow until it broke," Manteuffel said of the Army Group B commander. German forces in the west had virtually no fuel reserves and only about a third of the ammunition they needed. The Luftwaffe was so feeble that Hitler likened air warfare to "a rabbit hunt." More than seven hundred armored vehicles had been lost in the Ardennes, German manpower reserves were exhausted, and the Reichsbahn was so badly battered that as of January 19 all rail freight shipments were banned except for coal and Wehrmacht matériel. After more than five years of war, four million German soldiers had been killed, wounded, or captured. Hitler professed to find solace in a letter Frederick the Great had written during the Seven Years' War: "I started this war with the most wonderful army in Europe. Today I've got a muck heap."

Patton sensed the kill. "When you catch a carp and put him in the boat," he told reporters, "he flips his tail just before he dies. I think this is the German's last flip." Manteuffel came to the same conclusion. The Bulge had left the Wehrmacht so enfeebled, he warned, that Germany henceforth would be capable of fighting only "a corporal's war."

Few U.S. generals had enhanced their reputations in the Ardennes, except for battle stalwarts like McAuliffe. An American Army that considered itself the offensive spirit incarnate had paradoxically fought best on the defensive, as it had at Salerno, Anzio, and Mortain. The cautious January counterattack designed by Bradley and Montgomery, with Eisenhower's consent, extruded Germans from the Bulge rather than maneuvering or cudgeling them out; intended to "trap the maximum troops in the salient," the riposte trapped almost no one. Among top commanders, Patton proved the most distinguished. His remarkable agility in fighting the German Seventh Army, half the Fifth Panzer Army, and portions of the Sixth Panzer Army was best summarized in Bradley's six-word encomium: "One of our great combat leaders."

Churchill sought to repair Anglo-American discord with a gracious speech in the Commons. "United States troops have done almost all the fighting and have suffered almost all the losses," he said. "They have lost sixty to eighty men for every one of ours." The Bulge "is undoubtedly the greatest American battle of the war and will, I believe, be regarded as an ever-famous American victory." To his secretary, the prime minister later remarked that there was "no greater exhibition of power in history than that of the American Army fighting the battle of the Ardennes with its left hand and advancing from island to island toward Japan with its right." Montgomery also showed unwonted courtesy in notes to Eisenhower and "my dear Brad," telling the latter, "What a great honour it has been for me to command such fine troops." But honeyed words hardly mollified those determined to resent the continued British control of an American field army under Eisenhower's reconfiguration. "Why isn't Ike a man?" Patton wrote in his diary on January 24. "We will attack and win, in spite of Ike and Monty."

Eisenhower claimed that the German offensive "had in no sense achieved anything decisive." In fact, HERBSTNEBEL had hastened the Third Reich's demise. Hitler's preoccupation with the west in late 1944—and the diversion of supplies, armor, and reserves from the east—proved a "godsend for the Red Army," in the estimate of one German historian. Half of the Reich's fuel production in November and December had supported the Ardennes offensive, and now hundreds of German tanks and assault guns fighting the Russians were immobilized on the Eastern Front for lack of gasoline. By January 20, the Soviet juggernaut of two million men had torn a hole nearly 350 miles wide from East Prussia to the Carpathian foothills, bypassing or annihilating German defenses. Bound for the Oder River, Stalin's armies would be within fifty miles of Berlin at a time when the Anglo-Americans had yet to reach the Rhine. Here, a thousand kilometers from the Ardennes, was the greatest consequence of the Battle of the Bulge.

* * *

With the German tide receding, Eisenhower resumed sketching big arrows on the map. His timetable had been disrupted by six weeks or so, but his basic scheme for ending the war remained unaltered: Allied forces would continue destroying enemy forces west

of the Rhine; they would seize bridgeheads over the river "when the ice menace is over" in March; and then they would advance into the German heartland. In a long message to the Combined Chiefs on January 20, he reiterated that Montgomery's attack north of the Ruhr was "our principal purpose," but believed "this area will be most strongly held by the enemy." SHAEF victualers also reckoned that no more than thirty-five Allied divisions could be supported above the Ruhr until new rail bridges spanned the Rhine. All the more reason then, in Eisenhower's calculation, for a second axis: he envisioned the bulk of Bradley's army group attacking from Mainz and Karlsruhe toward Frankfurt and Kassel—a corridor whose use Patton had long touted.

At present the Western Allies mustered 3.7 million soldiers in 73 divisions along a 729-mile front, with U.S. forces providing more than two-thirds of that strength. Eisenhower also had almost 18,000 combat aircraft—complemented by air fleets in Italy—and overwhelming dominance in artillery, armor, intelligence, supply, transportation, and the other sinews of modern combat. The Pentagon accelerated the sailing dates of seven U.S. divisions, diverted two others not previously earmarked for Europe, and combed out units in Alaska, Panama, and other quiescent theaters, where Marshall believed "plenty of fat meat" could be found. So desperate was the need for rifle-platoon leaders that an emergency school for new lieutenants opened in the Louis XV wing of the Château de Fontainebleau, with classes in map-reading, patrolling, and camouflage. Many of these students were among the almost 30,000 U.S. enlisted men who received battlefield commissions during the war. Army draft levies, which had just increased from 60,000 to 90,000 men a month, would jump again in March to 100,000. SHAEF expected the western armies to grow to 85 divisions by May.

That would have to suffice. Britain had nearly run out of men and the American replacement pool was described as "almost depleted," with much hard fighting still to come against Germany and Japan. Eisenhower asked for a hundred thousand Marines; he would get none. Patton calculated that victory in western Europe required "twenty more divisions of infantry"; that was a pipe dream. Eisenhower would have to win with the forces now committed to his theater, and no more.

The Battle of the Bulge had affirmed once again that war is never linear, but rather a chaotic, desultory enterprise of reversal and advance, blunder and élan, despair and elation. Valor, cowardice, courage—each had been displayed in this spectacle of a marching world. For magnitude and unalloyed violence, the battle in the Ardennes was unlike any seen before in American history, nor like any to be seen again. Yet as always, even as armies and army groups collided, it was the fates of individual soldiers that drew the eye.

"Everybody shares the same universals—hope, love, humor, faith," Private First Class Richard E. Cowan of the 2nd Infantry Division had written his family in Kansas on December 5, his twenty-second birthday. Two weeks later he was dead, killed near Krinkelt after holding off German attackers with a machine gun long enough to cover his comrades' escape. "It is such a bitter dose to have to take," his mother confessed after hearing the news, "and I am not a bit brave about it." Cowan would be awarded the Medal of Honor, one of thirty-two recognizing heroics in the Bulge. Like so many thousands of others, he would be interred in one of those two-by-five-by-six-and-a-half-foot graves, along with his last full measure of hope, love, humor, and faith. The marching world marched on.

Affixed to a wall in Montgomery's caravan, amid the photos of Rommel and Rundstedt and the field marshal himself, was a copy of Sir Francis Drake's meditation before his attack on Cádiz in 1587. "There must be a beginning of any great matter," Drake had written, "but the continuing unto the end until it is thoroughly finished yields the true glory." So too in this great matter, this struggle for civilization itself. The moment had come to seize the true glory.

Part Four

10. ARGONAUTS

Citizens of the World

MORNING sun and a tranquil breeze carried hints of an early Mediterranean spring across Grand Harbour, where strains of "The Star-Spangled Banner" could be heard from a Royal Navy band practicing aboard H.M.S. *Sirius* on Friday, February 2. Not since Eisenhower's arrival with his headquarters in July 1943, just before the invasion of Sicily, had the little island of Malta seethed with such excitement. Hundreds of Allied officers now swarmed through the capital, Valletta, where an Anglo-American strategy conference code-named CRICKET had convened to consider the weightiest matters of war and peace.

Sixteen thousand tons of Axis bombs had pulverized Malta from 1940 to 1943, clogging every street with drifted rubble and giving Valletta the gaunt, haunted mien of the Maltese themselves. Difficulties in finding enough intact buildings to house the CRICKET legations had exasperated conference planners, who warned that "a certain amount of inconvenience must be expected." (They also cautioned that "spreading of rumors and gossip in Malta is a national pastime, so please discuss nothing in public.") The Americans alone occupied sixteen barracks, palazzi, and improvised hostels, including the local YWCA and the Lascaris Bastion, a dank warren excavated eons ago by the Knights of St. John, a monastic order founded during the First Crusade. The honey-hued sandstone long favored by Maltese builders was so porous that even buildings unbruised by enemy bombs were said by one airman to resemble "ventilated cold-storage vaults." Allied officers took their meals in winter garb, and an admiral described trying to sleep while wrapped in a dressing gown, raincoat, overcoat, and several blankets. To provide more billets, nine U.S. Navy ships had berthed in Grand Harbour, lauded by a visitor as "perhaps the most astonishing natural anchorage in the world." An LST from Naples served as a floating garage for staff cars.

To compensate for any discomfort, every officer was permitted seventy pounds of luggage, and CRICKET's British hosts assigned each a batman to fetch the daily newspaper. "The shine he put on my shoes lasted for weeks," an American delegate marveled. An efficient valet service pressed uniforms overnight, and bars opened punctually at six P.M. A twenty-piece orchestra played until midnight in Admiralty House, once home to the Captain of the Galleys; marble scrolls on the wide staircase listed the name of every British sea dog to command the Mediterranean fleet for the past century and a half, Lord Nelson among them. A local librarian gave walking tours to explain Malta's exotic history, beginning with the Phoenicians and the Carthaginians: how shipwrecked Saint Paul converted the Maltese to Christianity with proselytizing fervor and perhaps a miracle or two; how the knights in the sixteenth century paid the Holy Roman emperor Charles V an annual rent of one falcon, due on All Souls' Day, a curiosity used by Dashiell Hammett in his novel *The Maltese Falcon;* how Turkish brigands captured Fort St. Elmo in 1565, nailing defenders to wooden crosses that were floated across Grand Harbour; how the Maltese retaliated by decapitating Turkish prisoners and ramming the severed heads into cannon breeches, then firing them at the enemy redoubt. Malta clearly was a place of no quarter.

At 9:30 A.M. on Friday, the pugnacious gray prow of the cruiser U.S.S. *Quincy* glided past that same Fort St. Elmo, escorted by U.S.S. *Savannah*, revived and refitted after nearly being sunk by a German glide bomb off Salerno seventeen months earlier. A half-dozen Spitfires wheeled overhead like osprey, and whooping crowds lined the rooftops and the beetling seawalls around the quays. "The entrance to the harbor is so small that it seemed impossible for our big ship to get through," a passenger on *Quincy* wrote.

As the cruiser crept at four knots along the stone embankment, a solitary figure could be seen sitting on the wing bridge, wrapped in a boat cloak with a tweed tam-o'-shanter atop his leonine head and a cigarette holder clenched between his teeth. For this journey he had been assigned a sequence of code names—BRONZE, GARNET, STEEL, and, from the British, ADMIRAL Q—but now there was no hiding his identity. Tars and swabs came to attention on weather decks across the anchorage. A field piece at the fort boomed a slow salute of twenty-one rounds, and that band aboard *Sirius* tootled through the much-rehearsed American anthem to herald the arrival of Franklin D. Roosevelt, president of the United States. The diplomat Charles E. Bohlen described the moment:

> The sun was glistening on the waves and a light breeze was snapping the flags flying from the British warships and walls of the city.… Roosevelt sat on deck, his black cape around his shoulders, acknowledging salutes from the British man-of-war and the rolling cheers of spectators crowding the quays. He was very much a historical figure.

Across the harbor, on the quarterdeck of H.M.S. *Orion*, another historical figure stood in a naval uniform, puffing a cigar and waving his yachtsman's cap until the American president spotted Winston Churchill and waved back. An abrupt hush fell across the harbor. "It was one of those moments," another witness wrote, "when all seems to stand still and one is conscious of a mark in history." *Quincy* eased her starboard flank against Berth 9. Thick hawsers lassoed the bollards, and the harbor pilot signaled belowdecks: "Through with engines."

Since leaving Washington eleven days earlier, Roosevelt had traveled just under five thousand miles. Sea voyages always enchanted him and this trip had been no different, despite an annoying cold that confined him to his cabin for part of the passage. He devoted little time to the briefing books and studies prepared by the State Department, preferring to sleep or watch movies—*Laura*, *Our Hearts Were Young and Gay*, *To Have and Have Not* —or thumb through pulp mysteries packed for the trip, with portentous titles like *Death Defies the Doctor* and *Blood upon the Snow*. A special elevator hoisted him to the flag bridge, where he liked to sit in an admiral's swivel chair, staring at the pewter sea and the destroyers darting fore and aft. A strong-swimming Secret Service agent stood near, prepared to leap overboard with the president in his arms should *Quincy* be torpedoed or mined. But two suspected submarine contacts proved to be fish, and the only peril encountered was a nasty swell two days out of Newport News that caused the destroyer *Satterlee* to roll sixty-one degrees. After supper, Roosevelt often played poker or gin rummy for half a penny a point, ruminating on the recent election—he had just won a fourth term, by 432 electoral votes to 99—and on the subsequent inauguration, held not at the Capitol but on the White House portico, with thirteen of his grandchildren capering about.

To celebrate the president's sixty-third birthday on January 30, his traveling companions had wheeled four cakes into his cabin—one for each term—followed by a fifth that displayed a big question mark etched in frosting. *Quincy*'s crew gave him a brass ashtray fashioned from a shell casing fired at Normandy on D-Day.

With *Quincy* made fast, the tweet of a bosun's whistle shortly after ten A.M. announced the first visitors, and George Marshall trooped up the gangplank accompanied by Admiral Ernest J. King, the U.S. Navy chief. They found the president basking topside in a wicker chair near a port gun mount. The officers exchanged silent looks of dismay at Roosevelt's appearance: he was haggard and ashen, with violet circles beneath his eyes. Bohlen, who also boarded the cruiser, later wrote:

> I was shocked by Roosevelt's physical appearance.… He was not only frail and desperately tired, he looked ill. I never saw Roosevelt look as bad as he did then, despite a week's leisurely voyage at sea.

Time magazine had catalogued the many rumors about the president's health: that he had been secretly rushed to the Mayo Clinic, that three psychiatrists attended him when he traveled, that he was anemic. The truth was worse. Not for decades would it be revealed that his blood pressure had climbed from 128 over 82, in 1930, to 260 over 150, in December 1944. In the past year he had shed nearly thirty pounds. ("Can't eat," he had complained in December. "Cannot taste food.") An examination by a cardiologist disclosed "a bluish discoloration of his skin, lips, and nail beds," with labored breathing, "bouts of abdominal distress," and symptoms of an enlarged heart and fluid in the lungs—all leading to a diagnosis of congestive heart failure. He had indeed been anemic, from chronic bleeding hemorrhoids exacerbated by his inability to stand or walk, and he had suffered symptoms of a mild heart attack in August while giving a speech in Washington State. For various ailments he was periodically treated with phenobarbital and injections of codeine. His personal physician ordered that as little as possible be revealed to Roosevelt, who took the prescribed green digitalis pills without asking what they were and made fitful efforts to halve his daily smoking and drinking to ten cigarettes and one and a half cocktails, as recommended. "Lots of sleep & still need more," he would write his secretary from Valletta later on Friday. Each day the White House press office leafed through official photographs in search of images to show the public that did not suggest a decrepit, dying man. That task had become almost impossible.

Yet if the body was frail, the inner man remained steadfast. To the end of his days Roosevelt would be, as the scholar James MacGregor Burns later wrote, an "improviser, a practical man, a dreamer and a sermonizer, a soldier of the faith, a prince of the state." Today he was eager to hear of Allied progress on the Western Front, and since Eisenhower had chosen not to attend CRICKET—he pled the demands of battle—Marshall and King spent more than half an hour describing to Roosevelt the SHAEF plan for reaching the Rhine, seizing bridgeheads, and advancing by two complementary avenues toward the Ruhr. They also outlined Montgomery's alternative single-prong thrust in the north. Calling for a map, the president reminisced about bicycling through the Rhineland as a young man, green and carefree. He knew that terrain, knew it well, he said, and Eisenhower's scheme made perfect sense. As commander-in-chief, he approved.

Another trill of the bosun's pipe announced Churchill's arrival on the quarterdeck, beaming and natty in his tailored blue uniform with a handkerchief peeking from the breast pocket. He too was traveling under various noms de guerre—Colonel Warden, Colonel Kent, TUNGSTEN, CHROME—and, at age seventy, he too had been ill, arriving by plane in Valletta three days earlier febrile and out of sorts. "His work has deteriorated a lot in the last few months," his physician, Charles Moran, noted in his diary on Wednesday. "He has become very wordy." Sunshine, whiskey, and a few winning hands of bezique seemed to restore him, and for an hour over lunch he prattled to Roosevelt about his "complete devotion to the principles enunciated in America's Declaration of Independence." The president smiled indulgently; he often complained of "pushing Winston uphill in a wheelbarrow" when it came to applying those principles to Britain's imperial possessions. The war in Europe would likely end this year, Roosevelt said, although the defeat of Japan might not come until 1947. Peace would bring a chance to remake a principled world.

Churchill retrieved an eight-inch cigar, firing it with a small candle on a tobacco tray at his elbow. Citizens in too many countries feared their own governments, he said, and they must be freed from such fear. "As long as blood flows from my veins," he added with a theatrical flourish, "I will stand for this." Roosevelt could only agree; together they would spread the Four Freedoms around the globe, including freedom from fear. But for now the president intended to see a bit of Malta before they reconvened for dinner. As Churchill turned to go, Roosevelt confided that he had slept ten hours every night since leaving Washington, but had yet to feel "slept out."

Off he went for thirty miles in a touring car on this sparkling day, escorted by the island's governor-general, through battered Valletta and Ghajn Tuffieha and walled Mdina. Maltese peasants and tradesmen snatched the caps from their heads as the convoy

sped by, saluting with a knuckle touched to the brow. By 4:30 that afternoon Roosevelt was back aboard *Quincy*, where Churchill eventually joined him for cocktails in the wardroom. The prime minister, having insisted on a leisurely bath, was half an hour late. The Charlie-Charlies also arrived, except for Hap Arnold, the Army Air Forces commander, recuperating at home from his fourth heart attack.

To president and prime minister the chiefs reported "complete agreement" on Eisenhower's plan for concluding the war in Europe. Churchill, who was uncommonly chatty even by his voluble standard, tendered advice about reserve divisions along the Rhine. He also proposed occupying as much of Austria as possible to keep the Russians at bay; the prime minister had long recognized that the maneuvering of armies would shape postwar politics, but this was the first time he had suggested positioning Anglo-American troops to impede Soviet expansion.

Roosevelt nodded now and again but said little. At eight o'clock, dinner was served.

* * *

This amiable gathering concealed the most rancorous confrontation of the war between the British and American high commands. The donnybrook had begun innocently enough three days earlier, when the Combined Chiefs met at noon on Tuesday for the 182nd time since first making common cause in January 1942. Above Grand Harbour, in a former market building known as Montgomery House and made so noisome by kerosene heaters that the officers preferred to sit bundled in their overcoats, a SHAEF delegation led by Beetle Smith once more presented Eisenhower's plan: destroy the enemy west of the Rhine, jump the river, then advance "into the heart of Germany" on two axes. Straightening the line along the Rhine, from Alsace to Holland, would forestall further German counterattacks by using the river as a defensive barrier while the Allies coiled for their final offensive. The entire U.S. Ninth Army would reinforce Montgomery in the north, Smith said; the second lunge toward Frankfurt and Kassel, by Bradley's 12th Army Group, would help envelop the Ruhr from the south and deliver a right-hand roundhouse punch should the left hook of 21st Army Group be stymied.

Again Field Marshal Brooke took on the role of naysayer. Thin, sallow, and round-shouldered, privately known as Colonel Shrapnel, Brooke was both formidable and easily parodied. "Men admired, feared, and liked him: in that order, perhaps," the *Economist* magazine observed. His civil passions were homely and endearing: lake fishing, Cox's Orange Pippin apples, mimicry, a bit of opera, wildlife photography (in which he was a pioneer), and, most especially, birds—he could go on and on about Knipe's *Monograph of the Pigeons*. Raised in France, the youngest of nine children born to a baronet from Northern Ireland, he had hoped to become a physician. Instead, as a young soldier Brooke proved to be "a gunner of genius in the great barrage-duels of the First World War," a biographer wrote. Exploiting both mathematics and psychology, he was particularly adept at the creeping barrage and a practice known as "searching back," intended to catch unwary enemies as they emerged from cover.

The tactic befitted the man. Never convivial, Brooke after another five years of world war was often dyspeptic and dispirited. "I don't feel that I can stand another day working with Winston," he had confided to his diary a few days earlier. "He is finished and gone, incapable of grasping any military situation and unable to get a decision." But it was the cousins who most irked him, particularly as British clout dwindled and American influence grew. Now, as if again "searching back" at the Somme, he targeted Smith.

The British chiefs, Brooke said in his clipped staccato, believed the Allies had "not sufficient strength available for two major operations." One attack avenue must be chosen, and only one. Montgomery's route in the north appeared "the most promising," given its proximity to both Antwerp and the Ruhr. Bradley's southern assault would dilute Allied strength by diverting bridging kit and other matériel. The Bulge had revealed the folly of Eisenhower's broad-front strategy in spreading an attack too thin. "Closing up the Rhine on its whole length," as SHAEF proposed, could retard the advance. Would Montgomery have to wait on the riverbank until the Colmar Pocket was eradicated? Until Bradley's forces crossed the Roer and cleared the Saar?

This argument had dragged on for five months, but Smith kept his poise to rally in defense of the SHAEF plan. Eisenhower intended to support "every single division which could be maintained logistically" in the north, he said, but topography required Montgomery to attack the Rhine on a narrow, four-division front that "might bog down" if confronted by Rundstedt's residual host. Montgomery himself had acknowledged that barely two dozen divisions could be supported east of the Rhine in his sector until rail bridges spanned the river; Eisenhower was committed to supplying three dozen there, plus another ten divisions to exploit any breakthrough. But why should nearly forty other American and French divisions remain dormant when Germany clearly lacked sufficient strength to defend the entire Western Front? Putting all eggs in a single basket, Smith added, would be risky.

Marshall concurred, warning that it was "not safe to rely on one line of advance only." The session adjourned without agreement, and Smith hurriedly cabled Eisenhower in Versailles. The British "will insist on something in writing to clinch the fact that the main effort on the north is to be pushed," he wrote; they also wanted assurances that an attack on the Ruhr would not be delayed "until you have eliminated every German west of the Rhine." The supreme commander replied promptly:

> You may assure the Combined Chiefs of Staff in my name that I will seize the Rhine crossings in the north just as soon as this is a feasible operation and without waiting to close the Rhine throughout its length. Further, I will advance across the Rhine in the north with maximum strength and complete determination.

This pleased Brooke not at all, given Eisenhower's continued insistence on bifurcating his force. To his diary on Wednesday, Colonel Shrapnel confided, "When we met at 2:30 P.M. the situation was more confused than ever, as Bedell Smith had sent another wire to Ike which was also impossible and Ike had wired back. So we were again stuck.… I am feeling very tired, and old!"

Worse was to come. As Brooke prepared to climb into bed at midnight in the San Anton Palace, Smith appeared at his door for further discussion. The conversation grew warm. Brooke wondered whether Eisenhower had "his hands too full," and whether his headquarters was too far from the front. Was he in fact "strong enough" for the job, or too readily swayed by whichever commander had seen him last? "Goddamn it," Smith barked. "Let's have it out here and now." For an hour they traded jabs, until spent by exhaustion and the late hour. "I think the talk did both of us good," Brooke wrote before falling asleep, "and may help in easing the work tomorrow."

That was unlikely. Alerted by Smith to the late-night altercation, George Marshall had had enough. Not only did the British carping imply lack of faith in Eisenhower, but Brooke and his ilk appeared to champion Montgomery against his superior officer. "Please leave this to me," Marshall told Admiral King.

As the chiefs convened again on Thursday afternoon, February 1, Marshall asked that the room be cleared of all subordinate officers and note-takers. No sooner had Brooke taken his chair than Marshall bored in. Why were the British so worried about the influence that Bradley and Patton had on Eisenhower? What about Roosevelt's influence? Did the British consider that pernicious, too? "The president practically never sees General Eisenhower, and never writes to him. That is at my advice because he is an Allied commander," Marshall said, eyebrows knit and voice rising to a wrathful timbre. In fact the British chiefs could not be "nearly as much worried as the American chiefs of staff are about the immediate pressures of Mr. Churchill on General Eisenhower." The prime minister never hesitated to hector the supreme commander directly, day or night, circumventing the Combined Chiefs. "I think your worries," Marshall declared, "are on the wrong foot."

He had not finished. Should the British succeed in interposing a ground commander between the supreme commander and his three army group commanders, Marshall intended to resign—or so he had told Eisenhower. Montgomery was behind much of this pother, Marshall charged; despite being given "practically everything he asked for," including the U.S. Ninth Army, he plainly craved "complete command." If truth be told, Montgomery was an "over-cautious commander who wants everything," an "impudent and disloyal subordinate" who treated all American officers with "open contempt."

A stunned silence followed this tirade. After the war Brooke would write: "Marshall clearly understood nothing of strategy and could not even argue out the relative merits of various alternatives. Being unable to judge for himself he trusted and backed Ike, and felt it his duty to guard him from interference." But Admiral Cunningham, the first sea lord, later observed that "Marshall's complaint was not unjustified."

For now, American indignation carried the day. Brooke fell silent, the chiefs promptly agreed to endorse SHAEF's master plan, and the last great internecine tempest of the war subsided. For another month, the British conspired to replace Tedder as deputy supreme commander with Harold Alexander, whom they considered more pliant despite Brooke's dismissal of him as "a very, very small man [who] cannot see big." Eisenhower, braced by Marshall, advised London that if Alexander should arrive at SHAEF from Italy, he would find few military duties to occupy him. Spaatz would succeed Tedder as senior airman in the west, and there would be "no question whatsoever of placing between me and my army group commanders any intermediary headquarters."

Few could doubt that the Americans now had the whip hand. "The P.M. was sore," Kay Summersby jotted in her diary, "but E said he would get over it."

* * *

Light rain spattered Luqa airdrome southwest of Valletta in the smallest hours of Saturday, February 3. A fleet of twenty-five transport aircraft, collectively known as Mission No. 17, stood beneath arc lights on the bustling flight line. Trucks and staff cars crept along the runway in search of this plane or that. Baggage handlers hoisted suitcases and crates into the bays—sealed boxes with secret documents bore black bands and yellow tags—while flight chiefs with clipboards carefully scrutinized the blue-and-white passes of the passengers clambering into the cabins. CRICKET was over; now would come ARGONAUT, a conference with Joseph Stalin at the Crimean resort of Yalta, on the Black Sea.

Roosevelt in recent months had proposed venues from Scotland to Jerusalem. Stalin, pleading ill health and the demands of his great offensive against Germany's Eastern Front, countered with Yalta, a proposal that sent Anglo-American officials paging through their Baedeker guides. "I emphasized the difficulties that this decision made for you, but that in consideration of Marshal Stalin's health you were prepared to meet them," W. Averell Harriman, the U.S. ambassador to Moscow, had written Roosevelt in late December. Among the difficulties cited, aside from the seven-hour, fourteen-hundred-mile flight from Malta to a remote locale and Roosevelt's own precarious health: "toilet facilities will be meager [and] there are no bars"; travelers were advised to bring sleeping bags and ample "bug powder"; electric current at Yalta was an odd 330 volts; and the Turkish government had given overflight permission for Mission No. 17, but "cannot guarantee that the planes will not be fired upon." To a man the president's advisers had opposed his making such an arduous journey, but Roosevelt insisted. As his aide Harry Hopkins later remarked, "his adventurous spirit was forever leading him to go to unusual places."

Roosevelt and Churchill had agreed to limit their respective entourages to 35 people; instead, a total of 700 were flying from Malta, with more descending on the Crimea by train from Moscow and others arriving by ship. The Americans numbered 330, among them 14 generals, 15 full colonels, 18 bodyguards, and 8 cooks and stewards. The British travel roster ran on for eleven pages, including 62 signalers, 58 Royal Marines, a catering captain, a pair of cinema operators, 5 map-room officers, and 17 members of Churchill's personal staff. Each traveler had been told to "invent a suitable and plausible cover story to account for departure and absence" from home, and the British Board of Trade discreetly issued 2,400 ration coupons for purchases of clothing suitable for "a place abroad where the climate is cold." Churchill alone requested an extra 72 coupons to buy new uniforms and underwear.

In view of the rustic conditions anticipated at Yalta, the commissary list prepared by British provisioners for transport aboard Mission No. 17 included 144 bottles of whiskey, 144 bottles of sherry, 144 bottles of gin, 200 pounds of bacon, 200 pounds of coffee, 50 pounds of tea, 100 rolls of toilet paper, 2,500 paper napkins, 650 dinner plates, 350 tea cups and saucers, 500 tumblers, 100 wineglasses, 20 salt and pepper shakers, 400 sets of cutlery, 36 tablecloths, and 13 sugar bowls. Moreover, R.M.S. *Franconia*, bound for Yalta through the Dardanelles, carried a supplemental 864 bottles of whiskey and gin, 180 bottles of sherry, 20,000 American cigarettes, 500 cigars, and 1,000 boxes of matches. A separate shipment designated "Yalta Voyage 208" included several hundred bottles of Rhine wine, vermouth, Gordon's gin, Johnnie Walker Red Label and King George IV whiskies, and 1928 Veuve Clicquot champagne, as well as 20,000 Chesterfield and Philip Morris cigarettes, 500 Robert Burns cigars, and a carton of toilet paper. For good measure, a consignment for Yalta entrusted to the British ambassador in Moscow included a dozen bottles of 1928 Château Margaux, cognac, beer, 10,000 Players cigarettes, and 48 bottles of White Horse, Black & White, and Vat 69 whiskies. No one would go thirsty. Churchill advised the White House that whiskey "is good for typhus and deadly on lice."

"We left Malta in darkness," an Army colonel wrote, "like migrating swans." The first plane lifted into the low ceiling at 1:50 A.M., blue flame spurting from the exhaust manifolds as the pilot pushed the throttle to full power on Luqa's short runway. Other aircraft followed at ten-minute intervals. The flight plan would take these swans across the Mediterranean almost to German-occupied Crete, followed by a ninety-degree left turn over the Aegean, past Athens and Samothrace, before the planes crossed European Turkey and the Black Sea. With radio silence imposed, pilots extinguished their lights at takeoff. Passengers set their watches ahead two hours and tried to sleep.

Churchill boarded a four-engine C-54 Skymaster provided him by the Army Air Forces; he claimed that British artisans had used five thousand animal hides to upholster the plush cabin. Huddled in his greatcoat, the prime minister resembled "a poor hot pink baby about to cry," in the description of his daughter Sarah, who was in his traveling party.

Down the flight line stood C-54 No. 252, named *Sacred Cow,* which would be making her maiden flight with a passenger identified on the manifest only as "The Admiral." Soon a caged elevator hoisted Roosevelt in his wheelchair into the plane's aft cabin. Churchill would later recall that the president's face "had a transparency, an air of purification." There was "a faraway look in his eyes."

Spitfire and P-38 fighter escorts already droned overhead. Aircrews in recent weeks had experimented to determine the lowest possible altitude that balanced safety and comfort: the flight would be made at 6,000 feet. The engines coughed and caught. Silver propellers whirred beneath a wet moon. At 3:30 A.M. *Sacred Cow* nosed into the night and banked to the east.

A Fateful Conference

WEDGED into a natural amphitheater between the Black Sea and the Crimean Mountains, Yalta seemed to have been built for drama. The towering peaks, bearing the gray scars of ancient avalanches, loomed above the town like "a vision of the Sierras," as Mark Twain had written in *The Innocents Abroad*. Anton Chekhov, who wrote *The Cherry Orchard* and *Three Sisters* at his villa in Yalta, observed in "The Lady with the Pet Dog":

> The stories told of the immorality in such places as Yalta are to a great extent untrue … tales of easy conquests, of trips to the mountains, and the tempting thought of a swift, fleeting love affair.… The town with its cypresses had quite a deathlike air, but the sea still broke noisily on the shore; a single barge was rocking on the waves, and a lantern was blinking sleepily on it.

That sea—to the ancients, Pontus Euxinus, Sea Friendly to Strangers—had broken noisily on a shore occupied by Cimmerians and Scythians, Greeks and Genoese, Tartars and Russian princes. Two thousand annual hours of sunshine—comparable to Nice—suggested salutary conditions on the Crimean coast, and the first of three dozen sanatoriums for tuberculars and other invalids had been financed by progressive intellectuals, including Chekhov and Maxim Gorky. In 1920, by Lenin's decree, Yalta became a workers' spa, a proletarian paradise of fig, mulberry, and beech groves overlooking an inky sea of imponderable depth.

Then came the Germans. Three years of warfare, including the epic siege at nearby Sevastopol, utterly despoiled the Crimea, and Stalin's invitation to the Anglo-Americans had triggered weeks of frenzied efforts to make Yalta presentable. Thousands of Red Army soldiers filled bomb craters, refurbished gutted houses, and shoveled manure from nineteenth-century palaces that the Germans had used to stable their horses. Fifteen hundred rail coaches ran from Moscow, a four-day journey, bringing carpets, window glass, and even brass doorknobs, which the absconding enemy had sawed off and carried away. Chefs, waiters, chambermaids, maîtres d's, linens, beds, curtains, dishes, and silverware were gathered from the Hotels Metropol, National, Splendide, and Moscow for duty at Yalta. Each night a Russian convoy swept across the Crimea, rooting through farmhouses, boarding rooms, and schools for shaving mirrors, washbowls, coat hangers, clocks, and paintings. Swarms of plasterers, plumbers, painters, electricians, and glazers worked around the clock. Five hundred Romanian prisoners-of-war planted shrubs and semitropical flowers in riotous profusion.

British and American support ships were diverted to Sevastopol when it was found that Yalta's coastal waters remained clogged with German mines. ("They didn't leave a map," a Russian officer explained with a shrug.) From the ships' holds, office furniture, two hundred tons of radio equipment, and all that tipple aboard *Franconia* was trucked for fifty miles—and nine hundred hairpin turns—across the mountains. A "sanitary survey," conducted in Yalta on January 28 by U.S. Navy physicians, found a "marked

infestation with bed bugs"; hundreds of mattresses and pillows were sprayed with a 10 percent solution of DDT dissolved in kerosene. Linens were dusted with DDT powder and, for good measure, Russian kitchen staffs received instruction in "hygienic practices."

Four Soviet regiments arrived to safeguard Yalta, in addition to 160 fighter planes, several antiaircraft batteries, and Stalin's security cordon of 620 men, reinforced by a personal bodyguard of a dozen Georgians carrying tommy guns. Seventy-four thousand security checks were made within a twenty-kilometer diameter of the town, and 835 suspected "anti-Soviet elements" arrested. Three concentric circles of sentries ringed the Soviet, British, and American compounds, and the woods grew stiff with shadowy agents. Eavesdroppers with listening bugs and directional microphones also arrived from Moscow, intent on overhearing as many private conversations as possible.

Despite the efforts of all those Soviet maids and maîtres d's, ARGONAUT would be more rough-hewn than earlier conclaves in venues like Casablanca, Quebec, and Washington. "Regret necessity for nineteen full colonels sleeping one room," a terse message to the British delegation warned. Lieutenant General Hastings Ismay, the prime minister's military assistant, later wrote, "It would have been difficult to find a more unget-at-able, inconvenient, or unsuitable meeting place."

Yet apprehension ran far deeper than concerns over crowded quarters and bed bugs. "This may well be a fateful conference," Churchill had told Roosevelt. "The end of this war may well prove to be more disappointing than was the last." ARGONAUT would help shape the postwar world. Now all that remained was for the Argonauts themselves to arrive.

Sacred Cow touched down at 12:10 P.M. on Saturday at Saki airfield on the Crimean west coast, followed twenty minutes later by the prime minister's upholstered Skymaster. Wearing his cape and a gray fedora with the brim turned up, Roosevelt descended in the caged elevator to the icy runway, where a Secret Service agent lifted him into a Russian jeep. He was greeted by Vyacheslav Molotov, the Soviet foreign minister, known privately to the Americans as "Stone Ass." With Churchill standing at his elbow smoking a cigar, the president took the salute of a high-stepping, white-gloved honor guard from whose rifles live ammunition had been confiscated. All twenty-five planes from Mission No. 17 stood in perfect alignment as the captain of the guard marched past holding a sword "straight in front of him like a great icicle," wrote Charles Moran. A band crashed through three national anthems and then the "Internationale."

> We will destroy this world of violence,
> Down to the foundations, and then
> We will build our new world.
> He who was nothing will become everything.

"The president looked old and thin and drawn," Moran added. "He sat looking straight ahead with his mouth open, as if he were not taking things in." Three large tents stood near the crude control tower. Tables inside were heaped with platters of salmon, sturgeon, whitefish, caviar, and black bread. Beside steaming glasses of tea stood pitchers of vodka, as well as bottles of cognac and champagne. Marshall, muffled in a fur-lined khaki overcoat, glanced disapprovingly at this repast and muttered, "Let's get going."

Soon a weaving convoy of sedans and buses followed the unpaved road to Yalta, eighty miles and five hours away. No photograph or Movietone footage could have more vividly conveyed to the Western Allies the intensity of the war being waged by their eastern comrades: mile upon mile of gutted buildings, barns, crofts, trains, tanks, trucks. Peasant women in shawls and knee boots waved from barren fields and from orchards reduced to flinders. Except for a few sheep, no livestock could be seen, or farm machinery, or men for that matter, apart from the sentries in greatcoats and astrakhan hats, one every hundred yards, saluting each passing vehicle with an abrupt extension of their rifles at a thirty-degree angle. Churchill passed the time by reciting Lord Byron's epic poem *Don Juan*. Beyond bleak Simferopol, the terrain lifted from snowy moor to mountain. The Route Romanoff followed a high, winding trace around the limestone flank of Roman-Kosh, the highest peak in the Crimea, before descending to the serpentine coastal road above the sea, each mile warmer than the mile before, until shortly before six P.M. they came to Yalta. Female traffic wardens waved them through with a waggle of red and yellow flags.

Churchill and the British contingent peeled away for their assigned billets in the Villa Vorontsov, described by Ismay as "a fantastic mixture of bogus Scottish castle and Moorish palace"; its furnishings, another guest said, radiated "an almost terrifying hideosity." Built for a Russian governor in the early nineteenth century, with a handsome view of the Black Sea, the estate had served as a headquarters for Field Marshal Erich von Manstein during the Germans' Crimean offensive. Great logs now burned in the hearths, and Russian housekeepers in black livery scurried about in an effort to accommodate the visitors. When Sarah Churchill mentioned that caviar was improved by lemon juice, a tub holding a lemon tree heavy with fruit appeared in the foyer. When Air Marshal Portal noted that a large glass tank lacked fish, goldfish swam on the instant.

Alas, Moran complained, "nothing is left out but cleanliness." Bedbugs soon brought American fumigators with their DDT sprayers—too late for Churchill's badly gnawed feet, although a bigger, bug-free bed was shipped by special train from Moscow. Generals and admirals now shared cells built for serfs—"We sleep in droves like prep school boys in dormitories," one officer wrote his wife—and just two bathrooms with cold taps served the entire villa. Sarah wrote her mother of seeing "3 field marshals queuing for a bucket" to relieve themselves. Yalta, the prime minister would harrumph, was surely "the Riviera of Hades." Perhaps only Brooke was happy: "I picked up a great northern diver, scoters, cormorants, many gulls and other diving ducks," he told his diary. "Also dolphins feeding on shoals of fish."

Ten miles away the Americans settled into the fifty-room Villa Livadia, a two-story, flat-roofed palace of limestone and marble set on a sea bluff. Suitcases and musette bags were piled in the grand foyer, as the travelers arrived to be greeted by servants who bowed

at the waist and addressed Roosevelt as "Your Excellency." ("The president did not seem displeased," one general noted.) Here too the guests found an odd mixture of elegance and inconvenience. Waiters in swallowtail coats carried silver trays with little cakes and scalding tea in tall glasses, and caviar hillocks seemed to rise from every oak table. In a makeshift salon, a Russian barber and manicurist stood ready to groom the Americans, and the lush grounds around Livadia offered fifteen kilometers of walking paths lined with cedars, yews, and black cypresses shaped like exclamation points. Yet only four bathtubs and nine lavatories served more than one hundred Americans living on two floors in the villa; cards thumbtacked to the doors listed bathroom assignments by age, rank, and sex. (The president's daughter, Anna, was one of two women in the traveling party.) For the impatient, auxiliary latrines were dug in a nearby deer park. A notice to all delegates asked, "Please do not pilfer rooms and dining services for souvenirs."

An air of tragedy hung over Livadia, which had been built in 1911 as a summer palace for the last czar, Nicholas II, and his czarina, Alexandra, at a cost of two million rubles, paid in gold. Orthodox priests had spattered holy water and swung smoldering censers to bless each room. Little imagination was required to see the royal couple with their four daughters and ailing son arriving by imperial train from St. Petersburg, snacking on reindeer tongue and smoked herring as they cavorted through the villa or aboard the three-masted, twin-funneled royal yacht anchored below the bluff. It was said that lion-head embellishments on the marble benches outside the front entrance caricatured the czar; that he slept in a different room every night to foil assassins; that a private outside staircase had been used by the mystical Rasputin to visit the czarina. After abdicating in 1917, Nicholas futilely petitioned to retire at Livadia; instead, he and his family were murdered, and the villa became first a tuberculosis asylum and then a German division headquarters in 1941. Hitler had promised the estate to Rundstedt after the war for services rendered, and thus it escaped the torch.

Now Roosevelt slept in the czar's first-floor suite, whose décor was described as "early Pullman car," with brass lamps shaded in fringed orange silk and bottle-green harem cushions scattered across the floor. Marshall was assigned another royal bedroom upstairs, and Admiral King, to the great mirth of his comrades, occupied the czarina's boudoir.

* * *

At four o'clock on Sunday afternoon, the heavy wooden doors flew open and a Secret Service squad marched into the Livadia foyer, followed by a Soviet security phalanx at port arms. From a black Packard in the semicircular driveway emerged a short ursine figure in a round military cap and a greatcoat adorned with epaulets and six brass buttons. His trousers were tucked into boots of soft Caucasus leather with elevated heels, and on the khaki tunic of his marshal's uniform he wore the red ribbon and five-pointed star of a Hero of the Soviet Union. The impenetrable dark eyes and gray pushbroom mustache were softened by a slight smile that revealed irregular teeth, more black than bone in tint, and even the fading light showed that beneath a heavy coating of talcum powder his cheeks were dimpled with the smallpox scars he had incurred at age six. All conversation stopped—Russian servants were careful not to rattle the teacups—and junior officers pressed forward, necks craned, as if to catch a fleeting glimpse of Grendel.

Joseph Stalin intrigued even Franklin Roosevelt, who now greeted the marshal with a broad grin and an extended hand from behind the desk of his makeshift study in the palace. They shared native shrewdness, political acumen, and a conviction that their respective nations were about to become superpowers—a recent coinage that they would help define. In other respects the wealthy patrician had little in common with this son of a drunk cobbler and a mother born into serfdom. Roosevelt a few weeks later would tell his cabinet, preposterously, that during Stalin's youthful study for the priesthood "something entered into his nature of the way in which a Christian gentleman should behave"; in fact, he had left the seminary to specialize in bank robbery, extortion, and—as the first editor of the Bolshevik newspaper *Pravda*—manipulation of the masses. Calm, laconic, and often courteous, with, in Brooke's estimation, "a military brain of the highest caliber," he was also vindictive, enigmatic, and a murderer to rival Hitler. Still, Roosevelt repeatedly told his lieutenants, "I can handle Stalin." As for the marshal's perspective: he had observed a few months earlier that "Churchill is the kind of man who will pick your pocket of a *kopeck*.… Roosevelt is not like that. He dips his hand only for bigger coins."

Beneath a painting of a farmer plowing his field and a chandelier with bulbs of varying size and brilliance, they made small talk. The president was pleased they could have a private conversation before Churchill joined them. Stalin spoke a few snatches of English, perhaps learned from Hollywood movies, notably, "You said it!," "So what?," and "What the hell goes on around here?" With Bohlen translating and taking notes, Roosevelt assured the marshal that he was "living in comfort" at Livadia, where all plenary sessions would convene for the president's convenience. He observed that Allied military fortunes had "considerably improved" since their last meeting, in Teheran fourteen months earlier. With armies from east and west now edging closer, he hoped that General Eisenhower would be able to communicate directly with Soviet field commanders rather than routing all messages through the Combined Chiefs. The shocking pillage of Crimea made him "more bloodthirsty than a year ago," the president added, and he urged Stalin to consider offering a dinner toast "to the execution of fifty thousand officers of the German army."

The marshal replied that the carnage was much worse farther north in Ukraine; there the enemy's *Lebensraum* plan to settle ten million German colonists in the east had resulted in genocide. *Everyone* had become more bloody-minded, he said, for the Germans were "savages and seemed to hate with a sadistic hatred the creative work of human beings."

Roosevelt offered Stalin a cigarette and lighted another for himself. The British, he said, were "a peculiar people and wished to have their cake and eat it too." As for the French, he wholeheartedly agreed with Churchill's tart rationale for excluding De Gaulle from ARGONAUT. ("I cannot think of anything more unpleasant and impossible," Churchill had recently written Anthony Eden, his foreign secretary, "than having this menacing and hostile man in our midst.") Yet the president believed it might make sense for France to have a postwar occupation zone in Germany, along with the Big Three.

Why, Stalin asked, given how little France had contributed to winning the war?

"Only out of kindness," Roosevelt replied.

Stalin nodded. "That," he said in his thick Georgian accent, "would be the only reason to give France a zone."

They parted with another handshake. Later, tamping tobacco into his pipe, the marshal gestured toward the ailing man in the wheelchair and mused aloud, "Why did nature have to punish him so?"

* * *

Upon Churchill's arrival at 5:10 P.M., the first plenary session began with twenty-eight men convening in what had once been the Livadia state dining room. Half sat around a circular table covered in white damask and the rest perched on chairs along the walls. Measuring fifty by thirty feet, the chamber had double walnut doors at one end and a huge conical fireplace, now blazing merrily, at the other; half a dozen arched windows gave onto the garden. In this high-ceilinged room Nicholas and Alexandra in 1911 had celebrated the sixteenth birthday of their eldest daughter, the Grand Duchess Olga Nikolaevna, with a dress ball and a cotillion supper; as an autumn moon sailed above the Black Sea, the czar gave Olga a necklace of thirty-two diamonds and pearls. It was said that even in November the scent of roses had perfumed the night.

Much of ARGONAUT's initial meeting was given over to reports from the front. Speaking without notes, General Marshall offered a concise summary of circumstances in the west. The German salient in the Ardennes had been eliminated, he said, and Eisenhower hoped to cross the Rhine in March. Montgomery was readying an offensive southeast toward the Rhine above Düsseldorf, supported by the U.S. Ninth Army, which would drive northeast toward the same objective. The Ruhr would then be enveloped rather than assaulted frontally. A supporting attack by Bradley's army group would angle toward Frankfurt and beyond, with Devers's army group shielding the right wing. Tens of thousands of tons of cargo now arrived every day in European ports—this even though more than sixty V-1s and V-2s had pummeled Antwerp just two days earlier. Allied bombing continued to batter the Reich, Marshall added: in less than a year German oil production had dwindled to 20 percent of its peak.

The Soviet account, read by General of the Army Aleksei I. Antonov, was electrifying. The winter offensive launched east of Warsaw in mid-January had advanced three hundred miles in three weeks; the Germans evidently had expected Stalin to await better weather and so were caught out. Red Army troops outstripped even the ten to twelve miles a day their commanders had hoped for, and Soviet soldiers now stood on the Oder River, less than fifty miles from Berlin. Enemy forces in East Prussia had been cut off, with Soviet legions sweeping toward Stettin, Danzig, and Königsberg on the Baltic. Industrial Silesia had been overrun. Red Army political officers were nailing up signs with messages scrawled in diesel oil: "You are now in goddamn Germany." Antonov estimated that forty-five German divisions already had been destroyed in the offensive.

The Soviets currently possessed a seven-to-one superiority over the Germans in tanks, eleven-to-one in infantry, twenty-to-one in artillery. Hitler had shifted reserves from the west, but many were diverted to Budapest, or to screen Vienna and the Hungarian oil fields. Stalin chimed in to say that on the central front in western Poland, Soviet divisions outnumbered German by 180 to 80. Neither he nor Antonov noted the liberation near Kraków a week earlier of Auschwitz, among the most heinous of Nazi concentration camps. Only a few thousand inmates had been found alive, but subsequent investigation would reveal the extermination of more than a million people, mostly Jews, and unspeakable medical experiments. The Germans had not had time to cart away seven tons of women's hair shorn from victims, or 348,820 men's suits and 836,515 dresses, neatly baled, or the pyramids of dentures and spectacles whose owners had been reduced to ash and smoke.

"Our wishes," Antonov said, "are to speed up the advance of the Allied troops on the Western front." German defenses had congealed east of Berlin; although Eisenhower in Versailles was offering three-to-one odds that the Russians would enter the enemy capital by March 31, that proved optimistic. Many Soviet divisions had been pared to fewer than four thousand men, with shortages of air support and artillery ammunition. Bridgeheads on the Oder remained pinched. Rain, snow, and mud slowed the armies' momentum, as did the need to shift supply lines from Russian rail gauges to narrower western European tracks. Enemy counterattacks threatened the flanks in East Pomerania. Antonov put Red Army casualties in the past three weeks at 400,000, almost quadruple U.S. losses in the Bulge. When Admiral King complimented Soviet valor, Stalin replied, "It takes a very brave man not to be a hero in the Russian army."

Valor, yes, but also iniquity. Soviet atrocities were now rampant in the east; they included the burning of villages, wanton murder, and mass rape in East Prussia, Silesia, and elsewhere. By late 1945, an estimated two million German women would be sexually assaulted by Red Army assailants, and that figure excluded Poles and liberated Soviet women who had been kidnapped by the Wehrmacht to Germany as slave laborers. In Königsberg, nurses would be dragged from operating tables to be gang raped. "Our men shoot the ones who try to save their children," a Soviet officer said. German fathers executed their daughters to spare them further defilement, and raped women were nailed by their hands to the farm carts carrying away their families as part of the migration of 7.5 million Germans to the west over the next few months. "They are going to remember this march by our army over German territory for a long, long time," a Russian soldier wrote his father. Of these things, nothing was said—not in the Livadia salon that day, nor at any point during ARGONAUT.

At 8:30 P.M., Roosevelt, Churchill, Stalin, and eleven others adjourned to dinner "in very good humor," according to Bohlen's notes. Great care had been taken not to have thirteen at table lest the number discomfit the superstitious Roosevelt. Filipino mess boys served caviar, sturgeon, beef and macaroni, fried chicken, fruit, and layer cake, washed down with vodka and five types of wine. "The world will have its eyes on this conference," Churchill declared. "If it is successful, we will have peace for a hundred years." The prime minister was described by one diplomat as "drinking buckets of Caucasian champagne"; Stalin sipped only half his vodka during the innumerable toasts before discreetly recharging his glass with water.

Not until the final half hour did political issues arise, when table talk turned to the postwar epoch soon to come. "We three have to

decide how to keep the peace of the world," Stalin said, "and it will not be kept unless we three decide to do it." Surely it was "ridiculous to believe that Albania would have an equal voice with the three great powers who had won the war," he continued, adding that the Soviet Union would "never agree to have any action of the great powers submitted to the judgment of the small powers."

Roosevelt agreed that "the great powers bore the greater responsibility," and should dictate the peace. But smaller nations could hardly be ignored. "We have, for instance," he said, "lots of Poles in America who are vitally interested in the future of Poland."

"But of your seven million Poles, only seven thousand vote," Stalin interjected, apparently concocting his statistics from thin air.

Great nations, Churchill declared, "should discharge their moral responsibility … with moderation and great respect for the rights of the small nations." Rising to his feet, he proposed a toast to "the proletariat masses of the world," then added, "The eagle should permit the small birds to sing and care not wherefore they sing."

Shortly after eleven P.M. the gathering dissolved. Much work lay ahead, but president, prime minister, and marshal agreed they had made a good start. Not everyone agreed. "A terrible party I thought," Anthony Eden noted in his diary. "President vague and loose and ineffective." Churchill had "made desperate efforts and too long speeches to get things going again. Stalin's attitude to small countries struck me as grim, not to say sinister."

* * *

Stalin's attitude toward Germany was far grimmer. He made this clear when the conference reconvened late Monday afternoon, February 5. "I should also like to discuss … the dismemberment of Germany," he told Roosevelt and Churchill, reminding them that at Teheran the president had proposed carving the Fatherland into five lesser states. "Hasn't the time come for decision? If you think so, let us make one."

"We are all agreed on dismemberment," Churchill said, "but the actual method, the tracing of lines, is much too complicated a matter to settle here in five or six days. It requires very searching examination of geography, history, and economic facts.… We reserve all rights over their land, their liberty, and their lives.… It is not necessary to discuss it with the Germans."

"No," Stalin agreed, "simply to demand from them."

Roosevelt asserted that he still favored "the division of Germany into five or seven states," but in fact the Anglo-Americans had backed away from such draconian solutions since their brief flirtation the previous fall with Henry Morgenthau's agrarian scheme.

"We are dealing with the fate of eighty million people and that requires more than eighty minutes to consider," Churchill said. Whatever the Allies decided must not leak to the enemy, he added. "Eisenhower doesn't want that. That would make the Germans all the harder. We should not make this public."

"No," Stalin said, a cigarette jutting from his mustache, "these questions for the moment are only for us. They should *not* be public until the time of surrender."

Glancing at a note slipped to him by Harry Hopkins, Roosevelt proposed deferring the matter until the three foreign ministers could devise a method for secretly studying dismemberment options. On the related issue of how postwar Germany should be occupied, the president observed that zones had been agreed upon by the European Advisory Commission in London but not yet approved by the Big Three governments. With a shuffle of paper he passed around a crude, hand-drawn map showing the tripartite division of Germany, including a jointly administered Berlin.

Churchill now raised the question of giving France an occupation zone, perhaps carved from the British and U.S. sectors, since the "French might be able to be of real assistance" in a protracted postwar period.

How long would U.S. forces likely remain in Europe? Stalin asked Roosevelt. "I can get the people and Congress to cooperate fully for peace but not to keep an army in Europe for a long time," the president replied. "Two years would be the limit."

"Germany should be run by those who have stood firmly against Germany and have made the greatest sacrifices," Stalin said. "We cannot forget that in this war France opened the gates to the enemy."

Churchill could hardly let the marshal's shabby amnesia pass unchallenged. ("He loves France like a woman," Moran told his diary later that evening.) But rather than remind Stalin of his 1939 nonaggression pact with Hitler, and of Moscow's congratulatory telegrams to Berlin following every subsequent Wehrmacht victory, the prime minister slyly mused that every nation had "difficulties in the beginning of the war and made mistakes." In postwar Europe, he insisted, "France must take her place."

But who should pay for the catastrophe? Much of the Soviet Union lay in ruins—Roosevelt and Churchill had seen that for themselves in the Crimea—and rebuilding would require many years. Since shortly after the German invasion in 1941, Stalin had pressed for reparations. Now, he said, the Soviets had a specific plan: German heavy industry would be reduced by 80 percent through confiscation of aviation plants, synthetic-oil facilities, and the like, and the Soviet Union would require payment from Berlin of $1 billion in German goods annually for a decade, with a like sum to the Anglo-Americans.

On this issue, too, Washington and London had second thoughts. Roosevelt said the United States now coveted nothing from postwar Germany. (U.S. officials privately estimated that whatever German assets survived the war would be worth at most $200 million.) Yet he also did not want Germans to have a higher living standard than the Soviet people. Churchill's opposition was stouter; privately he considered Stalin's reparations plan "madness." Germany, like France, would be an important counterweight to Soviet power in Europe, and he was also reluctant to bankrupt a future trading partner.

Recalling the oppressive conditions imposed by the Treaty of Versailles in 1919, the prime minister told Stalin that he was "haunted by the specter of a starving Germany." If the victors wanted a German dray horse to pull their wagon, he added, they "would at least have to give it fodder." Stalin scoffed. "Care should be taken," he said, "to see that the horse did not turn around and kick you." This matter was likewise deferred: a commission would be appointed to examine reparation issues.

* * *

On it went for six more days of hammer-and-tongs work, the three leaders and their lieutenants like smiths attempting to forge a new world. Roosevelt privately complained of Churchill's protracted monologues—"now we are in for ½ hour of it," the president scribbled on a notepad when the prime minister launched into another allocution. As Churchill's rhetoric soared, swooped, and pirouetted, Air Marshal Portal reported, "he ran away from the interpreter & was untranslatable." Other delegates sought brief respites from the conference hall. One evening the U.S. chiefs watched *National Velvet,* a new film starring Mickey Rooney and a twelve-year-old actress named Elizabeth Taylor. Moran visited the villa once owned by his fellow physician Chekhov, admiring a wooden stethoscope and a bronze bust of Tolstoy. A clutch of British generals toured Crimean War battlefields, where Brooke attempted to make sense of the Light Brigade's charge at Balaclava by thumbing through old maps and a guide to the campaign.

Back at the Villa Livadia, no issue occupied the Argonauts more than Poland's fate, which was discussed in seven of the eight plenary sessions. The United States and Britain currently recognized a Polish government-in-exile in London—"a decent but feeble lot of fools," in Churchill's opinion—while Moscow supported a provisional, pro-Soviet regime in Warsaw. "If we separate still recognizing different Polish governments, the whole world will see that fundamental differences between us still exist," Churchill asserted. "The consequences will be most lamentable." Some 150,000 Polish soldiers fought alongside the Western Allies, but with ten million Red Army troops in eastern Europe and all of Poland now occupied, Stalin held trump.

Rising from his chair, Stalin called Poland "the corridor through which the enemy passed into Russia. Twice in the past thirty years our enemies, the Germans, have passed through the corridor." Unpersuaded, Churchill reminded the marshal that Britain had gone to war in 1939 to restore Polish sovereignty. "We could never be content with any solution that did not leave Poland a free and independent state," he said. Roosevelt, seeking to mediate, asked the Soviets, "How long will it take you to hold free elections?" Molotov replied: "Within a month's time."

In the event, elections would not be held in Poland for two years, and they were hardly free. But no confrontation short of armed conflict was likely to reverse Stalin's conviction that stupendous Soviet losses in the Great Patriotic War had purchased the right to determine eastern Europe's political contours, as the historian Warren F. Kimball would later observe. "All the Balkans except Greece are going to be Bolshevized, and there is nothing I can do to prevent it," Churchill had lamented even before Yalta. "There is nothing I can do for poor Poland either." Poland's eastern and western borders eventually would be shifted west. By annexing eastern Poland—an area roughly the size of Missouri—the Soviet Union gained a wider buffer; in turn, much of Pomerania, East Prussia, and Silesia would be peeled away from Germany and appended to western and northern Poland. Following the war, Soviet puppets would rule in Warsaw, and the Red Army troops who had reentered Poland in 1944 subsequently remained for almost half a century. "Terrible and humbling submissions must at times be made to the general aim," Churchill later wrote.

For Roosevelt, two paramount concerns shaped his views on Poland and other matters. The first reflected a January memorandum from the Joint Chiefs, declaring that prompt Soviet entry into the war against Japan "is necessary to provide maximum assistance to our Pacific operations." In the Philippines, MacArthur had yet to capture Manila. In the central Pacific, the next American assault—against the flyspeck island of Iwo Jima—was not scheduled until mid-February. In Burma, the British remained months away from capturing Rangoon. And in New Mexico, there was no guarantee that the atomic bomb, a secret not shared with Moscow, would work. If the Pacific war were to last eighteen months after the victory in Europe—with huge American casualties, as feared by the Pentagon—Soviet help in tying down the Japanese in Manchuria and providing air bases in eastern Siberia would be vital to the Joint Chiefs. By entangling Moscow in Asia, the United States might also curb Soviet ambitions in Europe.

Stalin at the Teheran conference had tentatively committed the Soviet Union to war against Japan; now he firmly agreed to shift twenty-five divisions to the Far East and provide additional military aid within three months after Germany's surrender. In exchange, Moscow would receive territories lost by imperial Russia in 1905 after the Russo-Japanese War, plus the Kuril Islands and guarantees regarding ports and railroads in the Far East. These penalties and others to be imposed by the Western Allies would ensure that Japan forfeited its entire empire. To preserve the illusion of Soviet neutrality in the Pacific and to forestall a preemptive Japanese attack, the agreement, formally signed on February 10, would for now remain secret, locked in a White House safe. Chagrined U.S. negotiators complained that in "trading with the Russians you had to buy the same horse twice."

The second issue preoccupying Roosevelt, and the matter nearest his heart, was creation of a world organization capable of keeping the peace by balancing the security requirements of the great powers against the rights of small nations. He entertained what one adviser termed "pet ideas" of building strategic military bases around the globe controlled by what he called the "United Nations"; the U.N. would keep the United States committed to the wider world after the war, and offer a forum for Soviet engagement with the West. An elite security council within the organization would give smaller nations a voice while providing the great powers with a veto. Earlier discussions on the United Nations had stumbled over the precise configuration of that council, and over Moscow's insistence on individual memberships for all sixteen Soviet republics. Molotov at Yalta agreed to pare the number to two or three extra votes. "This is not so good," Roosevelt wrote, likening the demand to giving individual membership to all forty-eight U.S. states. But in the end he relented, ceding Moscow two extra votes in a future general assembly, for Ukraine and Belorussia, in addition to a seat on the security council for the Soviet Union. This deal also would remain secret.

* * *

ARGONAUT staggered to an end. They were "tired all through," in Churchill's phrase, not least from two more grand banquets that closed out the conference. Stalin hosted the first, at nine P.M. on February 8, in the Yusupov Palace, a Moorish Revival villa once owned by the prince who had helped orchestrate Rasputin's murder. Bohlen counted forty-five toasts, while mosquitoes stung

exposed ankles under the table and one inebriant repeatedly barked, "Drink it down!" Stalin hailed Churchill as "the bravest governmental figure in the world … a man who is born once in a hundred years." Churchill in return called Stalin "the mighty leader of a mighty country.… We regard Marshal Stalin's life as most precious to the hopes and hearts of all of us." The prime minister invoked a beguiling image of "standing on the crest of a hill with the glories of the future possibilities stretching before us."

Roosevelt, who had tossed down two cocktails before dinner, toasted Stalin as the "chief forger of the instruments which had led to the mobilization of the world against Hitler"; "the atmosphere of this dinner," he added, "[is] that of a family." Guests hopped around the table clinking glasses; only the foolish had failed to heed Russian advice to coat their stomachs with butter and oily salmon before the first sip of vodka. A huge man in a black alpaca jacket stood behind Stalin's chair, advising the marshal on what to eat and drink. When Roosevelt asked the identity of a pudgy Soviet guest sporting pince-nez, Stalin replied, "Ah, that one. That's our Himmler." It was Lavrenty P. Beria, the sadistic murderer and rapist who served as chief of the secret police.

Churchill hosted the final dinner at the Villa Vorontsov on Saturday, February 10, the last night of ARGONAUT. Soviet agents arrived early to peer behind the walls and under the table, flipping chairs and chests. A British honor guard in regimental finery lined the front steps to welcome the nine guests; for half an hour the three leaders loitered in Churchill's map room, studying battle lines east and west. Churchill broke into song, a rousing version of "When We've Wound Up the Watch on the Rhine," and Roosevelt joked, "This singing by the prime minister is Britain's secret weapon." During the lavish meal—the menu included sturgeon in aspic, suckling pig, white fish in champagne, mutton shashlik, wild goat of the steppes, quail, and partridge—Churchill stood and lifted his glass to Stalin. "The fire of war has burnt up the misunderstandings of the past," he said. "We feel we have a friend whom we can trust." The president added, "We are here at Yalta to build up a new world, which will know neither injustice nor violence, a world of justice and equity." Stalin daubed his eyes with a handkerchief. As he departed the villa behind his booted bodyguards, the British staff gathered in the foyer to be led by their prime minister in three rousing cheers for the marshal. *Hip, hip, hooray!*

They were done. A communiqué approved by the three leaders on Sunday morning affirmed their "sacred obligation" to maintain in peace the same Allied unity that had prevailed in war. A "declaration on liberated Europe" within the statement also endorsed "a world order under law" and "the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live." "We will meet again soon, in Berlin," Roosevelt told Stalin in a farewell from the Villa Livadia at 3:45 P.M. He gave the marshal a book titled *Target: Germany*, published by the Army Air Forces, with vivid photographs of bomb damage. Two Russian servants arrived bearing Georgian wine, caviar, butter, oranges, and tangerines for the Americans. Stalin also promised to ship to Washington the desk Roosevelt used at Livadia because he had "worked so hard there."

Churchill had begun the day in a querulous mood, sourly singing snatches of "The Soldiers of the Queen" after breakfast. He lamented both his failure to safeguard Poland—he decried the communiqué as "this bloody thing"—and the unmistakable decline of British influence in shaping the postwar world. But the prospect of sailing home from Sevastopol aboard *Franconia* cheered him. A former chef from the *Queen Mary* had been press-ganged to cook on the return voyage, and Stalin's couriers delivered bulging hampers of gifts: seven kilos of caviar, seventy-two bottles of champagne, eighteen bottles of vodka, a case of chocolate, seven cases of fruit, and various wines, liqueurs, and cigarettes.

"Papa, genial and sprightly like a boy out of school, his homework done, walked from room to room saying, 'Come, come on,'" wrote Sarah Churchill. Stalin, she added, "like some genie, just disappeared."

* * *

"I am a bit exhausted but really all right," Roosevelt wrote Eleanor as he headed back to Washington. His spirits were high enough to mimic both Stalin, in a faux Slavic accent—"I had not thought of it. It is a good idea. I will sign"—and Churchill, whom he imitated putting up his hands defensively, like a boxer on the ropes. "Churchill is acting now as if he is always afraid of getting hit," the president said. But there would be no rest for the weary, not yet. After a night aboard a Navy ship in Sevastopol, Roosevelt boarded the *Sacred Cow* at Saki airfield on Monday morning, February 12, and flew to Egypt. He had proposed a rendezvous with De Gaulle in Algiers, but the Frenchman—said by the U.S. embassy in Paris to be "in a sulky mood" at being excluded from ARGONAUT—brusquely declined.

Instead the president again boarded *Quincy*, moored adjacent to the Suez Canal, and welcomed a succession of potentates whose influence, he suspected, would expand in a postwar, postcolonial world. First came young King Farouk I of Egypt, wearing a fez and sunglasses, followed by the diminutive Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia, the Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah, Elect of God, and descendant of Solomon and Sheba. Finally the destroyer U.S.S. *Murphy* pulled along *Quincy*'s starboard flank to deliver the imposing, black-robed King Ibn Saud of Saudi Arabia, with an entourage that included a fortune-teller, a food taster, bodyguards carrying scimitars, a royal coffee server and his deputy, nine slaves, and a herd of sheep whose numbers diminished with each bloody butchering on *Murphy*'s fantail. A Navy navigator provided bearings to Mecca for the proper positioning of prayer rugs. The king presented Roosevelt with a gold knife, perfume, and Arab robes, including "harem attire" for Eleanor; the president reciprocated with a wheelchair—the monarch was barely ambulatory—and a supply of penicillin. "2 Kings & 1 Emperor in 2 days," Roosevelt wrote his secretary. "All goes well but again I need sleep."

Escorted by a cruiser and seven destroyers, *Quincy* steamed for home. The president spent much of the voyage basking in a sun with little power to brighten his eye or bronze his cheek. "He had," as Churchill would write in his memoir, "a slender contact with life." At nine A.M. on February 28, he would arrive back at the White House, completing a journey of 13,842 miles. "It's been a global war," he told Eleanor, "and we've already started making it a global peace."

* * *

"We really believed in our hearts that this was the dawn of the new day we had all been praying for," said Harry Hopkins, who suffered from liver disease and had less than a year to live. "We were absolutely certain that we had won the first great victory of the peace." Other delegates shared his exuberance. "For what we have gained here," Marshall said, "I would have gladly stayed a whole month." Even Brooke was chipper, telling his diary, "Conference is finished and has on the whole been as satisfactory as could be hoped for, and certainly a most friendly one."

Roosevelt and Churchill warranted Marshal Stalin's good faith. "Stalin doesn't want anything other than security for his country," the president said. "He won't try to annex anything and will work for a world of democracy and peace." The prime minister would tell his war cabinet, "Stalin I'm sure means well to the world and Poland.… He will not embark on bad adventures." He added, "I don't think I'm wrong about Stalin," whom he had called "that great and good man."

Public reaction was overwhelmingly favorable once the joint communiqué revealed the first details of ARGONAUT. *The New York Times* claimed the agreements "justify and surpass most of the hopes placed on this fateful meeting." Polling results given the White House in mid-March would show that only 11 percent of Americans surveyed deemed the conference "unsuccessful"; although 38 percent knew too little to have an opinion, a solid majority agreed that the Polish arrangement was "about the best that could be worked out." In a spasm of optimism, *Time* averred that "all doubts about the Big Three's ability to cooperate in peace as well as in war seem now to have been swept away."

Within weeks the bloom had left the rose. Churchill sat listening to *The Mikado* on a gramophone, lamenting "the shadows of victory" and fretting that he had trusted Stalin as Neville Chamberlain had once trusted Hitler. "We had the world at our feet," he mused. "Twenty-five million men marching at our orders by land and sea. We seemed to be friends." Provisional agreements made at Yalta soon came unstitched. The Western Allies effectively scuttled the deal to dismember Germany and to extract reparations collectively. Moscow in turn consolidated its grip on eastern Europe, installing a Communist regime in Bucharest and deporting tens of thousands of ethnic Germans to the Ural Mountains as slave laborers. Polish leaders deemed anti-Soviet were arrested in utter disregard of the "declaration on liberated Europe"; exiled Poles in London decried the "partition of Poland, now accomplished by her allies." The sentimentality of ARGONAUT quickly faded, along with delusions that Russian xenophobia and Leninist dogma could be sweet-talked away. Marshall alerted the Joint Chiefs to reports of "increasing Russian non-cooperation with U.S. military authorities," and Roosevelt would complain in mid-March, "We can't do business with Stalin. He has broken every one of the promises he made at Yalta." To a friend in Washington he added, "I didn't say the result was good. I said it was the best I could do."

Recriminations followed, inflamed by the eventual revelation of secret concessions regarding United Nations membership and the enticements that had induced Moscow to make war on Japan. A stigma soon stained Yalta, "a connotation of shameful failure, if not outright treason," as one British historian wrote, "matching that attached to the Munich Conference of September 1938." For decades the Western delegates would be blamed for everything from the Soviet domination of Eastern Europe to the rise of Communist regimes in China, northern Korea, and Indochina.

Roosevelt's frailty came to be seen as both the proximate cause of craven negotiating and a metaphor for the West's weak answer to Stalin's belligerence. "The shrewdness has gone, and there is nothing left," Moran wrote of Roosevelt during the conference. "The president's opinions flutter in the wind." Yet those working in closest proximity found, as Churchill later told the Commons, "an extraordinary effort of the spirit over the flesh, of willpower over physical infirmity." The president evinced both a reasonable command of complex issues and, the historian S. M. Plokhy would write, "his trademark ability to make alliances, strike deals, and maneuver in order to achieve his main goals." Eden wrote that although Roosevelt "gives the impression of failing powers … I do not believe that the president's declining health altered his judgment." Photos from Yalta would show a wasting man, gray and thin; U.S. Navy color movie footage shows a man indeed gray and thin, but also animated and plainly alert. Reporters ferried to the *Quincy* for the 992nd press conference of Roosevelt's presidency found him articulate, droll, and quick; asked whether the conference had laid a foundation for an enduring peace, Roosevelt replied, "I can answer that question if you can tell me who your descendants will be in the year 2057.… We can look as far ahead as humanity believes in this sort of thing."

Two generations later, Yalta can be seen as neither the portal to Roosevelt's "world of justice and equity" nor a disgraceful capitulation to red fascism but, rather, an intricate nexus of compromises by East and West. Roosevelt "largely followed through on earlier plans, and gained most of what he wished," the historian Robert Dallek concluded, including Soviet support for the United Nations and participation in the defeat of Japan, an obligation punctually fulfilled by Moscow's declaration of war three months after the German surrender. That declaration may not have "saved two million Americans," as Admiral King had envisioned at Yalta, but along with two atomic bombs it encouraged Tokyo's decision to surrender. With the Soviet Union killing far more Germans in combat than all other Allied forces combined, at a fell price of 26 million Soviet lives, Stalin was not to be denied what the diplomat George F. Kennan called "a wide military and political *glacis* on his Western frontier." If Roosevelt sounded plaintive and exasperated, his explanation also captured the political reality of Europe in February 1945: *It was the best I could do*.

War had held the Big Three together—the common cause of crushing Germany proved stronger than the centrifugal forces that beset any alliance. Now the entropy of peace threatened to unknot those ties, as postwar interests and imperatives emerged. Even Roosevelt and Churchill, who had met on nine occasions to spend 120 days together during the war, felt the bonds of blood and history fraying week by week. When the reporters aboard *Quincy* asked Roosevelt whether Churchill hoped to reassemble the antebellum imperial empire, the president replied, "Yes, he is mid-Victorian on all things like that.… Dear old Winston will never learn on that point.… This is, of course, off the record." But Churchill knew. Roosevelt "cannot leave the empire alone," he told Moran. "It seems to upset him." Eden shrewdly suspected that the president "hoped that former colonial territories, once free of their masters, would become politically and economically dependent upon the United States."

Moran in February observed, "We have moved a long way since Winston, speaking of Roosevelt, said to me in the garden at

Marrakesh [in January 1943], 'I love that man.'" Perhaps it was too much to expect such attachments to survive when so much had perished. Speaking to the Commons a few days after his return from Yalta, the prime minister warned: "We are now entering a world of imponderables.… It is a mistake to look too far ahead. Only one link in the chain of destiny can be handled at a time."

Yet for those who felt destiny as a following wind, the morrow beckoned and the imponderable held more promise than peril. "The Americans pitch their song on a higher note," Moran wrote. "They feel they are on top of the world."

"Only Our Eyes Are Alive"

FROM the Swiss border to the North Sea, across the fronts of almost eighty Allied divisions in seven armies, none of this mattered at the moment, not a whit. What preoccupied several million soldiers was the effort to find a bit of warmth in the frozen night, and perhaps a lukewarm meal rather than congealed hash in a cold can, and to live to see the next dawn, and then the next, and the next after that. The autumn rallying cry of "Win the War in '44" had been supplanted by the sour "Stay Alive in '45." A soldier in the 70th Division spoke for many GIs in a letter to his parents in Minnesota: "My mind is absolutely stripped of any traces of reason for war. … Maybe the overall picture justifies what goes on up here, but from an infantryman's point of view, it's hard to see."

The harshest winter in decades compounded the misery, even after the German retreat from the Bulge. "My hands shivered like tuning forks," wrote one private in Lorraine. "But worst of all, the cold had settled in my spine.… I was a bundle of icy vibrations." A soldier in the 84th Division described awakening in a slushy foxhole to find his feet "encased in a block of ice up to my ankles"; comrades chipped him free with bayonets. Impassioned debates raged over "whether sleeping with hands in the crotch or the armpits was the best way to avoid frostbite." Troops jerked awake by gunfire left patches of hair stuck to the icy ground. Soldiers fashioned crude igloos or huddled over tiny fires fueled with cardboard scraps from K-ration boxes. GIs became adept at chopping a small divot from the frozen ground with a pickax, then detonating a quarter-pound TNT block to finish excavating a foxhole. Graffiti scribbled on a concrete fortification in Lorraine read: "Austin White, Chicago, Ill., 1918. Austin White, Chicago, Ill., 1945. This is the last time I want to write my name here."

A SHAEF plan to cut one million cords of firewood by February 1 fell short by 964,000 for want of tools and lumberjacks. Coal production in Europe fell 40 percent in January, partly because Belgian miners went on strike; frozen canals impeded deliveries of what stock there was. GI work details spent a month slicing peat from Norman bogs for fuel before abandoning the task as pointless. Sled dogs shipped from Alaska and Labrador to evacuate the wounded in snowy terrain arrived after the spring thaw, and so gave the field armies only useless, barking mouths to feed.

A lieutenant in the 99th Division wrote his wife in January:

> To date, I've slept on a mattress, a steel deck, a wet concrete floor with a little straw on top, dirt floors, a bed, a stretcher, on an LST, in a truck, in a foxhole, across the front seats of a jeep, in a rope hammock, in cellars, first, second, and third floors, in a pillbox, on the back window shelf of a command car, in haylofts, on snow, and in shacks.

There were horrors to see, hear, and smell, horrors to relive and remember because they could never be forgotten. A soldier from the 75th Division described an hour in a foxhole with a mortally wounded comrade and no morphine: "I tried to knock him out. I took off his helmet, held his jaw up, and just whacked as hard as I could.… That didn't work. Nothing worked. He slowly bled to death." Another GI assigned to police corpses from the battlefield wrote:

> Everywhere we searched we found bodies, floating in the rivers, trampled on the roads, bloated in the ditches, rotting in the bunkers, pretzeled into foxholes, burned in the tanks, buried in the snow, sprawled in doorways, splattered in gutters, dismembered in minefields, and even literally blown up into trees.

When a reporter asked a private in the 23rd Infantry what he wanted Americans at home to know, he said, "Tell 'em it's rough as hell. Tell 'em it's rough. Tell 'em it's rough, serious business. That's all. That's all." A nurse in Seventh Army wrote her family in January: "Admitted a 19-year-old from Texas last night who had both legs blown off by a shell. He was unhappy because now he could never wear his nice cowboy boots. He died before he could be taken to surgery." Another nurse, in a Third Army shock ward dubbed the Chamber of Horrors, said, "Maybe it's a good thing their mothers can't see them when they die."

Prison-camp guards opened the locked boxcars on a freight train carrying captured Germans across France to find that 104 had suffocated. Their pleas and shouts had been ignored, and investigators found "evidence of teeth marks and clawing on inner walls." Eisenhower wrote Marshall, "I certainly loathe having to apologize to the Germans. It looks as if this time I have no other recourse." His message to Berlin, sent through the Swiss, read: "The supreme commander profoundly regrets this incident and has taken steps to prevent its recurrence."

War made the warriors sardonic, cynical, old before their time. "Will you tell me what the hell I'm being saved for?" a captain in the 30th Division mused after surviving a bloody attack on the West Wall. Another soldier replied, "For the Pacific." To a GI in the 100th Division, "it wasn't so much fear of death as the uncertainty of life." One squad leader found his battle-weary men "impassive, lethargic, uncommunicative." Some deliberately extended an arm or leg from their foxholes in hopes of the proverbial million-dollar

wound, but for most "each succeeding town came and each succeeding town went, and we continued dying a thousand deaths." After the Germans ambushed his patrol, a soldier in the 275th Infantry wrote, "Things didn't go exactly as planned. They usually don't." To Lieutenant Paul Fussell, the bitterest lessons of combat were indeed "about the eternal presence in human affairs of accident and contingency, as well as the fatuity of optimism at any time or place."

> All planning was not just likely to recoil ironically; it was almost certain to do so. Human beings were clearly not machines. They were mysterious congeries of twisted will and error, misapprehension and misrepresentation, and the expected could not be expected of them.

There was nothing for it but obduracy, to soldier on even for those who were not soldiers. "How hard I have become," an American Red Cross volunteer told her diary in February. "Emotions which formerly would have wracked my soul leave me almost untouched. It's a hardness of survival." A soldier in the 84th Division described seeing GIs using a severed German head as a soccer ball in an icy pasture; when a mortar round blew apart a U.S. trooper in a nearby street, he added, "I sat and ate my food. I had not known him." J. Glenn Gray, a counterintelligence officer, wrote in his journal, "Yesterday we caught two spies.… One had to be severely beaten before he confessed. It was pretty horrible.… I thought of the *Hamlet* line as most appropriate, ''Tis bitter cold and I am sick at heart.'"

Not all would learn to hate. Nor would all find satisfaction, even exhilaration, in killing the Huns, Heinies, Hermanns, Lugerheads, Jerries, Fritzes, Boches, Krauts, Katzenjammers, Squareheads. A survey of four thousand GIs found that although four-fifths expressed strong hatred toward German leaders, less than half voiced hatred toward German soldiers. But by late winter enough haters and killers filled the ranks to constitute a ferocious killing engine. After Malmédy, an officer in the 35th Division wrote: "A hatred such as I have never seen has sprung up among us against Hitler's armies and all of Germany." A British soldier added, "The question of killing does not present itself as a moral problem any more—or as a problem at all."

"Slowly it is beginning to dawn on them that the only good German is a dead German," the XII Corps chief of staff wrote his parents. "The result is that we're killing more and taking fewer prisoners." While smashing up a German house, a 2nd Division soldier bellowed, "Screw the bastards and all their works. Shit on them. Piss on them." A Canadian soldier wrote, "When the Jerries come in with their hands up, shouting '*Kamerad*,' we just bowl them over with bursts of Sten fire." A lieutenant in the 15th Infantry told his diary, "Sergeant Burton, somewhat inebriated, shoots two Krauts who are trying to surrender.… Some of our best men are the most murderous."

Fussell described how GIs in his 103rd Division found some fifteen Germans cowering in a deep crater in the forest.

> Their visible wish to surrender—most were in tears of terror and despair—was ignored by our men lining the rim.… Laughing and howling, hoo-ha-ing and cowboy and good-old-boy yelling, our men exultantly shot into the crater until every single man down there was dead.… The result was deep satisfaction.

"Killing is an obsession," a private in the 86th Division wrote his parents. "What code could withstand it?"

* * *

At 7:30 A.M. on Wednesday, January 31, a U.S. Army weapons carrier clanked up to a gray farmhouse with orange shutters outside Ste.-Marie-aux-Mines, an Alsatian town long celebrated for mineralogy, fifteen miles northwest of Colmar. A scrawny, handcuffed twenty-four-year-old private from Michigan named Eddie D. Slovik stepped from the rear bay, escorted by four MPs. A Vosges snowstorm had delayed their journey from Paris through the Saverne Gap, and Private Slovik was late for his own execution. No task gripped Eisenhower with more urgency than clearing the Colmar Pocket to expel the enemy from Alsace and shore up the Allied right wing. But first, a dozen riflemen were to discharge a single, vengeful volley in the high-walled garden of 86 Rue du Général Bourgeois.

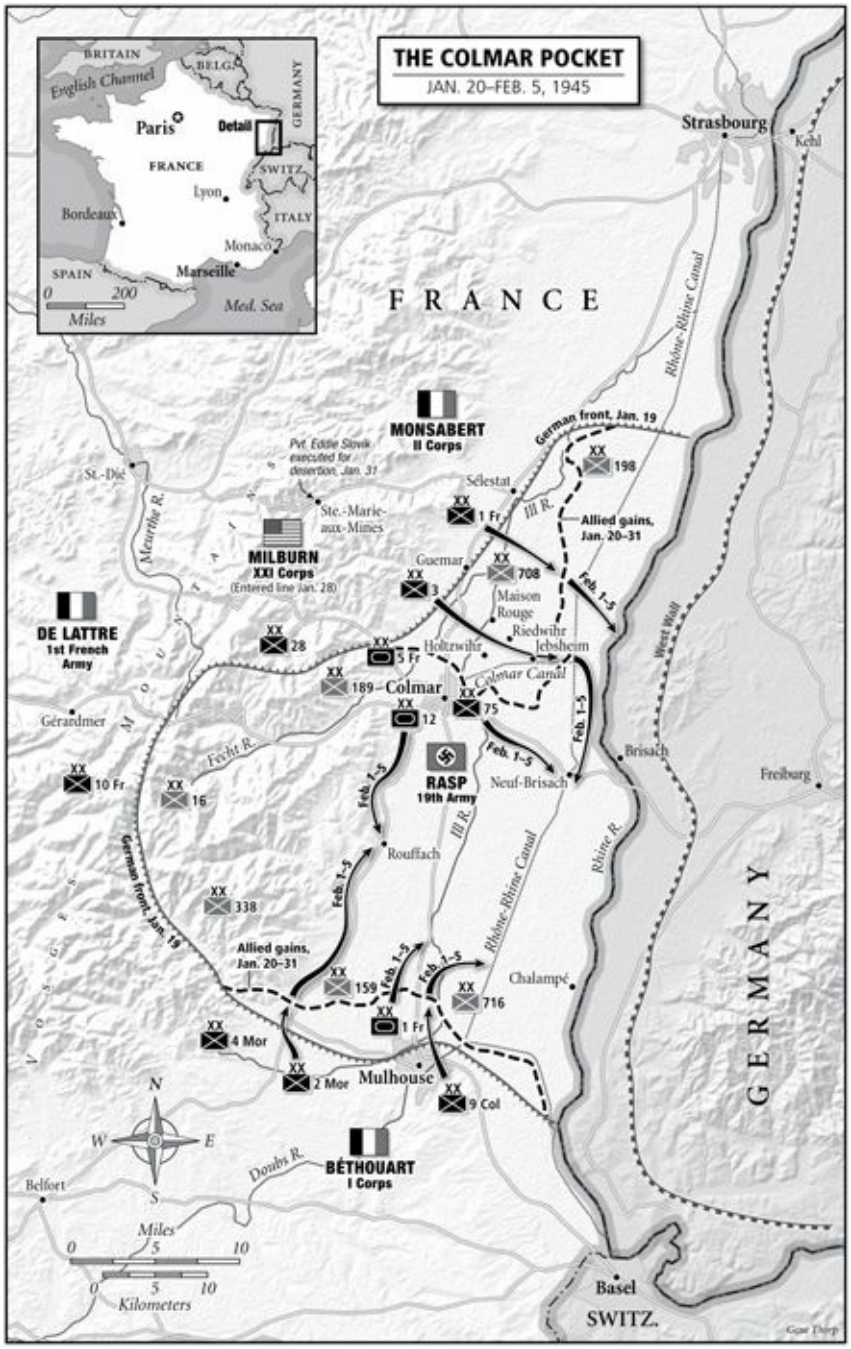
As a miscreant, Private Slovik was more bumbling than iniquitous. First arrested at age twelve, he quit school at fifteen, and served jail time for burglary, assault, and embezzlement. Originally declared 4-F by a draft board and exempted from conscription for what the British would call "LMF"—lack of moral fiber—he was reclassified 1-A, an indication of the desperate need for infantrymen. Inducted in late 1943, Slovik arrived in France in August 1944, was assigned to the 28th Infantry Division, and promptly deserted. Perhaps his only endearing trait was a uxorious devotion to his wife, Antoinette, to whom he wrote 376 letters, in pencil, during his 372 days in the Army. "I fought to make you love me," he told her, adding, "I think I'm going to have a lot of trouble. Army life don't agree with me."

In this he was not unique. Indiscipline had become a nagging worry for Eisenhower: nearly 11,000 general courts-martial would be convened for serious crimes committed in Europe by U.S. soldiers, in addition to 126,000 special and summary courts-martial for lesser infractions. "Disciplinary conditions are becoming bad," Eisenhower had told his diary in November. A month later he advised subordinates, "The large incidence of crimes such as rape, murder, assault, robbery, housebreaking, etc., continues to cause grave concerns." A French prefect lamented that "the liberators have turned into looters, rapists, and killers," and a newspaper in Cherbourg declared, "Never has one witnessed such debauchery." ("Unfortunately," a U.S. Army provost marshal conceded, "the editorial is justified.") General Juin wrote Eisenhower that civilian women dared "not to go about their daily chores even when accompanied by a man for fear of being accosted by American soldiers." Although less than one-half of one percent of Allied troops in Europe were

implicated in serious offenses, a SHAEF memo in late January noted that "a considerable percentage of the French civil population" believed that GIs behaved badly, if not criminally.

Severe punishment had a fitful deterrent effect. A study of military offenders found that many had "mental ages of seven or eight"; some were psychopaths or chronic alcoholics. Of fourteen hundred convictions for violating Article of War No. 64—striking an officer, drawing a weapon on an officer, or "willful disobedience"—the average sentence for infractions in combat was fifteen years' imprisonment. Thirty-year sentences for felonious behavior were not uncommon, and any jail term over six months also drew a dishonorable discharge. Four hundred and forty-three death penalties were imposed on GIs, most for murder or rape, and a severely disproportionate number fell on black soldiers, often after dubious due process. Seventy executions took place in Europe, including several public hangings; War Department Pamphlet 27-4 specified that the hangman's rope was to be "manila hemp, 1¼ inches in diameter … stretched to eliminate any spring," and coated "with wax, soap, or grease to ensure a smooth sliding action through the knot."

Desertion, defined by the U.S. military as an unauthorized absence of two months or more, was as old as warfare, and historically it was a capital crime punished by a firing squad. The British had handed down more than 3,000 death sentences from 1914 to 1920, and had executed about 10 percent of those condemned—before abolishing the death penalty for cowardice and desertion in 1930. The German military issued 50,000 military death sentences in World War II, with half or more carried out. Twenty-one thousand soldiers would desert from the U.S. Army during the war; less than half had been caught by the late 1940s. Of nearly 2,000 deserters convicted in Europe, 139 received death sentences. But the United States had not actually executed a deserter since 1864.



Slovik was arrested in October after living for weeks with a Canadian unit. Offered amnesty if he went to the front, he refused, vowing, "I'll run away again if I have to." He was convicted following a two-hour court-martial in the Hürtgen Forest on November

11. From a jail cell in Paris he appealed his death sentence to Eisenhower in a six-paragraph clemency plea. “How can I tell you how humbley sorry I am for the sins I’ve comitted.… I beg of you deeply and sincerely for the sake of my dear wife and mother back home to have mercy on me,” he wrote, according to the author William Bradford Huie. “I Remain Yours for Victory, Pvt. Eddie D. Slovik.” Unfortunately for the condemned, the supreme commander reviewed the petition at the nadir of the Bulge, on December 23, during a session in his Versailles office known as “the Hanging Hour.” Eisenhower not only affirmed the sentence, but decreed that as a lesson to shirkers it be carried out by Slovik’s putative unit, the 109th Infantry Regiment, in General Dutch Cota’s 28th Division. “Darling,” Slovik wrote Antoinette, “I’m in a little trouble.”

The MP guards had lost the handcuff key during the trip through the Vosges, and a hacksaw was used to free the prisoner’s wrists so that he could be properly bound with nylon parachute cord. A priest heard his confession and handed him twenty-eight letters from the wife who would soon be a widow. Cota convened the firing squad of twelve specially chosen sharpshooters to remind them that they were “the finest marksmen in the Army”; a physician gave a tutorial on the location of the heart, but, considering the point-blank range of twenty yards, chose not to pin a target on Slovik’s chest. He was hooded with a black sack, sewn by a local seamstress in accord with the Army regulation “to cover the head and neck of the prisoner and to obscure all light.” A blanket was draped over his shoulders against the cold. Slovik declined to make a final statement other than to ask, “Please shoot straight so I won’t have to suffer.”

Gray overcast roofed the garden at ten A.M. as Cota, clutching a brass-handled swagger stick, stood in the snow with forty-two other witnesses. Murmuring a prayer, the condemned man shuffled through an archway and was lashed to a six-foot stake. The firing squad appeared in quick step, halted, faced right, shouldered rifles, and on command cut loose a smoking volley. Eleven bullets struck Slovik, including two in the left arm; not one hit his heart. Even the Army’s finest marksmen trembled at such an awful moment. Three physicians with stethoscopes listened to the wounded man’s shallow breathing and irregular heartbeat as the squad prepared to reload. “The second volley won’t be necessary,” a doctor pronounced at 10:08 A.M. “Private Slovik is dead.” Cota, who in the past eight months had endured Omaha Beach, St.-Lô, the Hürtgen Forest, and the Bulge, later described this episode as “the toughest fifteen minutes of my life.”

A priest anointed the body with oil. Slovik would be buried outside a World War I cemetery at Oise-Aisne, near Soissons, in row three of Plot E—a hidden, unsanctified tract reserved for the dishonorable dead. *’Tis bitter cold, and I am sick at heart.*

* * *

Eisenhower acknowledged a gnawing obsession with the Colmar Pocket. He called it “the one sore on the whole front,” and insisted that “we must get cleaned up in the south, even if it is going to hold up the offensives in the north.”

In this he would be further frustrated, for Hitler showed no inclination to forswear his 850-square-mile swatch of Alsace, stubbornly held by 23,000 Wehrmacht troops. Deep trenches zigged and zagged across snowy terrain now seeded with minefields, and more than a dozen Alsatian villages had been converted into fortresses around the pocket’s 130-mile perimeter. Perpetual smoke screens hid rail and road bridges across the Rhine, as well as ten ferry sites, frustrating AAF bombers trying to sever German supply routes. Allied engineers upstream had released more than two hundred floating contact mines, to no avail. The Führer even awarded an Iron Cross for valor to one particularly durable span near Brisach.

General Devers’s initial effort to reduce the pocket through Operation CHEERFUL, an ill-named double envelopment, had foundered in late January on French inadequacy. In the south, General de Lattre’s I Corps fired off the entire French artillery ammunition consignment in a fruitless barrage, then lost half its tanks to mines and antitank guns. By early February, after eleven days of flopping around on “polished ice terrain,” not a single objective had been captured. The French II Corps, attacking from the north on a seven-mile front, did a bit better, but enemy graffiti scribbled on walls throughout the pocket—*“Elsass bleibt deutsch,”* Alsace remains German—still obtained.

Franco-American fraternity, always delicate, grew brittle. “Having gained surprise in both north and south, we have been unable to exploit,” Devers told his diary. “Continual trouble with Gen. de Lattre.… Situation on the front does not look good.” The French, he lamented, lacked “the punch or the willingness to go all out.” General Leclerc’s refusal to take orders from De Lattre, again, led Devers to observe that if he “were in the Russian army he would be shot.” When Devers repeatedly pressed De Lattre to close up his straggling line, the Frenchman snarled, “Goddamn it! Am I commander here or not? If I am, let me command. If not, relieve me.” Eisenhower privately complained, “We have certainly been let down by the French.”

American units had their own difficulties. Cota’s 28th Division, consigned to De Lattre’s French First Army in mid-January, was described as “exhausted and depleted” after the Bulge. When the veteran 3rd Division joined the French II Corps in attacking north of Colmar, soldiers donned mattress covers or improvised nightshirts for camouflage and carried wooden planks to cross the countless streams braiding the marsh flats. But no plank would support a Sherman M-4, and the first tank in an armored column crashed through a frail bridge over the Ill River at Maison Rouge; the mishap left three infantry battalions exposed to a panzer counterattack on the far bank. Terrified GIs scoured across the plain “in flight and panic,” splashing through the icy, steep-banked Ill while enemy grazing fire lashed their backs with white tracers. “It was like a goddamned scene from Civil War days,” a captain reported. One regiment lost 80 percent of its combat kit and 350 men, many of them taken prisoner while hiding in boggy burrows. “Our clothes were so frozen after we were captured,” wrote one private, “that we rattled like paper.” As a taunt, enemy gunners fired leaflet canisters stuffed with the names of GIs now in German custody.

Audie Murphy helped redeem the day with valor uncommon even by his standards. Since advancing up the Rhône and across the Vosges with the 3rd Division, Murphy—who was still not yet old enough to vote or to shave more than once a week—had collected two Silver Stars, a battlefield commission, and a severe wound that turned gangrenous and cost him several pounds of flesh whittled

from his right hip and buttock. Rejoining the 15th Infantry in mid-January after two months' recuperation, he soon took command of the same company he had joined as a private in North Africa two years earlier; it was now reduced to eighteen men and a single officer, himself. On January 26, two hundred German infantrymen with half a dozen panzers attacked from the woods near Riedwihr. Clutching a map and a field phone, Second Lieutenant Murphy leaped onto a burning tank destroyer and for an hour repulsed the enemy with a .50-caliber machine gun while calling in artillery salvos. He "killed them in the draws, in the meadows, in the woods," a sergeant reported; the dead included a dozen Germans "huddled like partridges" in a nearby ditch. "Things seemed to slow down for me," Murphy later said. "Things became very clarified." De Lattre described the action as "the bravest thing man had ever done in battle," but Murphy reflected that "there is no exhilaration at being alive." He would receive the Medal of Honor.

At last an Allied preponderance began to crush the pocket. An exasperated Eisenhower committed a U.S. corps, the XXI, for a total of four American divisions to bolster De Lattre's eight; the reinforcements gave Devers better than a five-to-one advantage in men, tanks, and artillery ammunition. "God be praised!" the French commander exclaimed. By Friday, February 2, the 28th Division had cleared Colmar's outskirts, then stood aside to let French tanks liberate the town. "Your city," De Lattre said, "has found the motherland and the tricolor once more."

By February 5, columns from north and south had joined at Rouffach, cleaving the Geman pocket in half. From the north the 3rd Division enveloped Neuf-Brisach, another of Vauban's seventeenth-century strongholds, known as the City of Ramparts. Brutal fighting with tanks, mortars, bazookas, and grenades swept across the Jewish cemetery. GIs bellowed "Hindy ho, you bastards!"—an approximation of *"Hände hoch,"* Hands up—although one regiment reported that "the men did not take any prisoners because they would have gotten in the way." Hundreds of Germans pelting south from Neuf-Brisach were butchered by artillery, like "clay pigeons in green uniforms." A French patriot showed GIs a narrow tunnel leading from a dry moat beneath the citadel's northeast wall, but only seventy-six German soldiers were found alive within.

At eight A.M. on Friday, February 9, enemy demolitionists dropped the last bridge into the Rhine at Chalampé with a spectacular splash. "My dear French comrades," De Lattre said, "you have been artisans of a great national event.… Germany passed its last night in France." (Actually a corner of northeastern Alsace was to remain in Hitler's custody for a few more weeks, as well as several French ports.) The pocket was finally eradicated, even if the job had taken three times longer than the week De Lattre had anticipated. Trucks hauled German bodies to yet another mass grave—"entangled among each other like so many frozen, dead chickens in packing cases," in a GI's description. Colmar had cost 20,000 Franco-American casualties, by De Lattre's tally; the Germans reported more than 22,000 killed or missing. Fewer than 500 men had escaped from each of the eight German divisions defending Hitler's purchase on Elsass.

As the U.S. Army concluded with justification, Germany's Nineteenth Army "had been sacrificed for no appreciable gain." The German host that had begun retreating within hours of the Allied landings in southern France six months earlier was now a silent, spectral memory, a legion of shades.

* * *

Pulverizing the Reich from above now intensified with a fury no nation had ever endured. Thousand-bomber Allied raids had become common, even quotidian. The first 22,000-pound British "earthquake bomb" was dropped on Bielefeld in early spring, gouging a crater thirty feet deep and wrecking a hundred yards of rail viaduct. Forty more would fall, each with a power exceeded among air munitions only by the atomic bomb. The M-47 100-pound phosphorus bomb fell for the first time in late January; deemed an "excellent antipersonnel incendiary weapon" by AAF tacticians, each canister carried six times the hellfire of a 155mm artillery phosphorus round. Innovative applications of napalm also flourished because, as Robert A. Lovett, the U.S. assistant secretary of war, explained, "If we are going to have a total war we might as well make it as horrible as possible." SHAEF issued a forty-three-page list of German monuments, historic sites, and objets d'art to be spared, "symbolizing to the world," in Eisenhower's words, "all that we are fighting to preserve." In a letter to his family, an American corporal put such rarefied sentiments in perspective. "Thanks to the Allied air forces," he wrote, "most of Europe resembles Stonehenge more than anything else." One enemy city after another had been reduced to what the German writer W. G. Sebald would call "lifeless life."

British air strategists considered taking the war to small German municipalities, but concluded that bombers could obliterate only "thirty towns a month at the maximum"; destroying one hundred such *Dörfer* would "account for only 3 percent of the population." A more lucrative target was Berlin, known to pilots as "Big B," which housed not only the regime but 5 percent of Germany's *Volk*. Two months had passed since Berlin was last clobbered, and George Marshall at Malta advocated bombing Big B again to impede German reinforcement of the Eastern Front and to curry Soviet goodwill. In this the British eagerly concurred: Bomber Harris had long urged bludgeoning Berlin until "the heart of Nazi Germany ceases to beat." By one calculation, a no-holds-barred bombardment could kill or injure 275,000 Germans; it would also "create great confusion" and "might well ruin an already shaky morale."

Skeptics objected only to be shouted down. General Doolittle, the Eighth Air Force chief, believed that "the chances of terrorizing into submission" people who had already been bombed repeatedly since 1942 were "extremely remote." Flight crews dreaded the most viciously defended city in Europe. "Big B is no good as a target," one airman said. "I don't believe in spite bombing." But in a note scribbled to Beetle Smith, Eisenhower had written, "I agree the project would be a good one."

THUNDERCLAP, as the "project" was code-named, dumped 2,279 tons of bombs on Berlin on February 3, at a cost of almost two dozen B-17s lost to flak. The single heaviest raid to hit Big B in the war proved a disappointment: only one ton in three detonated within a mile of the aim point, and some groups managed to miss the world's sixth largest city altogether. The German regime claimed 20,000 dead, and the AAF official history later put the figure at 25,000; subsequent analyses lowered the THUNDERCLAP death toll to 2,893, plus another 2,000 injured. No one surrendered.

Even so, bombs smashed rail stations, marshaling yards, and neighborhoods—also electronics, leather, and printing plants; hotels; newspaper offices; and various government buildings, including the Air Ministry, the Foreign Office, Gestapo headquarters, and the Reich Chancellery. “It was a sunny, beautiful morning,” a German woman wrote. “Blooming blue hyacinth, purple crocuses, and soon-to-bloom Easter lily.… One should never enjoy such things.” Terror swept a subway station, according to a Wehrmacht account, and “the people literally ripped clothes from each other’s bodies. They totally forgot themselves in their panic and were hitting each other.” Others were said to herd together “like deer in a storm.” A survivor recounted how phosphorus bombs “emptied themselves down the walls and along the streets in flaming rivers of unquenchable flame.” The raid rendered 120,000 Germans homeless. A diarist described Berliners as “marching backwards in time” to become cave-dwellers and added, “Only our eyes are alive.”

Other elaborate air missions followed throughout February, among them Operation CLARION, an assault by 3,500 bombers and almost 5,000 fighters meant to further eviscerate German transportation and remind small-town Germans in “relatively virgin areas” of their mortality. Trains, rail stations, barges, docks, and bridges were bombed and strafed, but neither a general collapse of the Reichsbahn nor weakened civilian will could be detected. “Perhaps it was a case,” the AAF posited, “of trying to injure the morale of a people who had no morale.”

Most infamous of the winter raids was the attack on Dresden by more than eight hundred Bomber Command aircraft during the night of February 13, followed over the next two days by almost as many Eighth Air Force bombers. Discrete blazes confederated into a firestorm with superheated winds capable of uprooting trees and peeling shingles from rooftops. “Chimney stacks fell down just from the echo of my voice,” a schoolgirl later reported. “I saw a pile of ashes in the shape of a person.… It was my mother.” Asked to assess the raid, Bomber Harris replied, “Dresden? There is no such place as Dresden.” Nazi officials claimed 200,000 dead in a city jammed with refugees from the east, but an exhaustive inquiry more than half a century later lowered the figure to 25,000. Among those hauling bodies to cremation pits were SS squads experienced in such matters from duty at Treblinka; also pressed into service was Private First Class Vonnegut, captured on the Schnee Eifel two months earlier. “Dear people,” he wrote his family in Indiana:

> We were put to work carrying corpses from air raid shelters; women, children, old men; dead from concussion, fire or suffocation. Civilians cursed us and threw rocks as we carried bodies to huge funeral pyres in the city.

Each night and each day, bombing snuffed out another corner of the Reich. More than one German dwelling in every five was destroyed from the air, leaving 7.5 million homeless during the war and more than 400,000 Germans dead. Devastation scorched seventy cities, and carbonized bodies lay stacked in countless black windrows. Of the vast Krupp factory in Essen, a witness would report that “the biggest armament works in the world is incapable of producing a hairpin.” *Time* described how Duisburg, Düsseldorf, Dortmund, Wuppertal, Bochum, and other industrial hubs “burned like torches for a night, smoldered for a day, then lay blackened and dead.”

Yet still the lifeless life lived on. Even General Spaatz decried “the chimera” of bringing Germany to her knees from twenty thousand feet. Only subjugation and occupation would persuade the Reich that the Reich was finished. Only conquest would end the war.

* * *

Field Marshal Montgomery had a conqueror’s glint in his eye as he set in motion the battle he hoped would lead to Berlin. Montgomery’s plan was to begin on Thursday, February 8, with 340,000 troops in the Canadian First Army plowing southeast up the left bank of the Rhine from Nijmegen in Operation VERITABLE. Two days later, in Operation GRENADE, the U.S. Ninth Army with another 300,000 men would lunge northeast across the Roer on a forty-mile front, reinforced on the right flank by 75,000 First Army men from Joe Collins’s VII Corps. This American horde, bristling with two thousand guns and fourteen hundred tanks, was to join the Canadians shoulder to shoulder on the Rhine before enveloping the industrial Ruhr.

But no crossing could be made on the Roer—a modest stream that paralleled the Rhine—until the Schwammenauel and Urft dams upstream were seized to prevent the Germans from uncorking floodwaters at an indelicate moment. Efforts in the late fall to capture or bomb the waterworks had failed, and “damn the dams” remained a tiresome malediction in American headquarters. Not until those bugaboos were eliminated could the Roer be vaulted, the Rhine attained, and the Ruhr captured.

The Urft fell easily in early February, but only because German defenders had rallied round the Schwammenauel and the twenty billion gallons it impounded. For nearly a week the green 78th Division, reinforced by a regiment from the 82nd Airborne and eventually the veteran 9th Division, had retaken ground won and then lost in the Hürtgen battles of late fall: the Kall gorge—where dozens of decaying, booby-trapped corpses of 28th Division troops still lined the trail—and then Kommerscheidt, and finally ruined Schmidt, captured in a cellar-to-cellar gunfight on February 8 after forty battalions of U.S. artillery made the rubble bounce. The Schwammenauel stood two miles away.

At eight P.M. on Friday, February 9, a battalion of the 309th Infantry crept from a tangled wood to find the dam intact and imposing: 170 feet high, 1,200 feet across, and almost 1,000 feet thick at its base. German mortar and artillery rounds rained down, and muzzle flashes winked from the far shoreline, answered by an eventual forty thousand U.S. shells. Silvered by flare light, five engineers and an escort of riflemen trotted across the dam as an ominous rumble rose from the Schwammenauel valve house below. Finding that a bridge across the sluiceway had been destroyed, the men hopped over a guardrail and slid down the dam’s northern face to enter a doorway far below. Stifling heat and pressure made breathing difficult—“it was like going in a tunnel under the sea,”

one lieutenant recalled—but no explosives were found within. Engineers had calculated that German demolitionists would need a half million pounds of TNT to blow a hole in the massive structure.

But mortal wounds had already been inflicted. Other patrols found the gatehouse, power room, and discharge valves thoroughly wrecked: an unstoppable cascade of water fifteen feet wide was pouring from floodgates ninety feet below the dam's lip. German dynamite also had jammed open the valve on a penstock carrying water from Urft reservoir to the Schwammenauel basin, guaranteeing that the Roer valley would be flooded for days by 100 million tons of water.

Snowmelt and rain had already made the Roer unruly, as readings taken at gage stations every two hours made evident. Now the river rampaged. The ominous code word "Johnstown" alerted Ninth Army of inundations to come, although with a rising tide rather than a wall of water. Overnight the Roer rose eight inches, and kept rising.

With Montgomery's concurrence, Lieutenant General Bill Simpson, the Ninth Army commander, postponed his attack at the Roer for twenty-four hours, then delayed it again indefinitely. Engineers reported that currents upstream were racing at nearly ten miles an hour, too swift for bridging, and aerial scouts above Linnich downstream found that a river usually one hundred feet wide from bank to bank now stretched a thousand yards, and in some spots more than a mile.

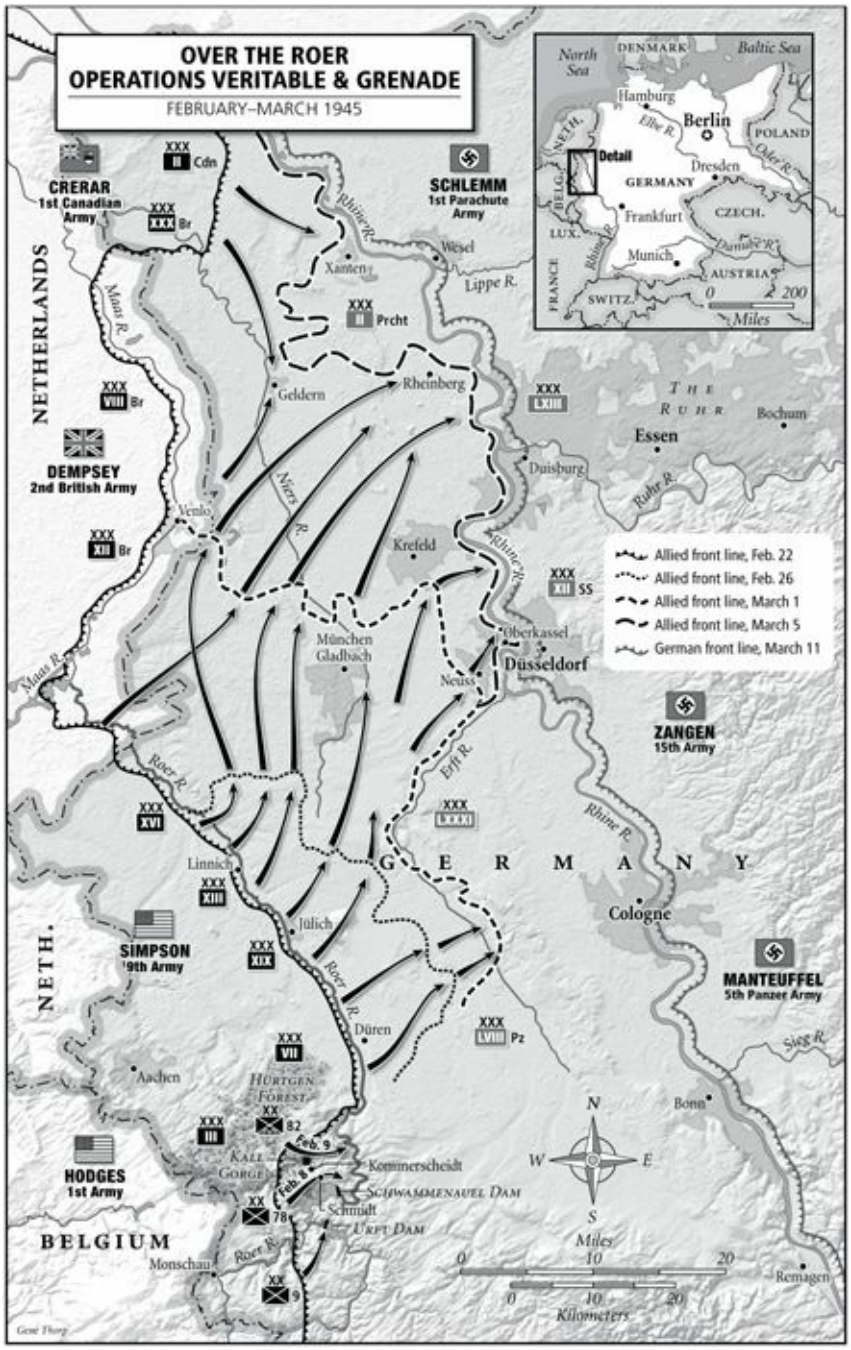
For nearly a fortnight, fifteen American divisions would wait on the west bank for the reservoirs to drain and the torrent to abate. Fortunately, patience and common sense were among the military virtues accorded Simpson, the son of a Confederate Army veteran who became a Pecos River rancher. Lean, angular, and six foot four, with a helmet that fitted his shaved head like a skullcap, Simpson credited his wife as "the balance wheel that settled me down." Combat experience in the Philippines, Mexico, and the Meuse-Argonne taught him as a young officer to "never send an infantryman where you can send an artillery shell." "He is excellent in every respect," Eisenhower told Marshall, and Bradley called Ninth Army "uncommonly normal." An admiring AAF officer wrote that Simpson "had the perfect calm, poise, and surety of an experienced professor. He displayed no anxiety, no uncertainty, and his whole headquarters reflected his character."

While Simpson bided his time, the Canadian First Army, composed of both British and Canadian corps, of necessity carried the weight of the Allied attack. The ponderous, muddy trudge from Nijmegen—"a bitter slugging match," in Eisenhower's phrase—averaged a bit more than a mile a day through the sloughs and thickets between the Rhine and the Maas, bagging eleven thousand enemy prisoners and reducing a score of German villages to half-timbered ash. "Machine guns are crackling now like fire rushing wildly through dry bracken," wrote R. W. Thompson, a reporter for London's *Sunday Times*. The sight of evening barrages, he added, "reminds me of the Jabberwock: 'with eyes of flame came wiffling through the tulgy wood, and burbled as he came.'" Rundstedt on February 12 reported that Army Group B had fewer than three hundred tanks and an infantry strength of under seven divisions; each German battalion was said to face the equivalent of an Allied division. As in Sicily and Normandy, Montgomery's forces would pin down substantial enemy reserves, permitting an American breakthrough.

* * *

At length Ninth Army was ready to take up the cudgels. Hoping to catch the enemy by surprise several days before the Roer spate had fully subsided, Simpson on Thursday, February 22, ordered Operation GRENADE launched the next morning; he then watched Bing Crosby in *Going My Way,* tossed down a nightcap, and went to bed. Hardly had the crooning ended than, at 2:45 A.M. Friday, two thousand massed guns cut loose. "The light from the flash of the cannon and explosion of the rounds was so brilliant," a lieutenant colonel in XIX Corps reported, "that you could read a document in the dark of night without any impression that there was flickering light."

Forty-five minutes later three corps plunged forward on a seventeen-mile front. Enemy fire and an unruly current still flowing at seven miles per hour would cost the assault six hundred storm boats. A footbridge installed at 4:24 A.M. promptly collapsed when rammed by a careering river craft. A falling tree and German gunners sank more foot spans, as mortar rounds walked across the water and plunging machine-gun fire chewed through GIs flailing for shore. One bridge built by 30th Division engineers was knocked out eight times before being abandoned. The damp cold prevented a battalion in Joe Collins's VII Corps on the right flank from starting even a single outboard motor, and other boats swamped, sank, or were shot to driftwood by either enemy artillery or white-phosphorus rounds fired short from U.S. guns. A battalion commander reported "indescribable confusion."



But within hours brute force won through. Anchor cables held fast and by seven A.M. three footbridges crossed the flood; a sturdier span opened at four P.M. Friday, bearing the first vehicles. By nightfall, the bridgehead was four miles deep, and three feeble German counterattacks had been slapped aside. Of fourteen hundred U.S. casualties, most were engineers. Simpson's headquarters kept a one-page chart listing each battalion in thirteen infantry regiments with the notation "crossing" or "over" as appropriate. By dawn on Saturday, twenty-eight battalions from six divisions had reached the far shore, with ten more to follow by nightfall. A separate list of "cities captured"—mostly German villages, really—grew to sixteen. On Saturday evening, nineteen bridges spanned the Roer, seven of them fit for tanks. Scouts found beer on tap in a *Gasthaus*; other GIs captured a Nebelwerfer battery before it could fire a shot. "It looks like things are beginning to break a bit," the 30th Division commander reported.

By Monday, February 26, as three corps fanned across a bridgehead twenty-five miles wide, Ninth Army was advancing three or four miles a day with VII Corps shielding the right flank. On Tuesday, Simpson committed his armor under orders to exploit, and columns of Shermans clattered across the Cologne plain toward Düsseldorf. Swarming fighter-bombers heckled the fleeing foe; villages with streetlights burning and trolleys running fell without a shot fired. Abruptly the war seemed to have returned, as one Army historian later wrote, "to the halcyon days of August and September." By Thursday, March 1, Simpson's spearhead had reached Neuss, within rifle shot of the Rhine. From the rooftop of a seven-story grain elevator, American officers with telescopes reported seeing "the dead, lifeless giant of Düsseldorf.… Of the sea of factory chimneys, one smoked; of the miles of railroad yards in the foreground, not one car moved."

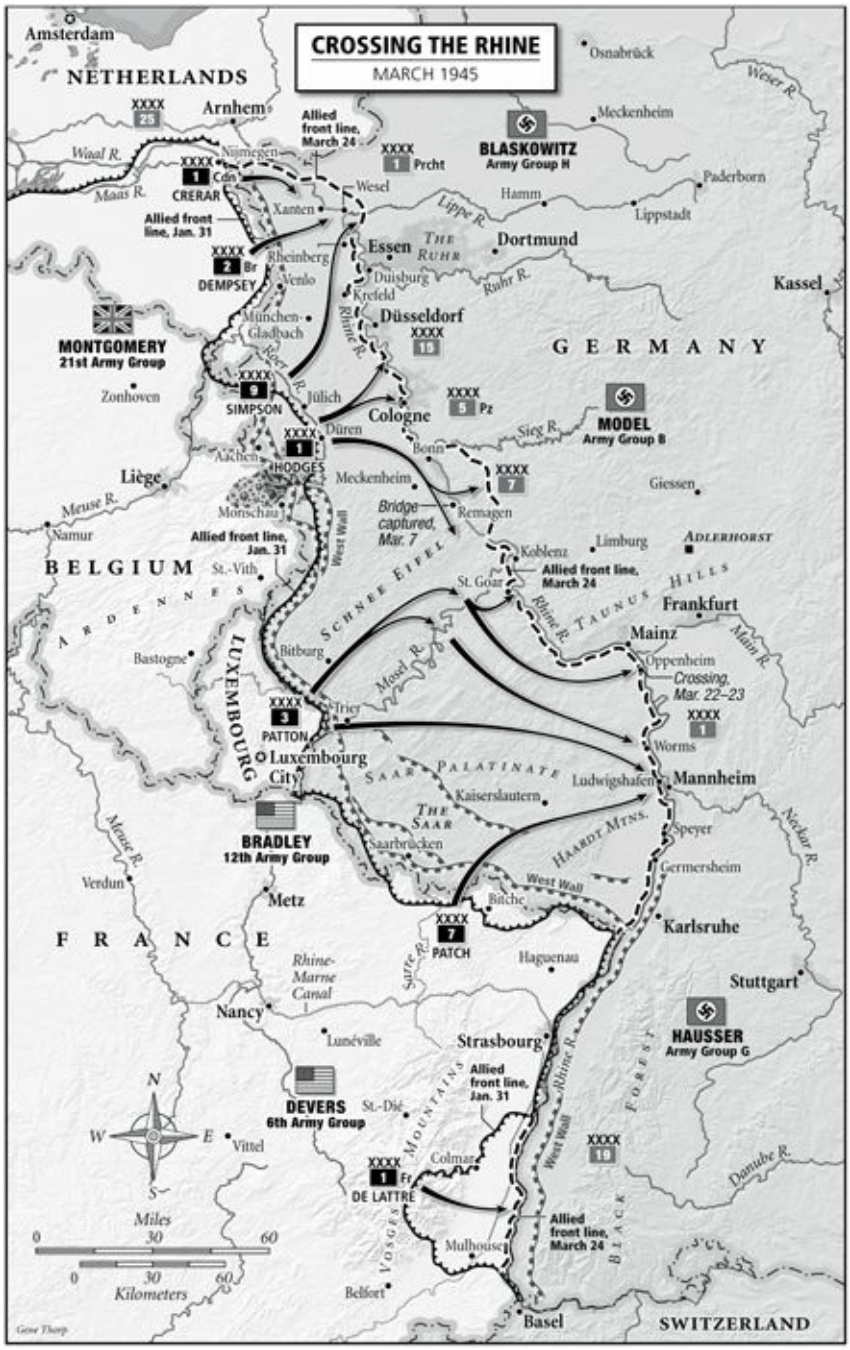
Eight bridges spanned the great river on Ninth Army's front, and one by one German engineers blew them into the water. A ruse to seize the crossing at Oberkassel almost succeeded: the strike force moved at night, with Shermans tricked up as panzers and with German-speaking GIs perched on the fenders. The deception was unmasked only at dawn by a gimlet-eyed enemy soldier on a bicycle who bellowed in alarm. Gunfire raked the street, sirens wailed, and a pell-mell rush for the ramp ended abruptly when bridge

girders, towers, and roadbed plunged into the river with a roar and another of those mighty, disheartening splashes.

Simpson now proposed a quick amphibious assault over the Rhine north of Düsseldorf. A thrust by XIX Corps could shorten the war by weeks, he believed; patrols reported that "the enemy is completely disorganized and has neither defensive forces on this side nor the far side of the Rhine capable of stopping a fast crossing." Montgomery declined with a curt "Don't go across," adding that any attempt by Ninth Army to invade the "industrial wilderness" of the Ruhr without extensive, deliberate preparation was "unwise" and would risk precious bridging matériel. The field marshal's rationale was quite plausible, but an incensed Simpson believed Montgomery coveted for himself and the British the glory of the first Rhine crossing—"a selfish idea," in the army commander's estimation. American officers increasingly derided the British as the "time out for tea army."

GRENADE was over. Ninth Army in less than two weeks had driven more than fifty miles from the Roer to the Rhine. The Canadian First Army had covered forty miles, against stiffer opposition. The two forces met on March 3 at Geldern, west of Duisburg. Together they had suffered 23,000 casualties while capturing 51,000 Germans and killing or wounding 38,000 more.

Despite the staggering losses, enemy survivors escaped in good order across the Rhine before blowing six final bridges in Duisburg and Wesel. Allied armies had begun to mass along the great river, if piecemeal and without a clear sense of how or where to cross. Still, Rundstedt told Hitler that the German plight on the Western Front was "bad everywhere," and even the Führer was forced to acknowledge "a heavy heart."


CROSSING THE RHINE
MARCH 1945
Amsterdam
NETHERLANDS
Arnhem
XXXX 26
Allied front line, March 24
Osnabrück
Weser R.
Meckenheim
BLASKOWITZ
Army Group H
XXXX 1 Prcht
Waal R.
Nijmegen
XXXX 1 Cdn
CRERAR
Maas R.
Wesel
Paderborn
Hamm
Lippe R.
Lippstadt
Allied front line, Jan. 31
Xanten
Essen
THE RUHR
Dortmund
XXXX 2 Br
DEMPSEY
Rheinberg
Venlo
Duisburg
Ruhr R.
Kassel
Krefeld
Rhine R.
Düsseldorf
MONTGOMERY
21st Army Group
München-Gladbach
XXXX 15
GERMANY
Roer R.
Zonhoven
XXXX 9
SIMPSON
Jülich
Cologne
XXXX 5 Pz
MODEL
Army Group B
Düren
Sieg R.
XXXX 1
HODGES
Aachen
Bonn
Liège
Meckenheim
XXXX 7
Giessen
Meuse R.
Monschau
Bridge captured, Mar. 7
Remagen
Namur
Allied front line, Jan. 31
West Wall
Koblenz
Limburg
ADLERHORST
BELGIUM
St.-Vith
SCHNEE EIFEL
Allied front line, March 24
St. Goar
TAUNUS HILLS
Frankfurt
ARDENNES
Rhine R.
Mainz
Bastogne
Bitburg
Oppenheim
Crossing, Mar. 22–23
Main R.
LUXEMBOURG
Mosel R.
XXXX 3
PATTON
Trier
XXXX 1
Worms
Luxembourg City
SAAR PALATINATE
Ludwigshafen
Mannheim
Kaiserslautern
THE SAAR
Speyer
BRADLEY
12th Army Group
Saarbrücken
HAARDT MTNS.
Neckar R.
Germersheim
Meuse R.
Verdun
West Wall
Bitche
Metz
XXXX 7
PATCH
Karlsruhe
FRANCE
Haguenau
Rhine-Marne Canal
Sarre R.
Stuttgart
Nancy
HAUSSER
Army Group G
Lunéville
Strasbourg
Allied front line, Jan. 31
N
W
E
S
DEVERS
6th Army Group
St.-Dié
Rhine R.
FOREST
MOUNTAINS
Vittel
XXXX 19
Colmar
XXXX 1 Ft
DE LATTRE
Danube R.
Miles
0 30 60
0 30 60
Kilometers
VOSGES
Allied front line, March 24
Mulhouse
BLACK
Belfort
Basel
SWITZERLAND
Gene Thorp

11. Crossings

The Inner Door to Germany

Into the Rhineland they pounded, and across the Saar and down the Mosel, where violets and myrtle had begun to bloom and the first early buds stippled the fruit trees. Engineers corduroyed cart tracks through smitten glades, and filled roadside ditches with bricks and stone from granulated villages to fashion an extra lane for the endless convoys rolling east. "This is better than the other sort of war," a British lieutenant reflected. "You feel you're getting somewhere."

German refugees trudged away from the beaten zone, lugging suitcases and favorite lamps and tablecloth peddler packs. Martial slogans could still be seen on the broken walls—*"Führer befehl, wir folgen!"* Führer, command us and we'll follow!—but so could slatherings of despair, including *"Hitler weg! Krieg weg!"* Down with Hitler! Down with war! Churches posted "In Memoriam" notices for dead soldiers by the hundreds, the thousands, the tens of thousands. U.S. Army trucks trundled to the rear with coal-scuttle helmets as hood ornaments, each open bed packed with prisoners. "They stood facing the rear, their gray-green uniforms dirty," wrote W. C. Heinz, "all of them rocking together with the motion of the trucks." German women held up babies or tossed bread from their doorways as they studied the passing blur of faces in hopes of a recognition. "I am in the fodderland," Audie Murphy would write to his family. "It is much different than the other countrys ive been in. The Houses are nicer and more modern but still arnt as good as ours."

As two dozen British, Canadian, and American divisions in 21st Army Group closed on the Rhine in the north, Hodges's First Army also made for the river between Cologne and Koblenz, with thirteen divisions in three corps abreast. "It is impossible not to be elated," the headquarters diary noted on March 3. Farther south, twelve divisions in Patton's Third Army overran the rubble that once was Bitburg, then pivoted through the Saar-Palatinate in tandem with fourteen divisions from Patch's Seventh Army. Together, they would attack on a seventy-mile front along the flanks of the Haardt Mountains. Any town that spurned surrender demands from a "bullshit wagon"—a Sherman fitted with loudspeakers audible two miles away—was scourged with tank and howitzer shells until eventually a white flag or two popped up; the obstinate died. "On the road yesterday I could look ahead and see at least a dozen towns burning and fires sprouting out from various and sundry places all over the horizon," Major General Alvan C. Gillem, Jr., commander of XIII Corps, wrote his wife in Georgia. Of 1,700 buildings in Jülich, 300 remained intact; of 9,322 in Düren, described by an engineer as "the most totally destroyed city I have ever seen," 13 stood undamaged. Doors torn from their hinges were used to cover German bodies awaiting burial, and big paper sacks served as coffins for want of lumber.

"Everything smelled of death," Iris Carpenter wrote after viewing another place reduced to slag. "Bulldozers scraped a road through the heart of the town which was little more than a smoldering rockery." Allied fighter-bombers harried the fleeing enemy in what one pilot called a "rat hunt: You beat the ground. You flushed the vermin." Artillery barrages ignited open-pit coal seams, Alan Moorehead noted, giving "a lovely play of light and gold flowing heat." To his family in Virginia, a logistics officer wrote in early March, "The earth is certainly scorched."

Nearer the Rhine, however, the swift bound of Allied armies captured intact a *gemütlich* land of bucolic farmsteads and bulging larders. "The cattle, so numerous, so well fed. Chickens and pigs and horses were running everywhere," Moorehead wrote. "Every house seemed to have a good linen cupboard." The reporter R. W. Thompson catalogued "fine stocks of ironmongery, metal goods, oil stoves, furniture, and mattresses. The paper in the deserted offices was of fine quality." In a former candy factory, Martha Gellhorn found "vast stocks of sugar, chocolate, cocoa, butter, almonds," as well as rooms chock-full of Dutch and French cheese, Portuguese sardines, Norwegian canned fish, and syrup by the barrel.

Here was a world of Dresden plates, pewter steins, and trophy antlers arranged *just so* on parlor walls, of Goethe and Schiller bound in calfskin, of boiled eggs in brine vats and the smell of roasting goose. Here was a world of damask tablecloths and silverware in handsome hutches, of Third Reich motherhood medals for stalwart childbearing, and French cosmetics looted from Paris or Lyon. Every house seemed to display a crucifix or Christian texts over the bedsteads; some flew Allied flags, or posted signs claiming that the occupants were Dutch or Belgian, and never mind that discolored patch of wallpaper where the Führer's portrait had hung until the day before. "No one is a Nazi. No one ever was," Gellhorn wrote. "It would sound better if it were set to music. Then the Germans could sing this refrain."

Here too was a world to be looted. "We're advancing as fast as the looting will permit," a 29th Division unit in München-Gladbach reported. German towns were "processed," houses "liberated" from attic to cellar, with everything from Leica cameras to accordions pilfered. A corps provost marshal complained of "gangsterism" by GIs who were "looting and bullying civilians"; some

were caught exhuming a medieval grave in a hunt for jewels, while others ripped up floorboards or searched gardens with mine detectors. W. C. Heinz watched a soldier on a stolen bicycle with half a dozen women's dresses draped over his arm carefully stow both bike and garments in a jeep trailer. Plundering MPs were known as the "Lootwaffe": according to a soldier in the 45th Division, a "typical infantry squad involved two shooting and ten looting." Moorehead described how "German cars by the hundred were dragged out of garages … painted khaki and driven away." French troops hauled German motorcycles, typewriters, and Friesian cows back to Lorraine. British soldiers pillaged a hardware shop, carrying away screws, nails, and hinges simply from "a desire to do some unhindered shoplifting," a *Daily Telegraph* reporter concluded.

That which escaped plunder often was vandalized in what one private called "the chaotic air of a drunken, end-of-the-world carnival." A Canadian soldier recounted his own rampage through a Westphalian house:

> First I took a hammer and smashed over 100 plates, and the cups along with them. Then I took an axe to the china cabinets and buffets. Next I smashed all the furniture.… I put a grenade in the big piano, and after I poured a jar of molasses into it. I broke all the French doors and all the doors with mirrors in them and threw the lamps into the street. I was so mad.

"I did not feel sorry for the Germans," said Major Peter Carrington, a British officer. "After all they had proved enormously inconvenient."

Allied commanders also found themselves struggling to enforce SHAEF's "non-fraternization" edict, which forbid "mingling with Germans upon terms of friendliness, familiarity, or intimacy," and specifically proscribed "the ogling of women and girls." Violations incurred a $65 fine, so the pursuit of pretty German girls—dubbed "fraternazis" and "furleins"—was soon known as "the $65 question." "Don't play Samson to her Delilah," an Armed Forces Network broadcast warned. "She'd like to cut your hair off—at the neck." But "goin' fratin'" became epidemic, often with cigarettes or chocolate as "frau bait." "To frat" was a synonym for intercourse; non-fraternization was referred to as "non-fertilization." GIs argued that "copulation without conversation is not fraternization," and Patton advised, "Tell the men of Third Army that so long as they keep their helmets on they are not fraternizing." Many a troop truck rolled through a Rhenish village with some leather-lunged soldier bellowing pathetically at young women on the sidewalk, *"Bitte, schlafen mit."* Please sleep with me.

* * *

General Hodges ordered champagne served in his mess on Monday, March 5, to celebrate First Army's imminent arrival on the Rhine. Toasts were raised "to an early crossing." A day later VII Corps punched into Cologne, Germany's fourth largest metropolis, that city of mystics and heretics, of Saint Ursula and eleven thousand virgins said to have been massacred by barbarians for their faith, the city where Karl Marx had edited the *Rheinische Zeitung* and where priests had once celebrated a thousand masses a day. Now, of 770,000 residents only 10,000 remained. Two dozen Bomber Command raids in the past three years left Cologne resembling "the open mouth of a charred corpse," in the image of the poet Stephen Spender. Like other dead cities it had the same odd shapelessness that afflicted dead men, a loss of structure and contour as well as life.

Volkssturm pensioners fought from behind overturned trams, and enemy snipers darted through the rubble. Building by broken building, block by broken block, Sherman gunners systematically burned out upper floors with white phosphorus while GI infantrymen grenaded the cellars. A cavalry charge across Cologne's airfield by 3rd Armored Division tanks smashed sixteen 88mm antiaircraft guns trying to form a skirmish line. The twin-spired thirteenth-century cathedral still stood, though wounded by bombs, shells, and incendiaries that had left the ceiling and stained glass in shards across the nave floor. Nazi flags could be found "dumped like scarlet garbage into the corners of alleys," wrote the journalist Janet Flanner. "The destroyer of others is herself destroyed."

Hodges on Wednesday, March 7, reported that Cologne had fallen. Yet so had the city's link to the east bank of the Rhine: a twelve-hundred-foot segment of the Hohenzollern bridge had been blown into the river at noon the previous day. First Army's hopes for an early crossing seemed ever more faint.

"The Rhine. I don't know what I expected. Another Mississippi, I suppose," an engineer sergeant told his diary. "The damn thing flows north." Indeed it did. From Switzerland, where the river was fed by 150 glaciers, to the North Sea, the European father of waters formed an extraordinary moat against invasion from the west. Although it was only the world's fifteenth-largest river in volume, ranking between the Euphrates and the Rhône, the Rhine was broad, deep, and fast enough that engineers compared any crossing to "a short sea voyage." "At no place is the river fordable, even at low water," the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers reported, and winter floods had been the highest in a quarter century, with currents in some stretches approaching eleven miles an hour. Most of the thirty-one Rhine bridges within Germany had been demolished by men with a rare aptitude for destruction. Thanks to the aerial bombardment of German factories, the river flowed relatively unpolluted for the first time in a generation, but so much wreckage clogged its bed that the Allies could not simply sail upstream from Nijmegen. A "top secret and private" note from Churchill's office to Beetle Smith likened the difficulties faced by seven Allied armies in catapulting eighty divisions across the river to "another D-Day."

Plans to jump the Rhine had been drafted even before the Normandy landings. Exhaustive studies examined bank, current, weather, and ice conditions, as well as Roman accounts of erecting a trestle bridge before the birth of Christ, and French records of nineteenth-century pile-driving near Strasbourg. Army engineers in Vicksburg, Mississippi, scrutinized historical hydrology data, aided by intelligence agents in Switzerland and daily gage readings intercepted in German radio broadcasts to river pilots. More than 170 models of the Rhine were built, and a hydraulics laboratory in Grenoble conducted elaborate experiments. A Rhine River Flood Prediction Service opened in January; mindful of the Roer debacle, diplomats pressed the Swiss to protect seven headwater dams with

soldiers and artillery.

River-crossing schools on the Loire trained hundreds of outboard-motor operators, pile-driving specialists, and DUKW drivers. A steel mill in Luxembourg extruded 54,000 tons of massive I-beams for bridge building. Boatyards in Florida, Minnesota, and Michigan built hundreds of seventeen-foot plywood craft designed to carry a dozen riflemen and three engineers each; nested and crated in clusters of six, the vessels were whisked to Europe by cargo plane or fast ship. French boatwrights, shown a photograph of a storm boat in January, set to work using blueprints drawn by a naval architect. Trees were felled, plywood milled, and screws and nails fashioned from surplus wire; five weeks after placing the order, the U.S. Army picked up seven hundred boats. Seagoing landing craft, capable of carrying a Sherman tank or sixty men, sailed from England to Antwerp and up the Albert Canal before being hauled overland to the Rhineland on trailers so enormous that bulldozers led the convoys to knock down any building crimping the roadway. Other big craft for this "inland navy" were trucked three hundred miles from Le Havre; they arrived, a witness reported, "festooned with treetops, telephone wires, and bits of buildings from French villages."

By early March, forward depots contained 1,100 assault boats, 124 landing craft, 2,500 outboard motors, 5 million board feet of lumber, 6,000 bridge floats, and enough steel and pilings to build more than 60 bridges. Everyone agreed, however, that it would be far simpler to capture one already built.

* * *

Just such a bridge still stood fifteen miles south of Bonn at Remagen, an ancient Roman town straddling a road built by Marcus Aurelius. Here the Rhine scoured a curving basalt gorge: to the north, Siegfried had slain his dragon at Drachenfels, bathing in the creature's blood to become invulnerable; to the south, Julius Caesar built two spans over the river, in 55 and 53 B.C., during his Gallic campaigns. The current bridge had been completed in 1918 and named for General Erich Ludendorff, the progenitor of the final, fatal German offensives on the Western Front in the Great War. More than a thousand feet long and wide enough for two trains to pass abeam, the span featured symmetrical arches resting on four stone piers, with embrasured stone towers at either end. Wooden planks could be laid on the rail tracks to permit motor traffic. On the east bank, the tracks vanished into the Dwarf's Hole, a tunnel bored through the steep six-hundred-foot hill called the Erpeler Ley. Local aesthetes complained that the bridge marred the dramatic riverscape; they complained more when it drew repeated Allied air attacks, including a January raid that killed three dozen civilians.

Retreating German soldiers had tramped across the Ludendorff in late 1918, and now retreating German soldiers were tramping over it once again, mingling with refugees, livestock, and an occasional hospital train carrying broken boys. A teenage antiaircraft gunner described a snaking procession making for the bridge through Remagen's jammed streets on Wednesday morning, March 7, "with cannons being pulled by horses, by motor vehicles, and yes, even by soldiers." Fewer than a thousand defenders remained in the area; most were Volkssturm militia of doubtful martial value, and all fell under a confused, fractured command architecture. Field Marshal Model had promised reinforcements, but none had arrived.

Sixty zinc-lined boxes for explosives had been fitted to the bridge in 1938, linked by cables through heavy conduits to an electrical firing switch inside the rail tunnel. The premature blowing of a bridge near Cologne—apparently triggered by an American bomb—had led to a Führer order that explosive charges would be emplaced only when the enemy was within five miles of a bridge, and igniters were to be withheld until "demolition seems to be unavoidable." On Wednesday morning, sketchy reports put U.S. Army outriders near the western bluffs above Remagen. Explosives were laid, but Army Group B described the Americans as a thin screening force to mask an Allied thrust toward Bonn and Cologne. Little urgency obtained.

Their enemy was nearer than they knew. On the previous night, March 6, the U.S. III Corps commander, Major General John Millikin, had phoned Major General John W. Leonard, commander of the 9th Armored Division. "Do you see that little black strip of a bridge at Remagen?" Millikin asked as both men squinted at their maps. "If you happen to get that, your name will go down in glory."

At 8:20 A.M. on this gray, misty Wednesday, a tank-and-infantry task force left Meckenheim, ten miles from the river. Leading the column in the advance guard was Lieutenant Karl H. Timmermann, who had commanded Company A of the 27th Armored Infantry Battalion for less than twenty-four hours. Timmermann had been born not far to the southeast, in Frankfurt; his doughboy father had taken a German war bride in 1919 before moving back to Nebraska. In a note scribbled in a Meckenheim cellar, the weary young officer told his wife:

> There is no glory in war. Maybe those who have never been in battle find [a] certain glory and glamour that doesn't exist. … Tell mom that we'll be on the Rhine tomorrow.

Now Lieutenant Timmermann would prove himself wrong: for a brief, vivid moment glory would be his. Summoned by two waving scouts shortly before one P.M., he hurried forward in his jeep to find a hazy, panoramic view of the Rhine gorge below. "Jesus, look at that," a sergeant muttered. "Do you know what the hell river that is?" Through field glasses Timmermann watched cows, horses, soldiers, trucks, and civilians cross beneath the bridge arches in a lumbering parade. Just below, white flags and bedsheets flapped from Remagen windowsills. Two locomotives with steam up stood on the far bank.

As three platoons descended through the town, leapfrogging from doorway to doorway, Timmermann bounded past the handsome St. Apollinaris Church and a sign that read, "Citizens and Friends: Preserve Our Parks." A spatter of German musketry provoked booming return fire from a platoon of new M-26 Pershing tanks, each brandishing a 90mm gun. Tearful Germans pointed to cellars where Volkssturm stragglers crouched in terror. A captured enemy general in an elaborately braided uniform proved upon interrogation to be a railroad station agent.

Shortly before two P.M. a dark geyser of earth and paving stones abruptly blossomed above the western ramp; the blast left a smoking hole thirty feet wide, intended to keep American tanks from gaining the bridge. Heckling gunfire erupted from the Ludendorff towers. Bullets pinged and sparked among the girders. GIs fixed bayonets before darting past the last houses above the river. "I'll see you on the other side," the 27th Armored Infantry commander told Timmermann, "and we'll all have a chicken dinner. … Move on." Timmermann raked the far bank with his glasses. Tiny figures loped along the shoreline and into the tunnel. "They look like they want to get us on the bridge before they blow it up," he said.

Barely half a mile away, pandemonium swept the eastern shore. Civilians and shrieking children cowered in the Dwarf's Hole as billowing smoke from white-phosphorus shells drifted down the tunnel. German soldiers ran this way and that along the bridge ramp, including several engulfed in orange flame from American tank shells chewing up the riverbank and smacking the Erpeler Ley. Three junior officers argued over whether the demolition order should be put in writing. Shouts of "Blow the bridge!" carried across the water, and at length a captain shouted, "Everybody lie down! Open your mouths to protect your eardrums." He turned the key on the firing switch.

Nothing happened. He turned it again, and again, without effect. A German sergeant sprinted ninety yards onto the bridge, lighted the primer cord by hand, and pelted back to the tunnel, chased by bullets.

With a doleful boom the timber planks rose from the railbed like jackstraws. Dust and black smoke boiled from the piers. The Ludendorff seemed to levitate momentarily as if expending a great sigh, then settled back onto its stone foundations, insulted but intact.

No one would ever be certain why fourteen hundred pounds of explosives failed to detonate properly: faulty charges, faulty blasting caps, perhaps a tank shell that severed the main demolition cable, perhaps, as some averred, a miracle.

Reprieved, Lieutenant Timmermann and his men raced onto the bridge, slashing wires and pitching charges into the water. Four Pershing tanks and a dozen Shermans arrayed on the west bank hammered the eastern tower until riflemen could clear out a German machine-gun nest. Sergeant Alex Drabik of Toledo reached the far bank first, in a zigzagging, stumbling sprint that cost him his helmet. Eight others followed on his heels, including Timmermann.

By late afternoon, Company A had 120 men across. A platoon began to scale the Erpeler Ley, dodging stones rolled down the slope by a flak battery holding the crest. After a single warning shot, five German engineers surrendered in the Dwarf's Hole; GIs blew apart the master demolition switch with a carbine. A 90mm tank round from across the river smashed through a German locomotive tugging a long string of boxcars, and the train halted with a sharp lurch, a white plume of steam sighing from the firebox. GIs crouched in a ditch as a passenger train from the north pulled into the tiny Erpel station; middle-aged soldiers with rifles spilled onto the platform only to be greeted with mispronounced shouts of *"Hände hoch."* A single German guard at the eastern exit of the rail tunnel also was seized, and twenty minutes later two hundred others emerged under a white flag to march in their long leather coats, hands high, across the bridge they had neither saved nor destroyed. Before surrendering, Captain Willi Bratge, the Remagen commandant, told a subordinate to deliver a message to the German high command. "Inform them that the demolition of the bridge was unsuccessful," Bratge said, "and that the Americans have crossed."

Night fell, a sodden, moonless night, "dark as a pocket," as one officer recorded, so dark that engineers felt for the street curbs in Remagen with their feet. Bulldozers slowly filled the crater on the western ramp and three artillery battalions unlimbered. Soldiers ripped lumber from German houses to patch the rail planks. Exhausted drivers napped at their wheels as great knots of convoy traffic converged at the bridge, awaiting orders to cross. By ten P.M. three depleted rifle companies occupied the far shore, thwarting a counterattack by a hundred German engineers and antiaircraft crewmen who were repulsed near the Erpeler Ley while carrying half a ton of explosives.

At last nine Shermans—narrower than the Pershings—crept across at midnight, guided by foot soldiers wearing luminous buttons on their belts. German tracer fire searched the span, usually a few feet too high. "Ominous and nerve-wracking creaking" rose from the bridge, a captain reported, all the more ominous when the tenth vehicle to cross, a tank destroyer, skidded to the right near one of the eastern piers and plunged partway through a hole in the deck. For several hours—"the most harrowing minutes of my life," one officer acknowledged—the vehicle remained stuck, blocking all traffic. Engineers debated pushing it over the side, or jacking it up, or winching it out, or blowing it to pieces. Just as dawn peeked above the Erpeler Ley, the damnable thing was muscled out and towed away. The desperate effort to deepen the bridgehead resumed apace, through what a Wehrmacht general now called "the inner door to Germany."

* * *

Ancient, stately Reims, known by the undignified Allied code name BASSINET, had been home to SHAEF's forward headquarters since mid-February. The city was renowned both for enthroning more than two dozen French kings, beginning with the fifth-century conversion to Christianity of Clovis the Frank, and for champagne, fermented in chalky warrens that ran for miles underground. Allied staff officers often held blind tastings at day's end, sipping from one bottle after another to debate the merits of Krug and Taittinger and Moët & Chandon.

Eisenhower messed in the borrowed house of a Heidsieck Monopole champagne baron, not far from the Cathédrale Notre-Dame, and on March 7 he had invited several airborne commanders to supper, among them Ridgway, Gavin, and Maxwell Taylor. He had just complained about the soup when a whispering aide summoned him to the telephone for a call from Bradley. Harry Butcher could hear the supreme commander's booming voice:

> Brad, that's wonderful. Sure, get right on across with everything you've got. It's the best break we've had.… To hell with

the planners. Sure, go on, Brad.… We'll make good use of it even if the terrain isn't too good.

Returning to the dining room with a jubilant grin on his face, Eisenhower ordered champagne for the table. "That was Brad," he said. "He's got a bridge across the Rhine. And he apologized for it, said it was badly located at Remagen."

They drank to the bridge, and to the valiant lads who had seized it. Yet before long the supreme commander would realize that this remote site created almost as many problems as it solved. "Nobody ever would have selected *that* bridge," General Millikin conceded. Poor roads and rugged terrain; a sclerotic bottleneck at Remagen; the shift of Allied legions to bolster Montgomery's planned crossing ninety miles north—such exigencies made exploitation harder than simply flinging First Army over the Ludendorff, or the Ludy, as it was soon called.

For the moment, Eisenhower would commit five divisions across the Rhine, with orders to gain the autobahn seven miles beyond the river. By Thursday evening, March 8, eight thousand GIs occupied a bridgehead two miles wide and a mile deep. Mindful of the German frogmen who had destroyed the Nijmegen rail bridge, engineers strung three protective booms upstream, including one with a steel net dangling ten feet below the river surface. Searchlights swept the water from dusk until dawn, cavalrymen fired at suspicious flotsam, and boat crews dropped depth charges every five minutes, detonating seven tons of explosives each night.

As engineers toiled to strengthen the fragile Ludy, the first ferry crossed the Rhine at dawn on Friday, soon joined by two more hauling gasoline and ammunition. Construction crews also began work on a floating treadway bridge a few hundred yards downstream. Power boats bullied each new segment through the river, to be appended to the growing span with four-foot spikes hammered home by "suicide squads" braving German mortar and artillery barrages. A particularly vicious shelling demolished nineteen floats in ten minutes, killing or wounding seventeen engineers. Among them was Private First Class Marion Priester, age twenty, who tried to close a wicked chest wound with his hands before announcing, "Boys, I've had it." As a comrade reported, "He died before he hit the ground." Yet by five o'clock on Sunday afternoon, thirty-two hours after work had begun, the first jeep crossed the thousand-foot bridge. A second span was finished a few hours later. By Monday, three infantry divisions and part of an armored combat command held a bridgehead fourteen miles wide and four miles deep.

* * *

Loss of the Ludendorff was an unalloyed disaster for the German high command. In an order decrypted by Ultra, Rundstedt demanded that both bridge and bridgehead "be immediately destroyed with lasting effect." Model directed the 11th Panzer Division to lead a counterattack from Düsseldorf, a fantasy given the profound shortages of fuel and munitions. Still, more than a hundred guns soon battered the bridgehead, a round every two minutes, among them three shells that hit the Ludy on March 9, punching another fifteen-foot hole in the deck and setting an ammunition truck on fire. Joining the cannonade was the "Karl" mortar, a 600mm behemoth that weighed 137 tons and fired a 2-ton projectile with little accuracy and less effect, although one enemy shell was said to have hit a Remagen bank, filling the street with fluttering Reichsmark notes.

Hermann Göring sought volunteers to fly suicide missions into the bridge, a proposal also intercepted by Allied eavesdroppers even before it was rejected as impractical by German commanders. Nearly four hundred Luftwaffe sorties were flown over Remagen, including missions by jet planes and antiquated Stuka dive-bombers; all could just as well have been deliberately suicidal. The marauders soon encountered twenty-five barrage balloons and nearly seven hundred antiaircraft guns—the Army's densest concentration of World War II—under orders to shoot anything with wings. Each approaching enemy plane was said by one officer to "cost the American taxpayer a million dollars in antiaircraft ammunition," and gunners would claim more than a hundred aircraft shot down. The intense fire inflicted two hundred friendly casualties on the ground, mostly welts and bruises from the spent .50-caliber slugs that fell like hard rain. On Hitler's command, V-2 launch sites in Holland also fired eleven rockets at the bridge, the only tactical use of the weapon during the war. None struck home; the single near miss killed three GIs and a barnyard full of livestock several hundred yards from the river.

The debacle at Remagen clearly called for recrimination and reprisal, and the Führer wasted no time. Rundstedt, who had already infuriated Hitler by ridiculing the *Westwall* as a "mousetrap," was relieved of command for the second time in nine months. Given another bauble to pin to his uniform and a curt "I thank you for your loyalty" from the Führer, Rundstedt once again repaired to Bad Tölz to take the cure for his rheumatism. "No one," his chief of staff wrote, "can jump over his own shadow." He was succeeded on March 10 as the OB West commander by Field Marshal Albert Kesselring, who for the past two and a half years had been the Allies' arch-nemesis in North Africa, Sicily, and Italy.

Harsher fates befell four junior officers deemed to have bungled the Ludendorff demolition. A drumhead court-martial tried, convicted, and condemned them within thirty minutes. Denied clergy and stripped of rank insignia, each was shot in the back of the neck and buried in a shallow grave. The letters they had been permitted to write their families were then burned.

* * *

Such rough justice was said to create a "bridge psychosis" throughout the German ranks: officers devoted colossal tonnages of TNT to blowing bridges and culverts across the shrinking Reich. But neither Kesselring nor a kangaroo court could stem the American flood tide at Remagen.

Among those crossing the Rhine on March 12 was the 5th Platoon of Company K of the 394th Infantry Regiment. Singular only because they were black, these GI riflemen were among fifty-three platoons of "colored" infantry mustered from volunteers to help remedy manpower shortages after the Bulge. Many had surrendered sergeant's stripes earned as cooks, drivers, and laborers in black service battalions for the privilege of fighting as privates. "Hitler was the one that got us out of the white folks' kitchen," one black

observer later said.

"Get it moving," yelled a first sergeant in the 394th. "You ain't in the quartermaster no more. You're in the Army now." They of course had already been in the Army, among 900,000 African-Americans to serve in olive drab, but now they were partially integrated as black platoons under white officers within white companies, scattered through eleven divisions. Despite the creditable records of two black divisions in Italy and the Pacific, and of black artillery and tank battalions before and during the Bulge, resistance to integrating combat regiments ran deep. "A colored soldier cannot think fast enough to fight in armor," Patton told his diary, and some argued that teaching black riflemen to shoot white Germans would lead to the shooting of white Americans at home. "We were going to make liars out of the whites," a black soldier later said. Another wrote, "I am an American negro, doing my part for the American government to make the world safe for a democracy I have never known." For many white combat soldiers in Germany, the simple truth was voiced by an artillery forward observer in the 394th Infantry: "We were short-handed and they were welcome."

Repairs on the Ludendorff continued for nine days even as tactical bridges carried most of the traffic across the Rhine. Between air raids and enemy shellings, two hundred welders, riggers, ironworkers, and carpenters swarmed over the structure, patching chords, stringers, and holes in the deck. Measurements showed the Ludy settling a bit on the upstream side, to the south, but engineers believed the structure had been stabilized.

It had not. Just before three P.M. on Saturday, March 17, a rivet sheared away with a sharp *pop!* Others followed, as if musketry swept the girders. A vertical hanger snapped. Dust billowed from the quaking deck. Timbers splintered and the squeal of steel on steel echoed against the Erpeler Ley. "Men on the deck dropped their tools and started to run," an engineer colonel later testified. Many found themselves sprinting uphill as the center span twisted counterclockwise and buckled. Then the entire bridge seemed to fold in on itself, "gracefully, like an old slow-motion movie," before pitching into the Rhine with a white splash.

Of those who rode the Ludy down, twenty-eight died and another sixty-three were injured. A major's body found atop the east pier was recognizable only by his oak-leaf rank insignia; others vanished into the Rhine forever. Scaffolding and deck timbers threatened to ram through the treadways downstream until engineers with axes and poles pushed the debris away while boatmen fished survivors from the river. Precisely why the bridge collapsed would remain uncertain. Weakened by earlier Allied bombing and the botched demolition, the span had since been assaulted by hard winds, heavy traffic, welding, incessant hammering, V-2s, artillery, and the vibration of a thousand shells fired from an Army 8-inch howitzer battery less than a mile away. "Most of us," an engineer told his diary, "are glad the damned thing is gone."

Late Saturday night, seven German frogmen who had trained in a Vienna swimming pool slipped into the Rhine with orders to destroy the tactical bridges using plastic explosives. None got close before being captured, killed, or forced to shore by exhaustion, gunfire, and blinding searchlights. Within a week, eight Army bridges would span the Rhine near Remagen, feeding a bridgehead now twenty-five miles wide and eight miles deep. The Frankfurt autobahn, finally severed on March 16, would serve as a trunk road into the Fatherland's central precincts.

On Monday, March 19, Eisenhower approved shoving nine First Army divisions across the Rhine in anticipation of forming a common front with Third Army once Patton jumped the river below Koblenz. "The war is over, I tell you," Hodges repeatedly proclaimed in Spa. "The war is over." The war was not over, nor would giddy repetition make it so. But the inner door to Germany had swung wide, never to be shut again.

Two If by Sea

FIELD Marshal Kesselring's buoyant optimism and Bavarian bonhomie had served him well through five years of war. A toothy, ruthless sophisticate whom the Americans derisively called Smiling Albert, he was descended from brewers, vintners, and an occasional soldier of fortune; his father had been a schoolmaster in Bayreuth, home of Richard Wagner. Kesselring's Allied adversaries in the Mediterranean knew all too well that he was an exceptional field commander, responsible for the long, fighting withdrawal from El Alamein to northern Italy. Energetic and confident, he also possessed that priceless attribute of successful generalship—luck—and was celebrated for his narrow escapes. Having learned to fly at age forty-eight before transferring from the artillery to the Luftwaffe, he had survived being shot down five times. "I don't believe you can be a military commander unless you're an optimist," Hitler said of Kesselring. The new OB West commander's marching orders from the Führer were concise, explicit, and impossible to fulfill: "Hang on."

Now Kesselring's luck showed signs of deserting him. In October, his staff car had collided with a German gun, an accident from which he was still recuperating. He found travel difficult, and his ability to personally inspect the battlefront was impaired. Exactly how many troops he commanded was uncertain; since the beginning of the Rhineland battles in February, a quarter-million Germans had vanished, mostly into Allied prison camps. Wehrmacht maps showed divisions where not even regiments remained, and staff officers estimated that German strength in the west had been pared to "at the very best one hundred combatants to every kilometer of front." Directives and queries from Berlin inclined toward the hallucinatory: for instance, could the Channel Islands garrison hold out for another year? Rumors circulated in the ranks that the Americans intended to shoot all German corporals to forestall the rise of another Hitler.

Field commanders in mid-March urged Kesselring to complete the Wehrmacht's evacuation across the Rhine; clinging to enclaves west of the river was deemed hopeless if not disastrous. The field marshal disagreed, fearful that retreat would degenerate into rout. In

line with Hitler's "hang on" policy, on March 17 he ordered "the retention of present positions," while telling subordinates that "annihilation … is to be avoided."

Yet only three days later even the Reich's last optimist had to acknowledge that the Americans had "torn our front wide open." The enemy might be delayed, but not stopped. "The best general," Kesselring mused, "cannot make bricks without straw."

* * *

George Patton had taken brief leave in Paris, where Beetle Smith took him hunting in an old royal preserve outside the city. Patton shot three ducks, three hares, and a pheasant. Later he sat in a box at the Folies Bergère, sipping champagne and acknowledging an adulatory ovation from the audience. The revue girls, he noted, were "perfectly naked, so much so that no one is interested." Hurrying back to the front, he resolved to remain within sound of the guns for the duration.

Battlefield carnage always inflamed Patton's imagination, and the Saar-Palatinate proved particularly vivifying. In Trier, for instance, twenty air raids and Third Army onslaughts had reduced the city to 730,000 cubic yards of rubble. "The desolation is frozen, as if the moment of combustion was suddenly arrested, and the air had lost its power to hold atoms together," wrote Private First Class Lincoln Kirstein, who would soon found the New York City Ballet. "Hardly a whole thing is left." The entrance to the old Roman amphitheater still stood and that, coupled with his nightly readings from Caesar's *Gallic Wars,* sufficed for Patton to inform his diary in mid-March that he "could smell the sweat of the legions." It was all there for him: gladiators grappling with wild beasts; legionnaires and centurions "marching down that same road" now carrying his own legions; Caesar himself mulling how best to bound across the Rhine.

Rarely, perhaps never, had his generalship been nimbler, surer, more relentless. With Patch's Seventh Army also sweeping like a scythe from the south, the Americans would count ninety thousand prisoners captured in the Saar, three thousand square miles overrun, and irreplaceable German steel, chemical, and synthetic-oil plants flattened or seized. American mobility unhinged the enemy, and firepower flayed him. "Scarcely a man-made thing exists in our wake," one division commander reported. The butcher's bill increased each day, of course. "Lots of young men dying miserably, or fighting to keep from dying," a nurse wrote in her diary, "hanging onto my hand until it hurts, as if I could keep them from slipping into that dark chasm." Patton urged on those still standing. "Roads don't matter," he declared. "Terrain doesn't matter. Exposed flanks don't matter." When a self-propelled gun got wedged under a rail overpass, Patton told the hapless artillery commander, "Colonel, you can blow up the goddamn gun. You can blow up the goddamn bridge. Or you can blow out your goddamn brains, I don't care which."

By Wednesday, March 21, three corps from Third Army had reached the Rhine. General Middleton's VIII Corps vaulted the Mosel to envelop Koblenz and reported "not a shot, not a round of shellfire, indeed not a sign of the enemy." Fewer than two thousand disheartened German defenders soon paddled across the Rhine in heavy fog. Forty miles upstream at Mainz, and beyond to Worms in Seventh Army's sector, enemy rear guards fled on any conveyance that could float. More bridges were blown, at Ludwigshafen and Germersheim. "We're going to cross the Rhine," Patton declared on Thursday, "and we're going to do it before I'm a day older."

He made good his boast. At Oppenheim, a wine town and barge harbor midway between Mainz and Worms, two battalions from the 5th Division crossed by stealth in assault boats at 10:30 P.M., surprising enemy soldiers in their bedrolls. By daybreak on Friday, March 23, six infantry battalions had reached the far shore with just twenty casualties before pressing eastward behind the marching fire known as "walking death." Tanks followed by ferry, and then across a floating bridge; GIs ripped down roadside fences to accommodate three columns of traffic on the far bank. Patton recorded how he "drove to the river and went across the pontoon bridge, stopping in the middle to take a piss in the Rhine, and then pick up some dirt on the far side … in emulation of William the Conqueror."

"Brad, we're across!" he bellowed in a phone call to Namur. "And you can tell the world Third Army made it before Monty." Bradley obliged him: the American crossing, he informed reporters, had been accomplished without aerial bombardment, without airborne assault, even without artillery fire. Within a day the 5th Division bridgehead was five miles deep. To "produce a proper feeling of rivalry," Patton ordered all three Third Army corps to race for Giessen and a juncture with First Army.

"I love war and responsibility and excitement," he wrote Bea. "Peace is going to be hell on me. I will probably be a great nuisance."

* * *

Churchill had proposed riding into battle in a British tank during Operation VARSITY PLUNDER, the 21st Army Group attack over the Rhine. "I'm an old man and I work hard," he later explained. "Why shouldn't I have a little fun?" Dissuaded, he instead donned the uniform of a colonel in the 4th Queen's Own Hussars—the regiment in which he had been commissioned half a century earlier—and on the afternoon of March 23, he boarded a C-47 Dakota with Brooke to fly to Venlo, on the Dutch-German border. An Anglo-American smoke screen fifty miles long already hugged the river, "a thick black haze," one witness reported, "for all the world like Manchester or Birmingham as seen from the air."

They found Montgomery's command post in a pine forest, occupying a clearing once used by an equestrian school. Photos of Rommel and Rundstedt still adorned the caravan walls, like the vanquished ghosts from battles past. After supper, the prime minister repaired to Montgomery's map wagon, where caged canaries sang their arias. A few hours earlier, the field marshal explained, he had put his master plan in motion with a code phrase to his lieutenants: "Two if by sea." The British were coming.

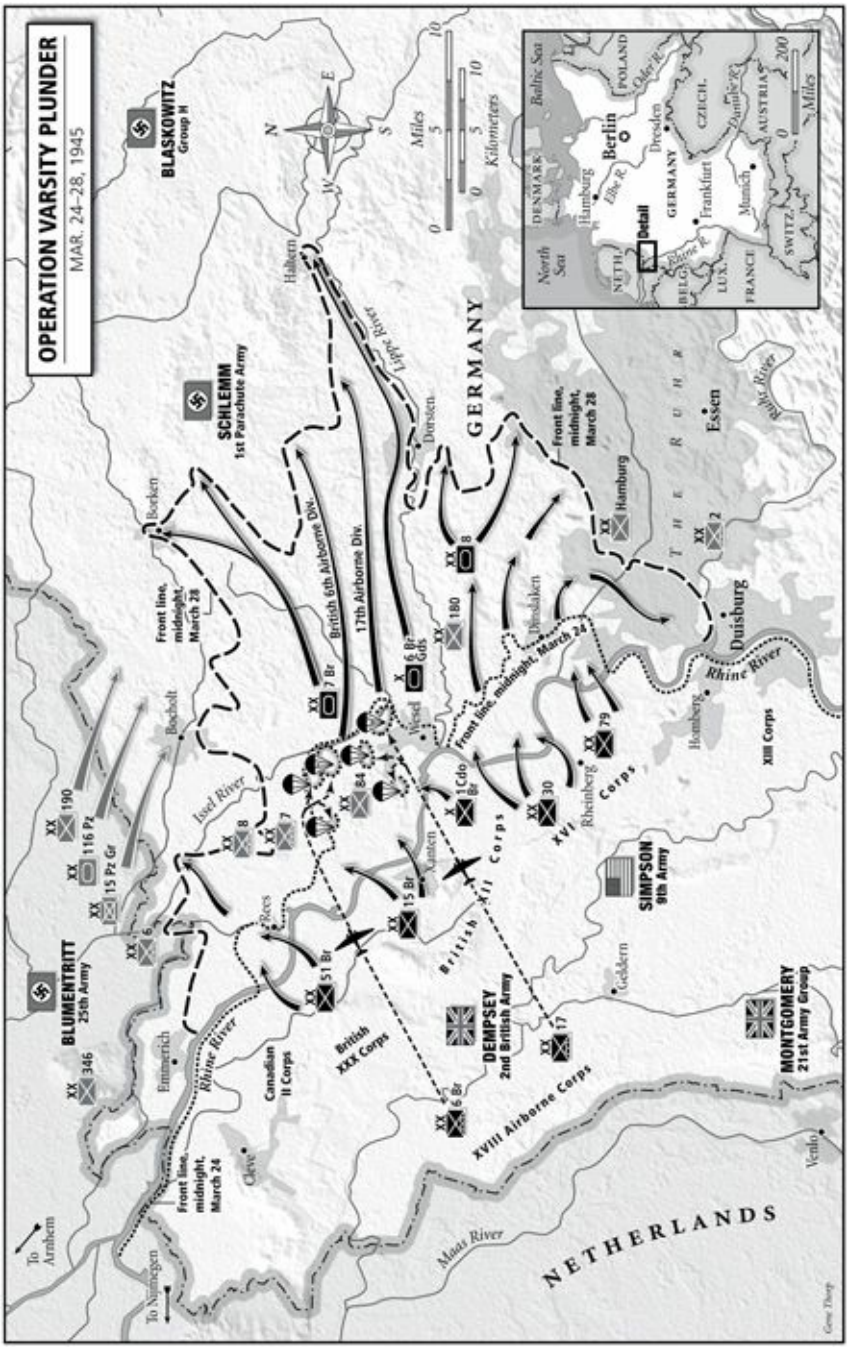
Under Montgomery's command, more than 1.2 million Allied soldiers now leaned forward, in an operation that rivaled OVERLORD

for complexity and grandeur. Three armies crowded the west bank of the Rhine, with the British Second squeezed between the Canadian First to the north and the U.S. Ninth to the south, all imperfectly concealed by that smoky miasma. On the east bank, arrayed around Wesel, their foe was reduced to what a German general called the "shadow of an army" that could "only pretend to resist." The British Army might be melting away—the bloody slog from Nijmegen had cost the equivalent of thirty-five infantry battalions, for which there were few replacements—but Montgomery intended to stage one last, glorious military pageant, worthy of an empire.

The plan for PLUNDER called for three corps, two British and one American, to assault the river that night. Less than twelve hours later, in VARSITY, they would be followed by an Anglo-American airborne corps that would descend onto the reeling enemy—a reversal of previous battle sequences. Sixty thousand engineers had gathered on this stretch of the Rhine. Fifty-five hundred artillery tubes stood elevated and poised to fire: a single 105mm howitzer could spray almost two tons of lethal fragments over nine acres in an hour. Fifteen thousand tons of bombs had been dropped in the past three days to soften up the battlefield. The British alone had amassed 120,000 tons of matériel, half of it ammunition; American stocks were larger still. Churchill already had chalked a message on one huge shell: "Hitler Personally."

With a final pinch of his cheek and clipped assurances that all would be well, Montgomery retired to his sleeping trailer. The distant grumble of guns signaled that PLUNDER had commenced. Churchill and Brooke strolled among the pines in the balmy evening, reflecting on how far they had come in the past thirty months, from Alam Halfa and Alamein in Egypt to Hitler's inner keep. Just before ten P.M. Churchill took a final draw on his cigar and then he, too, turned to bed, an aging hussar in need of sleep.

Twenty miles east, the Rhine attack had grown febrile with "the unbearable whip and lash of the guns," in Alan Moorehead's phrase. Flame and steel seared the far shore with as much hellfire as several thousand tubes could deliver. Concussion ghosts drifted back across the river, rippling the battle dress of Tommies assembled in water meadows, where they drained their rum mugs and blackened their cheeks with teakettle soot. Commandos "appeared in long files, coming out of the woods," wrote Eric Sevareid. "There was the sound of creaking boots and straps.… They were slightly bent under their packs. Some were singing." Into storm boats and amphibious Buffaloes they clambered, and soon the flotillas beat for the far shore, following an azimuth of Oerlikon tracers that stretched to the east like bright strands of rubies. Chandelier flares hissed overhead, dripping silver light into the river. "If you happen to hear a few stray bullets, you needn't think they're intended for you," a British officer had told his troops. "That, gentlemen, is a form of egotism."



From the second floor of a holiday villa overlooking the Rhine, Moorehead watched a Pathfinder aircraft orbit above Wesel's church spires to mark the target for British bombers. He thought the plane resembled "a single hurrying black moth in the air."

> He shot his clusters of red flares into the center of the town, which meant—and how acutely one felt it—that Wesel had just about ten minutes to live. Then the Lancasters fill[ed] the air with roaring and at last the cataclysmic, unbelievable shock of the strike.… Buildings and trees and wide acres of city parkland simply detached themselves from the earth.… A violent wind came tearing across the river.

"A great crimson stain of smoke and flame poured up like a huge open wound," wrote R. W. Thompson, "and the river seemed the color of blood." A British major wondered in his diary "if more than mortal powers had been unleashed." The bombers flew off, a thousand tons lighter, and a violet pall draped Wesel as the Commandos, who had gone to ground on the east bank, now rose to claim their prize. "Burglar-like and in single file, the leaders paying out a white tape, the whole brigade crept into the town," Moorehead wrote. Wesel, or rather its charred carcass, soon was theirs. Two British corps, the XII and XXX, surged over the river in force.

A few miles upstream, 40,000 Ninth Army gunners cut loose at one A.M. with a barrage exceeding a thousand shells a minute. An hour later Simpson's XVI Corps, swollen to 120,000 men, hoisted the first of seven hundred assault boats up over a dike and into the river. Medical heating pads had been used to warm the outboard motors, and now the frenzied yank of starter cords sent, in one writer's description, "shoals of small boats scudding across the water" under a three-quarter moon. Machine-gun tracers guided the initial waves until colored airfield landing lights could be emplaced on the far shore. German resistance evinced "no real fight in it," a lieutenant reported, and the two assault divisions tallied only thirty-one casualties. On the near shore, beachmasters in white helmets

hectored stragglers, and twenty-ton cranes hoisted the larger landing craft into the Rhine.

By Saturday morning, March 24, thirteen U.S. infantry battalions held the east bank on an eight-mile front. Engineers in five equipment dumps west of the river whipped off camouflage covers—garnished fishing nets, chicken wire, tar paper, and fabric darkened with coal dust—to reveal endless acres of pontoons, stringers, trusses, and anchor cables. The bridge-builders set to work on the river with a will, and a way.

* * *

Rested and exultant, Churchill shortly before ten A.M. on Saturday settled into an armchair placed for his benefit on a hillside in Xanten, five miles west of Wesel. A clement sun climbed through a cloudless sky, marred only by the milky contrail of a V-2 streaking southwest toward Antwerp, or perhaps London. Booming British guns battered targets far beyond the Rhine, and the orange starbursts of exploding shells twinkled through the morning haze. Gazing at the pageant of boats and rafts plying the river below him, the prime minister mused, “I should have liked to have deployed my men in red coats on the plain down there and ordered them to charge. But now my armies are too vast.”

A deep droning from the rear grew insistent. Churchill sprang to his feet with unwonted agility. Flocks of Allied fighters abruptly thundered overhead, trailed by tidy formations of transport planes, low enough for those on the ground to discern paratroopers standing in each open jump door. Following behind, as far as eye could see or imagination conjure, came aerial tugs, each towing a glider or two. The prime minister capered downhill for several steps, shouting, “They’re coming! They’re coming!” Just north of Wesel the first red and yellow parachutes blossomed, in Moorehead’s description, “like enormous poppies.”

Here then was VARSITY. The British 6th Airborne Division, flying in column from eleven airdromes in East Anglia, had merged south of Brussels with the U.S. 17th Airborne Division, flying from a dozen fields near Paris. Protected by three thousand Allied fighters, their combined amplitude darkened the sky: seventeen hundred transports and thirteen hundred gliders, bringing to battle seventeen thousand paratroopers and glidermen. Their orders were to seize the high ground and woodland above Wesel in reinforcement of the PLUNDER bridgeheads—“to loosen up the scrum,” as a British airborne commander put it, “and set the armies behind us swanning.”

In this they would be modestly effectual, seizing ten landing zones and drop zones with alacrity. But the stupendous bomb tonnage, the tens of thousands of artillery shells, and the hundreds of attack sorties against suspected antiaircraft positions had failed to winkle out all the enemy batteries, or to discourage mobile 20mm flak guns rushed to the field. “About the time we crossed the Rhine, holes started appearing in the wings and fuselage,” an officer in the 513th Parachute Infantry Regiment later wrote. “Flak hitting on the plane body reminded me of the noise made by hail on a corrugated iron roof.” Paratroopers groggy from Dramamine narrowed their shoulders and squeezed tight their buttocks as bullets punched through steel floor matting. A battalion commander in the same regiment reported that as his parachute opened, “I looked back and saw the left wing of our aircraft burst into flame. Almost immediately the entire aircraft was afire and falling.” Sevareid watched as another plane “parted with a wing.”

> The body of the plane plummeted earthward while the wing followed, fluttering and scudding like a big leaf. Another plane was streaming fire from both engines. The flames were beautiful golden ribbons.

Enemy tracers ignited wooden glider frames and fabric skins. A flight lieutenant reported seeing a British Hamilcar disintegrate in midair, the occupants “falling like puppets.” A parachutist corporal watched another glider bank above a landing zone when ground fire “cracked it open like an egg and the jeep, gun, blokes all fell out.” Of four hundred 6th Airborne gliders, only eighty-eight landed unscathed, and another thirty-two were destroyed on the ground by German artillery and incendiaries. One-quarter of the British glider pilots were casualties. More than fifty American gliders were destroyed by gunfire or in collisions with trees, poles, and other gliders in what one officer called “a flaming hellhole.”

“Controls hit by flak in air,” a glider account noted. “Wings and nose gone. Pilot and co-pilot hit. 12 EM WIA [enlisted men wounded-in-action].” On Landing Zone N, many glider men reportedly were “slain in their seats, and many loads burned or destroyed by mortars.” Robert Capa, who jumped with an American battalion, watched as German marksmen riddled paratroopers helplessly snagged on a tall tree; hearing Capa swear furiously in his native Hungarian, a GI told him, “Stop those Jewish prayers. They won’t help you now.” A low-flying B-17 Flying Fortress carrying other combat cameramen and reporters fled in flames back across the Rhine. A survivor who bailed out of the stricken bomber watched as “all around us … burning and disabled C-47s crashed into the fields.”

The morning proved even more hazardous for the new C-46 Curtiss Commando, flying in combat for the first time. Much larger than the C-47, with twin jump doors and a bay that carried twice as many paratroopers, the C-46 also was more vulnerable “due to the position and size of the fuel tanks and maze of hydraulic lines,” a Pentagon study later concluded. Bullets striking aluminum often generated sparks up to five inches wide, while leaking gasoline from punctured C-46 tanks tended to dribble through the hot exhaust stacks toward the fuselage. The AAF also had chosen not to install self-sealing fuel bladders in the three thousand C-46s eventually bought. The self-sealing technology had been developed since the 1920s and further refined after the dissection of German Messerschmitt fighters shot down in England during the Battle of Britain in 1940. Two layers of rubber lined the fuel tank, one vulcanized and impermeable, the other more absorbent; the latter, when saturated with gasoline from a bullet puncture, expanded to plug the hole, like blood clotting in a wound. Self-sealing tanks had been installed in fighters and recently in some C-47s. But production priorities, and concern about adding weight and reducing fuel capacity, caused the Pentagon to exclude the C-46, despite earlier airborne calamities in Sicily and noisy charges by one disaffected lieutenant colonel that the decision was “criminal

negligence" and "little short of murder."

"I saw pieces of the plane's skin tearing off when shells whizzed through," a sergeant who survived VARSITY later recalled. "There was another C-46 alongside us with the jumpers already in the door. Suddenly it was hit and flames shot from its wing roots." That spectacle recurred again and again above Wesel. "The C-46 seemed to catch on fire every time it was hit in a vital spot," crewmen reported. Of the seventy-three C-46s flown by the 313th Troop Carrier Group, nineteen were destroyed and thirty-eight damaged. Investigators found that fourteen of those lost were "flamers," planes "destroyed by fire originating [in the] gas tanks." The 52nd Troop Carrier Wing, which had flown in Sicily, Normandy, and Holland, concluded that "the C-46D is not a suitable troop carrier aircraft for combat operations."

One final calamity remained to unspool in VARSITY. Just after one P.M., as the airborne divisions finished the three-hour assault, waves of Eighth Air Force B-24 Liberators flew over the battlefield dropping six hundred tons of ammunition, gasoline, and other supplies from as low as one hundred feet. At that altitude, the lumbering, four-engine bombers became shooting-gallery targets, and 15 of 240 Liberators were lost, with another 104 damaged.

Among those shot down just north of Wesel was B-24 J 42-50735, nicknamed *Queen of Angels* and flying from Suffolk with the 704th Bombardment Squadron. The eight dead crewmen included First Lieutenant Earle C. Cheek of Missouri, the navigator, "a genial friend, a good companion, and a lovable comrade," according to the unit chaplain. Cheek had survived many harrowing sorties in bombing runs from Italy and then from England: crewmen wounded on his thirteenth mission; an emergency landing in France on his fifteenth; two engines knocked out on his seventeenth; and flak damage to the wings, tail, and bomb bay over Magdeburg on his twenty-first. This was his thirtieth, the one that would fulfill his quota and send him home. "It shouldn't take much longer," he had written his girlfriend in Texas on March 18. "There are so many things we could do together."

The sole survivor from *Queen of Angels,* a waist gunner who bailed out almost at the treetops, subsequently wrote Cheek's mother in Missouri, "The ship crashed about 500 yards from where I landed and killed the rest of the boys, leaving me as the only survivor. … This is about the hardest letter I ever wrote to anyone." Another officer in the bomb group confirmed the disaster: "They were last seen with one engine on fire and going toward a crash landing in enemy territory.… Fate is definite and there is no altering—the suit always fits."

* * *

Churchill at day's end returned to Montgomery's encampment in the pine clearing. With His Majesty's forces now firmly entrenched east of the Rhine, the prime minister was in high feather. "The German is whipped," he declared. "We've got him. He is all through." During dinner, Churchill entertained the mess with dramatic recitations from *The Life of the Bee,* an ode by the Belgian Maurice Maeterlinck to the most orderly society on earth, with chapters entitled "The Swarm" and "The Massacre of the Males." The prime minister and his field marshals then pushed back from the table and strolled to the map caravan to hear British officers describe VARSITY PLUNDER's progress.

All in all, the reports ratified Churchill's buoyancy. From the 51st Highland Division on the left to the American 79th Division on the right, the Allied bridgehead extended for twenty-five miles along the east bank and reached as deep as seven miles beyond the water's edge. Engineers were at work on various spans: the first tank-bearing bridge would open in the Ninth Army sector within a day. Three thousand enemy prisoners had been bagged on this Saturday, and PLUNDER ground units had made contact with airborne troops. The uncommonly fine weather would continue for at least another day.

The utility of VARSITY's vertical envelopment would long be debated, much as Montgomery's operatic staging of PLUNDER would be ridiculed as unnecessary by the likes of Patton and Bradley. Enthusiasts believed the airheads had disrupted enemy artillery, kept counterattacking Germans away from the river crossings, and opened an alley toward the Ruhr. General Brereton, commander of the First Allied Airborne Army, deemed the day a "tremendous success."

Yet VARSITY bore a taint, a reminder that rarely in war did success and sorrow exclude each other from the battlefield. Given the supine state of enemy defenses, no objective seized by paratroopers would have long eluded a three-corps ground assault. No great depth had been added to the Allied purchase over the Rhine, nor had bridge building been expedited. The two airborne divisions incurred nearly 3,000 casualties, including more than 460 dead. In addition to C-46 and B-24 losses, some 300 C-47s had been damaged and another 30 destroyed. Troop carrier crews suffered another 357 casualties, more than half of them dead or missing. Relatively few gliders could be salvaged. Once again, airborne forces appeared to be coins burning a hole in the pockets of Allied commanders, coins that simply had to be spent. Soldiers soon mocked the operation as VARSITY BLUNDER, and burial squads with pruning saws and ladders took two days to cut down all the dead. *Fate is definite. The suit always fits.*

The next morning, March 25, Churchill, Brooke, and Montgomery attended Palm Sunday services celebrated by a Presbyterian chaplain in a captured German church near the river. The prime minister offered his troops a brief homily on "an influence, supreme and watchful, which guides our affairs." Then with a V-for-victory waggle he was off with his entourage to the river town of Rheinberg for a rendezvous with Eisenhower, Bradley, and Simpson.

Together in the brilliant sunshine the six men picnicked on fried chicken served upon a white tablecloth in the garden of a colliery manager's house. "Our men muttered about camouflage," a British lieutenant reported, "and helped themselves to a few cakes left behind." Strolling close to the river, where soldiers swarmed with a purposeful buzz worthy of Maeterlinck, Brooke congratulated Eisenhower on Allied successes in recent days. The supreme commander would later quote him as saying, "Thank God, Ike, you stuck by your plan. You were completely right," a statement repudiated by Brooke. "It will be clear that I was misquoted," the field marshal subsequently wrote, "as I am still convinced that he was completely wrong."

For the moment such disputes seemed picayune. After Eisenhower and Bradley took their leave, Churchill's mischievous eye lighted on a nearby landing craft. "I am in command now that Eisenhower is gone," he declared. "Why don't we go across and have a look?" Across the Rhine they went, prowling about for half an hour, ears cocked to the to-and-fro shriek of artillery. The prime minister "seemed more perturbed about lighting his cigar in the wind than about shellfire," a British officer noted, but at length an anxious Simpson told Montgomery, "Get him out of here before he gets killed."

Back on the west bank, Churchill scrambled onto the iron trusses of a demolished rail span as German shells in search of American bridge-builders began to plump the river three hundred yards upstream and even nearer downstream. "Prime Minister," Simpson pleaded, "there are snipers in front of you, they are shelling both sides of the bridge, and now they have started shelling the road behind you." By Brooke's account, Churchill "put both his arms round one of the twisted girders of the bridge and looked over his shoulder at Simpson with pouting mouth and angry eyes." At length he climbed back to shore and shambled off to safety.

After presenting Montgomery with a fine set of *Marlborough: His Life and Times*—Churchill's four-volume paean to his illustrious warrior ancestor—the prime minister reboarded his plane and flew home to London, a dozen Spitfires his attending courtiers. "He never fought a battle that he did not win, nor besieged a fortress that he did not take," Churchill had written in volume one. "He quitted war invincible."

* * *

In short order, seven Allied armies finished jumping the river. On the far left wing, Canadian First Army troops funneled through the Wesel bridgehead. Simpson bridled at the pinched frontage allocated his Ninth Army and at what he considered the languid British pace. But by March 27, 21st Army Group had advanced twenty miles beyond the Rhine to begin enveloping the north rim of the Ruhr.

On the right flank, in the south, Patch's Seventh Army had crossed in a two-division assault at Worms early on March 25, supported by three dozen amphibious tanks. XV Corps captured twenty-five hundred Germans at a cost of only two hundred American casualties, and within seventy-two hours Patch built enough momentum to burst from the bridgehead against an enervated enemy pared to fewer than six thousand combat effectives.

The French, who had been first on the Rhine in November, were last to leap it, whipped on by De Gaulle, who cabled General de Lattre, "My dear General, you must cross the Rhine, even if the Americans do not help you and you are obliged to use rowboats.… Karlsruhe and Stuttgart await you, even if they do not want you." General Devers readily assented, but the retreating Germans had sunk all watercraft at Speyer, forcing the French to make do with a single rubber boat; ten riflemen at a time paddled across until a bigger flotilla could be assembled. A solitary company would hold the east bank at dawn on March 31, enough to plant a tricolor and satisfy Deux Mètres, at least for the moment.

"This is the collapse," a British Second Army intelligence assessment concluded on March 26. "The enemy no longer has a coherent system of defense between the Rhine and the Elbe. It is difficult to see what there is to stop us now." Hodges's First Army agreed, in intelligence estimate No. 77: "The enemy is capable of collapse or surrender in successive groups."

Alas, the enemy was capable of more than that, and gouts of blood would yet be spilled. But the Allied conquest intensified and accelerated. Eleven thousand daily air sorties contributed to what SHAEF called "a systematic annihilation of the German armed forces." March proved the heaviest bombing month of the war: 130,000 tons. Upon returning from his Rhineland expedition, Churchill suggested in a March 28 memo that "the moment has come when the question of bombing German cities simply for the sake of increasing the terror, through other pretexts, should be revised. Otherwise we shall come into control of an utterly ruined land." An outraged Bomber Harris counterattacked so vigorously, accusing Churchill of "stigmatizing a policy for which he had been personally responsible," that the prime minister withdrew his minute. Yet the strategic bomber fleets soon found their war "petering out in diminuendo," as one officer wrote, simply for lack of targets to pulverize.

Not so for the ground forces, surging across a 250-mile front. The war had again become mobile and mechanized, precisely the war for soldiers with "machinery in their souls," as John Steinbeck described his fellow Americans. A war of movement, distance, and horsepower was suited, as *Time* rhapsodized, to "a people accustomed to great spaces, to transcontinental railways, to nationwide trucking chains, to endless roads and millions of automobiles, to mail-order houses, department stores and supermarkets."

The United States in the past year had outproduced all Axis nations combined by a factor of two. Not least in that preponderance, American factories during the war turned out seven times more trucks than Germany; now, with more than 700,000 vehicles on the Continent, the U.S. Army drove hell-for-leather across the Reich "like a vast armed workshop." Eisenhower's armies burned four million gallons of gasoline a day, delivered by eighty-six ocean tankers, through thirty-five hundred miles of pipeline, and in thirty million jerricans. Having erected ten bridges a day on average since June 6, including fourteen major road spans over the Meuse, the U.S. Army would throw fifty-seven more across the Rhine. The traffic those bridges carried included more than six thousand tanks.

The terrible swift sword was fully drawn. Many now dared indulge in the hope, as a British captain wrote, that "with luck, one might be able to see the end." In a message to Marshall that was as close to gloating as he would permit himself, Eisenhower wrote:

> Naturally I am immensely pleased.… I hope this does not sound boastful, but I must admit to a great satisfaction that the things that Bradley and I have believed in from the beginning and have carried out in the face of some opposition from within and without, have matured so splendidly.

"The Enemy Has Reason to Fear Him"

NO sword was swifter or more terrible than Patton's. When a sniper took a potshot at a Third Army staff officer, Patton ordered German houses burned in retaliation. "In hundreds of villages there is not a living thing, not even a chicken," he told his diary. "Most of the houses are heaps of stone. They brought it on themselves.… I did most of it." As his vengeful divisions approached Frankfurt, another "brick and stone wilderness," he wrote Bea that Eisenhower had recommended his promotion to full general, but "at the moment I am having so much fun that I don't care what the rank is.… I hope things keep smooth. It seems too good to be true." *Time* featured him on a cover with the caption: "Third Army's Patton. The enemy has reason to fear him."

In a personal note to his fearsome general, Eisenhower wrote:

> I am very proud of the fact that you, as one of the fighting commanders who has been with me from the beginning of the African campaign, have performed so brilliantly throughout. We are now fairly started on that phase of the campaign which I hope will be the final one. I know that Third Army will be at the finish.

Curiously, it was unfinished business from Africa that now distracted Patton, ensuring that things would not "keep smooth" and marring the start of his drive into the German heartland. His beloved son-in-law, Lieutenant Colonel John Knight Waters, a West Point cavalryman, had been captured in Tunisia on Valentine's Day, 1943, during the early hours of the German offensive that culminated at Kasserine Pass. Waters eventually found himself interned as POW No. 4161 with fifteen hundred other American officers in Oflag 64, a prison camp in northern Poland, where listening to the BBC on an illicit radio was known as "reading the canary"; where a hissed warning of "Goon up!" signaled an approaching guard; and where "kriegies" (from *Kriegsgefangenen,* or war prisoners) organized a dance band, a theatrical troupe, a glee club, a camp newspaper, and a five-thousand-volume library.

Waters kept a pocket notebook, titled "Remembrances," which began with a laconic scribble on February 14, 1943: "Captured. Night in cactus." For the next two years his spare entries recorded events small and large, including Red Cross and Swedish YMCA inspections, and, on June 6, 1944, the one-word annunciation: "Invasion." Each calendar day was crossed off in red pencil as it ended. Rarely did Waters give voice to the drear monotony of Oflag 64, as in his October 1, 1944, entry: "And so another month begins. When will this end?"

He also maintained a "Wartime Log," wrapped in brown burlap with a liberty bell drawn on the front cover and an epigraph from the British novelist Henry Seton Merriman: "War is a purifier; it clears the social atmosphere and puts womanly men and manly women into their right places. It is also a simplifier." Here Waters kept a meticulous chart of "P.O.W. Rations," showing daily allotments that typically included 35.7 grams of meat per man—a bit more than an ounce—plus 318 grams of barley bread, 200 grams of cabbage, 100 grams of carrots, 143 grams of cow turnips, and so forth. He carefully peeled food labels from relief-package cans and pasted them into the volume—Top-O peanut butter, Kroger's Country Club Quality Fruitcake, Richardson & Robbins plum pudding—as if to extract a few final calories of nourishment from the memories. Each letter to POW No. 4161 was carefully listed by date, travel time, and censor number. Every parcel from home or the Red Cross was logged, with notations such as "badly damaged" or "good shape," and a catalogue of the contents, which ranged from pencils, shoelaces, and vitamin pills to a cribbage board, MacDonald cigarettes, and, oddly, ice skates.

The great Russian winter offensive had abruptly put the kriegies of Oflag 64 on the road, under guard, with millions of other refugees, war prisoners, and concentration-camp inmates trudging west ahead of the Red Army. On January 21, Waters and his comrades marched out of the camp, carrying stolen cutlery stamped with swastikas and with the secret radio hidden inside an officer's bagpipes. For five weeks they tacked across northern Germany in a horrid three-hundred-mile anabasis. "Zero weather & blizzard," Waters scrawled in his journal on January 28. Men died, or were shot, or vanished. "Toughest day yet," he wrote on February 22. Survivors studied their own stool like sheep entrails, for portents of illness; some chose not to wash rather than sponge away body oils that might provide a thin film against the cold. Starving men described the lavish meals they intended to devour when they got home, or concocted elaborate menus and lists of memorable restaurants where someday they hoped to dine again.

On February 26, the column was herded into boxcars to travel by rail at a glacial pace for another ten days to an eighth-century Bavarian town fifty miles east of Frankfurt. "Reached Hammelburg at 6 P.M.," Waters wrote on March 8. "Deloused, etc." Marched from the rail yard down Hermann-Göring-Strasse, the men found themselves entering a constellation of prisons that included a vast compound with thirty thousand enlisted men, mostly Soviets. Also here was Oflag XIII-B, a cantonment of five thousand Allied officers, including Serbs held since 1941 and fifteen hundred Americans captured during the Bulge from the 28th, 99th, and 106th Infantry Divisions, as well as the star-crossed 14th Cavalry Group. The camp's senior officer was Colonel Charles C. Cavender, who had surrendered his 423rd Infantry Regiment on the Schnee Eifel nearly three months earlier.

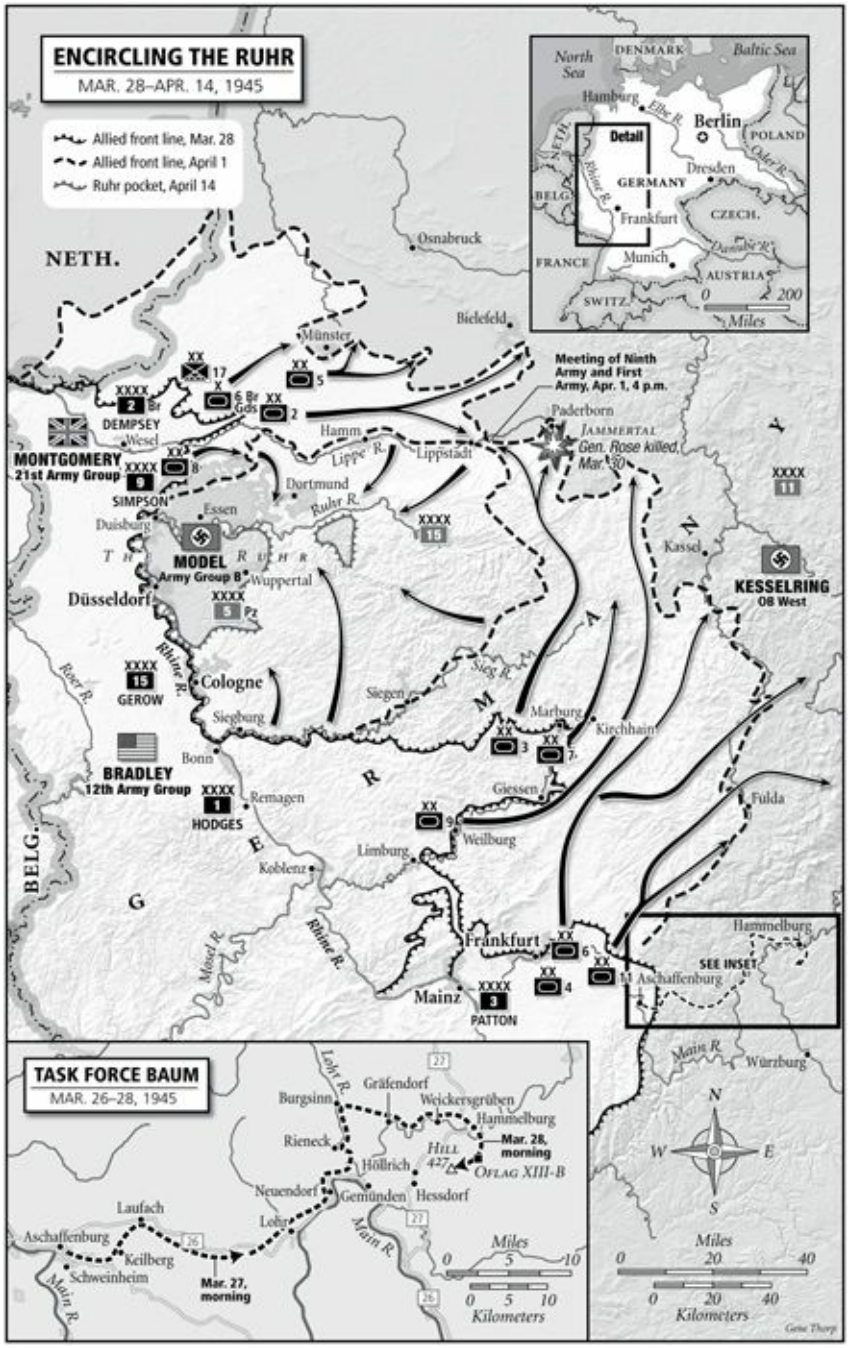
Conditions at Hammelburg were wretched: a diet of beet or cabbage soup, black bread, and turnip marmalade; a single, cold, four-minute shower each week; eighty men wedged into each shabby hut; and the risk of accidental slaughter by marauding Allied aircraft. "Air alerts all day. Worse than ever," Waters wrote on March 19. "Distant rumbling."

* * *

Patton had hoped to hear of Colonel Waters's liberation in mid-January. But SHAEF on February 9 advised him that Soviet intelligence listed Waters among a number of American prisoners apparently spirited westward. Fragmentary Allied intelligence and Red Cross reports more than a month later suggested that he might be among new arrivals at Hammelburg. On March 23, the day

Third Army crossed the Rhine in force, Patton wrote Bea, “We are headed right for John’s place and may get there before he is moved.” Two days later he added, “Hope to send an expedition tomorrow to get John.”

The dubious honor of rescuing the commanding general’s kinsman sixty miles behind enemy lines fell to a tall, tough, redheaded captain from the Bronx named Abraham J. Baum. The twenty-four-year-old son of an immigrant Russian Jew, Abe Baum had studied costume design and worked as a pattern cutter in Manhattan’s Garment District; he enlisted after Pearl Harbor and rose through the ranks as a decorated officer in the 4th Armored Division. Without disclosing his blood interest, Patton ordered XII Corps to dispatch an armored column to Hammelburg and stage a raid that he privately hoped would eclipse Douglas MacArthur’s recent rescues of imprisoned Americans at several camps in the Philippines. To ensure that Waters could be recognized, he pressured his aide, Major Alexander C. Stiller, a former Texas Ranger, to accompany the column, ostensibly “for the thrills and laughs.” Only en route would Stiller confess to Baum that one of the prisoners they hoped to free was the husband of Patton’s only daughter.



Patton had proposed sending an entire four-thousand-man armored combat command eastward but was persuaded that a smaller, nimbler task force would have better odds of success. Baum’s column comprised just over three hundred soldiers in sixteen tanks, twenty-seven half-tracks, three motorized assault guns, and seven jeeps. Exhausted from the Rhine crossings, with little sleep in the past four days, the men carried but fifteen maps among them. Some of Patton’s subordinates harbored serious doubts about the foray, not least because Hammelburg lay east of a corps driving north. Lieutenant Colonel Creighton Abrams, whose unit was to provide much of the armored firepower, smacked his fist against a field table during a planning meeting late Monday afternoon, March 26. “What the hell is this all about?” he demanded. “It just doesn’t make sense.” As Baum’s force galloped away a few hours later, Patton wrote Bea, “I have been as nervous as a cat all day as everyone but me thought it was too great a risk. I hope it works.… If I lose the column it will possibly be a new incident.” To his diary he added, “I do not believe there is anything in that part of Germany heavy

enough to hurt them."

He was quite wrong. After skirmishes near Aschaffenburg, the column reached Highway 26 at 2:15 A.M. on Tuesday, March 27, making fair time while cutting phone wires and, at first light, gunning down German troops doing calisthenics on a parade ground. American tank and machine-gun fire ripped through barges, tugboats, and German trains along the Main River, east of Lohr; Major Stiller described how enemy soldiers "jumped off and scattered like quail" from an armored antiaircraft *Zug*. In Gemünden, defenders rallied to blow a bridge "in a spume of stone and concrete," and Panzerfaust fire demolished three tanks while wounding Baum in the knee and hand. Detouring north onto a gravel road, the task force freed seven hundred Russian prisoners from a work detail shortly before noon on Tuesday—"Mazel tov," Baum told a German civilian—then again pivoted east before clattering into Hammelburg around 3 P.M.

Here trouble awaited them. An American map found in the wreckage at Gemünden, and reports from a Storch observation plane tracking the olive-drab procession, suggested Hammelburg as the column's likely destination. A German assault-gun battalion lumbered into town from the east while Baum and his men approached from the west. A running gunfight broke out when the Americans nosed up a twisting road toward the prison compound, which sat on a high plateau south of town. Enemy shells scorched through the column from below, and by the time American return fire beat back the attack, more vehicles had been demolished, including three half-tracks. Baum's fuel reserve and ammunition track were ablaze, and camp guards armed with old Belgian rifles had tumbled into a skirmish line outside the fence. The Oflag air-raid siren shrieked maniacally.

Drumfire and coiling black smoke had roused the prisoners, and the sight of five-pointed white stars in the distance provoked jubilant pandemonium. A kriegie priest captured in the Ardennes offered absolution to those who wanted it, but most stood braying at the windows until tank rounds began to slam through the cantonment. The Shermans riddled guard towers and a water tank, and also ignited several buildings in an adjacent compound: Baum's gunners had mistaken Serb uniforms for German. Prisoners dropped to the floor, and word circulated through the barracks: "No smoking, no lights."

With consent from a German commandant eager to surrender, five volunteers led by Colonel Waters marched out the main gate amid the battle din and flitting tracers, waving an American flag and a bedsheet tied to a pole. Several hundred yards from the camp, making for Baum's left flank, they passed a barnyard enclosed by a plank fence. Waters turned just as a German soldier thrust his rifle between the slats and, without aiming, pulled the trigger. The bullet hit POW No. 4161 just below the right hip, chipping his coccyx and exiting through his left buttock. He fell like a stone. Carried in a blanket sling to a nearby German hospital, where he was refused treatment, Waters was then hauled back to the camp and entrusted to Serb surgeons equipped with little more than paper bandages and a table knife for a scalpel.

Baum's tanks meanwhile had crashed through the perimeter fence to be greeted by whooping, back-slapping prisoners. Many appeared ready to bolt, with bedrolls under their arms and pockets stuffed with Red Cross food cans rifled from the mess pantry. Baum had anticipated finding 300 American officers. Instead he confronted 1,291, according to the latest head count; the milling throng reminded him of Times Square.

It was now 6:30 P.M., with daylight fading and the enemy undoubtedly convening another attack. Clambering onto the hood of a jeep, Baum quieted the men and told them, "There are far more of you than we expected. We don't have enough vehicles to take all of you." He pointed west. "When I left, the lines were about sixty miles back in that direction, at the River Main." He could squeeze a hundred or so onto his tanks and half-tracks. The rest would have to walk, or wait in Hammelburg for eventual liberation. A dismayed murmur ran through the throng.

Evening's first stars glittered overhead as hundreds of officers, on foot and outfitted by Baum with a few compasses and maps, tramped into the gloaming, vaguely heading west. Separately, with tanks in the vanguard and every hull upholstered with kriegies, Baum's motorized procession eventually rolled west by southwest, hoping to collide with Patch's Seventh Army.

Instead they promptly found more trouble. Gunfire and Panzerfausts launched from the shadows harassed them. Vehicles burned, casualties mounted. Scouts reported ambushes and roadblocks with panzers ahead at Höllrich and at Hessdorf, where Baum had hoped to pick up Highway 27. Sometime after three A.M. on Wednesday, he ordered the column to shelter atop a dark knob identified on the map as Hill 427, only four miles southwest of Oflag XIII-B. The wounded were carried into a stone barn as the last gasoline was drained from eight half-tracks to fill six surviving tanks. All but a dozen of the hitchhiking kriegies formed into a column of twos and tramped back toward Hammelburg under a white flag, surely the better part of valor. They would reach the camp at 9:30 A.M. to find that German patrols had already rounded up many of the officers who had set out on foot the previous night.

Just after eight A.M., Baum and his depleted band started to edge down Hill 427. "A sheet of hell," as he subsequently put it, abruptly engulfed the ridgeline with tank, artillery, mortar, and machine-gun fire. "At daylight," Major Stiller later wrote, "they destroyed us." As one olive-drab vehicle after another burst into flame, a final Morse message was tapped over the radio—"Task Force Baum surrounded. Under heavy fire. Request air support."

"Every man for himself," Baum hollered. Into the trees he ran, with Stiller on his heels. The baying of dogs echoed across the slope. One by one the GIs were captured or shot down. A German soldier found Baum and Spiller burrowed beneath a den of leaves; when Baum fumbled for his .45 automatic, the German raised his own pistol and shot him in the left thigh, his third wound of the expedition. They, too, would return to Hammelburg, Baum sprawled in a horse cart. "Get a good sleep, boys," a guard told the Americans. "You had a hard night."

* * *

After his wounding, John Waters managed to scratch a few spare entries into his "Remembrances" journal:

March 27: “Shot while under white flag by German.”
March 28: “Operation & hospital. Suffering.”
March 29: “Hosp. Morphine.”
March 30: “Hosp. Suffering.”

Not for some days would Patton learn details of the failed raid, although German propaganda broadcasts celebrated the repulse at Hammelburg as a signal victory for the Reich. A few officers from Oflag XIII-B escaped their pursuers and eventually stumbled into American lines with fragmentary accounts of salvation, flight, and gunfire. Most prisoners and their erstwhile rescuers, including Stiller, were force-marched to another camp near Munich, where they would await Seventh Army’s arrival a month later. Task Force Baum had been obliterated, every vehicle lost and nearly every man captured in addition to the fifty-seven killed, wounded, or missing. An uncertain number of prisoners had died in the escapade.

Patton both evaded responsibility—blaming Major General Manton S. Eddy, the XII Corps commander, for dispatching an undersized force—and prevaricated. To reporters on March 30 he claimed that Task Force Baum was intended largely as a feint. “I felt by hazarding a small force I would confuse the enemy completely as to where we were going,” he said. “It did work, for they thought I was going to Nuremberg.” Later he would insist that he had first learned of Waters’s internment at the camp long after the raid. To Bea on March 31, he wrote:

> I had known of the camp there for a week but did not know definitely he was in it. I sent a force to capture it but fear that the force was destroyed. However it was the proper thing to do.

As details of the fiasco emerged and criticism intensified, Patton unsuccessfully tried to suppress the story. “They are trying to make an incident out of my attempt to rescue John,” he told Bea. “How I hate the press.” Ten days after the raid, when troops from the 14th Armored Division overran Hammelburg, they found that those too ill or too damaged to travel to Munich had been left in the Serb dispensary, including Colonel Waters and Captain Baum. Patton sent an Army surgeon and two small planes to evacuate his son-in-law to a Frankfurt hospital; the young officer would recover from his injuries and later attain four-star rank. Baum and other wounded Americans were left behind at the camp for several more days. Eventually the former pattern cutter was promoted to major and awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for “loyal, courageous devotion to duty,” a decoration pinned on his hospital pajamas by Patton.

Patton had abused his authority, issuing reckless, impulsive orders to indulge his personal interests. As in the slapping incidents in Sicily, his deportment, compounded this time by mendacity, was unworthy of the soldiers he was privileged to lead. Yet with victory so near, his superiors had no heart for public rebukes. Bradley considered the raid “foolhardy,” but kept silent. “Failure itself was George’s own worst reprimand,” he concluded. In cables to Marshall, Eisenhower referred to the raid as “a wild goose chase” and “Patton’s latest crackpot actions.” The Third Army commander had “lost a full company of medium tanks and a platoon of light tanks. Foolishly he then imposed censorship on the movement.”

“Patton is a problem child,” Eisenhower added, “but he is a great fighting leader in pursuit and exploitation.”

Lovers’ Quarrels Are a Part of Love

EISENHOWER’S office in Reims occupied the second floor of the Collège Moderne et Technique de Garçons, three stories of red brick on Rue Henri Joliauer. His windows overlooked a rail marshaling yard and the city’s seedy train station; beyond the tracks, German prisoners with push brooms swept the cathedral close. Military convoys crawled through the narrow streets at all hours in a clangor of grinding truck gears and straining engines. SHAEF’s forward headquarters now accommodated more than five thousand Allied officers and enlisted men, double the intended number, and they filled not only the *collège* but a music conservatory, various offices on Rue Talleyrand, French military casernes, and the Hôtel du Lion d’Or, where at night jitterbugging soldiers danced in a cabaret with rifles slung over their shoulders.

“France smells wonderful these days,” a SHAEF lieutenant wrote home after exploring Reims.

> We get the variegated odors of roast beef, onion and oil dressing, and naturally French pastry. The air is scented with the blossoming chestnut trees.… The lilacs were in full bloom, the wisteria dripped from their vines, and all those fruit trees! I nearly was overcome.

Such vernal delights were largely wasted on the supreme commander, who despite recent battlefield successes showed alarming signs of dispirited exhaustion. Eisenhower “looked terrible,” Bradley conceded, beset with an aching knee, respiratory miseries, and a painful cyst on his back that required surgical excision. Kay Summersby described his waspish mood as “truly vile”; his “physical and mental condition was worse than we had ever known it,” she later wrote. “Beetle was positive that he was on the verge of a nervous breakdown.” Smith was hardly in the pink himself, tormented by a bleeding ulcer and an infection that had confined him to bed for several days, further burdening Eisenhower. In his diary, Everett Hughes had written, “Ike shouts and rants. Says ‘I have too

many things to do.' … He acted like a crazy man.… On defensive, guard up, worried, self-isolated."

The supreme commander needed rest. With Smith he flew to Cannes in late March and spent five days at a borrowed villa doing little but sleep, sunbathe, and play an occasional rubber of bridge. For the first forty-eight hours, he woke only long enough to lunch on the terrace before shuffling back to bed. "I just can't concentrate," he complained. But the break proved salutary, and he returned to Reims restored and ready to finish the war. Still, as he confessed to Mamie, "Those of us that are bearing real responsibility in this war will find it difficult to ever be restful [or] serene again."

He also returned from the Riviera with a revised battle plan. "Ike has learnt his lesson and he consults me before taking any action," Montgomery had told Brooke earlier in March. But on Wednesday, March 28, only a day after Montgomery had informed Eisenhower that he was beginning his drive from the Rhine toward the river Elbe with the U.S. Ninth Army and British Second Army, the supreme commander delivered a thunderbolt message:

> As soon as you have joined hands with Bradley in the Kassel-Paderborn area, Ninth United States Army will revert to Bradley's command. Bradley … will deliver his main thrust on the axis Erfurt–Leipzig–Dresden to join hands with the Russians. The mission of your army group will be to protect Bradley's northern flank.… Devers will protect Bradley's right flank.

This plan, Eisenhower assured him, "is simplicity itself." In a clear tweak at the field marshal's presumption, he added, "As you say, the situation looks good."

The supreme commander had his reasons for shifting the main attack avenue from the Allied north to the center, none of which he had discussed with Montgomery or Churchill during their Palm Sunday picnic on the Rhine. Not least, as Eisenhower had written Marshall, "I get tired of trying to arrange the blankets smoothly over several prima donnas in the same bed." Now they would have separate beds. Moreover, Montgomery's armies in the north would have to cross the fenny Westphalian plain, a lowland of watercourses that could easily impede armored columns; the corridor farther south presented few obstructions and offered fine highways for the mobile Americans. With ten thousand German soldiers now surrendering every day, the Wehrmacht tottered toward annihilation, although some Allied intelligence officers worried that diehards might escape to the Alps or organize guerrilla brigades. Speed was paramount, and SHAEF had concluded, in General Whiteley's words, that "if anything was to be done quickly, don't give it to Monty."

Montgomery was gobsmacked by what he called "the blow from Ike.… A very dirty work, I fear." Without General Simpson's heft, 21st Army Group was unlikely to reach the Elbe soon, much less Berlin. "The violent pro-American element at SHAEF is pressing for a set-up which will clip the wings of the British group of armies," he wrote London. "The Americans then finish off the business alone." To Brooke, he went further. "This new plan of Ike's," he warned, "will prolong the war." Montgomery elicited less sympathy than he might have hoped. "Monty has only himself to blame for the suspicion with which the Americans treat him," said Admiral Cunningham, the first sea lord.

There was more. Since OVERLORD, Allied planners had presumed that Berlin was their ultimate objective. "Berlin is the main prize," Eisenhower had affirmed in September. "There is no doubt whatsoever in my mind that we should concentrate all our energies and resources on rapid thrusts to Berlin." Now he changed his mind. In a "personal message to Marshal Stalin" cabled that same fateful Wednesday, with a copy to the Charlie-Charlies, the supreme commander disclosed that "the best axis" would carry his legions to Leipzig and Dresden in southeast Germany, a hundred miles from the capital. To Montgomery he added in a subsequent note, "In none of this do I mention Berlin. That place has become, so far as I am concerned, nothing but a geographical location.… My purpose is to destroy the enemy's forces and his powers to resist."

Again he had cause. The Red Army was thirty miles from Berlin, on favorable terrain with more than a million men who had been massing for this assault since January; the Anglo-Americans remained well over two hundred miles from the capital. Bradley and other commanders estimated that taking Berlin might cost between ten thousand and one hundred thousand American casualties alone. Marshall had cautioned Eisenhower against "unfortunate incidents," including fratricide between forces approaching from east and west. (On a single day in early April, U.S. and Soviet planes would inadvertently tangle five times, with exchanges of gunfire.) Postwar occupation zones already had been established, and the partition of Berlin would take effect regardless of who captured the city. A race to Berlin, or Vienna, or Prague would bleed U.S. forces needed in the Pacific, and perhaps corrode Moscow's commitment to make war on Japan. By angling southeast, Bradley's spearhead would cut the Reich in half, severing Bavaria and Austria from Berlin, and help forestall the scorched-earth decree Hitler had issued on March 19, "Destructive Measures on Reich Territory." Finally, Eisenhower well understood that Roosevelt's vision of an enduring peace was predicated on cooperation with the Soviets, a comity unlikely to be enhanced by a rivalrous dash to the Reichstag. As he later asked an interviewer, "What would you have done with Berlin if we had captured it?"

None of this went down easily in London. Not only did Eisenhower's new plan steal Montgomery's thunder—this, when the British had suffered twenty thousand casualties in the past two months—but in directly corresponding with Stalin the supreme commander appeared, in British eyes, to exceed his authority. When it was suggested that Eisenhower had impinged on the prerogatives of his superiors, Marshall and the other U.S. chiefs demurred. "The commander in the field," they wrote Brooke and his confederates on March 30, "is the best judge of the measures which offer the earliest prospect of destroying the German armies or their power to resist."

A day later Churchill lowered his beaver and entered the lists. "We might be condemned to an almost static role in the north," he warned the British chiefs, and on Sunday he wrote Roosevelt:

Berlin remains of high strategic importance.… The Russian armies will no doubt overrun all Austria and enter Vienna. If they also take Berlin, will not their impression that they have been the overwhelming contributor to our common victory be unduly imprinted in their minds?

"Laying aside every impediment and shunning every diversion," the prime minister advised, "the allied armies of the north and center should now march at the highest speed towards the Elbe." Yet the Americans were not to be headed. In a deft rebuff from his vacation cottage in Warm Springs, Georgia, Roosevelt told Churchill that "the British Army is given what seems to me very logical objectives on the northern flank."

Eisenhower would further assure Marshall, "I shall not attempt any move I deem militarily unwise merely to gain a political prize unless I receive specific orders from the Combined Chiefs of Staff." No such directive was forthcoming, nor had Eisenhower's marching orders changed significantly from the charge given him the previous spring—to "enter the continent of Europe" and destroy Germany's armed forces.

He had accomplished the former; now he would fulfill the latter. The Allied juggernaut in the west had grown to almost four and a half million, including ninety divisions. They faced a tatterdemalion enemy: sixty-five divisions so depleted that their combined combat strength barely equaled two dozen. Gasoline had grown precious enough that a sour joke in German ranks described a new "fifty-man panzer crew"—one man to steer, one to shoot, and forty-eight to push.

Montgomery had not quite yielded. But when he asked SHAEF for ten American divisions to reinforce a British thrust toward Lübeck and then Berlin—"I consider that Berlin has definite value as an objective," he said—Eisenhower brought him up short. "You must not lose sight of the fact that during the advance to Leipzig you have the role of protecting Bradley's northern flank," the supreme commander replied. "It is not his role to protect your southern flank. My directive is quite clear." Montgomery answered meekly, "It is quite clear to me what you want."

Churchill saw that further bickering was pointless. In a graceful capitulation, he first pronounced the Anglo-Americans "the truest friends and comrades that ever fought side by side," and then sent Roosevelt a scrap of wisdom from the Roman playwright Terence: "I will use one of my very few Latin quotations, *'Amantium irae amoris integratio est.*'" Lovers' quarrels are a part of love.

* * *

With Armed Forces Radio playing "The Last Round-Up," the U.S. First, Third, and Ninth Armies trundled onto the German *Autobahnen* and stepped on the gas. The wide double highways were described as "real dream roads … as smooth as a highly polished floor," although the cloverleaf ramps baffled those who had never encountered them before. Truck drivers kept themselves awake by singing "Onward, Christian Soldiers." T Force intelligence units would fall on each captured city in search of not only Nazi villains but also industrial secrets; thirty-five mobile microfilm teams rooted through factories and universities. From Wehrmacht depots, they also collected fine German maps of the Soviet Union, just in case.

Towns fell quickly: Limburg, Weilburg, Giessen—Hodges won a box of cigars from Patton by getting there first—Marburg, Kirchhain. "This mad, Alice in Wonderland rush forward through Germany," in one major's description, was both exhilarating and ruthless. Enemy soldiers who resisted were shot down on the instant. Enemy villages that failed to surrender were razed. When SS troops in search of gasoline and vehicles captured an American field hospital in late March, false rumors that doctors had been murdered and nurses raped led to a feverish, malignant manhunt, which left five hundred enemy troops dead before eight hundred others were allowed to capitulate. "How I want the war to end," wrote one soldier. "The danger now begins to frighten me. To die at this stage—with the door at the end of the passage, the door into the rose garden, already in sight, ajar—would be awful."

The hour had come to cinch the noose around the Ruhr. With Ninth Army spanking east and soon to rejoin his command, Bradley on Wednesday, March 28, ordered First Army to hurry north for a rendezvous with Simpson's vanguard, the 2nd Armored Division, while Patton's Third Army angled northeast toward Kassel, shielding Hodges's right flank. The First and Ninth Armies were to meet in Paderborn, an eighth-century bishopric founded by Charlemagne—or rather, they were to meet in what remained of the town: in a thirty-minute raid on Tuesday, RAF Lancasters had dropped 75,000 incendiaries, igniting three thousand individual fires that merged into a single blaze fed by half-timbered houses. It was said that the very air had first turned yellow, then peat brown, then pitch black. Here the enemy intended to stand, with a defensive line of sixty Panthers and Tigers below the town, crewed mostly by SS fledglings and reinforced with a motley brigade of Luftwaffe, Volkssturm, Hitler Youth, and Waffen-SS zealots.

General Collins's VII Corps led the First Army cavalcade, and on a cool, drear Good Friday, March 30, four columns from the 3rd Armored Division converged on Paderborn after a forty-five-mile gallop from Marburg the previous day. In a southern precinct known as Jammertal—Wailing Valley—an ambush brought the American sally to a halt, with tank and Panzerfaust fire skewering one Sherman in the flank and blowing a track from a second. Stabbing volleys from King Tigers caught others in the open at short range, and tracers bounced off the asphalt roads like flaming marbles. Seventeen Shermans, seventeen half-tracks, and a small fleet of Army trucks, jeeps, and ambulances soon brightened the dull day with their pyres; the only saving grace was the inability of panzer gunners to depress their machine guns low enough to rake GIs cowering in a roadside ditch. Napalm dumped along a ridgeline by P-47s did little more than further illuminate the calamity.

Flame, smoke, and percussive gunfire brought the division commander hastening to the front, and no soldier seemed more likely to redeem the day than Major General Maurice Rose. Tall and taciturn, with an addiction to Camel cigarettes and a fondness for musical comedy, Rose was considered the best armored commander in the U.S. Army by Collins and other admirers. Having earned battle honors at St.-Mihiel during the last war, and in North Africa, Sicily, and Normandy during this one, he now led a unit of nearly four hundred tanks, many carrying infantrymen clustered on the hull like barnacles. The son and grandson of rabbis from White

Russia, Rose had grown up speaking Yiddish at home in Denver before joining the Colorado National Guard at age sixteen; beginning in 1918, on various Army forms he repeatedly declared himself to be either Methodist, Episcopalian, or generically Protestant, a conversion perhaps inspired by residual anti-Semitism in the officer corps. Near Marburg two days earlier, when a reporter had asked Rose about his plans after the war, he replied, "I have a son. He's four years old now, and I don't know him. We're going to get acquainted."

No, they would not. Moving up the spearhead's eastern edge at dusk in a convoy of three jeeps, two motorcycles, and an armored car, Rose and his command group abruptly took fire from both flanks. "We're in a hell of a fix now," he murmured. Chased by machine-gun bullets, the convoy bolted forward; but at last light, four panzers emerged from the darkness, each emitting the twin exhaust-flame signature of a Tiger. A quick swerve by one tank pinned Rose's jeep against a plum tree. "It looks like they have us," he said. The Tiger commander popped from his turret hatch with a submachine gun, yelling and gesticulating as the general, his aide, and the jeep driver stood in the road with hands high, laved by the faint light of Shermans afire in a nearby field. As Rose reached for his pistol to drop it in the road, the German fired. Two slugs hit him in the right hand, another ripped into his right cheek. Four stitched his chest, four more struck him in the head, and a final three hit him in the groin, thigh, and lower back. His two comrades tumbled into a ditch, then fled through the dark wood, leaving behind their commander's riddled corpse.

That night as the enemy retreated into Paderborn, a platoon recovered Rose's body and laid him in a grain bin, wrapped in a blanket with an MP honor guard. "It can't be him. I'm sure it ain't him," a young lieutenant said. Told that the dead man had been irrefutably identified, the lieutenant persisted, "I sure hope it ain't him." Rose would be interred in a temporary grave under a wooden cross, then reburied in the majestic Margraten cemetery beneath a Star of David at the insistence of Jewish chaplains who recited Kaddish over his grave. In 1949 a Latin cross was reinstated after a hearing board affirmed his conversion. Under any insignia, a gallant soldier was gone, and his hard death foretold a Reich that would also die hard.

A war-crimes investigation by Lieutenant Colonel Leon Jaworski, who three decades later won fame as a special prosecutor in the Watergate scandal, ruled Rose's shooting accidental. By then, reprisal had run its red course. Feral American troops smashed the villages south of Paderborn, burning houses and executing wounded enemy soldiers. Twenty-seven Germans, said to have been shot after surrendering, were later discovered behind the Etteln cemetery, and eighteen more were counted in Dörenhagen. Some GIs reportedly prevented the Germans from burying their dead, and bodies lay corrupting in the sun and rain for days as a reminder to the living of what war had wrought. Carrion crows hopped about, stiff-legged and unsentimental. It had come to this.

* * *

Fanatical resistance in Paderborn caused General Collins to revise his attack. Early Saturday morning, March 31, he ordered the 3rd Armored Division to pivot twenty miles west, where the Ninth Army's 2nd Armored Division was nearing Lippstadt. Here opposition promised to be lighter: the town now was defended mostly by Volkssturm militia with armbands for uniforms and ancient Czech rifles for weaponry. Beaten Wehrmacht columns from the Rhine trudged eastward through the streets, pushing their kit in barrows and stolen prams. A Nazi boss had combed a military hospital for engineers to sabotage bridges over the river Lippe using explosives found in a V-1 storage shed and bombs from an airfield magazine, but the job was botched and the spans in Lippstadt still stood. It was said that a German surgeon had begun removing the telltale blood group tattoos from the inner left arms of Waffen-SS soldiers, leaving a scar that resembled a bullet wound.

Easter Sunday dawned bright and warm. Army chaplains in village churches near the American gun lines hastily celebrated the holy morning as howitzers popped away. "Every time a battery would fire the candles on the altar would flicker and the loosened window panes would rattle," a paratrooper wrote his parents. "The church was crowded with GIs in their filthy combat clothes." Pealing bells in Lippstadt also summoned the faithful, and pious Germans hurried to Mass even as exploding shells walked down Barbarossastrasse. The last garrison troops wobbled away on bicycles, and home guardsmen plundered their barracks for underwear and mattresses.

At noon, observation planes reported vanguards of the 2nd and 3rd Armored Divisions approaching each other from west and east, respectively, the former led by a sergeant named Werner Osthelmer, who had emigrated from Lippstadt eight years earlier to open a butcher shop in Detroit. Shortly after four P.M. the columns met with back-slapping chortles to complete the Ruhr's encirclement. Refugees and liberated slave laborers looted stores in downtown Lippstadt, smashing bank windows and lighting their cigarettes with hundred-mark notes.

The "largest double envelopment in history," in Eisenhower's cock-a-hoop phrase, had thrown a cordon seventy-five miles wide by fifty miles deep around the Reich's industrial core. Precisely who had been trapped within those four thousand square miles remained uncertain, although Allied intelligence believed the pocket contained shards of the Fifteenth and Fifth Panzer Armies, and two corps from the First Parachute Army. Among those snared was Field Marshal Model, whose Army Group B now faced extermination. Model had no appetite for last-ditch fighting among the Ruhr's bombed factories, gutted cities, and slag pits, but Hitler forbade withdrawal on pain of death. Instead the field marshal was reduced to waiting for reinforcement by a new, largely imaginary Twelfth Army, while every uniformed *Landser* in his command was bundled into the Ruhr perimeter, including schoolboy fanatics in short pants, known as "Ascension Day Commandos" for their willingness to die. "All fear comes from the Devil," Model wrote his wife in an Easter letter. "Courage and joy come from the Lord.… We all must die at some time or other."

To bring that day closer for his foe, Bradley ordered four corps to reduce the Ruhr Pocket. Ninth Army, now restored to 12th Army Group, would squeeze from the north, clearing one grimy, skeletonized city after another. Some were too enfeebled to resist, like Duisburg and Essen. Others fought on, like Hamm, which would take four days to smite senseless. First Army pressed from the south, in terrain less urban but more rugged, gnawing away four to six miles each day and freeing slave workers by the tens of

thousands. Marching fire and thermite grenades usually proved irresistible to enemy holdouts; against one recalcitrant nest, at a Siegburg factory where German paratroopers used machine lathes to burrow into a deep subbasement, fifty flamethrowers encouraged surrender. After his 7th Armored Division captured the LXXXI Corps commander and twenty thousand soldiers, General Hasbrouck began a letter to his wife, then wrote, "There are so many interruptions from excited staff officers at higher headquarters that I will have to stop."

"What is there left to a commander in defeat?" Model asked his staff. "In ancient times, they took poison." The *Ruhrfestung*, Fortress Ruhr, was shrinking by the hour. Ammunition and food stocks dwindled with the American capture of grain and flour reserves near Hamm. Contact with the high command grew spotty, and fatuous orders from Berlin were "scarcely read, much less passed on," as Model's chief of staff conceded. Probes of the U.S. perimeter revealed no weak points for a possible breakout. General Ridgway of XVIII Airborne Corps sent a letter through the lines, urging Model to emulate Robert E. Lee at Appomattox:

> Eighty years ago this month, his loyal command reduced in numbers, stripped of its means of effective fighting and completely surrounded by overwhelming forces, he chose an honorable capitulation. This same choice is now yours.

The plea fell on deaf ears. Moscow had accused Model of complicity in a half-million deaths in Latvia early in the war, and he had no intention of facing Soviet justice. "A field marshal does not become a prisoner," he declared. "Such a thing is just not possible." Instead, he dispatched an aide to slip through the cordon to help the Model family flee westward from Dresden and to burn his personal papers. Then the field marshal ordered Army Group B disbanded, sparing himself the stigma of surrendering a unit that now no longer existed. "Have we done everything to justify our actions in the light of history?" he asked his chief of staff.

With the pocket disintegrating, Model and three fugitive officers drove to the Düsseldorf racetrack before picking their way on a logging road through a thicket northeast of the ruined city. Swatting mosquitoes in the dark, they listened to a radio broadcast from Berlin in an Opel-Blitz signals truck and heard Goebbels condemn the *"verrätische Ruhrarmee,"* the treacherous army of the Ruhr.

"I sincerely believe that I have served a criminal," Model mused. "I led my solders in good conscience … but for a criminal government." Sealing his wedding ring and a letter to his wife inside an envelope, he walked to a gnarled oak tree. "You will bury me here," he told a subordinate, then blew his brains out with a Walther service revolver.

* * *

A B-26 crewman flying low over the Ruhr in April spied what he thought was "a dark plowed field." On closer scrutiny, he reported, "it proved to be acres of massed humanity … packed together closer than a herd of cows."

Allied intelligence originally estimated that 80,000 Germans had been trapped in the Ruhr Pocket. On April 5, the figure jumped to 125,000. A day later Eisenhower told Marshall that he believed 150,000 were in the pocket, of whom "we will capture at least 100,000." Those figures proved far too modest: in the event, 323,000 enemy prisoners would be taken from seven corps and nineteen divisions. This multitude, larger than those bagged at Stalingrad or Tunis, included twenty-four generals and a dry-shod admiral. "I had some nice days during my military career, yes, it was lots of fun," a German commander told his interrogators. "But now I wish I were dead."

American planners had assumed a need for cages to hold 900,000 German prisoners by the end of June; instead, by mid-April the number exceeded 1.3 million, and the final Ruhr bonanza would sharply increase that tally. "We have prisoners like some people have mice," Gavin complained to his daughter. A guard from the 78th Division who set out on foot with sixty-nine Germans in his custody reached a regimental stockade near Wuppertal with twelve hundred. Enemy troops throughout the pocket could be seen waving "handkerchiefs, bed sheets, table linen, shirts"—on this battlefield, a division history observed, "the predominant color was white." One unit rode bicycles into captivity, maintaining a precise military alignment to the end. Another arrived aboard horse-drawn wagons, clip-clopping in parade formation. The men unhitched and groomed their teams, then turned them free into the fields as they themselves repaired to captivity.

The official Army history described the surrendering rabble:

> Young men, old men, arrogant SS troops, dejected infantrymen, paunchy reservists, female nurses and technicians, teenage members of the Hitler Youth, stiffly correct, monocled Prussians, enough to gladden the heart of a Hollywood casting director.… Some [came] carrying black bread and wine; others with musical instruments—accordions, guitars; a few bringing along wives or girlfriends in a mistaken hope that they might share their captivity.

A single strand of barbed wire often sufficed for an enclosure. GI sentries cradled their carbines and stifled yawns. Within the cordon sat supermen by the acre. Singing sad soldier songs and reminiscing about better days, they scavenged the ground for cigarette butts and plucked the lice from their field-gray tunics.


VICTORY IN EUROPE
MAY 8, 1945
Front line, May 8
Western Allies
Soviet forces
North Sea
Baltic Sea
DENMARK
BRITAIN
London
Portsmouth
English Channel
Cherbourg
Le Havre
Caen
NORMANDY
Paris
Seine R.
Reims
FRANCE
EISENHOWER
SHAEF
Amsterdam
Den Helder
Zuider Zee (Ijsselmeer)
NETHERLANDS
Arnhem
Rhine R.
Antwerp
Brussels
BELGIUM
Aachen
Margraten
Cologne
Bonn
Remagen
Essen
ARDENNES
St.-Vith
EIFEL
Moselle R.
LUXEMBOURG
Luxembourg City
Meuse R.
Nancy
Wiesbaden
Frankfurt
Aschaffenburg
Main R.
Karlsruhe
Heilbronn
Stuttgart
Strasbourg
Rhine R.
BLACK FOREST
Heidelberg
Nuremberg
Regensburg
Danube R.
Ulm
Dillingen
Hechingen
Munich
DACHAU
Landsberg
Haar
Lake Constance
Doubs R.
Bern
SWITZERLAND
ALPS
Innsbruck
BRENNER PASS
ITALY
AUSTRIA
Berchtesgaden
Salzburg
Linz
Vienna
HUNGARY
YUGO.
Karlsbad
Pilzen
Prague
CZECHOSLOVAKIA
Chemnitz
Dresden
Leipzig
Halle
Magdeburg
Farsleben
Ketzin
Berlin
Potsdam
Wittenberge
Ludwigslust
Lüneburg
Bremen
Hamburg
Lübeck
Wismar
Flensburg
Hanover
Braunschweig
Gardelegen
Osnabrück
Bergen-Belsen
Nordhausen
Buchenwald
Weimar
Jena
Gotha
Hersfeld
Fulda
Merkers
Ohrdruf
Mulde R.
Elbe R.
Weser R.
Oder R.
Neisse R.
Torgau
Strehla
Leckwitz
Würzen
Bitterfeld
Breslau
Poznan
Warsaw
POLAND
Danzig
EAST PRUSSIA (GERMANY)
Vistula R.
Krakow
Auschwitz
AXIS CONTROLLED
DEMPSEY
MONTGOMERY
21st Army Group
CRERAR
SIMPSON
BRADLEY
12th Army Group
GEROW
HODGES
PATTON
DEVERS
6th Army Group
PATCH
Belorussian Front
Ukrainian Front
Miles
0 100 200
Kilometers
0 100 200

12. VICTORY

Mark of the Beast

FOR the final destruction of the Third Reich, General Bradley—newly awarded a fourth star, and now dubbed "Omar the Warmaker" by the *Stars and Stripes* newspaper—shifted his command post to Wiesbaden, just west of Frankfurt. Eisenhower joined him there on Wednesday evening, April 11, after a flight from Reims in a B-25 bomber. Early the next morning they squeezed into a Piper Cub and flew eighty miles northeast, following the autobahn trace to the market town of Hersfeld. Here Patton, who also had been promoted to four-star general, awaited them with an armored cavalry escort and a convoy of jeeps, including one adorned with the supreme commander's five-star rank insignia. East they sped for twenty miles, through a lowland corridor known as the Fulda Gap, arriving at 10:30 A.M. in the Thuringian village of Merkers. A tank battalion guarded the entrance to a nineteenth-century potassium mine, where GIs had made a discovery that Patton believed Eisenhower should see.

A photograph of the Führer still graced the timekeeper's office wall in the mine mouth, and an exhortatory sign proclaimed, *auf Deutsch*, "Thy Strength Is Nothing: The People's Strength Is All!" The XII Corps commander, General Eddy, led them onto a rickety freight elevator, and as they slowly descended the pitch-black shaft Patton quipped, "If that clothesline should part, promotions in the United States Army would be considerably stimulated." Sixteen hundred feet down, the lift doors opened. A sentry snapped a salute, and upon recognizing his visitors exclaimed, "Jesus Christ!" In a wide gallery Patton pointed to currency-engraving plates used by the Reichsbank, and stacked bales of money designated for the Wehrmacht. Eyeing the bills, Bradley said, "I doubt the German army will be meeting payrolls much longer."

Treasures already had been discovered in other mines: in a damp Siegen iron pit on April 2, soldiers found six enormous crates labeled "Aachen Cathedral," which included a silver bust of Charlemagne imbedded with a fragment of the emperor's skull. Other boxes in the Siegen lode held paintings by Rembrandt, Van Dyck, and Van Gogh, and the original manuscript of Beethoven's Sixth Symphony. Yet no trove would surpass that found in the Merkers workings, as Eisenhower realized upon stepping through a hole blown in a bank-vault door by Army engineers using half a stick of dynamite.

Here in "Room No. 8," a chamber 150 feet long and 75 feet wide, more than 7,000 bags of gold and other loot recently transferred from Berlin—in some cases by double-decker bus—lay in neat rows under lights dangling beneath the twelve-foot ceiling. In addition to 8,307 gold bars and 55 crates of bullion, the repository included 3,682 sacks of German currency, 80 more of foreign currency, 3,326 bags of gold coins—among them 711 filled with U.S. $20 gold pieces, each sack worth $25,000—8 bags of gold rings, and a pouch of platinum bars. At the back of the room, in more than 200 satchels, suitcases, and trunks, each tagged "Melmer" after a kleptomaniacal SS captain named Bruno Melmer, were valuables stolen from concentration-camp victims: pearls, watch cases, gold tooth crowns, Passover cups, cigarette cases, spoons. Much of the metal had been hammered flat to save space. Other galleries and shafts nearby yielded two million volumes from Berlin libraries, 400 tons of patent records, 33 wooden cases of Goethe memorabilia from Weimar, paintings by Rubens and Goya, and costumes from the Berlin state theaters. "If these were the old free-booting days when a soldier kept his loot," Bradley told Patton, "you'd be the richest man in the world."

Patton facetiously proposed converting the 250 tons of gold—most of the Reich's reserve—into medallions "for every son of a bitch in the Third Army." Eventually valued by SHAEF in excess of half a billion dollars, the treasure in the Merkers shaft lay within what soon would become the Soviet occupation zone. There was not a moment to lose, and plans already had been made to spirit the booty to Frankfurt—in the American zone—using thirty ten-ton trucks guarded by two MP battalions, seven infantry platoons, and air cover from P-51 Mustangs. The artworks were to be wrapped in German army sheepskin coats, thousands of which were also found in the mine.

Similar removals were under way throughout the designated Soviet sector on grounds of "military necessity," provoking shrill, ineffectual protests from Moscow that not only treasure but also equipment and skilled personnel were disappearing westward. Among those brought into the American fold were a thousand German chemists, engineers, physicists, physicians, and mathematicians, as well as various intellectual fruits, whisked away under a program code-named AIRMAIL. The haul included: 241 scientists from the Institute of Physics and Chemistry in Halle, along with new aircraft designs; 45 technical experts from an IG Farben plant in Bitterfeld, with 500 tons of potassium bichromate and 200 tons of potassium permanganate; and, from a Zeiss plant in Jena, 213 experts in radar and other disciplines, plus a new German bombsight. Other swag included ground-to-air missile designs, material supporting 340,000 German patents, and enough V-2 components to build seventy-five rockets.

Patton had one more discovery to show Eisenhower. After a quick lunch at the XII Corps command post, the traveling party flew

by small plane to Gotha to join another convoy for a ten-mile excursion to the south. A German deserter's tale of an elaborate headquarters in remote Ohrdruf had intrigued Eisenhower the previous week, and he had authorized Patton to dispatch a flying column from the 4th Armored Division in hopes of capturing the enemy high command. By ill fortune, the raiders had just missed Field Marshal Kesselring, bagging only a few German soldiers masquerading as patients in a local hospital. The mysterious headquarters also proved disappointing: built inside huge underground tunnels in 1938, with telephone exchanges, carpeted offices, flush toilets, and a movie theater, the compound had never been used. Himmler had planned to refurbish the complex as a retreat for Hitler and present it to the Führer on April 20 for his fifty-sixth birthday.

Yet the expedition had hardly been fruitless, because here the Americans liberated a concentration camp in Germany for the first time. Known as S-3 and opened the previous fall, Ohrdruf was among more than eighty satellite camps of a penal facility that soon would become even more notorious: Buchenwald. Bradley described the traveling party's visit to S-3:

> We passed through the stockade. More than 3,200 naked, emaciated bodies had been flung into shallow graves. Others lay in the streets where they had fallen.… A guard showed us how the blood had congealed in the coarse black scabs where the starving prisoners had torn out the entrails of the dead for food.

An inmate pointed out a gallows where condemned men were strangled with piano wire. Others had been murdered with a pistol shot to the nape of the neck. As Allied forces had approached from the west, Patton informed his diary, SS guards "had some of the slaves exhume the bodies and place them on a mammoth griddle composed of 60-centimeter railway tracks laid on brick foundations. They poured pitch on the bodies and then built a fire of pinewood and coal under them," leaving "bones, skulls, charred torsos." Most guards then fled, disguised in mufti, although a few were beaten or stabbed to death by vengeful inmates as the first Americans arrived. "You search the face to find what it is that is lacking, to find the mark of the beast," a reporter wrote after scrutinizing SS visages. The camp still reeked of feces and burned hair. Another burial trench dusted with lime "was almost filled with ash and human debris from which, here and there, emaciated limbs projected," wrote Osmar White, the Australian correspondent assigned to Third Army. "Patton," Bradley noted, "walked over to a corner and sickened."

When a young GI giggled nervously, Eisenhower fixed him with a baleful eye. "Still having trouble hating them?" he asked. To other troops gathered round him in the compound, the supreme commander said, "We are told that the American soldier does not know what he is fighting for. Now at least he will know what he is fighting against."

* * *

Eisenhower and Bradley agreed to spend Thursday night at the Third Army bivouac in Hersfeld. After supper they retired to Patton's caravan with a sheaf of maps for a long discussion about where best to fling their armies. The destruction of Model's Army Group B left a hole 125 miles wide in the center of the German front for exploitation by 12th Army Group, which now boasted 1.3 million soldiers in twelve corps and forty-eight divisions. Two obvious invasion routes veered north and south of the Harz Mountains, once the Ruhr was cleared: under 12th Army Group's plan, Ninth Army would take the upper route, toward Magdeburg, and First Army the lower, across the Thüringen plain toward Leipzig. Third Army, already farther east on Bradley's right wing, would allow her two sister armies to come abreast and then swing southeast, while Patch's Seventh Army pivoted through lower Bavaria and Austria to shield Patton's flank. The new Fifteenth Army, under General Gerow, would trail the combat legions to take up occupation duties.

Despite great bounds now being made by all forces—Simpson's Ninth Army had traveled 226 miles since jumping the Rhine—Eisenhower wanted the American line to advance no farther east than Chemnitz, near the Czech border. As for Berlin, he reiterated his determination to leave the city to the Soviets, who were about to launch their final assault on the capital.

"Ike, I don't know how you figure that one," Patton said. "We had better take Berlin and quick, and go on to the Oder."

Eisenhower shook his head. "It has no tactical or strategic value," he said, with a hint of exasperation. Not only did an advance on Berlin risk colliding with the Red Army, but it would also hamper U.S. forces with even greater hordes of refugees and prisoners than those already burdening every field commander.

Another anxiety weighed on Eisenhower: he shared fears that the Nazi regime intended to retreat to a so-called National Redoubt in the Alps from which to wage a protracted guerrilla war or stage a sanguinary last stand. Either would allow Germans to claim that the Third Reich had never surrendered. How did a police state perish—with a supine whimper or a bloody bang? No one at SHAEF was sure, but Allied intelligence had convinced itself—and the supreme commander—that Hitler's regime would seek to fight on in the mountains with Götterdämmerung theatricality.

As early as the fall of 1943, Allied planners had envisioned a final shootout in heavily fortified Alpine eyries. Eisenhower warned Marshall, in September 1944, that German fanatics "may attempt to carry on a long and bitter guerrilla warfare." To Bradley in February he proposed training shock battalions to attack "nests of guerrillas which will have to be forcibly eradicated." An impregnable mountain fortress at altitudes up to twelve thousand feet could extend from Salzburg in the east to Lake Constance in the west, and even into Italy through the Brenner Pass. British intelligence voiced doubts: a quarter-million Ultra intercepts during the war had given no hint of such plans except for a vague message to Tokyo in mid-March from the Japanese embassy in Bern alluding to possible "last battlegrounds or redoubts." British agents in Austria found "no sign of preparations for organized resistance." A War Department study in early April reported "no indications that any fortifications are being constructed in Bavaria or Austria to prevent an Allied ingress into the 'redoubt area' from the north."

Far more credulous was Eisenhower's intelligence chief, Major General Strong, who later explained that "after the Ardennes, I was

taking no more chances with the Germans." Convinced that it would be "true to German form to die together," Strong in March issued a dire warning: Allied air reconnaissance of twenty Alpine locales showed extensive construction work, perhaps fortifications for a German resistance network he likened to the French maquis. "Some of the most important ministries and personalities of the Nazi regime," he added, "are already established in the Redoubt area." An excitable press also conjured Nazi diehards darting among the Alpine crags and cols. *Collier's* magazine in late January told readers of a vast guerrilla training camp near the Führer's vacation home in Berchtesgaden, and *The New York Times* suggested that the National Redoubt, with countless gun emplacements, would prove more obdurate than Cassino.

An OSS psychological portrait of Hitler, titled "His Life and Legend," examined eight possible fates for the Führer, from natural death—"a remote possibility"—and escape to a neutral country—"extremely unlikely"—to capture, "the most unlikely possibility of all." Suicide was deemed "the most plausible outcome," but the study concluded that "in the end he might lock himself into this symbolic womb and defy the world to get him." Other OSS assessments, fed by a gullible station in Switzerland, reported that food, arms, and ammunition had been stockpiled in Berchtesgaden for at least eighteen months; that 150 trucks brought more war matériel to the redoubt each day; that farmers in the Alpine region could feed 750,000 men 2,500 calories a day, although the diet would be "somewhat unbalanced, with an almost complete absence of sugar"; and that Redoubt factories were capable of making small arms and antitank guns, despite shortages of coke, lead, zinc, and explosives. General William J. Donovan, the director of the Office of Strategic Services, sent Roosevelt a personal memorandum in late March asserting that the Nazis had "made careful plans to go underground."

The correspondent William L. Shirer wondered whether SHAEF intelligence had been "infiltrated by British and American mystery writers," but no imaginations were more feverish than those in Seventh Army. "Vast stores of meat and canned goods are reported being cached in caves and subterranean warehouses in the Salzburg area," Patch's intelligence chief claimed on March 25. It was said that three to five long freight trains had added to the stockpiles each week since February 1, and that secret hydro-powered assembly plants could even produce Messerschmitt fighter planes. All this, a Seventh Army analysis warned in late March, could "create an elite force, predominately SS and mountain troops, of between 200,000 and 300,000 men … thoroughly imbued with the Nazi spirit."

The truth was less flamboyant. The previous fall a Nazi gauleiter in the Tyrol, upon learning of OSS anxiety about a possible Alpine stronghold, resolved to encourage the American "redoubt psychosis" in hopes that Allied demands for unconditional surrender would soften if confronted by German intransigence. Thus did the tail wag the dog. Hitler in fact had evinced little interest in defensive warfare; not until spring were tank obstacles constructed in the northern Alps, along with a few field positions hastily cobbled together against a Soviet advance from Hungary. Kesselring dismissed any heroic stand in the mountains as "merest make-believe," and captured German generals expressed genuine puzzlement about a redoubt, even when American interrogators in Wiesbaden dramatically unveiled a wall map depicting a secret "Valhalla."

Hardly more credible was the so-called Werewolf movement. Conceived by Himmler as a paramilitary insurgency and named for a lycanthropic, flesh-eating character from a German novel about the Thirty Years' War, the Werewolf commandos accomplished little more than to scribble a bit of graffiti—"Traitor, take care, the Werewolf is watching"—and assassinate the mayor of Aachen for collaboration. General Donovan briefly considered hiring Basque assassins to hunt down all Werewolves, but nothing came of it.

Yet at SHAEF the myth of the National Redoubt persisted almost to the end of the war. "We may be fighting one month from now and it may even be a year," Bradley would caution visiting congressmen in late April; Smith told reporters that "possibly 100 to 125" German divisions could move into the Alps. SHAEF compiled a list of more than two hundred caves in southern Germany and Austria, and called for relentless air reconnaissance. Eisenhower had already ordered Devers's army group to drive toward the mountains to prevent reinforcement of a redoubt, with assistance from the First Allied Airborne Army if necessary, and forces would be dispatched to Salzburg for the same purpose. Nearly three dozen U.S. and French divisions now flooded southern Germany and Austria.

Another intelligence summary from General Strong on April 22 cited "no less than 70 examples of underground construction" and other signs of Nazi resistance in the Alps, where fragments of one hundred divisions, including SS and panzer units, were believed to have congregated. Even if a well-organized defense appeared "increasingly dubious," Strong wrote, "it seems that Hitler or one of his satellites will try to fight on in the south." In the event, not until the last week of April would the Führer sign a directive calling for a mountainous *Kernfestung*—an inner fortress—as a "last bulwark of fanatical resistance." That too was an illusion. "In the end," a German general told his interrogators after the war, "the catastrophe was allowed to run its course."

* * *

Shortly after midnight on Friday, April 13, Eisenhower and Bradley retired to their guest quarters in the Third Army encampment. Patton was skeptical of any redoubt, which he would call "so much hot air" and "a figment of the imagination," but he now kept a carbine by his cot because of rumors that glider-borne German assassins might descend behind American lines. The approach of peace made him melancholy. "Sometimes I feel that I may be nearing the end of this life," he would write Bea that week. "What else is there to do? Well, if I do get it, remember that I love you." He continued to scribble battlefield poetry, as if to perpetuate the war in his imagination; *Collier's* had just rejected an especially awful verse, "The Song of the Bayonet," which began: "From the hot furnace, throbbing with passion / First was I stamped in the form to destroy." To a friend he wrote:

> War for me has not been difficult, but has been a pleasant adventure.… The best thing that could happen to me would be to get a clean hit in the last minute of the last fight and then flit around on a cloud and watch you tear my reputation to pieces.

Glancing at his wristwatch before going to bed, Patton found that it had stopped. He turned on the radio to learn the time, only to hear a flash bulletin released moments earlier. Forgoing all thought of sleep, he hurried from his caravan to tell Eisenhower and Bradley the fatal news.

* * *

Franklin D. Roosevelt, a man who had never fired a shot in anger and yet became the greatest soldier in the most devastating war in history, was dead. He had crossed over at the fag end of an existential struggle that would be won in part because of his ability to persuade other men to die for a transcendent cause. Churchill, who would sob like a child at the president's passing, subsequently wrote that "he altered decisively and permanently the social axis, the moral axis, of mankind by involving the New World inexorably and irrevocably in the fortunes of the Old. His life must therefore be regarded as one of the most commanding events in human destiny." Roosevelt's chief of staff said simply, "How could a man die better?"

His passing came at the Little White House in Georgia; desperate for rest, he had traveled to Warm Springs with his stamp collection, aboard the presidential railcar *Ferdinand Magellan*. In his final hours on Thursday, Roosevelt posed for a portrait—the painter, after starting with his eyes, at one point reportedly stepped away from her easel to measure his nose—and signed into law a bill to expand the Commodity Credit Corporation. While preparing for lunch, he abruptly lifted his right hand to his forehead, then pitched forward from a cerebral hemorrhage. He was carried to a bedroom and dressed in pajamas. His blood pressure spiked to 300 over 190 and, two hours after being stricken, he stopped breathing. An injection of adrenaline to the heart had no effect. At 3:35 P.M. he was pronounced dead. "Nothing worked," his physician said. "And that was it." The Secret Service tested his breakfast for poison and found none.

J. Austin Dillon, an Atlanta funeral-home director, arrived seven hours later at the clapboard house with gorgeous roses around the white-pillar porch. He waited until Eleanor Roosevelt emerged dry-eyed from the bedroom, where the first lady had bade her husband farewell. Dillon found the president beneath a sheet with a gauze sling tied beneath his chin to keep his mouth clamped shut. After placing the rigid body on an embalming table under several bright floor lamps, Dillon bathed Roosevelt's face, shaved him, and then injected embalming fluid in the right carotid artery and jugular vein, slowly, to avoid swelling. More injections followed, down the femoral and radial arteries, six bottles in all, before the thoracic and abdominal cavities were aspirated and then each incision carefully sutured. "It was," Dillon later confessed, "one of the most difficult cases in every respect." After toiling for five hours, Dillon cleaned the president's nails, daubed a touch of rouge on his cheeks, and dressed him in a double-breasted blue suit with a white shirt and a dark blue necktie. He summoned Roosevelt's valet, Arthur Prettyman, who gently combed the president's hair.

On Friday, the daily casualty list with next of kin published in the nation's newspapers included this entry: "Army-Navy Dead: ROOSEVELT, Franklin D., commander-in-chief; wife, Mrs. Anna Eleanor Roosevelt, the White House." In Europe, Eisenhower decreed that "wearing of mourning badges, firing of salutes, dropping national and regimental colors and standards will be dispensed with in view of war conditions." A lieutenant in the 15th Infantry told his diary, "This is a shock. He has been president since I was fourteen years old."

Roosevelt had at last found the abiding rest he needed. How could a man die better?

Dragon Country

TO an American pilot in his cockpit, the spectacle of Allied armies surging eastward seemed as if "the very crust of the earth itself had shaken loose and was rushing like hell for the Elbe." From a tank turret or a jeep seat, the war was hardly less vivid for those racing at forty miles per hour into Austria like "an irresistible molten mass," or for those watching captured Germans "running to the rear without guard, their hands clasped behind their heads, and gulping for breath," as a GI in the 86th Division described them in a letter home.

This was Dragon Country, in the phrase of the correspondent R. W. Thompson, even if at times the dragons seemed toothless, extinguished, pathetic. Flimsy barricades were called "Sixty-one Roadblocks" by German civilians, supposedly because they provoked sixty minutes of laughter from American soldiers, who then needed one minute to demolish them. A Seventh Army patrol overran an infantry school where two hundred conscripts drilled with wooden sticks and simulated the racket of machine guns by drumming on water cans. (The commandant insisted on surrendering his sword.) Troops from the 84th Division captured a German soldier with a map showing that Hanover's defenses were concentrated in the south and southwest; attacking from the north and northwest, GIs seized the city in a few hours. The university town of Heidelberg surrendered without a fight, red geraniums blooming in the window boxes beneath hundreds of white flags. Seventy thousand enemy soldiers infested the Harz Mountains, but the German Eleventh Army to which they belonged soon proved to be, in one assessment, "less an army than a conglomeration." Day after day the army commander, General Walter Lucht, dodged his American pursuers—first in a village, then in a limestone quarry, a forester's cottage, a cave, and a monastery—before finally repairing to the leafy copse where he was captured.

GIs in one town found a father, mother, and daughter who had hanged themselves as well as the family dog. "The shame of German defeat," their suicide note read, "is too much to bear." Perhaps the war was too far gone even for pathos. After seeing an elderly couple weeping before their burning farmhouse, a company commander in the 2nd Infantry Division wrote, "What right had they to stand there sobbing and blaming us for this terror? What right did they and their kind have to any emotions at all?" Alfried

Krupp, an industrialist whose slave factories had armed the Reich, also was said to have wept upon his arrest for war crimes; one of his 125 servants ran after him with a packed weekend bag as he was led away near Essen, as if the misunderstanding could be resolved in a day or two. In Krupp's 260-room Villa Hügel, described by one critic as "the most hideous building in Germany," soldiers found twenty walnut wardrobes lining a dressing room two stories high, with white wolf-skin rugs, gold gooseneck water taps spilling into a bathtub scooped from a huge block of marble, a table that could seat sixty-five diners, and a ceiling mural of a goddess astride a crescent moon, her hair pinned up with a star.

"Brilliant spring sunshine. The song of the lark, the flash of the kingfisher, the white flare of a deer running through the forest shade," wrote R. W. Thompson, advancing on Bremen with British troops. "From behind the window curtains, faces watch us fearfully." Osmar White described "old men leaning on sticks, snatching at their hats" in obeisance to their conquerors, and frantically denying the accusatory query, *"Liebst Du den Führer?"* No! they cried. No, I don't love the Führer! White recorded the roadside interrogation by GIs of a passerby:

> *Kommen Sie hier.* Where are you going?
> To my father's house.
> Why are you going?
> My mother has been killed. I am going to keep house for my father.… Is it permitted? Is it not forbidden?
> No. It is not forbidden as far as I know.

And yet dragons lurked. For every enemy platoon that surrendered, another fought savagely, often unto death: in April, 10,677 U.S. soldiers would be killed in action in Europe, almost as many as in June 1944. Goebbels in a radio broadcast in mid-April warned that houses displaying white flags would be considered "plague bacteria." Other decrees urged that shirkers and capitulators be hanged with placards around their necks identifying them as cowards; placarded miscreants soon dangled from streetlamps and telephone poles across the Reich. "If we lose the war," a Nazi official warned, "it means slavery for every German, and certain death for every party member." A party leader in the Harz told German women in April that they would be "abducted and taken to Negro brothels."

Some Luftwaffe pilots received training in how to ram their aircraft into Allied bombers, as well as political indoctrination on the nexus between Jews, Bolshevists, and the Western democracies. "By consciously staking your lives," Göring told his kamikazes, "save the nation from extinction." Few such "total commitment missions" succeeded in the air, but suicidal SS and Hitler Youth gangs were reported across the front. A Seventh Army patrol on April 14 killed several young boys carrying potato-masher grenades. "It's a heartbreaking sight," a reporter wrote of such juvenile soldiers. "These children's faces have nothing childlike about them."

Although the National Redoubt in the Alps was a brown pipe-dream, makeshift bastions here and there stoked SHAEF's fear of a Germany bent on self-immolation. In Aschaffenburg, Bradley reported that "women and children lined the rooftops to pelt our troops with hand grenades," while wounded veterans hobbled from their hospital beds into the firing line. In Heilbronn, on the Neckar River, already smashed by years of bombing, German officers shot down Hitler Youth detachments when they broke and ran under American mortar fire. Heilbronn held out for nine days, until April 13, and the detritus that once had been a pretty medieval town was said by an Army historian to retain "a noticeable stench all during the summer of 1945."

"Why don't the silly bastards give up?" asked a Coldstream Guards corporal. That enigma perplexed every Allied soldier at one moment or another. Imminent, ineluctable disaster had enhanced a perverse sense of German national cohesion, inflamed by terror, misery, and unhappy memories of the last, lost world war. Lurid propaganda—regarding Soviet atrocities in the east, the Allied demand for unconditional surrender, and those "Negro brothels"—fueled the resistance.

"Mother, you asked me when I was coming home. I don't know," Captain Jack Golden had written his family in Seymour, Texas, a few weeks earlier. "I don't see any end to the war. I can't see what the Germans hope to gain but they aren't giving up." Now twenty-three, a graduate of Texas A&M University, Golden had been overseas for more than two years; he had seen enough combat in North Africa and in landings at Gela and Omaha Beach to earn two Silver Stars and a Purple Heart. "I am getting a little tired and I am so nervous that I bite people's head off at the least mishap," he confessed in his looping cursive. The cannon company he commanded in the 16th Infantry Regiment, part of the 1st Division, had fired more than 75,000 rounds since June 6, he added. "We don't count what went on in Africa and Sicily. That is too long ago. Seems like another war."

In an April 3 letter from Germany, Golden expressed relief that his brother, a lieutenant in the Army Air Forces, was headed home on leave. "It will take a little worry off my mind. Every time I saw a bomber go down, I prayed it wasn't Bill." He continued:

> There are too many German towns that we haven't had time to fire our artillery into. I think we should fire about a thousand rounds into every town. Do them all good.… Enough. Enough.

That would be his last letter home. On Sunday, April 15, in the Harz foothills, two ambushers with machine pistols stepped from behind a house in Amelunxen onto the same road that a 16th Infantry rifle company had just cleared. They shot Captain Golden dead in his jeep. Jack's passing would be, his family acknowledged, "the greatest trial of our lives." In a condolence note to his parents, Secretary of War Stimson wrote, "The loss of a loved one is beyond man's repairing." *Enough. Enough.*

* * *

“Half the nationalities of Europe were on the march,” wrote Alan Moorehead, “bundles on their shoulders, trudging along the ditches in order to avoid the passing military traffic.” In fact, nearly *all* the nationalities of Europe were on the march, in what one witness called “that monstrous, moving frieze of refugees.” Allied officers estimated that 4.2 million “displaced persons” from forty-seven nations trudged through 12th Army Group’s sector of Germany alone. They were among some 11 million unmoored souls wandering across central Europe in the spring of 1945.

Some were on forced marches, including Allied prisoners-of-war evacuated by their captors to camps deeper within the shrinking Reich. Darrell W. Coates, a turret gunner shot down and captured in 1942, kept a journal as he and four thousand others from Stalag 17B were prodded across Austria just ahead of Soviet forces approaching from the east.

April 9: Most of us refused to move until they fed us. Bayonets and rifle fire quickly changed our minds.
April 11: We were very hungry this nite and we boiled grass in the rain so that we would have something inside us.
April 14: Rain again as usual.… Miserable as hell. Marched till after 6 P.M.
April 15: Hurry up Patton for Christ sake.
April 19: Get soup tonight. They must have just run a horse harness through hot water. Tastes like hell.

Others were liberated before the Germans could move them. “Everyone is yelling and jumping around,” Lieutenant Bernard Epstein, who had been captured in the Bulge, told his diary on April 12 after Ninth Army troops drove through the gates of Oflag 79, near Braunschweig. “An American officer beside me with one leg amputated is so overcome he can’t talk. He’s blowing his nose and tears are streaming down his cheeks.” Given the dearth of food and medical supplies, many were in wretched condition. “Smaller wounds were covered with toilet paper,” wrote Lieutenant June Wandrey, a Seventh Army nurse from Wisconsin. “Their brutal amputations were covered with rags.… Their bodies were covered with scratches, inflicted when they clawed at their body lice.” Some British prisoners captured at Dunkirk or in the Western Desert had been incarcerated for four years or more. “So,” one Tommy said, eyeing his liberators, “that’s what a jeep looks like.” Trucked westward to the Allied rear, the men cheered wildly at the sight of every ruined German town.

Of the shambling millions, many hundreds of thousands were slave laborers freed when factories were bombed or encampments overrun. SHAEF broadcasts in various languages by Radio Luxembourg offered instructions both to those not yet freed—“Take shelter and await the Allied armies. Form small groups of your own nationality and choose a leader”—and to those already at liberty: “Do *not* move out of your district. Wait for orders. Keep discipline.… Let your behavior be a credit to your national honor.”

Instead, starvation, revenge, indiscipline, and chaos often created what Allied officers called a “liberation complex.” SHAEF had presumed that refugees “would be tractable, grateful, and powerless after their domination for from two to five years as the objects of German slave policies.” As an Army assessment concluded, “They were none of these things.… Newly liberated persons looted, robbed, murdered, and in some cases destroyed their own shelter.” Freed laborers plundered houses in the Ruhr, burning furniture for cook fires and discarding slave rags to dress in business suits, pajamas, and evening clothes ransacked from German wardrobes. Ravenous ex-prisoners licked flour off the floor of a Farsleben bakery. In Osnabrück, “rampageous” Russian slaves died after swilling V-2 rocket fuel discovered in a storage yard. Others smashed wine barrels and liquor bottles in a Hanover cellar, drinking so heavily from a sloshing, six-inch-deep pool of alcohol on the floor that several collapsed in a stupor and drowned before U.S. MPs could close the entrance.

Thousands of refugees carried tuberculosis, diphtheria, and other contagions. As medical officers charted typhus outbreaks in the Rhine valley, roadblocks were thrown up to keep migrating eastern European hordes from advancing farther west. Pilgrims were dusted with DDT and herded into new camps, where a SHAEF sermon blared from public address loudspeakers: “Alleluia! The Lord is victorious, and the spirit of unrighteousness has been reduced to dust and ashes!”

Still the moving frieze moved on. “Some went barefoot even in the frost, others wrapped their feet in blanket strips and sacking,” wrote Osmar White.

> There were farm carts, milk floats, bakers’ wagons, buggies, sometimes drawn by skinny horses but more often by teams of men and women. Once I saw an ancient steamroller, belching smoke and sparks, towing a long line of drays and carts on the Berlin–Frankfurt autobahn. These processions were amazing and ludicrous … heavily salted with suffering.

Shallow graves were “marked by a truss of straw tied on as a crosspiece.” Those were the fortunate dead; many found no grave at all. On a road in upper Bavaria, the 90th Division medical battalion described discovering bodies in sad attitudes of liberation: “One man died in the position of massaging his feet. One died taking a drink from a tire rut. He remained on his hands and knees with his face in the rut for two days.”

For the liberators, this great floodtide of misery was unnerving. “It’s too big,” an 82nd Airborne paratrooper wrote in a letter home. “Personally I don’t give a damn.… It makes you hard.” After passing four hundred Italian slave laborers swaddled in rags, Eric Sevareid took inventory of his own sentiments: “a kind of dull satisfaction, a weary incapacity for further stimulation, a desire to go home and not have to think about it anymore—and a vague wondering whether I could ever cease thinking about it as long as I lived.”

* * *

There was worse to see and to think about—much worse. Ohrdruf had been but the first concentration camp liberated by Western

armies in the Fatherland, and it was hardly the most heinous. Others followed in short order, and new discoveries revealed the Reich's full depravity. "If the heavens were paper and all the water in the world were ink and all the trees turned into pens," a rabbi told a war correspondent, "you could not even then record the sufferings and horrors."

Nordhausen was overrun by the 3rd Armored and 104th Infantry Divisions, which found what one witness described as "a charnel house" of several thousand corpses. "Men lay as they had starved, discolored and lying in indescribable human filth," a medic reported. "One hunched-down French boy was huddled up against a dead comrade, as if to keep warm." In nearby tunnels used to assemble V-weapons, GIs beat up a captured German scientist, then beat him up again for the benefit of a Signal Corps photographer. General Collins ordered two thousand German civilians to carry Nordhausen's dead half a mile for burial in two dozen mass graves. "There is no greater shame for any German," Collins told them, "than to be a citizen of this town."

Soldiers who in years of combat had seen things no man should ever see now gawked in disbelief at the iniquities confronting them. "There was no fat on them to decompose," Major Ralph Ingersoll wrote after viewing corpses at Landsberg. "You are repelled by the sight of your own leg, because in its shape it reminds you of one of those legs. It is a degenerating experience." At the Wöbbelin camp near Ludwigslust, General Gavin ordered local civilians to open the mass graves of camp victims and lift the dead into wagon beds lined with evergreen boughs; they were to be reinterred in graves dug on the town square. "Each body was pulled out, handed up and wrapped in a white sheet or tablecloth," an 82nd Airborne lieutenant wrote his sister. "We were united in a bond of shame that we had ever seen such things." Gavin arranged for a film crew to record the proceedings, and years later he wept while watching the footage. "It was a defining moment in our lives," a paratrooper said. "Who we were, what we believed in, and what we stood for."

Such a moment arrived for the British Army, and the civilized world, on April 15 when the 11th Armored Division stumbled upon the Bergen-Belsen camp, fifty miles south of Hamburg. "We came into a smell of ordure—like the smell of a monkey camp," a British intelligence officer reported, and a "strange simian throng" greeted them at the gates. Over forty thousand men, women, and children jammed a compound designed for eight thousand; since January they had survived on watery soup, fourteen ounces of rye bread a day, and a kind of beet called mangel-wurzel, normally used as livestock feed. But for the past four days they had received neither food nor water and were reduced to eating the hearts, livers, and kidneys of the dead. Plundered bodies lay in such numbers that it was "like trying to count the stars," a medic reported. Ten thousand corpses littered the camp: two thousand lined a pit on the southern perimeter and others were stacked four deep around the crude hospital. "Both inside and outside the huts," the British Army reported, "was an almost continuous carpet of dead bodies, human excreta, rags, and filth." One soldier recounted seeing "a woman squatting gnawing at a human thigh bone.… In war you see humanity at the end of its tether." A wire-service reporter admitted to "peeping through fingers like a frightened child."

The living looked like "polished skeletons," in the phrase of a BBC correspondent, with faces resembling "a yellow parchment sheet with two holes in it for eyes." Among the survivors—"these clowns in their terrible motley," as an intelligence officer described them—medics tallied ten thousand cases of tuberculosis, ten thousand of typhus, and twenty thousand of enteritis. Still others had typhoid. A *Life* magazine reporter described an inmate who hobbled up and muttered something in German. "I couldn't understand what he said and I shall never know for he fell dead at my feet in the middle of his sentence." Of those still alive in what British doctors called "the horror camp," thirteen thousand died of their insults after liberation, passing at a rate of a thousand a day. The dead were bulldozed into pits, or carried to mass graves by barefoot German guards, who were hectored by Tommies and clubbed with rifle butts. A month later, after the last survivors had been evacuated, Bergen-Belsen would be burned to the ground.

An estimated quarter-million concentration camp inmates had died since the beginning of the year in death marches from one confinement to another, murdered outright by their guards or succumbing to malnutrition, exposure, and disease. Allied soldiers found the spoor of these perambulations across Germany, but few discoveries were more appalling than that made by a battalion from the U.S. 102nd Infantry Division on April 15 outside Gardelegen, twenty-five miles north of Magdeburg. In and around a smoldering brick barn lay more than a thousand charred bodies of political prisoners, Jews, and other inmates who had been evacuated mostly from camps around Nordhausen. By the time the columns of prisoners reached Gardelegen, hundreds had already been executed. The remnant was locked into the barn, which had been strewn with gasoline-soaked straw and potato sacks. A fusillade of rifle, machine-gun, and Panzerfaust fire, supplemented by fifty grenades, turned the structure into a flaming abattoir, as dying men screamed for mercy in Russian, Polish, French, Hungarian, and Dutch. Others sang "La Marseillaise," the "Internationale," or the Polish national anthem while roasting alive. By the time American soldiers arrived, the flames had subsided, although wisps of smoke rose from the bodies for days. Few of the 1,016 victims from the burning barn were ever identified by name.

For the U.S. Army, the camp at Buchenwald offered a uniquely searing epiphany of liberation because of its size and the clear evidence of systemic evil. Built in 1937 outside Weimar, a city that had once been home to Goethe, Schiller, and Franz Liszt, Buchenwald and its satellites had grown to more than 100,000 inmates by March 1945, with offenders categorized by triangle insignia on their uniforms: red for political prisoners, pink for homosexuals, green for criminals, yellow for Jews. Just after noon on April 11, a warning over the public address system advised, "All S.S. men leave the camp immediately." Sentries "ran with long strides into the forest," a witness reported, and at 3:15 P.M. a white flag rose above the camp. An hour later, outriders of the Third Army's 6th Armored Division burst through the main gate, which stood beneath a large sign proclaiming *Recht oder Unrecht, mein Vaterland*. Right or wrong, my Fatherland. They found twenty-one thousand survivors from thirty-one nations—engineers, lawyers, professors, editors, and a thousand boys under age fourteen—living on six hundred calories a day. As one liberator said of the liberated, "They were so thin and so dried out that they might have been monkeys or plaster of Paris and you had to keep saying to yourself, these are human beings."

An intricate, awful world soon was revealed: the cement cellar "strangling room," where the condemned were garroted and hung on forty-five wall hooks, those still struggling to be bashed with a wooden mallet; Block 46, where gruesome medical experiments were conducted; the dissecting room, where inmate tattoos were excised, tanned, and fashioned into lampshades, wall hangings, and a pair of gloves for the commandant's wife. "Inmates were beaten with fists, sticks, clubs, dog whips, riding crops, rubber hoses, ox-tail whips, leather belts, rifle butts, shovels, spade handles, and rocks," an Army report noted. "Also they were bitten by dogs." Others were strung up by their hands for hours from tree boughs in a grove known to SS guards as the "singing forest" because of the victims' cries. Music blared from the loudspeakers to mask gunfire at the camp stables or rifle range by the execution squad, "Detail 99."

The SS had murdered at least 56,000 inmates in Buchenwald and its subcamps. Many then were consigned to six brick ovens that could reduce a "charge" of eighteen bodies to bone ash in twenty minutes. A verse in gold and black lettering above the crematorium door caught Osmar White's eye:

Worms shall not devour but flames
Consume this body. While I lived
I always loved the heat and light.

Patton marched the burghers of Weimar through Buchenwald, and sent photos to George Marshall. As if to nurture some living thing in this cantonment of death, Patton personally watered the parched plants in a greenhouse. The journalist Edward R. Murrow, rarely at a loss for imagery, found that Buchenwald beggared the imagination. "The stink was beyond all description," he told his radio audience. "For most of it I have no words.… If I've offended you by this rather mild account of Buchenwald, I'm not in the least sorry."

Shocking evidence of German torture and murder had been emerging for many months as Allied armies overran crime scenes at Breedonck prison in Belgium, or in camps like Natzweiler in France and Majdanek in Poland. Yet not until the revelations of April 1945 did the vast criminality of the Nazi regime spark enduring outrage in the West. Hyperbolic propaganda about World War I atrocities "had left an enduring legacy of skepticism," the U.S. Army acknowledged; a survey in early December found that barely one-third of British citizens believed atrocity stories about the Germans. Graphic film footage from Europe had been suppressed because Hollywood worried about nauseating moviegoers or creating ill-will toward newsreel companies. But photography and eyewitness accounts from Bergen-Belsen, Buchenwald, and other hellholes now filled newspapers and cinema screens. Warner Bros. and other studios collaborated with the Pentagon in releasing atrocity documentaries. By mid-April, another survey showed that more than four in five Britons were convinced that the Reich had done evil on a monumental scale.

Even war-weary soldiers felt a new sense of purpose. "What kind of people are these that we are fighting?" an anguished GI in the 8th Infantry Division asked after viewing Wöbbelin. If the answer to that question remained elusive, the corollaries—What kind of people are *we*? What kind of people should we be?—seemed ever clearer. Complete victory would require not only vanquishing the enemy on the battlefield, but also bearing witness to all that the war had revealed about the human heart. "Hardly any boy infantryman started his career as a moralist," wrote Lieutenant Paul Fussell, "but after the camps, a moral attitude was dominant and there was no disagreement on the main point." A rifleman in the 157th Infantry agreed. "I've been in the Army for thirty-nine months," he said. "I've been overseas in combat for twenty-three. I'd gladly go through it all again if I knew that things like this would be stopped."

* * *

Berliners received an extra allocation of "crisis rations" to commemorate Hitler's birthday on Friday, April 20: a pound of bacon or sausage, half a pound of rice, and an ounce of coffee. Allied planes pummeled the city for much of the day, and citizens risked their lives to queue for the special groceries. "With these rations we shall now ascend into heaven," one woman told her husband. A commemorative postage stamp also was issued, with a cancellation imprint that read, "We are defending Europe against Bolshevism." Both stamp and slogan seemed uncommonly ironic for a regime not known for its wry humor: the Red Army now squeezed the city from north, south, and east. Soviet artillery, delivering a long-range birthday salute, hit downtown Berlin for the first time this day. Soon enough, firing became general, massacring shoppers outside the Karstadt department store and shredding the Reichstag cupola. "No express trains are moving in or out," a Berlin diarist wrote. "All transportation is at a standstill. Postal and telegraph services have ceased. We are cut off from the world, for better or worse at the mercy of the oncoming catastrophe."

In April, almost four thousand suicides would be reported in Berlin; an SS report noted that "the demand for poison, a pistol, or other means of ending life is great everywhere." "The pastor shot himself and his wife and daughter," wrote a sixteen-year-old girl in the Friedrichshagen district. "Mrs. H shot her two sons and herself and slit her daughter's throat.… Our teacher, Mrs. K., hanged herself; she was a Nazi." A shortage of coffins meant that the dead were sometimes wrapped in newspapers.

Still, a birthday parade meandered through the Olympic Stadium, where German girls sang, "Lift our banners, in the fresh morning breeze." Some of the party faithful celebrated so exuberantly with schnapps that vomit stained their uniform tunics. Slogans on broken walls around the capital declared "We Will Never Surrender!" and, more ambiguously, "For All This, We Thank the Führer."

The man himself took the passing of another year in stride, accepting murmured birthday greetings from his staff in the thirty-room bunker complex beneath the Reich Chancellery. Much of Hitler's life since leaving the Adlerhorst had been spent in this labyrinth, with its storerooms of canned beef, incessant ventilator hum, and pathetic tongue of red carpet in the foyer. Here he had

been joined by his mistress, Eva Braun, a Bavarian *Mädchen* who supposedly danced the Charleston well. Ashen and stooped, wrapped in a gray field coat that cloaked his trembling left arm and leg, the Führer on his birthday climbed up thirty-seven steps to the bomb-pitted Chancellery garden to present a few Hitler Youth skirmishers with Iron Crosses and pats on the cheek. It was his last ascent to the surface world.

Back behind three steel doors in his bunker late that afternoon, he convened his paladins for what would be their final conference together: Göring; Goebbels; Himmler; the architect Albert Speer; the foreign minister, Joachim von Ribbentrop; the Wehrmacht chiefs. Hitler waved away suggestions that he flee the city, as so many privileged "golden pheasants" had fled. "Jodl," he told his operations chief, "I shall fight as long as the faithful fight next to me, and then I shall shoot myself." That evening, a few adjutants and secretaries toasted him in his study. "Führer's birthday," his secretary, Martin Bormann, noted in a diary. "Unfortunately not really a birthday atmosphere." When Hitler retired for the night, the party moved upstairs to the ghostly Chancellery for champagne and dancing to the only gramophone record available, *"Blutrote Rosen Erzählen Dir vom Gluck."* Red roses bring you happiness.

The U.S. Seventh Army marked the day by conquering Nuremberg, a city of astronomers, printers, and toymakers, now designated on American maps as "Nazi Circus Town." Here the party had held its crepuscular rallies, and here the Germans had concocted the laws stripping Jews of their citizenship. For three days General Haislip's XV Corps had bored into the city. The 3rd and 45th Divisions, together since the invasion of Sicily, attacked from the north and southeast, respectively. Battalions abreast, the assault cracked the German gun ring. GIs then battled room by room and cellar by cellar, before breaching the medieval walls of the old city to overwhelm two thousand last-ditch soldiers, 150 armed firemen, and squads of civilian snipers. By Friday at four P.M., all resistance had ended but for two hundred subterranean fanatics whose extermination would take another six hours.

Little remained of the city other than "alluvial fans of rubble," an officer scribbled in his diary. At 6:30 that evening, 3rd Division soldiers gathered in Adolf-Hitler-Platz to raise the national colors on an improvised flagpole and sing the division anthem, "The Dogface Soldier." Their commander, Major General O'Daniel, whose son had been killed in Holland during MARKET GARDEN, rocked on the soles of his boots and bawled to his men: "Casablanca. Palermo. Anzio. Rome. The Vosges. Nuremberg."

A quieter commemoration unfolded a day later. On the southeast edge of the city, Zeppelin Field had been designed by Speer to accommodate a hundred thousand true believers, who in the 1930s were delivered here over a special rail spur for Nazi rallies. Modeled on the Pergamon Altar, the grandstand was crowned with an immense swastika encircled with a copper-clad wreath. Here the XV Corps rabbi, David Max Eichhorn, arrived in a jeep emblazoned with a Star of David and bearing a Torah from the shattered Jewish community in the Alsatian town of Haguenau. A second jeep carried five Jewish GIs from the 45th Division. Halting before the Zeppelin podium, they carried the holy ark up the steps, removed the Torah, and offered God prayers of thanksgiving and deliverance.

Army demolitionists subsequently blew the swastika to atoms, and a band played "The Stars and Stripes Forever." "One believes but can never fully comprehend," Eichhorn told his diary. "I have never beheld a more satisfying heap of ruins."

"God, Where Are You?"

WAR correspondents had begun offering odds on which American unit would be first to encounter the Russians as the Allied armies drew ever closer in eastern Germany. Men in the 84th Division painted welcome signs with Cyrillic lettering, and the appearance in a 69th Division command post of two brigands in Cossack attire caused great excitement until their accents unmasked them as British reporters playing a practical joke. An American order suspended artillery fire beyond the Elbe for fear of hitting the Russians; it was rescinded after cheeky Wehrmacht troops exploited the lull to sunbathe along the east bank. SHAEF and Moscow adopted recognition signals to prevent fratricide: red flares and a single white stripe around tank turrets for Soviet forces, green flares and a double stripe for the Yanks. GI scouts with field glasses scanned the fens along the Mulde River in search of the counterparts they now called "GIvans." A giddy report on April 23 identified a Russian tank, which closer scrutiny revealed as a grassy hummock with a clothesline strung across it.

East of Leipzig on the foggy morning of Wednesday, April 25, three patrols from First Army's 69th Division ventured into the uplands beyond the Mulde, ignoring orders from the U.S. high command to remain within five miles of the river. At 11:30 A.M., in the farm hamlet of Leckwitz, one group of three dozen GIs encountered a solitary Soviet horseman with Asian features mounted on a small pony; the rider swiftly galloped away. Continuing two miles to the Elbe, near Strehla—some twenty-five miles beyond the Mulde—the men spied soldiers milling along the east bank, medals glinting on their chests. After commandeering a sailboat and using hands and rifle butts to paddle across, the Americans shook hands with their Russian comrades from the 175th Rifle Regiment, exchanging smiles and extravagant gestures. But a message radioed to the regimental command post confused Strehla with Groba, four miles south; when an Army reconnaissance plane took ground fire without spotting any Soviets, the report was discounted as erroneous.

Twenty miles north and two hours later, Second Lieutenant William D. Robertson, a slender young intelligence officer, drove into the tenth-century river town of Torgau with three enlisted men in his jeep. Black smoke curled from a burning glass factory. The streets, lined with chestnuts and hawthorns, stood empty except for a few freed slave laborers and two sedans of German soldiers blind drunk on champagne. Gunfire could be heard from the Elbe, just east.

Lacking either green flares or a radio, Robertson smashed the glass door of an apothecary shop on Mackensenplatz, where his men scavenged enough tempera paint to convert a bedsheet into a crude flag with five horizontal red stripes, and blue stars daubed

onto a white field. Climbing to the battlements of the hulking Hartenfels Castle above the river, they unfurled their colors, bellowing, "Cease fire! American. Amerikanski. Russia. America.… We have no flares!"

After a brief, unnerving riposte of Soviet machine-gun fire that chewed at the castle walls, two Red Army soldiers could be seen creeping across the twisted girders of the demolished Elbe bridge. Robertson and his men pounded down the stairs to meet them halfway before crossing to the far bank for a shared meal of sardines and canteen cups filled with cognac. When afternoon shadows grew long, Robertson drove back to his battalion encampment in Wurzen, carrying four soldiers from the 173rd Rifle Regiment wedged into his jeep as proof of the rendezvous.

Thursday morning brought the full, overwrought merger of east and west. A flying column of fifteen jeeps packed with photographers and correspondents arrived in Torgau to find a scene "like an Iowa picnic," in one lieutenant colonel's description, albeit with promiscuous celebratory gunfire. Soviet soldiers had looted a nearby accordion factory and "Song of the Steppes" carried down the river. Half a dozen varnished shells from the Torgau Racing Club—the only river craft to be found—shuttled GIs and reporters to the east bank for black bread and apples washed down with vodka.

"The Russians all looked as if they hadn't had time for a bath since Stalingrad," Martha Gellhorn would later write, but their tunics were upholstered with "handsome enamel decorations for killing Germans." Red Army teamsters "handled the horses … rather like the chariot races in *Ben-Hur*. The pack trains had everything on them: bedding [and] pots and pans and ammunition, and also women." Above it all rose a "splendid Slavic roar and the clang of wheels on cobbles." GIs traded cigarette lighters and nail clippers for the lacquered red stars on Soviet caps. Hundreds of freed Russian slave laborers, mostly women in colorful kerchiefs, waited along the west bank for a seat on a makeshift ferry to begin their long journey home.

At three P.M. the 69th Division commander, Major General Emil F. Reinhardt, stepped uneasily into a wobbly shell. A stout Russian mother sat in the bow with her baby in a carriage balanced across the gunwales. "Get that woman off the boat," an Army officer shouted. "The general needs that boat." Unwilling to budge, the woman sat as rigid as a ship's figurehead until the coxswain swung out into the river with mother, child, and the squatting general as passengers. "Reinhardt's still lucky," a reporter quipped. "Washington had to stand." On the far shore a Soviet general advanced to greet him with an outstretched hand.

* * *

An unbroken Allied line now stretched from the North Sea to the Urals, cutting Germany in half and reducing the Reich to shards of a state. So little was left to wreck that Eighth Air Force flew its last bombing raid on April 25, almost at the same hour as the Torgau junction. Fifteenth Air Force, flying from Italy, quit a day later. In the north, a German rump still hugged the North Sea and the Baltic, through Schleswig-Holstein and portions of Mecklenburg and Brandenburg. But this territory was no longer contiguous with Berlin: Soviet armies encircling the city from north and south had met at Ketzin, twenty miles west of the capital. This too occurred on April 25.

Nothing now could thwart the Soviet juggernaut of two and a half million troops and six thousand tanks, although in destroying some ninety German divisions a trio of Soviet army groups in just the three weeks after April 16 would suffer more than three hundred thousand casualties, a bloodletting that made Eisenhower's aversion to Berlin seem prudent. The city's final agony had begun, and with it the rape of at least ninety thousand German women. Many smeared themselves with mud or dotted their skin with red spots to simulate typhus. Russian soldiers defiled them anyway, then ripped out water faucets and unscrewed lightbulbs to carry home as plunder. German strangers shook hands in the dying capital and urged one another, *"Bleib übrig":* Survive. A diarist described the city as "a hilly landscape of bricks, human beings buried beneath it, the stars above; the last moving things are the rats."

In the south, the Reich had been reduced to swatches of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, plus a narrowing belt that stretched from the Black Forest through lower Bavaria to the Austrian Tirol and Salzburg. Patton crossed the Czech border and each day ticked off fifteen or twenty miles toward Linz; on April 23, the entire Third Army reported fewer than fifty casualties while capturing nine thousand German soldiers. Patch's Seventh Army raced south from Nuremberg to seize intact a bridge over the Danube at Dillingen. Fleets of Sherman tanks led the breakneck pursuit, past grazing cows and farmers agape at their plows. The 10th Armored Division alone captured twenty-eight towns in a single day. Few signs of a National Redoubt could be detected.

"We are constantly suffering from misunderstandings with the French," a recent SHAEF memo had lamented, and perhaps inevitably these final battles would be marred by another snarling brouhaha of the sort that had characterized the Franco-American confederation since the North African campaign. In southwest Germany, General Devers had meticulously choreographed the capture of Stuttgart with three goals in mind: to prevent the escape of the enemy's Nineteenth Army; to expedite the U.S. attack into western Austria; and, secretly, to capture German atomic scientists at the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Physics in remote Hechingen. On Devers's order, French troops were to seize Stuttgart, but not until the U.S. VI Corps had outflanked the city to block escape routes south. Other American forces would then barrel through, sweeping into Austria before Nazi bitter-enders could cohere for a last stand.

General de Gaulle had other ideas. Washington and London had yet to specify a postwar French zone of occupation in Germany, and General de Lattre's French First Army seemed relegated to a minor role in the coup de grâce about to befall the Third Reich. Stuttgart offered a wide door to the Danube, Bavaria, and Austria, which, in De Gaulle's calculation, would "support our intentions as to the French zone of occupation." Holding a large tract of Roman Catholic southern Germany could enhance French prestige and perhaps provide a French client state abutting Alsace.

With Deux Mètres urging him on, De Lattre deftly used one French corps to surround the southern half of the Black Forest and another to envelop Stuttgart from the south and east. French tanks rumbled into the city on April 21—"like a merry-go-round," De

Lattre reported—and two days later the occupation was complete. When Devers on April 24 ordered his French subordinate to stand clear, De Gaulle stepped in. “I order you to keep a French garrison in Stuttgart … until the French zone of occupation has been settled,” he told De Lattre. Moreover, French field commanders were to ignore both Devers and Eisenhower. “French forces,” De Gaulle said, “should be employed in accordance with the national interest of France, which is the only interest that they should serve.” De Lattre apologized to Devers, but declared that he could “answer only to the French government.” Seventh Army’s chief of staff complained in his diary, “Penny politics by penny people.”

“The good and upright Devers was angrier than I have ever seen him,” De Lattre’s chief of staff reported, particularly after much of the German Nineteenth Army—though reduced to just seventeen thousand men—scampered off. Insult soon followed injury. The U.S. VI Corps approached the Danube city of Ulm to find that De Lattre’s tanks had arrived ten hours earlier, forty-four miles outside the designated French sector. When Devers again protested—“This is an absurdity which cannot exist and must not exist”—De Lattre pleaded that the city held special significance for France as the battlefield where Napoléon had routed the Austrian army in 1805. Again ignoring orders to decamp, the French general pressed his attack until a tricolor flew above Ulm. “De Lattre,” Devers later concluded, “was trying to be Napoleon.”

This opéra bouffe now grew sinister. German civilians fled Stuttgart to seek American protection from predatory French colonial troops. An English woman married to a German claimed that “every female between twelve and eighty” in her village had been assaulted. “Hens and women,” she added, “were the main thing they were after.” The U.S. 100th Division warned General Patch, “Situation in Stuttgart worst imaginable.… Rape, pillage and plunder have been rampant.” A reporter asserted that thousands of women were herded into a tunnel and raped; a French commander was said to have responded, with a shrug: “What can you do with the Moroccans?”

After advising De Lattre that “Stuttgart is chaotic,” Devers drove into the city at nine A.M. on Friday, April 27, to see for himself. He found the dire reports to be “greatly exaggerated”—rather than fifty thousand women raped, the figure was “fewer than two thousand,” some of whom had been violated by rampaging foreign workers or renegade Germans. Seventh Army noted dryly, “French procedure in occupying a German city is traditionally different from that of American forces.”

Eisenhower now intervened. In a tart cable to De Gaulle on April 28, he promised to inform London and Washington that “I can no longer count with certainty upon the operational use of any French forces they may contemplate equipping in the future.” The new U.S. president, Harry S. Truman, added his own rebuke in a note to De Gaulle.

But with a war to finish, neither Devers nor the supreme commander wanted to prolong this Gallic distraction. French troops for the moment would remain in Stuttgart, where the execution of a few rapists apparently persuaded Devers that “conditions were very much better.” Patch’s legions meanwhile pressed south. American intelligence agents outflanked the French to arrest some of the German scientists they sought in Hechingen, although the top prize, the Nobel physicist Werner Heisenberg, had pedaled off to Bavaria on his bicycle the previous day and would not be snared for another week.

Bickering over the French occupation zone would continue until a formal settlement was signed in late June. In addition to a sector in Berlin, Paris received a stretch of the Rhineland as far north as Remagen, but not Karlsruhe, Wiesbaden, or Stuttgart, as De Gaulle desired. France and the United States, whose blood camaraderie dated to the American Revolution, would emerge from the war as wary allies, their mutual mistrust destined to shape postwar geopolitics for decades.

Devers coined the perfect epigraph. “For many months we have fought together,” he wrote De Lattre, “often on the same side.”

* * *

A final monstrosity awaited discovery by American soldiers, further confirming not only the Reich’s turpitude but the inexorable moral corrosion of war, which put even the righteous at risk.

Ten miles northwest of Munich, a former gunpowder factory of the Royal Bavarian Army had, in March 1933, received the first of 200,000 prisoners. In the next twelve years, nearly a quarter of them would be murdered there and at the 170 subcamps to which Dachau metastasized. By the evening of April 28, when swastika flags were lowered and white flags raised at the main compound, 31,000 inmates from forty-one nations remained behind the electrified fence. Another 13,000 had died in the previous four months, mostly from typhus and starvation.

On a chilly, sunless Sunday morning, April 29, the 45th Infantry Division, bound for Munich and badly frayed after vicious gunfights in Aschaffenburg and Nuremberg, arrived in Dachau town. “There are flower beds and trees, small shops, bicycles on the ground, churches with steeples, a mirror-like river,” an Army physician wrote. There was more, as I Company of the 157th Infantry discovered upon following a rail spur toward the prison compound. Thirty-nine train cars—gondolas, passenger carriages, and boxcars—sat on the siding. Either in the cars or scattered along the tracks lay 2,310 decomposing corpses, some naked, others in tattered blue-and-white camp livery; most were Poles who had starved to death after being forcibly evacuated from Buchenwald. While GIs wept at the sight, four Waffen-SS soldiers emerged from hiding with hands high. A lieutenant herded the men into a boxcar and then emptied his pistol into them. Another GI pumped rifle rounds into those still moaning. “You sons of bitches,” the lieutenant shrieked. “You sons of bitches.”

As the Americans made for a side gate of the camp, thousands of inmates stood baying at the fence in a great keening babel. A decrepit old man offered a GI a stained cigarette. “Take it,” another inmate said in English. “That’s the only thing the guy owns in this world. That’s his everything.” Other prisoners cornered kapos and suspected informers, clubbing them with shovels. Howling inmates pursued remaining Waffen-SS troops, some of whom were masquerading in prison garb. “They tore the Germans apart by hand,” a soldier reported. Rabbi Eichhorn, who arrived at Dachau that afternoon, wrote, “We stood aside and watched while these guards were beaten to death, beaten so badly that their bodies were ripped open.… We watched with less feeling than if a dog were

being beaten." Inmates desecrated dead and dying Germans with sticks and rocks, crushing skulls and severing fingers. One guard's "body was strewn all over the place," a witness reported, "arms out of sockets." After entering the compound, soldiers from I Company herded several dozen Germans against the eight-foot stucco wall of a coal yard where, without warning, a gunner manning a light machine gun on a tripod opened fire. Others joined in with carbines and a Browning Automatic Rifle. By the time an officer halted the fusillade, seventeen victims lay dead. A battalion surgeon refused to treat the SS wounded.

At the same hour, the vanguard of the 42nd Infantry Division arrived at the main gate to be welcomed by the infamous *Arbeit Macht Frei* signage and, a brigadier general recounted, "a yelling, seething mass of prisoners who broke through the steel wire fence at several places.… In this process several were electrocuted." Sixteen Germans were rousted from a guard tower near the Würm River canal. Witnesses subsequently disagreed on whether any resisted, but upon being disarmed and assembled in two ranks the men were gunned down by soldiers from both the 42nd and 45th Divisions. Seven bodies lay like bloody bundles on the canal bank, with others heaved into the water "amidst a roar unlike anything ever heard from human throats," an Associated Press reporter wrote.

The rampage spent itself. Medics arrived, and grave diggers. "I haven't the words to tell you how horrible it really is," an Army nurse wrote her husband. Doctors and soldiers assumed a spectral appearance upon being dusted with DDT powder each time they emerged from the compound. The 45th Division commander, Major General Robert T. Frederick, among the Army's most valiant combat soldiers and the recipient of eight Purple Hearts, found Dachau too unnerving to discuss. To subordinates who had not been inside the fence, Frederick advised, "I wouldn't bother. It's just a mess."

The Seventh Army inspector general soon arrived to investigate the "alleged mistreatment of German guards." Word of bloodletting also reached Eisenhower, who subsequently spoke with high-ground eloquence in demanding that every division, corps, and army in Europe investigate extrajudicial killings by U.S. forces. "America's moral position will be undermined and her reputation for fair dealing debased," Eisenhower said, "if criminal conduct … by her armed forces is condoned and unpunished by those of us responsible for defending her honor."

At least twenty-eight SS men had been gunned down after surrendering at Dachau, the inspector general concluded; he recommended that four U.S. soldiers be court-martialed for murder. Others believed that the death toll was higher and the culpability wider. A judge advocate officer confirmed "a violation of the letter of international law, in that SS guards seem to have been shot without trial." But not a single prosecution followed, just as little would come of Eisenhower's call for a comprehensive legal accounting from his subordinates across Europe. General Patch rejected much of the inspector general's report, citing "an apparent lack of comprehension" of battle stresses. General Haislip, who soon succeeded Patch as Seventh Army commander, noted "the unbalancing effects of the horrors and shock of Dachau on combat troops already fatigued by more than thirty days' continuous action."

No doubt. Yet here surely was victor's justice, tinged with the sour smell of sanctimony, a reminder that honor and dishonor often traveled in trace across a battlefield, and that even a liberator could come home stained if not befouled.

In a letter to her family about treating Dachau survivors, Lieutenant Wandrey, the Seventh Army nurse, invoked a wrenching conundrum:

> I'm on night duty with a hundred corpse-like patients, wrecks of humanity.… Many have tuberculosis, typhus, enterocolitis (constant diarrhea) and huge bed sores.… Patients wear just pajama shirts as they can't get the bottoms down fast enough to use commodes.
>
> God, where are you?

As a specially designated "Führer City," Munich was known to Hitler's regime as both the "Capital of the Movement" and the "Capital of German Art." To the U.S. Army it was, in Eisenhower's phrase, the "cradle of the Nazi beast." But for three days German insurgents hoping to spare the city further destruction had battled SS troops with sufficient ardor to help prevent the demolition of bridges across the river Isar. Resupplied with 400,000 gallons of gasoline delivered by air on April 29, four American divisions fell on the Führer City the next day, lunging across ten Isar spans before noon to reach the ruined city center. "Window by window" shelling with 240mm howitzers further ruined the ruins, and by nightfall on Monday, April 30, Munich had fallen. Across the Feldherrnhalle, site of annual festivities commemorating the 1923 putsch, GIs found a confession painted in huge white letters: "I am ashamed to be German."

Three hundred miles north on that same Monday, Soviet souvenir-hunters prowled through a morgue full of dead German soldiers near Berlin's Tiergarten, plucking Iron Crosses and swastikas from field-gray tunics. Other Red Army troops prepared to celebrate May Day by roasting an ox in Pariserplatz. Terrified Berliners by the thousands crowded a shelter beneath the Anhalter train station, where excrement and urine had risen ankle-deep. A number of SS troops convened behind the Schultheiss brewery to shoot themselves, but resistance persisted here and there across the capital in what a Soviet writer called "post-mortal convulsions."

Far below the Reich Chancellery, listed on Soviet maps as Objective 106, Hitler ate a late lunch with his two secretaries and his dietician. Dressed in a uniform jacket and black trousers, he then shook hands with his staff, murmuring a few words of farewell before retreating to his study. Eva Braun, wearing a blue dress trimmed in white, joined him at 3:30 P.M. Only a rattle of ventilator fans and the distant grumble of artillery broke the silence. Ten minutes later, aides opened the study door to find Braun slumped on a sofa, dead from cyanide. Next to her sat the lifeless Führer, a bullet hole from a Walther PPK 7.65mm pistol in his right temple.

Twelve years and four months after it began, the Thousand-Year Reich had ended. Humanity would require decades, perhaps centuries, to parse the regime's inhumanity, and to comprehend how a narcissistic beerhall demagogue had wrecked a nation, a continent, and nearly a world. "Never in history has such ruination—physical and moral—been associated with the name of one man,

the chief instigator of the most profound collapse of civilization in modern times," wrote Hitler's biographer Ian Kershaw. Stalin, upon hearing the news, would need but a moment to compose the Führer's epitaph: "So—that's the end of the bastard."

Henchmen wrapped the two bodies in blankets, carried them up four flights to the shell-pocked garden, doused them in gasoline, and let them burn for three hours, a small, pleasing blaze within the larger conflagration. "The chief's on fire," a drunk SS bodyguard called down into the bunker. "Do you want to come and have a look?" A chauffeur later complained that the ventilation fans wafted a stench of seared flesh through the labyrinth. "We could not get away from it," he said. "It smelled like burning bacon."

* * *

Hitler's death, like his life, would prove predicate to a lie. Rather than disclosing that he had died by his own hand in a squalid rat trap, German radio on Tuesday, May 1, announced that he had "fallen for Germany" while "fighting to the last breath against Bolshevism." The Wehrmacht high command decreed that the Führer's "faithful unto death" example was to be "binding for all soldiers."

But collapse now came with gravitational certainty: the jig was up. The last Soviet shells fell on Berlin at three P.M. on Wednesday, May 2, followed by a silence more ominous for Germans than the din of battle. Defenseless and disemboweled, the city gave itself over to an occupation that was to last half a century.

Fifty miles due west along the Elbe, where Simpson's Ninth Army held the American left wing, tens of thousands of "hysterical, screaming Germans" fled the pursuing Red Army. "I saw German soldiers pushing old women out of boats in which they were trying to cross the river," wrote James Wellard, a Chicago newspaper reporter at Tangermünde. Some shinnied across a catwalk laid over a blown rail bridge, or built plank rafts for baggage and bicycles; others paddled skiffs or fashioned water wings from empty fuel cans even as Soviet artillery searched the shoreline and German rear guards with submachine guns fought within earshot. Refugees "kept leaping into the fast-moving river and kept being washed back on shore," Wellard added. "Dead, dying, and living were scrambled."

Simpson agreed to accept surrendering Wehrmacht troops only if they brought their own food, kitchens, and medical supplies. More than seventy thousand eventually reached the west bank, where they tossed their battle kit onto piles of rifles, pistols, and field glasses before making for the cages in long, singing columns. A German colonel reported that "quite a few people who were not able to cross the Elbe killed themselves."

On every fighting front, similar dramas reached their operatic crescendos.

In Italy, an offensive by a million and a half Allied soldiers from twenty-six countries had broken through the Po river valley on April 23. Five days later Mussolini and his mistress, gunned down by partisans, were strung up by their heels from a rusty beam outside a Milan gas station. "You had the feeling," wrote Philip Hamburger in *The New Yorker,* "as you have at the final curtain of a good play, that events could not have been otherwise." Allied troops soon swept into Verona, Genoa, and Venice. On April 29, at Field Marshal Alexander's palatial headquarters in Caserta, German emissaries capitulated unconditionally. The surrender of nearly one million men from Army Group C, effective at noon on May 2, brought to an end the Mediterranean struggle that had begun five years earlier.

Along the Continent's northern lip, Canadian troops pressed into the Netherlands with the prodigal use of flamethrowers and a sense of urgency: the starving Dutch had been reduced to eating nettle soup, laundry starch, the occasional cat or dog, and 140 million tulip bulbs. It was said that night watchmen in an Amsterdam mortuary rattled their keys to keep rats off the corpses, and that the Dutch were using the same hinged-bottom coffins over and over.

Allied engineers also feared that German demolitionists would flood western Holland by blowing the sea dikes. Secret negotiations led to a truce and safe passage for relief supplies by air beginning April 29 and by road on May 2. The subsequent surrender by General Blaskowitz of Army Group H and "Fortress Holland" triggered national jubilation: bonfires, singing, and dancing by a vast orange throng, even though more than 200,000 civilians were suffering from malnutrition. "The people here are obviously making up for five years of repression," wrote a British brigadier. Gray columns of captured Germans snaked toward Den Helder for embarkation on trawlers and sweeps, thence across the IJsselmeer for the long trudge to prison.

"They left like tramps and criminals," wrote Marsland Gander, a scribe for the *Daily Telegraph.*

> They were allowed ten horses and five carts for every 180 men.… Two bicycles among every 500 men could be retained for the purposes of delivering messages.… Every man was searched and stripped of loot before he stepped on board the evacuation craft, being allowed only one fountain pen and one wristwatch. The piles of discarded property on the quayside and in warehouses included bicycles, sewing machines, furniture, radio sets, cases of gin, clothing, scent.

"It was," Gander added, "a time of fairy-tale gladness."

Farther east, where four British divisions outflanked Bremen, the port had fallen on April 27 following a five-day gunfight. A Tommy found Germans "looting, drinking, [and] fighting among each other" in a city he deemed "among the most debauched places on the face of God's earth." Montgomery crossed the lower Elbe with his usual deliberation even as Eisenhower repeatedly hectored him to hurry—the Soviets were making for Denmark. It was a near-run thing: British tanks seized Lübeck on May 2, and paratroopers sprinted another forty miles to capture Wismar on the Baltic, sealing the Jutland Peninsula and blocking entry to Denmark just two hours before the Red Army arrived. Hamburg surrendered without a fight on May 3, as Ridgway's XVIII Airborne Corps—screening Montgomery's right flank—racked up a quarter of a million prisoners in two days.

Among Anglo-American armies, Patton's Third was now the farthest east. Czech villages hoisted pretty archways over approach roads, with flower garlands and signs proclaiming, "Welcome Americans"; identical arches on the far side of town proclaimed,

“Welcome Russians.” The British had urged that Third Army capture Prague, because, as Churchill cabled Truman, such a prize “might make the whole difference to the postwar situation in Czechoslovakia.” Eisenhower was tempted, despite Marshall’s warning that “I would be loath to hazard American lives for purely political purposes.” But Stalin had heeded American requests to halt on the Elbe, and thus the supreme commander affirmed his earlier commitment to stop along a line between Pilzen and Karlsbad in Bohemia. Patton’s legions beat for Linz and Pilzen, ceding Salzburg to Seventh Army and Prague to the Soviets.

Austrian partisans seized Innsbruck on May 2, and two days later VI Corps clattered into the city during a snowstorm, camping in a golf resort hotel with tennis courts and a Viennese orchestra. Just before eleven A.M. on Friday, May 4, a patrol from the 411th Infantry crossed the Brenner Pass to clasp hands with comrades from Fifth Army, a juncture of the European and Italian theaters two terrible years in the making. At Innsbruck’s city hall, General Erich Brandenberger surrendered the dregs of his Nineteenth Army in an elaborate ceremony with a written American script that specified the positioning of flags, orderlies, bandsmen, and even pencils. U.S. officers tendered neither salutes nor handshakes, but permitted Brandenberger’s men to keep their pistols along with one rifle and ten rounds of ammunition for every ten soldiers to preserve “internal security.”

At almost the same hour, Devers arrived by staff car with Generals Patch, Haislip, and O’Daniel at a sculptor’s studio in a sylvan glade outside Haar, southeast of Munich. Plaster cast models and statuary ranging from the miniature to the monumental filled the studio, where Lieutenant General Hermann Foertsch stood at rigid attention, ready to surrender both his First Army and Army Group G. As Devers and his lieutenants took their seats at a table, Foertsch bowed slowly from the hips. After a brief discussion of surrender provisions, including how to notify far-flung German units in the Alps that their war was over, Devers reiterated that all Army Group G soldiers between Switzerland and Czechoslovakia would now become prisoners.

“This is *unconditional* surrender,” Devers said. “Do you understand that?”

For a full minute Foertsch remained as stiff as the statues around him, a witness recorded, “the muscles of his face working like those of a man about to have convulsions.” Then with a slight cant of his head he replied in precise English, “I can assure you, sir, there is no power left at my disposal to prevent it.”

* * *

Few locales were more freighted with Teutonic sentiment than Berchtesgaden, a remote Bavarian village eighty miles southeast of Munich. Hitler had retreated here after the failed 1923 putsch, and here, in a log hut, he had written the second volume of *Mein Kampf*. Brisk book sales had financed his beloved vacation home—later known as the Berghof—on the Obersalzberg slopes above the town, with views of the mountain where Charlemagne and his mystic army were said to slumber. Other Nazi cronies also bought houses here to create a bucolic enclave conducive to pastoral husbandry—Bormann kept one hundred beehives on his tract—or the plotting of world domination.

As a gift for the Führer’s fiftieth birthday, and also as a venue for diplomatic receptions, the regime had hired almost four thousand workers to build a lavish mountaintop château nearby, dubbed the Eagle’s Nest. It came with the requisite spectacular vistas, as well as a grand Carrara marble fireplace donated by Mussolini; a Gobelin tapestry covered the wall above the hearth, like a pelt. Visitors drove up a serpentine road through five tunnels bored through the granite mountain, then ascended another four hundred feet to the summit in an Otis elevator appointed with Venetian glass, green leather benches, and brass fittings.

RAF bombers on April 25 had roiled this little brown world with a punitive raid that badly battered the Bormann and Göring houses, as well as Hitler’s Berghof and an adjacent SS barracks. Emboldened German looters then rifled the Obersalzberg, stealing Himmler’s furniture and Bormann’s collection of a thousand watercolors and drawings. News of the Führer’s death inspired SS bodyguards to burn his personal effects on May 1, and then set fire to the house as Allied armies drew near.

Flames still licked from various ruins when two battalions of the 3rd Infantry Division tramped into Berchtesgaden through meadows spangled with wildflowers at four P.M. on May 4. Under orders from General O’Daniel, officers posted a heavy guard on bridges across the Saalach River, barring both the approaching French 2nd Armored and the 101st Airborne Divisions from entering the village. “You’ve had Paris and you’ve had Strasbourg,” the XV Corps commander, General Haislip, told a fuming General Leclerc. “You can’t expect Berchtesgaden as well.” GIs lowered a Nazi flag and tore it into two-inch shreds for souvenirs.

Despite bombing, arson, and plunder, soldiers still found much to pillage on the Obersalzberg. Table linen, teacups, and spoons monogrammed “A.H.” could be found in the Berghof cellars, as well as phonograph records, magazines dating to 1930, and the toilet seat from a green-tiled water closet. GIs pilfered light fixtures, bedsprings, and high-command situation maps for various theaters. An officer poking through Eva Braun’s closet remarked, “What impressed me most was the number of coat hangers in her wardrobes. There must have been more than two hundred of them.” A nearby guesthouse yielded an espresso machine, a beer tap, and deep-freeze ice cream tubs.

RAF bombs had spared the Eagle’s Nest, but suspected booby traps in the elevator shaft meant a long, steep climb to the summit. Scouts found a dining room with blackout curtains and twenty-six chairs, furniture and paneling of cembra pine, and a pristine kitchen with a butcher’s block that appeared never to have felt a cleaver’s bite. Mussolini’s fireplace was so enormous, a visitor wrote, that “an ox could turn on the spit.” Soon three thousand Allied soldiers a day would tramp up to the Eagle’s Nest as tourists, ten thousand on Sundays. Bored, gum-chewing paratroopers were pressed into duty as guides.

Göring’s booty proved especially vast and varied, much of it crammed into a warehouse with a large bank vault inside: eighteen thousand bottles of wine and liquor; five thousand Minox cameras the size of cigarette lighters; two dozen suitcases stuffed with women’s underwear; an impressive cache of pornographic movies; and a bulletproof, fourteen-passenger Mercedes sedan. In nearby rail tunnels and other repositories, paratroopers found much of his notorious art collection, said to be worth more than $500 million: hundreds of paintings by the likes of Rembrandt, Rubens, and Van Dyck, as well as a Vermeer forgery, *Christ with the Woman Taken*

in Adultery; terra-cotta saints, satyrs, and warriors; tapestries, antique furniture, gold chalices, porcelain figurines. An inn was converted into a temporary gallery with a placard outside that read: "Hermann Goering Art Collection—Through Courtesy of the 101st Airborne Division." "Ah, war!" sighed Göring's personal curator, who was seized along with the swag. "Goodbye, goodbye."

The *Reichsmarschall* himself soon materialized, having offered his services to Eisenhower "in reorganizing the German Reich." Arrested by the 36th Division thirty-five miles southeast of Salzburg, with an entourage of seventy-five vassals that included a chef, a butler, and a valet, Göring was fed fried chicken and photographed in front of a Texas Lone Star flag, his many chins cascading to the Iron Cross at his throat. To ward off SS assassins, he was permitted to keep four machine pistols overnight. "He is a fat slob, very anxious to talk about how the mistakes were Hitler's and Ribbentrop's," General Dahlquist told his diary. Wearing sky-blue gloves, he claimed in a breezy session with correspondents that accounts of unpleasantries at Bergen-Belsen and Buchenwald were "merely propaganda reports." "I am no prophet," he added. "It is hard to say what will happen in the future." His marshal's baton, sixteen inches long and encrusted with 640 diamonds, twenty gold eagles, and twenty platinum crosses, became a prop to sell war bonds in the United States.

And then there was one. The last German headquarters still at large in the Alps was that of Field Marshal Kesselring, the Anglo-Americans' longtime nemesis. Two reporters tracked down the OB West commander as he awaited the end of the war aboard a five-car train along the Austrian border. Assuming they were Eisenhower emissaries come to negotiate his personal surrender, Kesselring invited them to a lunch of ham, cabbage, potatoes, and beer. Upon discovering his error, Smiling Albert chuckled and muttered, "Well, bugger me."

An American major subsequently invited Kesselring to move to the Berchtesgadener Hof, where he was given the finest room and permitted to keep his pistol, medals, and marshal's baton—"Six of these I have left behind in the ruins of command posts," he lamented—before being remanded to a more austere cell in Luxembourg where war-crimes interrogators awaited him. Asked before his departure to assess Hitler, the field marshal took a deep breath and replied, "Hitler was the most remarkable historical character I ever knew."

A Great Silence

FIELD Marshal Montgomery's final wartime encampment crowned a hilltop on the Lüneburg Heath, thirty miles southeast of Hamburg in a landscape of beech, birch, and half-timbered farmhouses with blue- or pink-tinted plaster. "The lovely colors of the countryside spread away for miles, pools of dark green in the clumps of pine, purple in the heather," wrote Alan Moorehead, who nonetheless considered this an "abode of witches and warlocks and sprites." Tommies fished unconventionally in a nearby trout hatchery, with revolvers and grenades. The spires of two Lüneburg churches soared above the treetops to the north, and pathetic groans could be heard from local hospitals jammed with damaged German soldiers. A sign in an abandoned Luftwaffe barracks still insisted "*Der Führer Hat Immer Recht*"—The Führer Is Always Right—and a storage room there had yielded fine maps of England, Scotland, and the Soviet Union, reminders of the Reich's foiled ambitions.

At 11:30 A.M. on Thursday, May 3, a German sedan escorted by two British armored cars crawled past the village of Wendisch Evern. The small convoy halted beneath a Union Jack that had been hoisted over a trio of camouflaged caravans. Four officers stepped from the sedan, two in gray army greatcoats and two in the long leather watch coats of German naval officers. The door of the middle caravan swung open and an elfin figure in battle dress and khaki trousers emerged, hands clasped behind his back in a pose of severest rectitude. Drawing themselves to attention, the four Germans snapped salutes, which Montgomery returned with the casual brush of a finger against his black beret.

"Who are you?" he bellowed. "What do you want?" A slight, sallow officer in a high-peaked cap stepped forward to introduce himself as Admiral Hans-Georg von Friedeburg. Under the Führer's last political testament, Grand Admiral Karl Dönitz had succeeded Hitler as head of state, or what remained of a state, in a provisional capital in Flensburg, near the Danish border. Admiral von Friedeburg had in turn succeeded Dönitz as commander-in-chief of the German navy, or what remained of a navy.

"I have never heard of you," Montgomery shouted. One British staff officer whispered to another, "He's been rehearsing this all his life."

Undaunted, Friedeburg on Dönitz's authority proposed surrendering the three German armies fleeing the Soviets between the Baltic and Berlin. "Certainly not," Montgomery replied. "Those armies are fighting the Russians, so they must surrender to the Russians. The subject is closed." He would accept only individual soldiers giving up with raised hands, "in the usual way."

After mulling the matter for a moment, the field marshal added, "Will you surrender to me all the German forces between Lübeck and the Dutch coast, and all supporting troops such as those in Denmark?" That would be a tactical battlefield surrender by enemies opposing 21st Army Group, not a strategic capitulation to undermine Moscow. When Friedeburg protested that he had no authority for such an arrangement, Montgomery cut him off. "I wonder," he said, "if you really know what your position is?"

Calling for a map, he quickly pointed out the catastrophe befallen German forces on every front, while delivering a tongue-lashing about concentration camps and the suffering caused by the Reich. "You had better go to lunch and think it over," the field marshal said. He personally would "be delighted to continue fighting." Escorted to a tent, the four Germans dined alone on a table laid with a white sheet. As his comrades nipped from bottles of red wine and cognac, Friedeburg wept—"an embarrassing scene," Moorehead wrote—then agreed to take Montgomery's counterproposal to the high command. He drove off at midafternoon, promising to return the following day.

At five P.M. on a rainy Friday, May 4, the field marshal bounded into the Lüneburg press tent, "jaunty, hands stuffed deep into the pockets of his light naval duffle-coat," R. W. Thompson recorded. "Had a good tea?" Montgomery asked the reporters. "Forces to be surrendered total over a million chaps. No so bad, a million chaps. Good egg!" A colonel soon appeared to announce that Friedeburg and his delegation had returned. "Ha! He is back. He was to come back with the doings," the field marshal said. "Tell them to wait." For half an hour he rambled on, then popped to his feet. "And now we will attend the last act. These German officers have arrived back. We will go and see what their answer is."

The answer was yes. Friedeburg trudged into Montgomery's caravan for a brief tête-à-tête, where he reported that Grand Admiral Dönitz—invariably called Donuts by Allied soldiers—had agreed to the British terms. Dönitz had also instructed Friedeburg to open negotiations with Eisenhower directly; the grand admiral clearly hoped that every hour of delay would allow thousands more Wehrmacht troops and German refugees to escape to the west. Eyes bright, Montgomery gestured to a photo on the wall. "Tell me," he said, "is this a good likeness of Field Marshal Rundstedt? I always like to study my opponents." Yes, Friedeburg said, the resemblance was excellent.

At 6:20 P.M., the admiral emerged from the trailer and, bracketed by two British officers, walked fifty yards to a tent with the side flaps raised. Two BBC microphones sat on a square table covered with an army blanket. "It was a grey evening," Moorehead wrote, "grey heather, grey heavy clouds, grey coats on the Germans and grey in their faces." Montgomery arrived directly. "This," he murmured to reporters, "is a great moment."

Friedeburg and his comrades rose from their chairs to salute stiffly. Montgomery took his chair, his biographer would write, "the simple, tortoiseshell-rimmed reading spectacles set upon the sharp foxish nose, with five rows of decorations below his lapel, the small gold chain linking the breast pockets of his battle dress, the bony, sinewy hands resting upon the table." Holding a document titled "Instrument of Surrender," he read aloud the seven paragraphs in his reedy voice, ending with "The decision of the Allied Powers will be final if any doubt or dispute arises as to the meaning or interpretation of the surrender terms." Picking up a pen, he dipped it into an inkpot and told Friedeburg, "You will now sign the document."

Once all German signatures had been affixed, Montgomery added his own, then began to write "April," crossed out the "A," and dated the document "4 May 1945, 1830 hrs." The capitulation would take effect the next morning at eight A.M. and remain valid until superseded by a general surrender to be signed under SHAEF auspices. He sat back with a sigh, removing his glasses. "That," he said, "concludes the formal surrender."

"The tent flaps were let down," R. W. Thompson reported, "and we walked away." To commemorate what he now called "Victory Hill," Montgomery ordered that an oak plaque be erected on the moor the next day. The marker was stolen within hours, but no one would forget what had transpired on Lüneburg Heath. Recounting the day's events in a letter to Brooke before going to bed, the field marshal wrote, "It looks as if the British Empire part of the German war in Western Europe is over. I was persuaded to drink some champagne at dinner tonight."

* * *

Foul weather on Saturday, May 5, spoiled plans to whisk Friedeburg to Reims for a quick end to the war. Instead, he flew to Brussels aboard a British plane before being driven south for 135 miles, arriving shortly after five P.M. at SHAEF's headquarters in the redbrick Collège Moderne et Technique de Garçons, hard by the sooty rail yards. Humming to himself while putting on a fresh collar in the washroom, Friedeburg then walked into Beetle Smith's second-floor office. Within twenty minutes, negotiations had collapsed.

Smith and Major General Strong, who together had handled the Italian capitulation for Eisenhower two years earlier, flatly rejected the admiral's proposed surrender of only those German forces making for the west. The supreme commander, they told Friedeburg, would "not in any circumstances" accept terms other than unconditional surrender to SHAEF and to the Soviet high command simultaneously. Germany's predicament was hopeless, Smith added; he pointed to several theater maps strewn across his desk, including a phony plan, drawn for Friedeburg's benefit, that showed attack arrows from east and west aimed at the Wehrmacht remnants in Bohemia and Yugoslavia. The admiral's eyes again welled with tears, but he was adamant: authority for such a surrender could only come from Dönitz.

Smith walked down the hall to find Eisenhower pacing his office and smoking one cigarette after another. Friedeburg would cable Dönitz, Smith told him, but no surrender was likely for hours, perhaps longer. The admiral had been placed under guard in a house on Rue Godinot and fortified with pork chops, mashed potatoes, and whiskey. "The let-down was horrible," wrote Kay Summersby. "Everyone left in a gray mood."

Eisenhower stalked from the headquarters with Telek, his pet Scottie. Fuming, he returned to his château and tried to lose himself in William Colt MacDonald's *Cartridge Carnival*, a pulp western ablaze with gunplay, cattle rustling, and crooked gambling. "I really expected some definite developments and went to bed early in anticipation of being waked up at 1, 2, 3 or 4 A.M.," he wrote Mamie the next morning. "Nothing happened and as a result I was wide awake, very early—with nothing decent to read. The Wild Wests I have just now are terrible—I could write better ones, left-handed."

A new negotiator arrived in Reims at six o'clock on Sunday evening—General Alfred Jodl, the OKW operations chief—with instructions from Dönitz to "find salvation in the west" by explaining "why we wish to make this separate surrender to the Americans." Joining Friedeburg in Smith's office, Jodl smugly assured the Anglo-Americans, "Eventually, you'll have to fight the Russians."

After ninety minutes of haggling, Smith informed Eisenhower that Jodl and Friedeburg were plainly stalling. "You tell them," the supreme commander snapped, "that forty-eight hours from midnight tonight, I will close my lines on the Western Front so no more

Germans can get through. Whether they sign or not—no matter how much time they take." In a radio message to Flensburg, Jodl told Dönitz, "Eisenhower insists that we sign today.… I see no alternative—chaos or signature." The grand admiral complained of "sheer extortion" but gave his consent: "Full power to sign."

SHAEF typists for days had been hammering out surrender drafts in English, French, Russian, and German. A version intended to be final had been prepared in Reims on Saturday, but some considered it the wrong document. An earlier, authorized "instrument of surrender," written by the European Advisory Commission the previous summer, had been approved subsequently by Washington, London, Moscow, and Paris. A slightly modified instrument, drafted after the Yalta conference, added a proviso empowering the victors to dismember Germany. But France had only recently been informed of this second, secret version, and now even Moscow seemed ambivalent.

In the absence of firm instructions from the Combined Chiefs, Smith chose to ignore both variants. He opted instead for a third, abridged document, cribbed from a copy of the German surrender in Italy, which *Stars and Stripes* had just published. Revisions requested by Smith and others in Reims were adapted by a British officer who had been an actor and theater manager in civil life. At the frantic urging of the U.S. embassy in London, a "general enabling clause" was inserted, authorizing the Allies to impose additional military and political conditions as needed. A SHAEF captain painstakingly translated various amendments into German, pecking at a typewriter with a single finger.

This hasty pudding would have to serve. Pared to 234 words in five paragraphs, the document was rushed to the typing pool, which in short order produced eight copies of the "Act of Military Surrender," each bound in a plain gray cover.

At two A.M. on Monday, May 7, seventeen reporters and photographers were herded up a stone stairway and through a narrow corridor to the second-floor SHAEF war room. Thirty feet square and used in antebellum days for table tennis and chess by students attending the *collège,* the warm, fusty room contained fifteen unpadded chairs and a heavy oak table. Huge maps hung like tapestries on the faded blue walls, displaying the disposition of Allied armies and airfields from the Arctic Circle to the Aegean Sea. Charts showed weather conditions, SHAEF casualties, and the number of German prisoners, now in seven figures.

"Get ready, gentleman, they're coming."

A hissing bank of klieg lights flickered to life. Jodl and Friedeburg walked to the table, erect and glassy-eyed. "The effect of make-believe was, if anything, heightened by the arrival in the room of the German uniforms," one witness reported. Photographers scuttled about, bent double. The eleven-man Allied delegation followed, including Generals Spaatz and Strong, a Soviet major general, and Beetle Smith. Each took his seat behind a name plate printed on a cardboard strip. Smith looked "ghastly, ill, and exhausted," wrote Osmar White from a perch in the press gallery. In his office down the hall, Eisenhower feigned Olympian detachment, pacing and smoking.

Strong laid a copy of the surrender document before Jodl. Only the click of camera shutters and a scratching of pen nibs broke the silence. When Smith and others had finished countersigning each sheet, Jodl stood, leaning forward slightly with his fingertips pressed against the tabletop. "I want to say a word," he told Smith in English, then added, in German with Strong translating, "The German people and the German armed forces are, for better or worse, delivered into the victors' hands.… In this hour I can only express the hope that the victor will treat them with generosity."

The surrender ceremony had lasted ten minutes. Smith and Strong led Jodl, his cheeks streaked with tears, to Eisenhower's office. They found the supreme commander seated behind a desk upon which miniature flags of the Allied nations were displayed. Purple circles rimmed his eyes and his jowls sagged. Jodl bowed.

"Do you understand the terms of the document of surrender you have just signed?" Eisenhower asked.

"Ja. Ja."

"You will officially and personally be held responsible if the terms of the surrender are violated. That is all."

Jodl saluted, then executed a smart about-face and withdrew under the supreme commander's cold gaze for an eventual appointment with the hangman.

Thus was peace made in Europe. "I suppose this calls for a bottle of champagne," Eisenhower said, managing a grin. A cork popped to feeble cheers. Photographers appeared, and a newsreel crew. At Smith's suggestion, various staff officers attempted to compose a suitable cable telling the Charlie-Charlies that the war was over.

As each draft grew more grandiloquent, the supreme commander thanked his lieutenants and then dictated the message himself: "The mission of this Allied force was fulfilled at 0241, local time, May 7, 1945. Eisenhower."

* * *

The sharp odors of soap and antiseptic still lingered in the Hotel Fürstenhof near Kassel, where until recently a military hospital had occupied the inn. A week earlier the 12th Army Group headquarters had moved here from Wiesbaden; Omar Bradley occupied a second-floor corner room, sleeping with the window open and a bone-handled .38-caliber pistol by his pillow. At 4:45 A.M. on Monday, a jangling telephone roused him from a deep slumber. "Brad?" Eisenhower's voice bawled from the receiver. "Brad, it's all over." A cease-fire would be imposed immediately, although not until 11:01 P.M. on Wednesday would the surrender officially take hold, allowing time to notify German garrisons in Norway and crews aboard U-boats across the Atlantic.

Bradley climbed from the bed, his hair deranged in gray wisps. Slipping into his frayed West Point bathrobe, he telephoned his army commanders: Hodges in Weimar, Patton in Regensburg, Simpson in Braunschweig, Gerow in Bonn. "Stop them in place," Bradley said. "No sense in taking casualties." He dressed and ambled downstairs to breakfast, a canvas map case under his arm. "Now our troubles really begin," he told a staff officer. "Everyone will want to start for home immediately." Opening his map board, he smoothed the tiny flags symbolizing each of the forty-three American divisions under his command, arrayed across a 640-mile

front. Clutching a grease pencil, Bradley wrote his final entry on the map—"D+335"—then threw open the black-out curtains to gaze on the sun-splashed world outside.

"For the first time in eleven months, there is no contact with the enemy," the First Army intelligence log noted in Weimar. At 8:15 Monday morning, seventy miles west of Prague, an order to "cease all forward movement" reached the 1st Division, which, since landing in Algeria thirty months earlier, had dispensed 21,000 Purple Hearts. "It's about goddamn time," one GI remarked. At his command post in a former German barracks in Regensburg, Patton listened to staff officers describe the disposition of the half-million men under his command. Peace still held little appeal for him. To an aide he mused, "Wonder what the rivers in Japan are like? See if you can get some terrain maps of Japan." Rising to his feet, with Willie the white bull terrier on his heels, he strode from the command post and down the barracks steps, snapping his fingers.

As word spread of the German surrender, some rambunctious soldiers celebrated with honking horns or what one officer called "mad, dangerous" gunfire; ".30- and .45-calibers coming back down like a hailstorm," a GI near Salzburg reported. General Gavin advised his diary, "This is it. After two years. One doesn't know whether to cry or cheer or just simply get drunk." The 3rd Armored Division—which had hoarded champagne since crossing the Rhine for precisely this moment—drank a toast to Eisenhower, their victorious commander.

Yet many felt subdued—"curiously flat," in Moorehead's phrase. Elation seemed misplaced. So many were gone, so many broken. "I should be completely joyous on this occasion. As it is, it comes more as an anticlimax," a soldier wrote his family. "I remember the many who marched with me, and who also loved life but lost it and cannot celebrate with us today." An eerie, profound silence fell across much of the battlefield, and even those astonished to have survived felt too weary, or numb, or haunted for hosannas. "I am in a let-down mood," Devers confessed. In Thuringia, the correspondent W. C. Heinz watched soldiers wander aimlessly among the lilacs and blossoming apple trees, as if baffled to find themselves in a land so benign and beautiful. "We did not know how to kill time," Heinz wrote.

For the first time in nearly six years, the sun set on a Europe without front lines, a Europe at peace. "Lights scintillated—truck lights, jeep lights, tent lights, flashlights, building lights, farmhouse lights," wrote a major in the 29th Division. "Everything lit up." Night stole over the Continent, creeping west from the Vistula to the Oder, and then to the Elbe and the Rhine and the Seine. Darkness enfolded a thousand battlefields, at Remagen and St.-Vith, Arnhem and St.-Lô, Caen and Omaha Beach. Darkness fell, and the lights came on again.

EPILOGUE

THE *Daily Mail* in London reported that a dozen elderly men stood for hours on Monday, May 7, "with ropes in their hands and hope in their hearts, waiting to send the bells of St. Paul's clanging in the paean of triumph." In vain they stood: no paean clanged, nary a bell pealed. Moscow had objected to proclaiming the war's end until a proper capitulation of German forces on the Eastern Front was signed in Berlin, validating the surrender improvised by SHAEF. The war in Europe was over, yet not quite finished.

No matter that word of the Reims ceremony had leaked. A German radio broadcast from Flensburg on Monday announced the end, and an Associated Press reporter who had witnessed the signing disobeyed Eisenhower's news embargo by sending word to New York, where ticker tape soon fluttered. "It will seem that it is only the governments who do not know," Churchill cabled Stalin at 4:30 P.M. Monday.

But Stalin remained adamant. For years the Nazis had claimed that the German army in World War I was never defeated, in part because the armistice had been signed on French soil; no such canard would be tolerated this time. Churchill and Truman reluctantly agreed to withhold confirmation of the surrender. V-E Day—victory in Europe—would not become official until Tuesday, May 8. Eisenhower dispatched a SHAEF delegation to meet the Soviets at a former German military engineering school in Karlshorst, ten miles southeast of central Berlin. Here the Germans would surrender, again, after nine hours of noisy haggling and more opéra bouffe. General de Lattre, representing France, bitterly decried the absence of a French flag from among the victorious national colors arrayed in the conference hall. He objected further when a tricolor hurriedly sewn by a Russian tailor—using cloth from a Nazi banner, a bedsheet, and denim overalls—turned out Dutch, with the red, white, and blue stripes stacked horizontally rather than aligned vertically. A bemused Harry Butcher wrote from Karlshorst, "It is much easier to start a war than to stop one."

Notwithstanding a BBC announcement at six P.M. on Monday that V-E Day must await the morrow, a boisterous, expectant throng jammed Piccadilly and Trafalgar Square. "V-E Day may be tomorrow," the *Daily Mail* declared, "but the war is over tonight." Bonfires glazed the clouds with an orange tint that reminded some of the 1940 Blitz. Yet as word of the postponement spread, the festive spirit fizzled. "Move along," a policeman ordered. "It's all off."

In Paris, a celebration that began Monday night would run riot until midday Thursday. Jeeps packed with GIs and comely French women rushed about as crowds shouted, "*Salut! Vive les États Unis!* American Army, heep heep, whoo-ray!" Snaking throngs danced down the Champs-Élysées as sirens sounded a final all clear and church bells rang across the city. A witness in Avenue Kléber reported mobs of "people going from anywhere to anywhere." So many filled the Place de la Concorde that American MPs struggled to open a corridor into the U.S. embassy; thousands joined the Yanks in singing, or at least humming, "The Battle Hymn of the Republic." For the first time since the war began, lights illuminated the Arc de Triomphe, the Opéra, and other grand landmarks. The Garde Républicaine trotted on horseback from the Madeleine in their plumed dragoon helmets, and at least one laughing girl seemed to share every saddle. French gunners unlimbered a howitzer before the palace in Versailles to fire salutes down the Avenue de Paris.

The rest of the world soon caught the celebratory spirit. A crowd estimated at five thousand gathered before the U.S. embassy near Red Square in Moscow to huzzah the American ally; Yanks spotted in the street were playfully tossed into the air. Half a million celebrants filled Times Square, and enormous headlines splashed across page one of *The New York Times* proclaimed, "The War in Europe Is Ended! Surrender Is Unconditional; V-E Will Be Proclaimed Today." In Washington, lights bathed the Capitol dome for the first time since December 1941, although streets remained quiet, perhaps because the battle for Okinawa had become a cave-by-cave bloodbath. Federal bureaucrats were ordered to report to work as usual on Tuesday, lest peacetime lollygagging take root. "This is a solemn but glorious hour," Truman told the nation. "We must work to finish the war. Our victory is only half won. The West is free, but the East is still in bondage to the treacherous Japanese."

V-E Day dawned in London with what one resident called "intense Wagnerian rain" and thunder so violent that many woke fearing a return of German bombers. By midmorning the storm had rolled off, the sun broke through, and those St. Paul's bell-ringers leaned into their work. British lasses with cornflowers and poppies in their hair swarmed about, wrote Mollie Panter-Downes in *The New Yorker,* "like flocks of twittering, gaily plumaged cockney birds." Tugs on the Thames tooted a Morse "V," and vendors peddled tin brooches of Montgomery's bereted head in silhouette. Buglers blew "cease fire" while students in Green Park clapped ash can lids like cymbals. Crates of whiskey and gin, labeled "Not to Be Sold Until Victory Night," were manhandled into hundreds of pubs, where many an elbow was bent prematurely. The Savoy added *La Tasse de Consommé Niçoise de la Victoire* to the menu, along with *Le Médaillon du Soldat.* Crowds outside Buckingham Palace chanted, "We want the king!" and the king they got, along with the queen and two princesses, who appeared waving from a balcony six times during the day. To the strains of "Rule, Britannia!," former Home Guardsmen set fire to a Hitler effigy.

Early in the afternoon Churchill left 10 Downing Street by the garden gate. Crowds cheered him to the echo as he rode in an open car from Horse Guards Parade to the House of Commons. There the prime minister read the surrender announcement to a standing

ovation before leading a procession of House members on foot to the twelfth-century St. Margaret's church, on the grounds of Westminster Abbey, for a service of thanksgiving. Thence he was driven by car to Buckingham Palace for tea, through adulatory throngs that bayed, "Winnie! Winnie!" "We all roared ourselves hoarse," the playwright Noël Coward told his diary after standing outside the palace. "I suppose this is the greatest day in our history." Churchill sent an aide to fetch a cigar, which he fired with a flourish before the ecstatic crowd. "I must put one on for them," he confided. "They expect it."

Searchlights at dusk picked out St. Paul's dome and cross, likened by one witness to "a marvelous piece of jewelry invented by a magician." Big Ben's round face glowed with lunar brilliance. More bonfires jumped up in Green Park, fueled with tree branches and the odd bench. As the day faded in the west, Churchill appeared on the Ministry of Health balcony to peer down at the seething crowd spilling across Whitehall. "This is your hour," he told them, flashing his stubby fingers in the trademark V. "We were the first, in this ancient land, to draw the sword against tyranny." Chandelier flares floated overhead, dripping light, and the throng linked arms in deliverance to sing Elgar's "Land of Hope and Glory," weeping together in sorrow and in joy, for all that was lost and all that had been won.

* * *

By the time Japan surrendered on September 2, 1945, the Second World War had lasted six years and a day, ensnaring almost sixty nations, plus sundry colonial and imperial territories. Sixty million had died in those six years, including nearly 10 million in Germany and Japan, and more than twice that number in the Soviet Union—roughly 26 million, one-third of them soldiers. To describe this "great and terrible epoch," as George Marshall called it, new words would be required, like "genocide"; and old words would assume new usages: "Holocaust." The war "was a savage, insensate affair, barely conceivable to the well-conducted imagination," wrote Lieutenant Paul Fussell. "The real war was tragic and ironic, beyond the power of any literary or philosophic analysis to suggest." To one victim, Ernie Pyle, this global conflagration had been simply "an unmitigated misfortune."

For the Allies, some solace could be derived from complete victory over a foe of unexampled iniquity. An existential struggle had been settled so decisively that Field Marshal Brooke, among many, would conclude "that there is a God all-powerful looking after the destiny of the world." In Europe, the Western Allies in 338 days had advanced more than seven hundred miles, liberated oppressed peoples by the tens of millions, seized a hundred thousand square miles of Germany and Austria, captured more than four million prisoners, and killed or badly wounded an estimated one million enemy soldiers. While bleeding far less than the Soviets, the West at war's end had retained the most productive and economically vital quadrants of the Continent.

A British military maxim held that "he who has not fought the Germans does not know war." Now the Americans, Soviets, and others also knew war all too well. The cohesion and internal coherence of the Allied coalition had assured victory: the better alliance had won. Certainly it was possible to look at Allied war-making on any given day and feel heartsick at the missed opportunities and purblind personalities and wretched wastage, to wonder why the ranks could not be braver or at least cleverer, smarter or at least shrewder, prescient or at least intuitive. Yet despite its foibles, the Allied way of war won through, with systems that were, as the historian Richard Overy would write, "centralized, unified, and coordinated," quite unlike Axis systems.

In contrast to the Axis autocracy, Allied leadership included checks and balances to temper arbitrary willfulness and personal misjudgment. The battlefield had offered a proving ground upon which demonstrated competence and equanimity could flourish; as usual, modern war also rewarded ingenuity, collaboration, organizational acumen, and luck, that trait most cherished by Napoléon in his generals. The Anglo-American confederation in particular, for all the high-strung melodrama, could be seen in retrospect to effect a strategic symbiosis: British prudence in 1942 and 1943, eventually yielding to American audacity in 1944 and 1945, had brought victories in the Mediterranean that proved a necessary prelude to the decisive campaign that began at Normandy. The war here had indeed formed a triptych, with the campaigns in North Africa, Italy, and western Europe each providing a panel to fashion the whole. Churchill composed his own aphorism, much quoted: "There is only one thing worse than fighting with allies, and that is fighting without them."

"Our resolution to preserve civilization must become more implacable," an American observer had written in 1939. "Our courage must mount." Resolution and courage both proved equal to the cause, as did more material contributions. The Americans had provided more than two-thirds of Eisenhower's 91 divisions, and half of the Allies' 28,000 combat aircraft. Thirteen U.S. divisions in Europe suffered at least 100 percent casualties— 5 more exceeded 200 percent—yet American combat power remained largely undimmed to the end. The entire war had cost U.S. taxpayers $296 billion—roughly $4 trillion in 2012 dollars. To help underwrite a military budget that increased 8,000 percent, Roosevelt had expanded the number of those taxpayers from 4 million to 42 million. The armed forces had grown 3,500 percent while building 3,000 overseas bases and depots, and shipping 4.5 tons of matériel abroad for each soldier deployed, plus another ton each month to sustain him. "I felt," one Frenchman wrote in watching the Yanks make war, "as if the Americans were digging the Panama Canal right through the German army."

What Churchill called the American "prodigy of organization" had shipped 18 million tons of war stuff to Europe, equivalent to the cargo in 3,600 Liberty ships or 181,000 rail cars: the kit ranged from 800,000 military vehicles to footwear in sizes 2A to 22EEE. U.S. munitions plants had turned out 40 billion rounds of small arms ammunition and 56 million grenades. From D-Day to V-E Day, GIs fired 500 million machine-gun bullets and 23 million artillery rounds. "I'm letting the American taxpayer take this hill," one prodigal gunner declared, and no one disagreed. By 1945, the United States had built two-thirds of all ships afloat and was making half of all manufactured goods in the world, including nearly half of all armaments. The enemy was crushed by logistical brilliance, firepower, mobility, mechanical aptitude, and an economic juggernaut that produced much, much more of nearly everything than Germany could—bombers, bombs, fighters, transport planes, mortars, machine guns, trucks—yet the war absorbed barely one-third of the American gross domestic product, a smaller proportion than that of any major belligerent. A German prisoner complained,

“Warfare like yours is easy.”

There was nothing easy about it, of course. But the United States emerged from World War II with extraordinary advantages that would ensure prosperity for decades: an intact, thriving industrial base; a population relatively unscarred by war; cheap energy; two-thirds of the world’s gold supply; and great optimism. As the major power in western Europe, the Mediterranean, and the Pacific, possessing both atomic weapons and a Navy and Air Force of unequaled might, the United States was ready to exploit what the historian H. P. Willmott described as “the end of the period of European supremacy in the world that had existed for four centuries.” If the war had dispelled American isolationism, it also encouraged American exceptionalism, as well as a penchant for military solutions and a self-regard that led some to label their epoch “the American century.” “Power,” as John Adams had written, “always thinks it has a great soul.”

The war was a potent catalyst for social change across the republic. New technologies—jets, computers, ballistic missiles, penicillin—soon spurred vibrant new industries, which in turn encouraged the migration of black workers from south to north, and of all peoples to the emerging west. The GI Bill put millions of soldiers into college classrooms, spurring unprecedented social mobility. Nineteen million American women had entered the workplace by war’s end; although they quickly reverted to traditional antebellum roles—the percentage working in 1947 was hardly higher than it had been in 1940—that genie would not remain back in the bottle forever. The modest experiment in racially integrating infantry battalions ended when the war did, despite nearly universal agreement that black riflemen had performed ably and in harmony with their white comrades. A presidential order in 1948 would be required to desegregate the military, and much more than that would be needed to reverse three centuries of racial oppression in America.

But tectonic plates had begun to shift. “Glad to be home,” a black soldier from Chicago observed as his troopship sailed into New York harbor. “Proud of my country, as irregular as it is. Determined it could be better.”

* * *

In battered Europe, enormous tasks remained. Those who had outlived the war must “learn how to reassemble our broken world,” as Pyle had put it. The last debris of the Third Reich had to be swept up, including 400,000 German troops adrift in Norway. Grand Admiral Dönitz and his bureaucrats stayed busy in Flensburg for two weeks after the surrender—writing reports, exchanging memos, even posing for an official regime photo—until SHAEF authorities finally arrived to hustle them off to jail. (“Any word from me would be superfluous,” Dönitz said.) An Allied Control Council would assume power over Germany in early June on behalf of the victors, and Anglo-American troops vacated the Soviet zone a month later. SHAEF moved from Reims to Frankfurt and became USFET, U.S. Forces in the European Theater, even as those forces—more than three million strong—began heading home. Not least among the jobs at hand was the disposal of 211,000 tons of German poisonous gas munitions found in the U.S. and British zones alone, including 90,000 tons of mustard bombs and 3.7 million gas artillery shells—a reminder of how much worse the war could have been. Military authorities considered shipping some of the stuff to the Pacific for use against the Japanese, then concluded that the 160,000 tons of U.S. gas munitions stockpiled in Europe and the Mediterranean offered an ample reserve, if needed.

“On the continent of Europe we have yet to make sure that … the words ‘freedom,’ ‘democracy,’ and ‘liberation’ are not distorted from their true meaning as we have understood them,” Churchill told Britons in mid-May. “Forward, unflinching, unswerving, indomitable, till the whole task is done and the whole world safe and clean.” Part of that cleansing required the investigation and prosecution of those culpable for murdering six million Jews, half a million Gypsies, and others, many others. Three thousand tons of documents relating to the camps would be captured and parsed. In Room 600 of the Nuremberg courthouse, the most celebrated of all war-crimes tribunals would hear testimony from 360 witnesses and review 200,000 affidavits. Of two dozen major Nazi defendants, ten would be hanged in October 1946, from gallows built in a jail gymnasium.

Individual Allied governments also conducted hundreds of additional trials. The Western powers alone arrested 200,000 suspected culprits, charging more than 5,000 with major war crimes. Of 48 defendants tried by a British military court in Lüneburg for crimes relating to Bergen-Belsen, 11 would be executed by an experienced hangman specially flown to the Continent. From 1945 to 1948, American military tribunals tried 1,672 Germans—military officers, politicians, diplomats, industrialists, physicians, jurists—in 489 trials.

The path to justice often proved circuitous. Seventy-four defendants were tried in a Dachau courtroom for murdering GIs and Belgian civilians at or near the Malmédy crossroads during the Bulge, and forty-three of them received death sentences, including their commander, Colonel Joachim Peiper. But confessions had been coerced, by threats to defendants’ relatives, physical force, and other wrongful inducements; all capital sentences were commuted. Released from Landsberg prison in 1956, Peiper found a job managing American sales for Porsche. Later he worked for Volkswagen and as a translator, remaining active in Waffen-SS veterans associations. In 1976, Peiper burned to death when his house in Alsace was fire-bombed by a killer who also had slashed the hoses of the local fire department. The crime remained unsolved.

* * *

Eisenhower’s avowed “number 1 plan” after the war was “to sit on the bank of a quiet stream and fish.” That would not happen: the victorious commander was destined for grander things. Among the many accolades he received was a graceful note from Montgomery. “I owe much to your wise guidance and kindly forbearance,” the field marshal wrote. “I know my own faults very well and I do not suppose I am an easy subordinate; I like to go my own way. But you have kept me on the rails in difficult and stormy times.”

No laurel meant more to Eisenhower than Marshall’s encomium:

You have completed your mission with the greatest victory in the history of warfare.… You have made history, great history for the good of all mankind, and you have stood for all we hope for and admire in an officer of the United States Army.

Ahead lay fifteen more years of service, as Army chief of staff, president of Columbia University, commander of the new NATO military alliance, and president of his country. But first Eisenhower would return to London, where three years earlier he had arrived as a new and quite anonymous major general responsible for planning the liberation of Europe. Now a mob instantly congregated when he tried to take a quiet stroll through Hyde Park—"Ike! Good old Ike!" they cried—and two bobbies had to escort him back to the Dorchester Hotel. "It's nice to be back in a country where I can almost speak the language," he had quipped.

On Tuesday, June 12, in an open landau pulled by a pair of high-stepping bays, he rode to the Guildhall, London's eight-hundred-year-old city hall, still scarred from the Blitz. Here he would receive a sword of honor and Britain's formal thanks. A band played Handel's "See the Conquering Hero Comes" as policemen mounted on five white chargers led the carriage into Gresham Street, where thousands of spectators let loose a roar that sent pigeons flapping from the church belfries. Inside, a string orchestra had just finished "My Old Kentucky Home" when a bailiff bellowed from the door, "The supreme commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force!" Eisenhower climbed to the dais to be welcomed with applause by the great men of England, Churchill foremost among them. For twenty minutes, pale and a bit nervous, he spoke without notes of their common cause, their shared sacrifice, and their joint victory. "I had never realized that Ike was as big a man until I heard his performance today," Brooke told his diary. One line from Eisenhower's address would be engraved over his tomb in Kansas a quarter-century later: "Humility must always be the portion of any man who receives acclaim earned in the blood of his followers and the sacrifices of his friends."

* * *

Blood there had surely been, and sacrifices beyond comprehension. Battle casualties among armies of the Western Allies since D-Day exceeded three-quarters of a million, of whom at least 165,000 were dead. Added to that were 10,000 naval losses, half of them dead, and 62,000 air casualties—half of them dead, too, in the 12,000 Allied planes lost over Europe.

British, Canadian, Polish, and ancillary forces in 21st Army Group tallied combat losses of 194,000 in eleven months, including 42,000 killed. French battle casualties in northwestern Europe reached 69,000, of whom 12,600 had died. Ghastly as such losses were, they paled beside those suffered by other combatants. Of all German boys born between 1915 and 1924, one-third were dead or missing. Some 14 percent of the Soviet population of 190 million perished during the war; the Red Army suffered more combat deaths at Stalingrad alone than the U.S. armed forces did in the entire war. Soviet forces also had killed roughly nine times more Germans than the United States and Britain combined.

American soldiers bore the brunt for the Western armies in the climactic final year: the 587,000 U.S. casualties in western Europe included 135,576 dead, almost half of the U.S. total worldwide. Of 361,000 wounded GIs, the quick and the lucky escaped with superficial scars, like the veteran who years later wrote that "my left index finger still carries the mark where a tiny shell fragment entered it once, back there one raving afternoon." Others were less fortunate, among them the 1,700 left blind from all theaters, and the 11,000 with at least partial paralysis of one or more limbs. The Army also tallied 18,000 amputations, most of which occurred after June 1944. A single hospital in Michigan treated more amputees than the total number of amputations incurred by the entire U.S. Army in World War I. "You didn't always remember their name," one surgeon later said, "but you did remember their stump."

* * *

Seventy-five thousand Americans had been listed as missing or captured during the European campaign; thousands still were not accounted for at war's end, leaving their loved ones with the particular anguish of uncertainty. "Darling, come to me in a dream tonight and tell me that you're alive and safe," Myra A. Strachner had written from the Bronx on April 18, after Private First Class Bernie Staller went missing. "Please! I know you want to tell me." Private Staller's secret eventually would out: he had been killed by German artillery a month earlier, at age nineteen. For others, the mystery endured. An estimated 25,000 GIs lay in isolated graves around the Continent, many of them hidden or lost.

No sooner had the ink dried on the surrender documents than mobile teams fanned across Europe to seek the dead and missing, including 14,000 Americans believed killed in air crashes behind enemy lines and others who had died in German prison hospitals. Similar searches began from the Arctic Circle to Cape Town, from the Azores to Iran. Graves Registration units labored to confirm the identities of more than 250,000 American dead in 450 cemeteries scattered across 86 countries, two-thirds of them in Europe or the Mediterranean. For an estimated 44,000 lost at sea, nothing could be done.

Within weeks, 700 bodies were disinterred in Czechoslovakia. Hundreds more emerged from scattered graves in eastern Germany, where the Soviets grudgingly permitted three American recovery squads to roam the countryside. Thirteen hundred sets of American remains were unearthed in the Low Countries, many from MARKET GARDEN polders. Millions of land mines made tromping around the Hürtgen Forest and the Siegfried Line perilous, but a nine-month hunt through western Germany would find 6,220 Americans on battlefields large and small. In three years, European fields, forests, orchards, and cellars would yield 16,548 isolated GI dead; over the subsequent decades they would continue to give up a skull here or a femur there.

Even as this search began, all twelve U.S. military cemeteries on German soil were emptied; no dead GI would knowingly be left in the former Reich. By the thousands, and then by the tens of thousands, the dead were reinterred at thirty-eight temporary sites, mostly in France, of which ten eventually became permanent American cemeteries. The solicitude accorded them could be seen at the

Ninth Army cemetery in Margraten, where on May 30, 1945, Memorial Day, Dutch citizens gathered flowers from sixty villages and spread them like a brilliant quilt across seventeen thousand graves.

The power of a well-wrought grave was beyond measure. Patricia O'Malley, who was a year old when her father, Major Richard James O'Malley, a battalion commander in the 12th Infantry, was killed by a sniper in Normandy, later wrote of seeing his headstone for the first time in the cemetery at Colleville, above Omaha Beach.

> I cried for the joy of being there and the sadness of my father's death. I cried for all the times I needed a father and never had one. I cried for all the words I had wanted to say and wanted to hear but had not. I cried and cried.

In 1947, the next of kin of 270,000 identifiable American dead buried overseas would submit Quartermaster General Form 345 to choose whether they wanted their soldier brought back to the United States or left interred with comrades abroad. More than 60 percent of the dead worldwide would return home, at an average cost to the government of $564.50 per body, an unprecedented repatriation that only an affluent, victorious nation could afford. In Europe the exhumations began that July: every grave was opened by hand, and the remains sprinkled with an embalming compound of formaldehyde, aluminum chloride, plaster of Paris, wood powder, and clay. Wrapped in a blanket, each body was then laid on a pillow in a metal casket lined with rayon satin.

Labor strikes in the United States caused a shortage of casket steel, and repatriation was further delayed by a dearth of licensed embalmers, although government representatives made recruiting visits to mortician schools around the country. In warehouses at Cherbourg, Cardiff, and elsewhere the dead accumulated. Finally the *Joseph V. Connolly,* the first of twenty-one ghost ships to sail from Europe, steamed down the Scheldt with 5,060 dead soldiers in her hold. Thirty thousand Belgians bade them adieu from the Antwerp docks, while pledging to look after the 61,000 Americans who would remain in those ten European cemeteries, "as if," one man vowed, "their tombs were our children's."

On Saturday, October 27, the *Connolly* berthed in New York. Stevedores winched the caskets from the ship two at a time in specially designed slings. Most then traveled by rail in a great diaspora across the republic for burial in their hometowns. Among those waiting was Henry A. Wright, a widower who lived on a farm in southwestern Missouri, near Springfield. One by one his dead sons arrived at the local train station: Sergeant Frank H. Wright, killed on Christmas Eve 1944 in the Bulge; then Private Harold B. Wright, who had died of his wounds in a German prison camp on February 3, 1945; and finally Private Elton E. Wright, killed in Germany on April 25, two weeks before the war ended. Gray and stooped, the elder Wright watched as the caskets were carried into the rustic bedroom where each boy had been born. Neighbors kept vigil overnight, carpeting the floor with roses, and in the morning they bore the brothers to Hilltop Cemetery for burial side by side by side beneath an iron sky.

Thus did the fallen return from Europe, 82,357 strong. As the dead came home, so too the things they carried. Two hundred miles north of the Wright farm, the Army Effects Bureau of the Kansas City Quartermaster Depot filled a large warehouse at 601 Hardesty Avenue, just below a majestic bend in the Missouri River. From a modest enterprise that had begun with half a dozen employees in February 1942, the Effects Bureau had expanded to more than a thousand workers, and by August 1945 they were handling sixty thousand shipments a month, each laden with the belongings of American dead from six continents.

Hour after hour, day after day, shipping containers were unloaded from rail freight cars onto a receiving dock and then hoisted by elevator to the depot's tenth floor. Here with assembly-line efficiency the containers traveled by conveyor belt from station to station down to the seventh floor as inspectors pawed through the crates to extract classified documents, pornography, ammunition, and perhaps amorous letters from a girlfriend that would further grieve a grieving widow. The prevailing rule on Hardesty Avenue was said to be "Remove anything you would not want returned to your family if *you* were the soldier." Workers used grinding stones and dentist drills to remove corrosion and blood from helmets and web gear; laundresses took pains to scrub bloodstains out of field jackets and uniform blouses. A detailed inventory was pinned to each repacked container before it was stacked in a storage bin. And all the while banks of typists in an adjacent room hammered out correspondence to the next of kin, up to seventy thousand letters a month, asking where the soldier's last possessions should be sent.

Over the years, Effects Bureau inspectors had found tapestries, enemy swords, a German machine gun, an Italian accordion, a tobacco sack full of diamonds, walrus tusks, a shrunken head, a Japanese life raft. Among thousands of diaries also received in Kansas City was a small notebook that had belonged to Lieutenant Hershel G. Horton, a twenty-nine-year-old Army officer from Aurora, Illinois. Shot in the right leg and hip during a firefight with the Japanese in New Guinea, Horton had dragged himself into a grass shanty and, over the several days that it took for him to die, he had scribbled a final letter in the notebook. "My dear, sweet father, mother, and sister," he wrote. "I lay here in this terrible place, wondering not why God has forsaken me, but rather why He is making me suffer."

* * *

This, the profoundest of all mysteries, would be left for the living to ponder. Soldiers who survived also would struggle to reconcile the greatest catastrophe in human history with what the philosopher and Army officer J. Glenn Gray called "the one great lyric passage in their lives." The war's intensity, camaraderie, and sense of high purpose left many with "a deplorable nostalgia," in the phrase of A. J. Liebling. "The times were full of certainty," Liebling later wrote. "I have seldom been sure I was right since." An AAF crewman who completed fifty bomber missions observed, "Never did I feel so much alive. Never did the earth and all of the surroundings look so bright and sharp." And a combat engineer mused, "What we had together was something awfully damned good, something I don't think we'll ever have again as long as we live."

They had been annealed, touched with fire. "We are certainly no smaller men than our forefathers," Gavin wrote his daughter.

Alan Moorehead, who watched the scarlet calamity from beginning to end, believed that “here and there a man found greatness in himself.”

> The anti-aircraft gunner in a raid and the boy in a landing barge really did feel at moments that the thing they were doing was a clear and definite good, the best they could do. And at those moments there was a surpassing satisfaction, a sense of exactly and entirely fulfilling one’s life.… This thing, the brief ennoblement, kept recurring again and again up to the end, and it refreshed and lighted the whole heroic and sordid story.

In Moorehead’s view, the soldier to whom this grace was granted became, “for a moment, a complete man, and he had his sublimity in him.” For those destined to outlive the war and die abed as old men half a century hence, the din of battle grew fainter without ever fading entirely. They knew, as Osmar White knew, that “the living have the cause of the dead in trust.” This too was part of the sublimity.

“No war is really over until the last veteran is dead,” a rifleman in the 26th Division would conclude. Of the 16,112,566 Americans in uniform during the Second World War, the number still living was expected to decline to one million by late 2014, and, a decade later, in 2024, to dip below a hundred thousand. By the year 2036, U.S. government demographers estimated, fewer than four hundred veterans would remain alive, less than half the strength of an infantry battalion.

Yet the war and all that the war contained—nobility, villainy, immeasurable sorrow—is certain to live on even after the last old soldier has gone to his grave. May the earth lie lightly on his bones.

Unless specified, all photos are from the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration. Additional photos can be found at liberationtrilogy.com.



The supreme commander of Allied forces in western Europe, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, crossing the English Channel en route to Normandy from southern England on June 7, 1944. President Roosevelt chose Eisenhower to command Operation OVERLORD as "the best politician among the military men. He is a natural leader who can convince other men to follow him."



An artillery unit bound for Normandy loads equipment into landing vessels in Brixham on the southwest coast of England, June 1, 1944. Seven thousand kinds of combat necessities, from surgical scissors to bazooka rockets, had to reach French beaches in the first four hours of the invasion.



The Allied military high command for Operation OVERLORD, during a meeting in London. Seated, from left to right: Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur W. Tedder; Eisenhower; General Bernard L. Montgomery. Standing, from left to right: Lieutenant General Omar N. Bradley; Admiral Sir Bertram H. Ramsay; Air Chief Marshal Trafford Leigh-Mallory; Lieutenant General Walter Bedell “Beetle” Smith, Eisenhower’s chief of staff.



Eisenhower with paratroopers from the 101st Airborne Division at Greenham Common in the Berkshire Downs, June 5, 1944. “The idea, the perfect idea,” Eisenhower advised, “is to keep moving.” The tall officer in the dark uniform is Commander Harry C. Butcher, Eisenhower’s naval aide.



American soldiers wade from a landing craft toward Omaha Beach and the bluffs beyond on the morning of June 6, 1944.



American and German dead await burial in a makeshift morgue behind Omaha Beach. The 4,700 U.S. casualties at Omaha, including wounded and missing, accounted for more than one-third of the Allied total on D-Day.



Reinforcements and artillery press inland from Omaha Beach two days after the initial invasion. Within a week of D-Day, more than 300,000 Allied troops and 2,000 tanks had arrived in France, but the beachhead remained pinched and crowded.



Montgomery, commander of Allied ground forces in Normandy, confers with war correspondents on June 15. Eisenhower considered him “a good man to serve under, a difficult man to serve with, and an impossible man to serve over.”



The remnants of Mulberry A off Omaha Beach after one of the worst June gales in eighty years. A senior American admiral denounced the artificial harbors emplaced off Normandy as “the greatest waste of manpower and steel and equipment . . . for any operation in World War II.”



Adolf Hitler examines wreckage in an undated German photo captured by the U.S. Army on the Western front. For the first and only time since the Germans overran Paris four years earlier, the Führer in mid-June of 1944 would return to France to confer with his commanders in Margival about the Allied invasion.



Field Marshal Erwin Rommel, commander of Army Group B in France, seen in a 1940 photo that foreshadows his subsequent wounding four years later during a strafing attack by Allied fighter planes.



A German V-1 flying bomb plummets to earth above a London rooftop. More than ten thousand of the crude weapons were fired at Britain, killing or badly injuring 24,000 people; thousands more V-1s fell on Antwerp.



GIs from the 79th Infantry Division fighting in bocage terrain south of the Cotentin Peninsula in mid-July. Of these bitterly defended hedgerows, a soldier wrote, “Each one of them was a wall of fire, and the open fields between were plains of fire.”



Eisenhower and Bradley listen to Major General J. Lawton Collins, right, commander of the U.S. VII Corps, shortly after the capture of Cherbourg. Among the few officers in France with combat experience in the South Pacific, Collins was described by one admirer as “runty, cocky, confident, almost to the point of being a bore.”



General Karl-Wilhelm von Schlieben, commander of the German garrison at Cherbourg, shortly after his surrender on June 26. In his pocket was found a menu from a dinner honoring him a few weeks earlier, featuring lobster and champagne.



Brigadier General Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., seen in Ste.-Mère-Église on July 12, hours before he died of a coronary thrombosis. The 4th Infantry Division commander described him as “the most gallant soldier and finest gentleman I have ever known.”



Honorary pallbearers at Roosevelt's funeral include Bradley and Lieutenant General George S. Patton at the head of the column on the left, and, on the right, Lieutenant General Courtney H. Hodges and Collins. *(U.S. Army Military History Institute)*



Field Marshal Walter Model took command of the retreating German armies in France in mid-August 1944. “Did you see those eyes?” Hitler once said of Model. “I wouldn’t want to serve under him.” *(U.S. Army Military History Institute)*



“A warring, roaring comet,” as one reporter described George Patton, the U.S. Third Army commander, seen here after his promotion to four-star general in 1945. *(U.S. Army Military History Institute)*



Photographer Robert Capa, left, and Ernest Hemingway, right, accredited as a correspondent for *Collier's* magazine, with their Army driver in France shortly before the liberation of Paris.



Major General Jacques Philippe Leclerc, commander of the French 2nd Armored Division, on the Boulevard du Montparnasse in Paris on the day of liberation, August 25, 1944.



General Dietrich von Choltitz, commander of German forces in Paris, seen shortly after he formally surrendered the city late on the afternoon of August 25.



Sniper fire sends French citizens sprawling or fleeing in the Place de la Concorde on August 26. “It was like a field of wheat suddenly struck by a strong gust of wind,” wrote one witness.



General Charles de Gaulle continues singing a hymn in Notre Dame cathedral on August 26 despite gunfire reverberating through the nave during a thanksgiving service. “The most extraordinary example of courage I’ve ever seen,” a BBC reporter declared.



A French woman accused of collaboration with German occupiers is barbered on August 29. Others like her had swastikas painted on their breasts or placards hung around their necks that read, “I whored with the Boches.”



Parisians line the Champs-Élysées on August 29 to cheer the U.S. 28th Infantry Division, marching through Paris before taking up pursuit of the German army to the east.



Assault forces from the U.S. VI Corps file ashore near St.-Tropez in southern France during Operation DRAGOON on August 15, 1944.



Major General Lucian K. Truscott, Jr., shown here after his promotion to three-star general in October, commanded the U.S. VI Corps during the invasion of southern France and the subsequent pursuit up the Rhône River. This was Truscott's third amphibious invasion of the war.



Lieutenant General Alexander M. Patch, Jr., commander of the U.S. Seventh Army in southern France, and his son, Captain Alexander M. “Mac” Patch III, shortly before the young officer’s death. *(U.S. Military Academy)*



General Jean Joseph Marie Gabriel de Lattre de Tassigny, described by one admirer as “an animal of action,” commanded the French First Army as part of the 6th Army Group in southern France. *(©KEYSTONE-FRANCE)*



Lieutenant General John C. H. Lee, the chief American logistician as commander of the Communications Zone. “Heavy on ceremony, somewhat forbidding in manner and appearance, and occasionally tactless,” as the Army’s official history described him, “General Lee often aroused suspicions and created opposition.”



British paratroopers in a C-47 transport plane, bound for Holland in Operation MARKET GARDEN.



More than twenty thousand parachutists and glider troops descended behind German lines on September 17, 1944, in the biggest, boldest airborne operation of the war.



By late September 1944, the once-handsome Dutch town of Nijmegen had been reduced to ruins, although the road bridge leading toward Arnhem, ten miles north, still spanned the Waal River.



GIs from the 1st Infantry Division battle through central Aachen on October 17, 1944, several days before German defenders finally capitulated.



Captain Joseph T. Dawson helped stave off German counterattacks at Aachen. “These bitter tragic months of terrible war leave one morally as well as physically exhausted,” he told his family. Here Dawson receives the Distinguished Service Cross from Eisenhower for heroics at Omaha Beach. *(McCormick Research Center, First Division Museum)*



Riflemen from the 110th Infantry Regiment of the 28th Division creep through the Hürtgen Forest near Vossenack in early November. “The days were so terrible that I would pray for darkness,” one soldier recalled, “and the nights were so bad that I would pray for daylight.”



Eisenhower quizzes Major General Norman D. Cota about the Hürtgen battle at the 28th Division command post in Rott. “Well, Dutch,” the supreme commander told him, “it looks like you got a bloody nose.”



Sherman tanks push eastward on November 16 as part of Operation QUEEN. After more than three weeks the attack sputtered and stalled, reaching the west bank of the Roer River but not the Rhine, as U.S. commanders had hoped.



The high command contemplates a winter campaign in northern Europe. Conferring in mid-November at the supreme commander’s forward headquarters in Reims are, left to right, Field Marshal Sir Alan Brooke, chief of the Imperial General Staff; Eisenhower; Prime Minister Winston S. Churchill.



A boy’s body burns after a V-2 rocket explosion in central Antwerp in late November 1944. German launch crews would fire more than 1,700 V-2s at Antwerp during a six-month period, in addition to some 4,200 V-1 flying bombs.



A French woman welcomes an American soldier on November 25, two days after French and U.S. troops liberated Strasbourg, the capital of Alsace.



Two GIs from the 9th Infantry Division shelter beneath a Sherman tank on December 11 in the smashed German town of Geich, near Düren.



At a Belgian crossroads in the early hours of the Battle of the Bulge, German soldiers strip boots and other equipment from three dead GIs. After U.S. troops captured this film, an Army censor redacted the road sign to Büllingen and other landmarks.



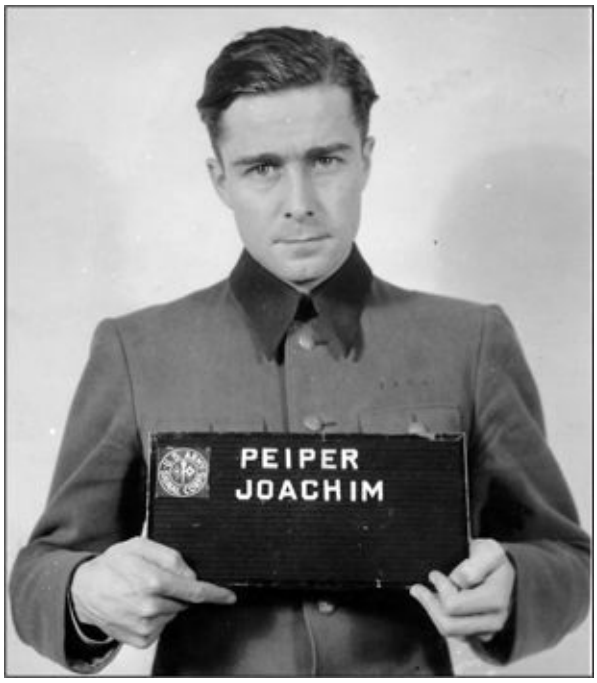
German soldiers smoke captured American cigarettes in front of a U.S. Army armored car on December 17, the second day of Operation HERBSTNEBEL, the attack through Belgium and Luxembourg.



General Hasso von Manteuffel commanded the Fifth Panzer Army in the Battle of the Bulge. An elfin veteran of campaigns in both Russia and Africa, Manteuffel was described by one superior as “a daredevil, a bold and dashing leader.”



General Sepp Dietrich, the one-time butcher’s apprentice and beer-hall brawler, commanded the Sixth Panzer Army. He is seen here in a Nuremberg jail cell, awaiting trial for war crimes in late 1945.



Lieutenant Colonel Joachim Peiper led a vanguard of six thousand SS troops across Belgium in a vain effort to seize crossings on the Meuse river. Convicted of mass murder, he would be condemned to death, though his sentence was later commuted.



Major General Matthew B. Ridgway, left, commander of the XVIII Airborne Corps, confers during the Battle of the Bulge with Major General James M. Gavin, commander of the 82nd Airborne Division. *(U.S. Army Military History Institute)*



Command of the 101st Airborne Division at Bastogne fell to Brigadier General Anthony C. McAuliffe, a short, genial artilleryman.



Montgomery, center, was given command early in the Bulge of all Allied forces in the northern Ardennes. His army commanders as of late December 1944 included, left to right: Lieutenant General Sir Miles Dempsey, British Second Army; Lieutenant General Courtney H. Hodges, U.S. First Army; Lieutenant General William H. Simpson, U.S. Ninth Army; General Harry D. G. Crerar, Canadian First Army. *(©Illustrated London News Ltd /Mary Evans Picture Library)*



GIs from the 347th Infantry Regiment in a mess line north of Bastogne on January 13, 1945, shortly before the convergence of the U.S. First and Third Armies in the Ardennes.



A young SS soldier captured by the U.S. 3rd Armored Division in Belgium on January 15.



A German saboteur, captured while wearing a U.S. Army uniform during the Battle of the Bulge, is lashed to a stake moments before his execution by a firing squad in Belgium. *(U.S. Army Military History Institute)*



President Franklin D. Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill aboard the U.S.S. *Quincy* in Grand Harbour, Malta, on February 2. Anna Roosevelt Boettiger, left, and Sarah Churchill Oliver accompanied their fathers on the long journey to the Crimea.



The Big Three at Yalta: Churchill, Roosevelt, and Joseph Stalin on the terrace of the Villa Livadia. The president had but two months to live.



A self-propelled 155mm “Long Tom” pounds enemy targets to the east. After overcoming ammunition shortages early in the summer and fall of 1944, American gunners by early 1945 often fired ten shells or more for every one fired by the enemy.



German mortar fire causes GIs to shelter among concrete dragon’s teeth along the Siegfried Line. Known to Germans as the *Westwall* and begun in 1936, the fortifications, which included three thousand bunkers and pillboxes, stretched from the Dutch border to Switzerland.



Lieutenant General Jacob L. Devers, left, commander of the 6th Army Group, with Patch, his Seventh Army commander. Capable and decisive, with a talent for handling his prickly French subordinates, Devers also had a knack for provoking his American peers.



Lieutenant Audie Murphy, right, is congratulated by Major General John W. “Iron Mike” O’Daniel, commander of the 3rd Infantry Division. Murphy, a fifth-grade dropout from Texas, earned both a battlefield commission and the Medal of Honor for his valor in France. *(U.S. Army Military History Institute)*



U.S. Seventh Army 155mm howitzers hammer a German observation post across the Rhine in Brisach in mid-February, shortly after the last enemy troops were expelled from the Colmar Pocket in Alsace.



The Ludendorff railroad bridge, seen from the east on the morning of March 17, with the German town of Remagen visible across the Rhine. Four hours after this photo was taken, the “Ludy” abruptly collapsed into the river, killing twenty-eight U.S. soldiers who were making repairs on the captured span.



Soldiers of the 89th Division, part of Patton’s Third Army, crossing the Rhine at St. Goar on March 26. One battalion came under fire even before launching its assault boats, and German defenses included a gasoline-soaked barge set ablaze in mid-stream. The division suffered almost three hundred casualties in reaching the east bank.



“In Cologne life is no longer possible,” wrote a German diarist, and the poet Stephen Spender compared the shattered city to “the open mouth of a charred corpse.” Although the Rhine bridges and thousands of buildings were destroyed, the great cathedral survived.



The wreckage of a B-24 Liberator in a German field. Of 240 low-flying Liberators that dropped supplies to Allied troops in the Rhine crossing operation called VARSITY PLUNDER, fifteen were lost and 104 damaged.



Churchill stands on a demolished Rhine rail bridge on March 25 during VARSITY PLUNDER. When U.S. officers demanded that he return to a safer position, the prime minister “put both his arms round one of the twisted girders of the bridge and looked over his shoulder…with pouting mouth and angry eyes.” *(William Simpson Collection, U.S. Army Military History Institute)*



Major General Maurice Rose, commander of the 3rd Armored Division, receives the Croix de Guerre and an embrace from a French general in mid-March. Less than three weeks later, Rose, considered among the U.S. Army's finest armored commanders, would be shot dead. *(U.S. Army Military History Institute)*



Lieutenant Colonel John K. Waters, captured in Tunisia in 1943, survived two years of German captivity and a failed raid on the Hammelburg prison camp, a scheme concocted by his father-in-law, George Patton. Seen here in a hospital bed after his eventual liberation, Waters went on to attain four-star rank. *(Courtesy of George Patton "Pat" Waters)*



The booty discovered by Third Army troops in an old potassium mine below the German town of Merkers included gold bars, gold coins, art works, and valuables stolen from concentration camp victims. “If these were the old free-booting days when a soldier kept his loot,” Omar Bradley told Patton, “you’d be the richest man in the world.”



Canadian infantrymen march through a Dutch town on April 9. The starving Dutch had been reduced to eating nettle soup, laundry starch, the occasional cat or dog, and 140 million tulip bulbs.



The Pegnitz river in Nuremberg on April 20, Hitler’s fifty-sixth birthday and the day this shattered city—reduced to “alluvial fans of rubble”—fell to the U.S. XV Corps.



Dead inmates discovered in the concentration camp at Buchenwald after its liberation on April 11 by the U.S. 6th Armored Division. An estimated 56,000 victims had been murdered at Buchenwald and its subcamps.



Soldiers from the U.S. 45th and 42nd Divisions arrived at Dachau camp, near Munich, on April 29. Investigators later concluded that vengeful GIs gunned down at least twenty-eight SS guards after they had surrendered.



Prisoners by the acre: an aerial photograph taken on April 25 shows some of the 160,000 Germans herded into a temporary encampment near Remagen. American stockades alone held more than 1.3 million enemy soldiers by mid-April, even before the haul from the Ruhr was complete.



Perched above Hitler’s vacation home in the remote Bavarian village of Berchtesgaden, a lavish mountaintop chalet known as the Eagle’s Nest had been built by the Nazi regime as a fiftieth birthday present for the Führer. American troops seized the area in early May, shortly after Hitler’s suicide in Berlin.



Field Marshal Gerd von Rundstedt following his capture by American troops south of Munich on May 2. The former OB West commander is accompanied by a medic wearing a brassard, and his son, a German lieutenant.



The victorious American commanders, on May 11, 1945. Seated from left to right: Simpson; Patton; General Carl A. Spaatz, U.S. Strategic Air Forces Europe; Eisenhower; Bradley; Hodges; Lieutenant General Leonard T. Gerow, Fifteenth Army. Standing from left to right: Brigadier General Ralph F. Stearley, IX Tactical Air Command; Lieutenant General Hoyt S. Vandenburg, Ninth Air Force; Beetle Smith; Major General Otto P. Weyland, XIX Tactical Air Command; Brigadier General Richard E. Nugent, XXIX Tactical Air Command.



On the night of May 7, hours before the official end of the war in Europe, jubilant Americans celebrate with the British at Piccadilly in central London.



A bugler blows “Taps” at the close of Memorial Day ceremonies in May 1945 at the U.S. military cemetery at Margraten, Holland.

NOTES

The following abbreviations appear in the endnotes and bibliography. Some stack locations and box numbers change as archivists reconfigure their collections. A list of additional manuscripts, monographs, and unpublished documents used in this book appears online at **www.liberationtrilogy.com**.

a.p. author's possession
AAAD Rick Atkinson, *An Army at Dawn*
AAF Army Air Forces
AAFinWWII W. F. Craven and J. L. Cate, eds., *The Army Air Forces in World War II*, vol. 3
AAR after action report
AB *After the Battle*
AB Div airborne division
AD armored division
admin administration
AF air force
AFHQ micro Allied Forces Headquarters microfilm, NARA RG 331
AFHRA Air Force Historical Research Agency
AFIA American Forces in Action publications and background papers
AG Army Group
ag adjutant general
AGF Army Ground Forces
ALH Howard L. Gleck et al., "The Administrative and Logistical History of the ETO," part 5, WD, May 1946, a.p.
ALM Audie Leon Murphy papers, USMA Special Collections, West Point, N.Y.
ANSCOL Army-Navy Staff College Collection, NWC Lib, U.S. National Archives
AR action report
Ardennes Hugh M. Cole, *The Ardennes: Battle of the Bulge*, *USAWWII*
AS Armored School
ASEQ Army Service Experiences Questionnaire, MHI
ASF Army Service Forces
AU Air University
bde brigade
Beck Alfred M. Beck et al., *The Corps of Engineers: The War Against Germany*, *USAWWII*
BLM Bernard Law Montgomery
bn battalion
BP Martin Blumenson, *Breakout and Pursuit*, *USAWWII*
CARL Combined Arms Research Library, Fort Leavenworth, Kans.
CBH Chester B. Hansen, including papers, diary, MHI
CBM Charles B. MacDonald, including papers, MHI
CCA Gordon A. Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, *USAWWII*
CCS Combined Chiefs of Staff
CE U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
CEOH U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Office of History
Chandler Alfred Chandler, ed., *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower: The War Years*
CI Combat Interview, ETO
CINCLANT Commander-in-Chief, Atlantic Fleet
CJB Clay and Joan Blair collection, MHI
CJR Cornelius J. Ryan, including papers, Ohio University, Athens, Ohio
CMH U.S. Army Center of Military History, Fort McNair, Washington, D.C.
CNO Chief of Naval Operations
co company

Coakley Robert W. Coakley and Richard M. Leighton, *Global Logistics and Strategy 1943–1945, USAWWII*
COHQ Combined Operations Headquarters, U.K.
Col U OHRO Columbia University Oral History Research Office, N.Y.
corr correspondence
COS chief of staff
CSI U.S. Army Combat Studies Institute, Fort Leavenworth, Kans.
DA Department of the Army
Danchev Alex Danchev and Daniel Todman, eds., *War Diaries, 1939–1945: Field Marshal Lord Alanbrooke*
DDE Dwight David Eisenhower
DDE Lib Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library, Abilene, Kans.
diss dissertation
div division
DOB Rick Atkinson, *The Day of Battle*
DTL Donovan Technical Library, Fort Benning, Ga.
E entry
ET Exercise Tiger collection, MHI
ETO European Theater of Operations
FA field artillery
FAJ *Field Artillery Journal*
FCP Forrest C. Pogue, including background material for *The Supreme Command*, MHI
FDR Lib Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library, Hyde Park, N.Y.
FMS Foreign Military Studies
FOIA Freedom of Information Act
FRUS *Foreign Relations of the United States: The Conferences at Malta and Yalta*
Ft. K Ft. Knox, Ky.
Ft. L Ft. Leavenworth, Kans.
FUSA First U.S. Army
GCM Lib George C. Marshall Research Library, Lexington, Va.
Germany VII Horst Boog et al., *Germany and the Second World War*, vol. 7, *The Strategic Air War in Europe and the War in the West and East Asia, 1943–1944/45*
Germany IX Ralf Blank et al., *Germany and the Second World War*, vol. 9, part 1, *German Wartime Society, 1939–1945*
***GS* V** John Ehrman, *Grand Strategy*, vol. 5
***GS* VI** John Ehrman, *Grand Strategy*, vol. 6
GSP George S. Patton, Jr., including papers, Library of Congress
HCB Harry C. Butcher, including papers
HD Historical Division
HI "Hospital Interviews," NARA RG 407 E 427, ML #2233
HIA Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University, Palo Alto, Calif.
Hinsley F. H. Hinsley, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, abridged
HKH Henry Kent Hewitt papers
Hq headquarters
ID infantry division
IFG Samuel Eliot Morison, *The Invasion of France and Germany, 1944–1945*
IG inspector general
IJ *Infantry Journal*
inf infantry
intel intelligence
IS Infantry School, Ft. Benning, Ga.
IWM Imperial War Museum, London
JAG U.S. Army judge advocate general
JB Joseph Balkoski
JCS Joint Chiefs of Staff
JLC J. Lawton Collins
JLD Jacob L. Devers, including papers
JMG James M. Gavin, including papers
JMH *Journal of Military History*
JT John Toland, including papers
LC Hugh M. Cole, *The Lorraine Campaign, USAWWII*
LHC Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives, King's College, London
LHD John Toland, *The Last Hundred Days*

lib library
LKT Jr. Lucian K. Truscott, Jr., including papers
LO Charles B. MacDonald, *The Last Offensive, USAWWII*
LOC MS Div Library of Congress Manuscript Division
LSA Roland G. Ruppenthal, *Logistical Support of the Armies*, vols. 1 and 2, *USAWWII*
MB Martin Blumenson
MBR Matthew B. Ridgway
MEB Magna E. Bauer
MHI U.S. Army Military History Institute, Carlisle, Pa.
MHUC Medical Historical Unit Collection, MHI
micro microfilm
ML miscellaneous AG records, ETO
MMB Mark M. Boatner III, *The Biographical Dictionary of World War II*
MMD 29th Infantry Division Archives, Maryland Military Department, Fifth Regiment Armory, Baltimore
MP military police
MRC FDM McCormick Research Center, First Division Museum, Cantigny, Ill.
msg message
mss manuscript
MTOUSA Mediterranean Theater of Operations, United States Army
n.d. no date
NARA National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Md.
NATOUSA North African Theater of Operations, United States Army
Naval Guns Morton L. Deyo, "Naval Guns at Normandy," ts, n.d., SEM, NHHC, box 87
NHHC Naval History and Heritage Command, Washington, D.C.
NSA National Security Agency
NWC Lib National War College Library
NWWIIM National World War II Museum archives, New Orleans
NYT *New York Times*
obit obituary
OCMH Office of the Chief of Military History
OCNO Office of the Chief of Naval Operations
OCS Office of the Chief of Staff
OH oral history
ONB Omar N. Bradley, including papers
OPD Operations Division, War Department
OR observer report
OSS Office of Strategic Services
PIR Robert M. Littlejohn, ed., "Passing in Review," MHI
Para parachute
PP Martin Blumenson, *The Patton Papers, 1940–1945*
PP-pres Papers, Pre-presidential
Proceedings *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*
qm quartermaster
regt regiment
RG record group
RN Royal Navy
ROHA Rutgers University Oral History Archives of World War II, New Brunswick, N.J.
Ross William F. Ross and Charles F. Romanus, *The Quartermaster Corps: Operations in the War Against Germany, USAWWII*
RR Jeffrey J. Clarke and Robert Ross Smith, *Riviera to the Rhine, USAWWII*
s.p. self-published
SC Signal Corps
SEM Samuel Eliot Morison Office Files
SGS Secretary General Staff
SLAM S.L.A. Marshall, including papers, MHI
SLC Charles B. MacDonald, *The Siegfried Line Campaign, USAWWII*
SMH Society for Military History
SOOHP Senior Officer Oral History Program
SOS Services of Supply
STM Sidney T. Mathews
Sylvan William C. Sylan and Francis G. Smith, Jr., *Normandy to Victory*

td tank destroyer
Texas MFM Texas Military Forces Museum, Austin
Three Years Harry C. Butcher, *My Three Years with Eisenhower*
TR Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., including papers, LOC MS Div
ts typescript
TSC Forrest C. Pogue, *The Supreme Command, USAWWII*
TT Charles B. MacDonald, *A Time for Trumpets*
UK NA National Archive, Kew, U.K. (formerly Public Record Office)
USAF HRC U.S. Air Force Historical Research Center
USAF U.S. Air Force
USAREUR U.S. Army, Europe
USAWWII *United States Army in World War II*
USFET U.S. Forces, European Theater
USHMM U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum
USMA Arch U.S. Military Academy Special Collections and Archives, West Point, N.Y.
USMC U.S. Marine Corps
USN U.S. Navy
USNAd "U.S. Naval Administration in World War II"
USNI OHD U.S. Naval Institute, Oral History Department, Annapolis, Md.
USSAFE U.S. Strategic Air Forces Europe
UTEP University of Texas at El Paso
UT-K University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Center for the Study of War and Society
VC C. P. Stacey, *The Victory Campaign*, vol. 3, *Official History of the Canadian Army in the Second World War*
VHP Veterans' History Project, National Folklife Center, Library of Congress
VW L. F. Ellis, *Victory in the West*
WaS S. W. Roskill, *The War at Sea, 1939–1945*, vol. 3, part 2
WD War Department
WP *Washington Post*
WSC Winston S. Churchill
WWII World War II
XO executive officer
YCHT York County Heritage Trust, York, Pa.
YU Yale University Library, Manuscripts and Archives

PROLOGUE

A killing frost: *The New Yorker Book of War Pieces*, 308–9; Peckham and Snyder, eds., *Letters from Fighting Hoosiers*, vol. 2, 95 ("*Three inches*").

Nearly five years: Settle, *All the Brave Promises*, 13, 84; Ziegler, *London at War, 1939–1945*, 243–45 (*zinc phosphate*).

Privation lay on the land: Fussell, *Wartime*, 200, 203; "A Yank in Britain," ts, n.d., Thor M. Smith Papers, HIA, box 2, 31 ("*Squander Bug*"); *Times* (London), May 15, 1944, 1 ("*artificial teeth*"); Stafford, *Ten Days to D-Day*, 203–4 ("*bombed upholstery*").

Other government placards: Fussell, *Wartime*, 201; Calder, *The People's War*, 380–81 (*two ounces* and *roast cormorant*); Essame, *Patton: A Study in Command*, 128 ("*Woolton pie"*).

More than fifty thousand: *VW*, vol. 1, 29; Joseph R. Darnall, "Powdered Eggs and Purple Hearts," ts, 1946, MHUC, MHI, box 24, 72–74 (*parachute flares*); Moynihan, ed., *People at War, 1939–45*, 169 ("*searchlights*"); Ackroyd, *London Under*, e-book, chapter 12 ("*slave ship*"); Ziegler, *London at War, 1939–1945*, 277, 270–71 (*own beds*).

Even during these short summer nights: *Times* (London), May 15, 1944, 5; Simpson, *Selected Prose*, 117 ("*profoundly dark*"); Reynolds, *Rich Relations*, 414 ("*battlefield of sex*"); Longmate, *The G.I.'s*, 276 ("*Marble Arch style"*); Eustis, *War Letters of Morton Eustis to His Mother*, 191 ("*madhouse after dark*").

Proud Britain soldiered on: Joseph R. Darnall, "Powdered Eggs and Purple Hearts," ts, 1946, MHUC, MHI, box 24, 92; *Daily Mail* (London), May 15, 1944, 3 (*pedaled their bicycles*); *Times* (London), May 15, 1944, 2 ("*colt of the first class*"), 5, 8; Stafford, *Ten Days to D-Day*, 17; Brown, *Many a Watchful Night*, 78.

"*French sailors with their red pompoms*": Calder, *The People's War*, 307.

Savile Row tailors: Taylor, *Swords and Plowshares*, 86; Capa, *Slightly Out of Focus*, 132 (*pocket flask*); Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 181 (*pumpkin hue*).

Nowhere were the uniforms: Forrest Pogue refers to American MPs as Snowballs. Pogue, *Pogue's War*, 15. More common was the British term, Snowdrop. Mollo, *The Armed Forces of World War II*, 235; "History of SHAEF, Feb. 13–June 6, 1944," July 1944, NARA RG 319, 2-3.7 CB 8, appendix 3 (*146 engraved invitations*); Middleton, *Our Share of Night*, 308 ("*big men*"); Naval Guns, 19 (*hard, narrow benches*); http://www.oldpaulinelodge.org.uk/School.htm; http://www.stpaulsschool.org.uk/page.aspx?id=8362; http://www.archive.org/stream/historyofstpaul00uoft.

Top secret charts and maps: Kennedy, *The Business of War*, 328 (*blankets*); D'Este, *Decision in Normandy*, 82–83 (*frock coat*); "Presentation of OVERLORD Plans," May 15 1944, PP-pres, DDE Lib, series VI, box 1 (*King George VI*); D'Este, *Eisenhower: A Soldier's Life*, 500 (*Churchill bowed*).

these big men: *IFG*, 223 ("*Mediterraneanites*"); Chandler, 1901 ("*in my blood*").

The Anglo-Americans pounced: see *AAAD* and *DOB*.

Elsewhere in this global conflagration: Weinberg, *A World at Arms*, 651, 656–57; Liddell Hart, *History of the Second World War*, 513, 520; Gilbert, *The Second World War*, 519, 615–17; Mansoor, *The GI Offensive in Europe*, 11 (*six Marine Corps divisions*).

The collapse of Berlin's vast empire: Charles V. P. von Lüttichau, "Germany's Strategic Situation," n.d., NARA RG 319, OCMH, R-93, box 15 (*German casualties*); Kimball, *Forged in War*, 257; *GS* V, 279 (*193 divisions*); *Germany VII*, 522 (*almost two thousand tanks*); Webster and Frankland, *The Strategic Air Offensive Against Germany*, vol. 4, appendix 44, 456 (*seventy thousand tons*). No two estimates of German troop dispositions precisely agree.

In 1941, when Britain: Wilson, ed., *D-Day 1944*, 280; Maurice Matloff, "Wilmot Revisited," in *D-Day: The Normandy Invasion in Retrospect*, 114–15 ("*iron-mongering*").

Cometh the hour: D'Este, *Decision in Normandy*, 83; Bradley and Blair, *A General's Life*, 240–41; Eisenhower, *Eisenhower at War, 1943–1945*, 231–32; Powers, "The Battle of Normandy," *JMH* (July 1992): 455+ (*skid-proof socks*).

"*at peace with his soul*": Naval Guns, 19; *CCA*, 269 (*June 5*); Hamilton, *Master of the Battlefield*, 581 ("*I consider it*"); Miller, *Ike the Soldier*, 599–600 ("*I have no sympathy*").

A wiry, elfin figure: Eisenhower, *Eisenhower at War, 1943–1945*, 231–32 (*padded shoes*); Chalmers, *Full Cycle*, 187; D'Este, *Patton: A Genius for War*, 595 (*sharp rap*); Liebling, *Mollie & Other War Pieces*, 128 (*ruddy, truculent*); *PP*, 411–12 (*bespoke overcoat*); CBH, June 1 and 2, 1944, box 4; Allen, *Lucky Forward*, 23 ("*son-of-bitchery*"); GSP to Beatrice, Feb. 3, 1944, GSP, LOC MS Div, box 11, folder 15 ("*bad for the soul*").

With a curt swish: Hamilton, *Master of the Battlefield*, 577–78 (*salmon*); Moorehead, *Montgomery*, 36 ("*pointed flint*"); http://www.stpaulsschool.org.uk/page.aspx?id=8362; http://www.archive.org/stream/historyofstpaul00uoft; *The Pauline*, March 1946, 50–52; Montgomery, *A Field-Marshal in the Family*, 306–8 (*prayers in Latin*).

Glancing at his notes: "Address on 15 May 1944: Brief Presentation of Plans Before the King," IWM, PP/MCR, C46, Lt. Col. Christopher "Kit" Dawnay Collection, micro R-1.

The Bay of the Seine: "Strategy of the Campaign in Western Europe, 1944–1945," USFET General Board study no. 1, n.d., 6–8, 14; "The Planning and Tactical Background of the Invasion of the Continent of Europe," n.d., Numa A Watson Collection, MHI; *CCA*, 72–73 ("*strategically unsound*"); ALH, I-183; *WaS*, 15 ("*impudent reconnaissance*"); George E. Creasy, OH, Feb. 4, 1947, FCP, MHI; Mason, ed., *The Atlantic War Remembered*, 345; www.msubmus.co.uk*.

Upon returning from Italy: *GS* V, 283; *CCA*, 165; *LSA*, vol. 1, 185 (*230 additional support ships*); *WaS*, 8.

As he unfolded his plan: Moorehead, *Montgomery*, 192–93; James, *The Counterfeit General Montgomery*, 53; Howarth, ed., *Monty at Close Quarters*, 62, 66 ("*essentially didactic*"); Hamilton, *Master of the Battlefield*, 591 (*two thousand clerks*).

Montgomery pressed ahead: Hinsley, 439–40, 459–60; "Address on 15 May 1944: Brief Presentation of Plans Before the King," IWM, PP/MCR, C46, Lt. Col. Christopher "Kit" Dawnay Collection, micro R-1 ("*Last February*"). The German high command in the west at the time of the invasion had forty-eight infantry and ten panzer divisions. Ludewig, *Rückzug*, 31–42.

Some officers in SHAEF: ALH, I-201; *WaS*, 13 (*one and one-third divisions*).

Montgomery envisioned: Cirillo, "The Allied High Command," lecture to British Army Doctrine and Development Directorate, n.d., a.p.; Crosswell, *Beetle*, 607, 633; *CCA*, 188; *GS* V, 284 (*Paris*).

Precisely how that titanic: ALH, II-73–87.

But that lay: "History of COSSAC," May 1944, file #95, NARA RG 498, ETO HD, 7; *CCA*, 10 ("*ugly piece of water*"); Smith, *The English Channel*, 12; Room, *Placenames of the World*, 6; www.jpmaps.co.uk/map/id.22553*; http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_Channel; Benjamin A. Dickson, "G-2 Journal: Algiers to the Elbe," MHI, 104 ("*already*

assaulted"); memo, Aug. 21, 1942, NARA RG 165, E 421, JPS studies, box 603 (*tunneling*).

"*Nothing must stop them*": "Address on 15 May 1944: Brief Presentation of Plans Before the King," IWM, PP/MCR, C46, Lt. Col. Christopher "Kit" Dawnay Collection, micro R-1; Ismay, *The Memoirs of General Lord Ismay,* 351.

None departed: "Instructions for Visitors," SHAEF, May 4, 1944, NARA RG 331; *PP*, 456 (*tumbler of whiskey*); memo, W. H. S. Wright to Henry Stimson, July 25, 1944, NARA RG 337, E 54, AGF top secret general corr, folder 319.1 (" *biding his time*"); GSP to Bea, Apr. 9, 1944, GSP, LOC MS Div, box 11, folder 16.

At 2:30: D'Este, *Warlord*, 665 ("*Risks must be taken*"); D'Este, *Decision in Normandy*, 87–88 ("*I am hardening"*); Thompson, *The Imperial War Museum Book of Victory in Europe*, 2 (*most prodigious undertaking*).

Shortly after six P.M.: Thomas W. Mattingly and Olive F. G. Marsh, "A Compilation of the General Health Status of Dwight D. Eisenhower," Mattingly Collection, DDE Lib, n.d., box 1, 53; *Three Years*, 550 (*ringing*), 538–39 ("*The strain is telling*").

As the drear suburbs: Eisenhower in 1946 described Churchill's statement as "shocking." OH, DDE, June 3, 1946, SLAM, A. S. Nevins Papers, MHI. Churchill had used the phrase to George Marshall three months earlier. Reynolds, *In Command of History*, 395.

"*You will enter*": "History of SHAEF, Feb. 13–June 6, 1944," July 1944, NARA RG 319, 2-3.7 CB 8, 14–17. Technically, the naval portion of the invasion was code-named NEPTUNE; for simplicity, OVERLORD—code for the overall invasion plan—has been used for all facets of the operation. Ambrose, *The Supreme Commander*, 338 ("*feet in the stirrups*").

For years he had pondered: Wilson, ed., *D-Day 1944*, 314–15, 324–25.

Planners had even coined: Gilbert, *D-Day*, 28–29 (*PINWE*); Chandler, 1869 ("*Film Planning Commission*"); memos, SHAEF, Apr. 4 and 23, 1944, NARA RG 331, E 6, box 9, "leave and furlough," 210.7-12 (CIRCON); *Three Years*, 526 ("*fog dispeller*"); Blair, *Ridgway's Paratroopers*, 200 (*gliders*).

For every PINWE item: Richard Collins, SOOHP, 1976, Donald Bowman, MHI, II, 14–15 ("*what parts would burn*"); memos, Apr. 27, May 12, 26, 27, 1944, NARA RG 331, E 1, "Liquidation of German Personalities," box 1.

As the invasion drew nearer: John W. Castles, Jr., memoir, ts, n.d., USMA Arch (*biological warfare* and *Geiger counters*); Chandler, 1860 ("*radioactive poisons*"); Groves, *Now It Can Be Told*, 199–202 ("*unknown etiology*").

Perhaps less far-fetched: memo, "Gas Intelligence," Maj. Gen. P. G. Whitefoord [*sic*], Jan. 20, 1944, NARA RG 331, E 27, SHAEF, box 83; *DOB*, 272; Kleber and Birdsell, *The Chemical Warfare Service*, 5, 655 (*two dozen kinds of gas*).

Fifteen hundred British civilians: "Historical Report of G-1 Section," June 19, 1944, XIX District, NARA RG 407, E 427, pre-invasion planning file 100, box 19231; Brig. Gen. Alden H. Waitt, "Summary Report of Situation in ETO," July 5, 1945, NARA RG 337, AGF OR, box 2 (*160,000 tons*); "Chemical Warfare Plan," June 2, 1944, NARA RG 334, E 315, ANSCOL, box 89 (*secret SHAEF plan*).

"*Everybody gets more*": Miller, *Ike the Soldier*, 588.

Thirty minutes after leaving: Williams, "Supreme Headquarters for D-Day," *AB*, no. 84 (1994): 1+; "Chief Engineer's Report on Camouflage Activities in the ETO," Nov. 15, 1945, Howard V. Canan Papers, HIA, box 3 (*garnished nets*).

Here hundreds of staff officers: *Three Years*, 531 ("*oldish*"); Eisenhower, *Eisenhower at War, 1943–1945* , 157 (*double socks*); Raymond H. Croll, ts, 1974, MHI, 240–55 (*language classes*).

Eisenhower's office: Summersby, *Eisenhower Was My Boss*, 129–32; Davis, *Soldier of Democracy*, 466; D'Este, *Eisenhower: A Soldier's Life*, 490 (*golf ball*).

Vernal twilight lingered: Eisenhower, *Eisenhower at War, 1943–1945* , 197; Eisenhower, *Strictly Personal*, 57 (*bomb shelter*); Chandler, 1852; Summersby, *Eisenhower Was My Boss*, 138, 162 ("*Bad Woman*"); Larrabee, *Commander in Chief*, 448 ("*don't have to think*").

"*A man must develop*": Miller, *Ike the Soldier*, 598; Eisenhower, *Eisenhower at War, 1943–1945* , 213 (*last troop reserves*); "Notes on the Planning of Operation Overlord," 21st AG, n.d., UK NA, WO 216/139, 29–30 (*Double Intense*); "Casualties and Effects of Fire Support on the British Beaches in Normandy," Army Operational Research Group, Report No. 261, n.d., UK NA, CAB 106/967 (*above 40 percent*).

Love's Tables: "A Moving Army," SOS, ts, n.d., NARA RG 498, UD 602, ETO HD; Cosmas and Cowdrey, *Medical Service in the European Theater of Operations*, 202 (*12 percent*); "The United States Navy Medical Department at War, 1941–1945," vol. 1, part 3, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, 1946, 719; Field Order No. 35, 1st ID, Apr. 16, 1944, NARA RG 407, E 427, 301-3.9 (*gas warfare*); Naval Guns, 21 ("*one-third to one-half*"); "Report of Operations," 12th AG, vol. 2, G-1 section, n.d., CARL (*combat drownings*); Casualty Division History, n.d., NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #4 (*punch cards*).

Recent exercises and rehearsals: Thompson, *The Imperial War Museum Book of Victory in Europe*, 9 ("*hopping about*"); Waugh, *Men at Arms*, 140; "Comments on Exercise TIGER," NARA RG 407, E 427, FUSA, n.d., file 455 (*DUCK, OTTER*); Yung, *Gators of Neptune*, 160 ("*got confused*"); "Rough Draft of Gen. Maxwell Taylor's Report," with jumpmaster reports, 101st AB Div, July 1, 1944, GCM Lib.

The imaginary biffing turned: Lewis, *Exercise Tiger*, 20; Bradbeer, *The Land Changed Its Face*, 37–47; "A History of the United States Naval Bases in the United Kingdom," 1944, NARA RG 498, HD, admin file #217; Fergusson, *The Watery Maze*, 324. All in ET: "Report of Enemy Navy Action," Apr. 30, 1944, HQ, Sub Area V; "Exercise Tiger News Letter," Jan. 1996; Arthur D. Clamp, "The American Assault Exercises at Slapton Sands, Devon, in 1944," n.d., AR, Twelfth Fleet, May 3, 1944, including reports from *LST-511, LST-496, LST-58, LST-499, LST-289, LST-531, LST-507* , Task Force 125, *H.M.S. Saladin*; German E-boat logs; also, corr and transcripts. Also, "Notes on Utah Beach and the 1st Engineer Special Brigade," n.d., NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #359a.

Survivors on rafts: Lewis, *Exercise Tiger*, 104; L. R. Talbot, "Graves Registration in the European Theater of Operations," 1955, chap. 26, PIR, MHI, II, 2–3 (*embalmers*); Joseph R. Darnall, "Powdered Eggs and Purple Hearts," ts, 1946, MHUC, MHI, box 24, 90–91.

Drowned men continued to wash ashore: The precise death toll remains uncertain. *CCA*, 270; John Connell, "Over Age in Grade," ts, n.d., MHI; Ingersoll, *Top Secret*, 103–5; Hoyt, *The Invasion Before Normandy*, 155–61; MacDonald, "Slapton Sands: The 'Cover-Up' That Never Was," *Army* 38, no. 6 (June 1988): 64+ (*remained secret*).

Eisenhower grieved: *CCA*, 270 (*LSTs*); DDE to GCM, Apr. 29, 1944, GCM Lib, corr, box 67, folder 5.

"*the man who can do the average thing*": Eisenhower, *General Ike*, 219; *AAAD*, 286 (*expected to be relieved*); Chandler, 1898 (*Hollywood*); D'Este, *Eisenhower: A Soldier's Life*, 511 ("*generous and lovable*"); Chalmers, *Full Cycle*, 261 ("*a very great man*"); *DOB*, 310 ("*best politician*").

"*When it comes to war*": D'Este, *Decision in Normandy*, 50n; Danchev, 546 ("*No real director*"); Ferrell, ed., *The Eisenhower Diairies*, 111 ("*They dislike to believe*").

He needed sleep: Chandler, 1865, 1891, and vol. 5, chronology, 153; Williams, "Supreme Headquarters for D-Day," *AB*, no. 84 (1994): 1+; "The U.S. Army Special Train *Alive*," n.d., NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #16 (*Monsters*); Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Soldier, General of the Army, President-Elect, 1890–1952*, vol. 1, 294 ("*the human soul*").

By the tens of thousands: *LSA*, vol. 2, 231; Ross, 289 (*four thousand in early 1942*); Coakley, 370 (*twenty now could be found*); "An Army in Transit," n.d., NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #241, 7–37 (*more than 100,000*).

Down the gangplanks: Robert W. Coakley, "The Administrative and Logistical History of the ETO," 1946, CMH, 8-3.1 AA2, vol. 3, 102–8; "Blankets," n.d., NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #500; Amy, lecture, Apr. 8, 1944, NY Port of Embarkation, HIA, Henry J. Amy papers, box 2 (*pillowcases*).

"*You are something*": Randall Jarrell, "The Sick Nought," 1914; Karl Cocke, "U.S. Army Replacement Policies, WWII, Korea, and Vietnam," DA, 1990, MHI, chart (*eleven thousand*); Kennedy, *Freedom from Fear*, 710 (*average GI was twenty-six*); Crosswell, *Beetle*, 789 (*teenagers*); "Activities and Organization of COMZ," May 28, 1945, NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #89, 57 (*grade school education*); "Army Life," WD pamphlet 21-13, Aug. 10, 1944, NARA RG 407, AGO Cent File 1940–45, box 3638 (*$50 a month*).

The typical soldier: Wiltse, ed., *Physical Standards in World War II*, 19–29, 37–42, 163, 193–94.

But what of their souls?: Cawthon, "Pursuit: Normandy, 1944," *American Heritage* (Feb. 1978): 80+ ("*amateurs*"); "Memorandum," May 1944, NARA RG 330, E 94, Surveys of Attitudes of Soldiers, ETO, B-46 (*April survey*); corr, Charles L. Easter to Marion Page, Aug. 14, 1944, USMA Arch ("*civilian at heart*").

Skepticism and irony: Reynolds, *Rich Relations*, 324 ("*Sums up my attitude*"); Rottman, *FUBAR: American Soldier Slang of World War II*, 98, 152; Dickson, *War Slang*, 208; Richler, ed., *Writers on World War II*, 487 ("*ambiguous farce*"); Cawthon, *Other Clay*, 147 ("*If it's not ironic*"); Yardley, "The Fight of Their Lives, and Not Just on the Battlefield," *WP*, Mar. 6, 2009, C1 ("*corrupt, inefficient*"); Scannell, *Argument of Kings*, 122 ("*madness*").

"*War is all foreground*": *Reporting World War II*, vol. 1, xxi; Simpson, *Selected Prose*, 120–21; Reynolds, *Rich Relations*, 400 ("*quarrelsome continent*"); Schrijvers, *The Crash of Ruin*, 258 (*recent Army survey*).

Certainly they believed: Scannell, *Argument of Kings*, 112, 121 ("*drab khaki world*"); Steidl, *Lost Battalions*, 31 ("*unseen powers of God*").

And so four by four: "The Role Played by Communications Zone in the War Against Germany," n.d., NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #479 (*1,200 camps*); *VW*, vol. 1, 34 (*133 airfields*); Eustis, *War Letters of Morton Eustis to His Mother*, 190 ("*Thomas Hardy*"); Sevareid, *Not So Wild a Dream*, 482 ("*old steady manner*"); Bernard Paget, OH, FCP, Feb. 18, 1947, MHI (*Home Guard*);

"A Yank in Britain," ts, n.d., Thor M. Smith Papers, MHI, 75 (*road signs*).

Nearly 400,000 prefabricated huts: Botting, *The Second Front*, 66; "Construction in the United Kingdom," Oct. 1944, NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #506 (*20 million square feet*); *LSA*, vol. 1, 255 ("*Spamland*"); "Marshalling [*sic*] for OVERLORD," Dec. 1945, NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #547, 14 (*School of Hygiene*); Amy, lecture, Apr. 8, 1944, NY Port of Embarkation, HIA, Henry J. Amy papers, box 2; Robert W. Coakley, "The Administrative and Logistical History of the ETO," 1946, CMH, 8-3.1 AA2, vol. 2, 189 (*GLUE*); H. H. Dunham, "U.S. Army Transportation in the ETO," 1946, CMH 4-13.1 AA 29, 160–61 ("*exposure to weather*"); "A Yank in Britain," ts, n.d., Thor M. Smith papers, MHI, 32 (*red tape*).

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The British displayed forbearance: Mass Observation Archive, University of Sussex Library, MO, FR 2454, provided author by Prof. Donald L. Miller ("*irritate me*"); *Meet the Americans*, 1; Margaret Mead, "Army Talks: The Yank in Britain," Mar. 15, 1944, NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #23; Reynolds, *Rich Relations*, ix (*Orwell*).

Occasional bad beheavior: Schrijvers, *The Crash of Ruin*, 159 (*royal swans*); Francis L. Sampson, *Look Out Below!*, 1958, in CJR, box 97, folder 21 (*grenades*); Kennedy, *Freedom from Fear*, 709 (*haystacks*); "Army Life," WD, pamphlet 21-13, Aug. 10, 1944, NARA RG 407, AGO Cent File 1940–45, box 3638 ("*men who refrain*"); "Legal Questions Arising in the Theater of Operations," NARA RG 407, E 427, AG WWII Operations Reports, no. 87, 31–32 ("*bastardy proceedings*"); Longmate, *The G.I.'s*, 285 ("*drive carefully*").

Both on the battlefield and in the rear: Lewis, *Exercise Tiger*, 48 ("*delicate hothouse*"); Hastings, *OVERLORD*, 293 ("*the chaps that mattered*").

The loading of invasion vessels: Bykofsky and Larson, *The Transportation Corps: Operations Overseas*, 259; ONB, OH, 1975, Charles Hanson, MHI, IV-19 (*Seven thousand kinds of combat necessities*). This oral history with Bradley, conducted in fourteen sessions over ten months, had been closed to the public until made available to the author in January 2010.

evocative of the Marx Brothers: Van Creveld, *Supplying War*, 210; William E. Depuy, SOOHP, 1979; Romie L. Brownlee and William J. Mullen III, MHI, 18 (*Selfridges*); Marshall, ed., *Proud Americans*, 138.

In twenty-two British ports: Gilbert, *D-Day*, 108; H. H. Dunham, "U.S. Army Transportation in the ETO," 1946, CMH, 4-13.1 AA 29, 120–23 (*301,000 vehicles*); "Ordnance Diary," Dec. 1, 1945, NARA RG 498, ETOUSA HD, UD 602, box 1 (*2,700 artillery pieces*); "Historical Report, Office of the Chief Signal Officers," vol. 1, Jan. 1945, NARA RG 498, ETOUSA HD, UD 602, box 1 (*telephone poles*); Waddell, *United States Army Logistics*, 41 (*7 million tons*); Frank A. Osmanski, "Critical Analysis of the Planning and Execution of the Logistic Support of the Normandy Invasion," Dec. 1949, Armed Forces Staff College, MHI, 99 (*41.298 pounds*); *LSA*, vol. 1, 441 (*500-ton bales*); "Ports: How an Army Is Supplied," Oct. 1944, NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #521, 1-3 (*war flats*); "The Reminiscences of Alan Goodrich Kirk," 1962, John Mason, Col U OHRO, 302 (*ferries*); Capa, *Slightly Out of Focus*, 136.

Armed guards from ten cartography depots: "Supply and Maintenance on the European Continent," NARA RG 407, E 427, AG WWII Operations Reports, 97-USF5-0.3, #130, 26; Beck, 565 (*210 million maps*); *IFG*, 68 (*charts*); Wieviorka, *Normandy*, 178 (*aerial photos*); "Reconnaissance in a Tactical Air Command," 10th Photo Group, Ninth AF, 1945, CARL, N-9395, 3–4; Allen, "Untold Stories of D-Day," *National Geographic* (June 2002): 2+ (*watercolors*); Coles and Weinberg, *Civil Affairs*, 864–65 ("*restraint and discipline*"); Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 224 (*Gone with the Wind*); Field Order No. 35, 1st ID, Apr. 16, 1944, NARA RG 407, E 427, 301-3.9 (*Field Order No. 35*); memo, XXX Corps, May 18, 1944, NARA RG 407, ML #753, box 19123 (*Pink List*).

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Four hospital ships made ready: Martha Gellhorn, "The First Hospital Ship," in *Reporting World War II*, vol. 2, 151; Dowling, lecture, Feb. 28, 1945, NARA RG 334, E 315, ANSCOL, box 207; Cosmas and Cowdrey, *Medical Service in the European Theater of Operations*, 167, 245 ("*dirty trap*"); Frank Davis, OH, Nov. 24, 1944, 68th General Hospital, NARA RG 112, E 302, interview #109 (*steam tables*); Ambrose, *The Supreme Commander*, 413; MacKensie, *Men Without Guns*, 97; Nalty, *Strength for the Fight*, 181 (*black and white donors*); Robert R. Kelley, OH, Jan. 27, 1945, Office of the Chief Surgeon, NARA RG 112, E 302, interview #130; Paul R. Hawley, OH, John Boyd Coates, Jr., et al., 1962, MHUC, 56 (*pallets*).

A new Manual of Therapy: memo, Office of the Chief Surgeon, Mar. 28, 1944, James B. Mason papers, HIA, folder 1 (*morphine poisoning* and *whole blood*); Cosmas and Cowdrey, *Medical Service in the European Theater of Operations*, 182; Paul R. Hawley,

OH, John Boyd Coates, Jr., et al., 1962, MHUC, 54 (*carbon dioxide tanks*).

But whole blood would keep: Cowdrey, *Fighting for Life*, 245; "The Evolution of the Use of Whole Blood in Combat Casualties," U.S. Army Medical Department, Office of Medical History, http://143.84.107.69/booksdocs/wwii/blood/chapter3.htm; Cosmas and Cowdrey, *Medical Service in the European Theater of Operations*, 175–76, 193; Gellhorn, "The First Hospital Ship," in *Reporting World War II*, vol. 2, 151.

On Tuesday, May 23: "Stories of Transportation," vol. 1, Frank S. Ross Papers, HIA, box 20, 203; memo, W. H. S. Wright to Henry Stimson, July 25, 1944, NARA RG 337, E 54, AGF top secret general corr, folder 319.1 ("*One Way*"); A. C. Doyle's *Sir Nigel*, chapter 13, in Wilson, ed., *D-Day 1944*, 197 ("*We sat on a hilltop*").

Mothers held their children: Watney, *The Enemy Within*, 20, 49 ("*boomerang*" and "*girl-saint*"); Ziegler, *London at War, 1939–1945*, 278–79 ("*half empty*"); Fussell, *Wartime*, 109 (*Whore's Lament*).

By late in the week: Moorehead, *Eclipse*, 100 ("*Civilians must not talk*"); Burgett, *Currahee!*, 69–70 (*German uniforms*); Watney, *The Enemy Within*, 63 (*Cherbourg*); Scannell, *Argument of Kings*, 121 (*diversionary attack*); Ziegler, *London at War, 1939–1945*, 282 (*death beam*); *AAFinWWII*, 92 (*icebergs*); Wilson, ed., *D-Day 1944*, 198 ("*shock kept the wounded*"); Longmate, *The G.I.'s*, 316 ("*Don't be surprised*").

Security remained paramount: Hinsley and Simkins, *British Intelligence in the Second World* War, vol. 4, 250–54 ("*certain defeat*" and *600,000 monthly visitors*); Stafford, *Ten Days to D-Day*, 15 ("*handsome*"); "History of SHAEF, Feb. 13–June 6, 1944," July 1944, NARA RG 319, 2-3.7 CB 8, 14–19; Gilbert, *D-Day*, 67; *CCA*, 270 (*counterintelligence agents*).

Camouflage inspectors roamed: "Chief Engineer's Report on Camouflage Activities in the ETO," Nov. 15, 1945, Howard V. Canan papers, HIA, box 3; "Concealment and Display of Camps," Plan FORTITUDE, section II, "Implementation," n.d., Thaddeus Holt papers, MHI, box 8 (*Garnished nets*); "Camouflage," historical report #18, Aug. 1945, CEOX, box X-32, folder 18, 38 ("*tone-down paint*"); "The Concealment Aspect of Beach Group Work," Camouflage Development and Training Center, Farnham, U.K., Sept. 22, 1944, CARL, N-5122, 4–5 (*Standard Camouflage Color 1A*); "Marshalling [*sic*] for OVERLORD," CE, Dec. 1945, NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #547, 28 ("*contours*").

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As May slid toward June: *LSA*, vol. 1, 369 (*waterproofing*); Beck, 317 (*fifty-four inches*); Thompson, *The Imperial War Museum Book of Victory in Europe*, 10 ("*wren's tail*"); *VW*, vol. 1, 137 (*Sherman tank*); Gilbert, *D-Day*, 104 (*white stripes*); Howarth, *Dawn of D-Day*, 126; Drez, ed., *Voices of D-Day*, 64 (*push brooms*).

Soldiers drew seasickness pills: Royce L. Thompson, "D-Day Personal Loads," OCMH, Dec. 4, 1951, CMH 2-3.7 AE P-11; Cawthon, *Other Clay*, 42 ("*braying*"); memo, Cleave A. Jones to G. S. Eyster, SHAEF, July 17, 1944, NARA RG 498, UD 603, ETO HD, SLAM 201 file, box 1 ("*skunk suits*").

"*We're ready now*": TR to Eleanor, May 30, 1944, TR, box 10; Ross, 695 (*quartermaster box*).

"I am a free man": John M. Thorpe, "A Soldier's Tale, to Normandy and Beyond," Nov. 1982, IWM, 84/50/1, 80; Airborne Museum, Ste-Mère-Église, V-mail shown to author by curator Phil Jutras, May 1994 ("*If I don't come out*"); corr, May 30, 1944, Joseph T. Dawson collection, MRC FDM, 1991.65, box 3 ("*destiny of life*").

Eisenhower left Bushy Park: Chandler, vol. 5, 155; corr, T. Smith to family, June 17, 1944, Thor M. Smith Papers, HIA; Williams, "Supreme Headquarters for D-Day," *AB*, no. 84 (1994): 1+; Stafford, *Ten Days to D-Day*, 178 (*three telephones*); "Normandy, 1944–1973," *AB*, no. 1 (1973): 2 (*Georgian mansion*); Kingston McCloughry, *Direction of War*, 138 (*nautical almanacs*).

"*The intensity of the burdens*": Overy, *Why the Allies Won*, 158; *Three Years*, 558 ("*jitters*"); Richard Collins, SOOHP, 1976, Donald Bowman, MHI, II, 16; R. H. Winecke, CI, NARA RG 407, E 427-A, folder 170; E. T. Williams, "Reports Received by U.S. War Department on Use of Ultra in the European Theater," SRH-037, Oct. 1945, NARA RG 457, E 9002, NSA, box 18, 2; memo, H. R. Bull to W. B. Smith, May 26, 1944, NARA RG 331, E 1, SHAEF SGS, box 76.

Such a robust force: diary, Oct. 14, 1944, N. T. Tangye, IWM, P 180 ("*nincompoop*"); Blumenson, *The Battle of the Generals*, 141 ("*peculiar knack*"); *CCA*, 186 ("*speculative operation*"); Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Soldier, General of the Army, President-Elect, 1890–1952*, vol. 1, 303 ("*futile slaughter*"); *VW*, vol. 1, 139 ("*two airborne divisions*").

"*soul-racking problem*": Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, 263; *CCA*, 279.

Emerging from his canvas hideaway: Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Soldier, General of the Army, President-Elect, 1890–1952* , vol. 1, 303; Chandler, 1894 ("*It must go on*").

A leafy hilltop: *VW*, vol. 1, 67–69; *IFG*, 77; CBH, June 3, 1944, box 4, MHI (*Late spring warmth*); memo, W. H. S. Wright to Henry Stimson, July 25, 1944, NARA RG 337, E 54, AGF top secret general corr, folder 319.1 (*barrage balloons*).

Soldiers still braying and bleating: Cawthon, *Other Clay*, 48; Pogue, *Pogue's War* , 55 ("*If any of you fellows*"); E. Jones, ts, n.d., IWM, 94/41/1, 4 ("*real white bread*"); Balkoski, *Utah Beach*, 66–67; memoir, Ralph Eastridge, 1995, NWWIIM ("*a man could have jumped*"); D. K. Reimers, "My War," June 4, 1944, MHI, 67 ("*which was Clara*").

As always where land met sea: Pogue, *Pogue's War* , 47; ETOUSA pamphlet 370.5, Jan. 1944, Charles E. Rousek papers, MHI ("*Preparation for Overseas Movement*"); "War Diary of Force 'U,'" June 2, 1944, SEM, NHHC, box 82, folder 46 (*Eighteen LCTs*); Lewis, "Landing Craft," lecture, Sept. 18, 1944, NARA RG 334, E 315, ANSCOL, box 199, 9 (*immersion rate*); AR, Don P. Moon, Force U, June 26, 1944, NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #217 (*ships were overloaded anyway*).

The deadweight included: "History of SHAEF, Feb. 13–June 6, 1944," July 1944, NARA RG 319, 2-3.7 CB 8, chapter 3; Wilson, ed., *D-Day 1944*, 204 ("*annoying and mysterious*"); Pogue, *Pogue's War* , 92 ("*sparse and gray of hair*"); Tobin, *Ernie Pyle's War* , 205 ("*scarecrow*"), 164–67 ("*All I do is drink*").

"*I'm no longer content*": Miller, *The Story of Ernie Pyle*, 321–30; Tobin, *Ernie Pyle's War*, 221 ("*fucking throat*"), 168 ("*too late*").

In claustrophobic holds: Harold S. Frum, "The Soldier Must Write," 1984, June 1, 1944 entry, GCM Lib ("*I love my fellow man*"); Liebling, *Mollie & Other War Pieces*, 177; Brown, *Many a Watchful Night*, 10 (*On* Augusta); Marshall, ed., *Proud Americans*, 138 ("*old uneasiness*").

More than five hundred weather stations: R. J. Ogden, "Meteorological Services Leading to D-Day," Royal Meteorological Society, Occasional Papers on Meteorological History, July 2001, 2, a.p.; Stagg, *Forecast for Overlord* , 51 (*reconnaissance planes*); Charles C. Bates, "Sea, Swell and Surf Forecasting for D-Day and Beyond: The Anglo-American Effort, 1943–1945," 2010, a.p., 6 (*British beach watchers*); Charles C. Bates, e-mail to author, Nov. 11 and 23, 2007; Hogben, "The Most Important Weather Forecast in the World," *London Review of Books* 16, no. 10 (May 26, 1994): 21+.

Each Allied invasion constituent: J. M. Stagg, "Report on the Meteorological Implications," SHAEF, June 22, 1944, CARL, N-11359.

Eisenhower had never been fortunate: Chandler, 1761; Eisenhower, *Eisenhower at War, 1943–1945* , 248; Charles C. Bates, "Sea, Swell and Surf Forecasting for D-Day and Beyond: The Anglo-American Effort, 1943–1945," 2010, a.p., 13–15 (*Cyclonic disturbances*); diary, Kay Summersby, DDE Lib, PP-pres, box 140 ("*very depressed*").

At 4:30 A.M. on Sunday: Ryan, *The Longest Day*, 48; Botting, *The Second Front*, 62; "Memorandum of Record," June 4, 1944, Arthur S. Nevins papers, MHI.

"*A series of depressions*": "Report on the Meteorological Implications," June 22, 1944, UK NA, CAB 106/976, 9–11; Stagg, *Forecast for Overlord*, 124 (*depression L5*); Bates and Fuller, *America's Weather Warriors, 1814–1985*, 92–94 ("*quite impossible*").

Eisenhower polled his lieutenants: Kingston McCloughry, *Direction of War* , 138–39 ("*No part*"); Stagg, *Forecast for Overlord* , 102 ("*we must postpone*").

At that moment the lights failed: Kingston McCloughry, *Direction of War*, 138–39 ("*Jesus!*"); *Three Years*, 560 (*Sunday papers*).

Banks of gray cloud: J. H. Patterson, ts, n.d., IWM, 05/491, 1/7, 3 ("*spindrift was flying*"); *IFG*, 80–81 ("*pyramidical waters*"); Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 257 (*HORNPIPE BOWSPRIT*); memo, W. H. S. Wright to Henry Stimson, July 25, 1944, NARA RG 337, E 54, AGF top secret general corr, folder 319.1 (*frantic blinkering*).

But bombardment squadrons from Belfast: Naval Guns, 26; S. C. Donnison, diary, June 3, 1944, IWM, 94/50/1 ("*three-quarter gale*"); *History of the Second World War* (periodical), part 65, 1974, 1796; "The Invasion of Normandy," USNAd, vol. 5, 395–96; Yung, *Gators of Neptune*, 176; "Memorandum of Record," June 4, 1944, Arthur S. Nevins papers, MHI ("*somewhat out of hand*").

As anchors dropped and engines died: Rick Atkinson, foreword, *Instructions for American Servicemen in France During World War II*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008, v–xiii; Collier, *Fighting Words*, 159 ("Encore une verre"); *Medicine Under Canvas*, 77th Evacuation Hospital, 1949, 120 ("mama-oiselle"); Collins, *Lightning Joe*, 196–97 ("*Holy God*"); Liebling, *Mollie & Other War Pieces*, 175 ("*If God be for us*"); Linderman, *The World Within War* , 238 ("*twenty dollars a card*"); A. J. Liebling, "Cross-Channel Trip," in *Reporting World War II*, vol. 2, 136 ("*Voltaire used the same gag*"); Ambrose, *Pegasus Bridge*, 67 (Stormy Weather).

the "D" in D-Day: AAR, 146th Engineer Combat Bn, CEOH, box X-37A. There are various explanations for the term; some authorities assert it was first used in an Army order in 1918, with the "D" used as a code letter rather than an abbreviation.

The strange, tempestuous Sunday: Kersaudy, *Churchill and De Gaulle*, 338–47.

The sad story was this: Eden, *The Reckoning*, 525–26 (*greeted De Gaulle on the tracks*); "History of SHAEF, Feb. 13–June 6, 1944," July 1944, NARA RG 319, 2-3.7 CB 8, 55–57; "The War of Will, Words and Images," n.d., Wallace Carroll papers, LOC MS Div, box 1, 18–19; Kersaudy, *Churchill and De Gaulle*, 346–47 ("*in chains if necessary*"); Fenby, *The General*, 638–39; Beevor, *D-Day*, 21 ("*gangster*").

No sooner had Churchill stormed: Eisenhower, *General Ike*, 147 (*Deux Mètres*); Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932–1945*, 462 ("*balancing a chip*"); "Memorandum of Record," June 4, 1944, Arthur S. Nevins papers, MHI (*he revealed to De Gaulle*); Aron, *France Reborn*, 27 ("*your forged notes*"); Fenby, *The General*, 638–39; Coles and Weinberg, *Civil Affairs*, 699 ("*violation of national sovereignty*"); "History of SHAEF, Feb. 13–June 6, 1944," July 1944, NARA RG 319, 2-3.7 CB 8, 55–57 (*French liaison officers*); "Preparations for D-Day," n.d., C. D. Jackson papers, DDE Lib, box 3; De Gaulle, *The Complete War Memoirs of Charles de Gaulle*, 559; Chandler, 1907; Davis, *Soldier of Democracy*, 494 ("*I cannot follow Eisenhower*").

"*there is no room in war for pique*": Foot, *SOE in France*, 386; Beevor, *D-Day*, 21 ("*treason*"); Fenby, *The General*, 641–42; memo, John J. McCoy to GCM, Apr. 26, 1944, GCM Lib, box 76, folder 3 ("*Frog File*"); Roberts, *The Storm of War*, 488 (*the hand that fed him*); Reynolds, *In Command of History*, 456 ("*not a scrap of generosity*"); Ferrell, ed., *The Eisenhower Diaries*, 118 ("*sorry mess*"); memo, W. B. Smith to Hastings L. Ismay, Jan. 23, 1944, NARA RG 331, SHAEF SGS, Geog Corr, box 108 ("*Joan of Arc complex*"); Ambrose, *The Supreme Commander*, 386 ("*To hell with him*").

At 9:30 P.M. the supreme commander again: Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 224–25 ("*unexpected developments*"); Charles C. Bates, "Sea, Swell and Surf Forecasting for D-Day and Beyond: The Anglo-American Effort, 1943–1945," 2010, a.p., 15–16 (*H.M.S.* Hoste); "Report on the Meteorological Implications," June 22, 1944, UK NA, CAB 106/976, 9–11.

Eisenhower polled his subordinates: Bates and Fuller, *America's Weather Warriors*, 94; "Memorandum of Record," June 4, 1944, Arthur S. Nevins papers, MHI.

For a long minute: *CCA*, 272–74; Crosswell, *Beetle*, 622; George E. Creasy, OH, Feb. 4, 1947, FCP, MHI; Kingston McCloughry, *Direction of War*, 138–39 ("*We'll go*"); Stagg, *Forecast for Overlord*, 112–15 ("*Don't bring any more*").

Across the fleet: "So appears this fleet majestical / Holding due course to Harfleur," *Henry V*, act III, prologue, 16–17.

"*Up anchor!*": Naval Guns, 23–28; Wilson, ed., *D-Day 1944*, 110; Moorehead, *Eclipse*, 105 ("*Ships were heaving*"); Roskill, *White Ensign*, 371; "War Diary of Force 'U,'" June 5, 1944, SEM, NHHC, box 82, folder 46; John A. Moreno, "The Death of Admiral Moon," n.d., a.p. 225+ ("*England expects*").

By midmorning the heavy skies: Brown, *Many a Watchful Night*, 12 ("*tropical in its colors*"); Stafford, *Ten Days to D-Day*, 264 (*chalk cliffs*); John F. Latimer, n.d., NARA RG 38, E 11, U.S. Navy WWII Oral Histories ("*one's eye for beauty*"); Liddle, *D-Day by Those Who Were There*, 91 ("*Road to the Isles*"); Sylvan, 8 (*Rome had fallen*).

Leading the fleet: *VW*, vol. 1, 67–69; "Report by the Allied Naval Commander-in-Chief, Expeditionary Force," Oct. 1944, NARA RG 407, ML #624, box 19117, 144; Wilson, ed., *D-Day 1944*, 109; "The Invasion of Normandy," USNAd, vol. 5, 437–39; "Navigational Aspects of the Passage and Assault in Operation OVERLORD," Nov. 1944, bulletin Y/39, COHQ, CARL, N-6530.18, 1–3; Howarth, *Dawn of D-Day*, 202–3 ("*street lamps*").

As the invasion convoys swung: Belfield and Essame, *The Battle for Normandy*, 83 ("*all ways at once*"); Balkoski, *Omaha Beach*, 176 (*Lousy Civilian Idea*); Lewis, "Landing Craft," lecture, Sept. 18, 1944, NARA RG 334, E 315, ANSCOL, box 199, 12–13; *IFG*, 84; Howarth, *Dawn of D-Day*, 145 ("*an ominous impression*"); Settle, *All the Brave Promises*, 6 ("*swallow a pork chop*").

For those who could eat: AAR, "Report on Operation Neptune," HQ Co, CT 16, June 16, 1944, NARA RG 407, 2-3.7 BG, AFIA; Cawthon, *Other Clay*, 48 ("*edge of eternity*"); Thompson, *The Imperial War Museum Book of Victory in Europe*, 27–29 ("*in case you stop one*"); Gaskill, "Bloody Beach," *American Magazine* (Sept. 1944): 26+ ("*Happy D-Day*"); McKee, *Caen: Anvil of Victory*, 141, 360 ("*Bring me my bow of burning gold*"); Sommers, "The Longest Hour in History," *Saturday Evening Post* (July 8, 1944): 22+ (*stripped each bridge*); Heinz, *When We Were One*, 10–11 ("*dress blues*"); diary, Cyrus C. Aydlett, June 6, 1944, NWWIIM ("*Mr. Whozits*"); Lankford, ed., *OSS Against the Reich*, 56–57 (*punching bag*).

"*The first six hours*": Wilson, ed., *D-Day 1944*, 207; diary, Jack Shea [Cota aide], Nov. 1, 1944, NARA RG 407, CI 81, 29th ID, box 19138, 4–5 ("*You're going to find confusion*").

"*The government paid $5 billion*": Robert K. Skagg, 741st Tank Bn, OH, June 18, 1944, NARA RG 407, 2-3.7 BG, AFIA; corr, Philip Cole to Ralph Ingersoll, Apr. 21, 1946, Thaddeus Holt papers, MHI, box 1 ("*alone and conspicuous*").

"*We are starting*": TR to Eleanor, June 3, 1944, TR, box 10; Renehan, *The Lion's Pride*, 236–37; Balkoski, *Utah Beach*, 180 ("*I'll see you tomorrow morning*").

Far inland, at more than a dozen airfields: Saunders, *The Red Beret*, 148; Thompson, *The Imperial War Museum Book of Victory in*

Europe, 33 (“*a good stamp*”).

American paratroopers smeared: Davis, *Soldier of Democracy*, 481; Rapport and Northwood, *Rendezvous with Destiny*, 82 (*minstrel act*); corr, Charles L. Easter to Marion Page, July 7, 1944, USMA Arch (“*$10,000 jump*”); Albert Hassenzahl, VHP, AFC/2001/001/5222 (“*I’m not going to die*”); Burgett, *Currahee!*, 77–78; Otis L. Sampson, “Destination,” n.d., JMG, MHI, box 12 (*brass-knuckle grip*); Carl Cartledge, 501st PIR, ts, n.d., NWWIIM (“*one for pain*”); Alosi, *War Birds*, 57 (*Carrier pigeons*); Astor, *June 6, 1944*, 128 (*trimmed the margins*).

“*We look all pockets*”: Simpson, *Selected Prose*, 119; Fauntleroy, *The General and His Daughter*, 107 (“*I have tried*”); diary, May 25 and June 5, 1944, JMG, MHI, box 10.

“*Our landings in the Cherbourg-Havre area*”: Chandler, 1908.

Just after six P.M.: Eisenhower, *Eisenhower at War, 1943–1945* , 252–53; Holt and Holt, *Major & Mrs. Holt’s Battlefield Guide to the Normandy Landing Beaches*, 45 (“*It’s very hard really*”); Beevor, *D-Day*, 27 (“*The idea, the perfect idea*”).

At aircraft number 2716: manifest, aircraft 2716, in “D-Day Experience of Eugene D. Brierre,” ts, March 1998, NWWIIM; Taylor, *General Maxwell Taylor*, 77; Taylor, *Swords and Plowshares*, 75–76; Crosswell, *Beetle: The Life of General Walter Bedell Smith*, 623 (“*light of battle*”); Holt and Holt, *Major & Mrs. Holt’s Battlefield Guide to the Normandy Landing Beaches*, 45 (“*I hope to God*”).

Red and green navigation lights: Drez, ed., *Voices of D-Day*, 72–73; corr, Charles L. Easter to Marion Page, July 7, 1944, USMA Arch; Tapert, ed., *Lines of Battle*, 157–58 (“*Give me guts*”); McNally, *As Ever, John*, 42 (*crew chiefs*); Burgett, *Currahee!*, 80 (“*Flap your wings*”); Rapport and Northwood, *Rendezvous with Destiny*, 79–80 (“*Stay, light*”).

“*Our flag bridge is dead quiet*”: Naval Guns, 31; John F. Latimer, ts, n.d., NARA RG 38, E 11, U.S. Navy WWII Oral Histories, 12 (“*trying to slip into a room*”).

Small craft struggled: notes, Force O, n.d., NARA RG 407, 2-3.7 BG, AFIA (“*Men sick*”); Keegan, *Six Armies in Normandy*, 135; Chalmers, *Full Cycle*, 223 (*thirty degrees*); “The Invasion of Normandy,” USNAd, vol. 5, 405–8; McKernon, *Corry*, 32 (“*Seasick*”).

CHAPTER 1: INVASION

The Far Shore

The singing stopped: Robert H. George, “Ninth Air Force,” 1945, AFHRA, study no. 36, 62–63; Baedeker, *Northern France*, 161 (*famed for cattle*); Rapport and Northwood, *Rendezvous with Destiny*, 85 (“*Say hello*”); Wright and Greenwood, *Airborne Forces at War*, 50–58.

Then France vanished: Taylor, *Swords and Plowshares*, 77; Drez, ed., *Voices of D-Day*, 64–69 (“*lighted tennis balls*”), 136 (“*keg of nails*”); 101st AB Div, CI #223, July 11–29, 1944, NARA RG 407, E-427-A (*jinking*); Carl Cartledge, 501st PIR, ts, n.d., NWWIIM (“*thick enough*”); John C. Warren, “Airborne Operations in World War II, European Theater,” 1956, AFHRA, historical study no. 97, 45.

Even as the cloud bank thinned: corr, Michael C. Chester to JMG, Mar. 30, 1959, JMG papers, MHI, 1–5; 101st AB Div, CI #223, July 11–29, 1944, and “Operation of 507th PIR,” n.d., CI #170, NARA RG 407, E 427-A; Gerald J. Higgins, 101st AB Div COS, OH, Feb. 5, 1946, SLAM, MHI, box 2 (*bundles got stuck*); “Report of Investigation of Operation NEPTUNE,” Aug. 9, 1944, Air Inspector, HQ, USSAFE, NARA RG 498, ETO, SGS, 333.5 (*failed to descend to the specified jump height of 500 feet*); Astor, *June 6, 1944*, 144–45 (“*anything in my jump pants*”); corr, Charles L. Easter to Marion Page, July 7, 1944, USMA Arch (“*wall of flame*”); Tapert, ed., *Lines of Battle*, 157–58 (“*a thousand years*”); Guy Remington, “Second Man Out,” in *The New Yorker Book of War Pieces*, 340 (*burning shreds*); Beevor, *D-Day*, 63 (“*watermelons falling*”).

“*I pulled up my knees*”: Astor, *June 6, 1944*, 142; Balkoski, *Utah Beach*, 112, 134.

Operation ALBANY: “Notes on Utah Beach and the 1st Engineer Special Brigade,” n.d., NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #359A, 53–54; “Interview with Dr. Simon, Carentan,” Sept. 1, 1945, SLAM, MHI, box 2; Ruppenthal, *Utah Beach to Cherbourg*, 3; Balkoski, *Utah Beach*, 53–54; memo, “Glider Operation NEPTUNE,” 82nd AB Div IG, Aug. 4, 1944, MBR papers, MHI, box 21.

At four A.M., *as thousands*: Beevor, *D-Day*, 71 (“*ravens*”); OH, J. Milnor Roberts, Jr., SOOHP, 1982, HIA, box 1, 72–74 (“*shoot an arrow*”); “Operation MARKET: Air Invasion of Holland,” n.d., Hq, IX Troop Carrier Command, NARA RG 334, E 315, ANSCOL, Act R, A-66, box 48, 56; Paul M. Davis and Amy C. Fenwick, “Development and Procurement of Gliders,” Mar. 1946, AFHRA, study no. 47, 164–67; John C. Warren, “Airborne Operations in World War II, European Theater,” 1956, AFHRA, historical study no. 97, 61 (*rarely if ever flown at night*); Lewis E. Johnston, ed., “The Troop Carrier D-Day Flights,” 2003, a.p., 64 (“*typewriter keys*”); Blair, *Ridgway’s Paratroopers*, 222, 235 (*Rommel’s asparagus*); Albert J. Randall, First Airborne Surgical Team, ts, June 8, 1945, “Medical Department Activities in ETO,” Office of the Surgeon General, NARA; Astor, *June 6, 1944*, 160; Ryan, *The Longest Day*, 128–39; Otis L. Sampson, “Destination,” ts, n.d., JMG papers, MHI, box 12, 12 (“*bees out of a hive*”).

Of more than six thousand jumpers: “Rough draft of Gen. Maxwell Taylor’s report,” with jumpmaster reports, 101st AB Div, July 1,

1944, GCM Lib; Capt. R. H. Brown, HQ, 506th PIR, NARA HI (*telephone books*); "Employment of 75mm Pack Howitzers," WD Observer Bd, Aug 1, 1944, CARL, N-7344; McNally, *As Ever, John*, 44 ("*men lying in the straw*").

"L'invasion est arrivé": Two versions of this anecdote can be found in Baldwin, *Battles Lost and Won*, 268, and Drez, ed., *Voices of D-Day*, 92; Taylor, *Swords and Plowshares*, 79–81 ("Allez me tuer"); author visit, May 2009; John C. Warren, "Airborne Operations in World War II, European Theater," 1956, AFHRA, historical study no. 97, 42; corr, Maxwell D. Taylor to SLAM, Feb. 25, 1946, SLAM, MHI, box 2; Gerald J. Higgins, 101st AB Div COS, OH, Feb. 5, 1946, SLAM, MHI, box 2; Ruppenthal, *Utah Beach to Cherbourg*, 22.

Five hours after leaping: Balkoski, *Utah Beach*, 123–25.

"Wir fahren gegen England": Howarth, *Dawn of D-Day*, 90–92; author visits, May 1996 and May 2009, including Musée Airborne exhibits; Jutras, *Sainte-Mère-Église*, 11; Holt and Holt, *Major & Mrs. Holt's Battlefield Guide to the Normandy Landing Beaches*, 49–50 (*listening to the BBC*).

"*almost no chance to sustain*": "Capture of Ste. Mère Église," Regimental Study No. 6, n.d., CMH, 2–8.

Alas, the drops in Operation BOSTON: Gilmore, ed., *U.S. Army Atlas of the European Theater in World War II*, 18–20; memo, "Glider Operation NEPTUNE," 82nd AB Div IG, Aug. 4, 1944, MBR papers, MHI, box 21 (*Less than half of the following gliders*); JMG, "Account of D-Day," ts, n.d., JMG papers, MHI, box 12; AAR, JMG, Aug. 16, 1944, "Debriefing Conference—Operation NEPTUNE," CARL, N-12198; Booth and Spencer, *Paratrooper*, 179–81; AAR, "508 Regiment After the Drop," n.d., MMD, 26–29 ("*he could not take any prisoners*").

Of the division's three parachute infantry regiments: Howarth, *Dawn of D-Day*, 93.

"*with eyes open*": Ryan, *The Longest Day*, 114–17.

Lieutenant Colonel Edward C. Krause: Wills, *Put on Your Boots and Parachutes!*, 82; AAR, 3rd Bn, 505th PIR, NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI #170; "Capture of Ste. Mère Église," Regimental Study No. 6, n.d., CMH, 2–8; Balkoski, *Utah Beach*, 152.

"*I am in Ste. Mère*": Marshall, *Night Drop*, 18; *CCA*, 289; Balkoski, *Utah Beach*, 113 (*first town in France*).

By dawn, 816 planes: Balkoski, *Utah Beach*, 113; Blair, *Ridgway's Paratroopers*, 236–37 (*only one of six regiments*); John C. Warren, "Airborne Operations in World War II, European Theater," 1956, AFHRA, historical study no. 97, 36, 59 (*advance weather plane*); Ruppenthal, *Utah Beach to Cherbourg*, 15 ("*not an unmixed evil*"); McNally, *As Ever, John*, 44 (*wires snipped*); Wills, *Put on Your Boots and Parachutes!*, 88 (*lie on their backs*).

an American light bomber flew: AAR, "Reconnaissance in a Tactical Air Command," 10th Photo Group, XIX Tactical Command, Ninth AF, 1945, CARL, N-9395.

Fifty miles to the east: Arthur, *Forgotten Voices of World War II*, 301–2 (*stuffed moose head*); *VW*, vol. 1, 156.

Two parachute brigades: *VW*, vol. 1, 149–50; Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 234–35; Shannon and Wright, *One Night in June*, 52; Saunders, *Royal Air Force, 1939–1945*, vol. 3, 108 (*only seventeen dropped*); Saunders, *The Red Beret*, 159 (*wrapped around his legs*).

Less fortunate were the men: Thompson, *The Imperial War Museum Book of Victory in Europe*, 41; Liddle, *D-Day by Those Who Were There*, 76 (*tea bags*), 81 ("*silken circles*"); Shannon and Wright, *One Night in June*, 83 (*Dives muck*).

Amid calamity came a celebrated success: Urquhart, *A Life in Peace and War*, 49 (*Saxon king*); Holt and Holt, *Major & Mrs. Holt's Battlefield Guide to the Normandy Landing Beaches*, 217–19 ("*Flying Morgue*"); Liddle, *D-Day by Those Who Were There*, 66 (*spiked with rum*); Ambrose, *Pegasus Bridge*, 5–13 ("*Cow Cow Boogie*"); Chatterton, *The Wings of Pegasus*, 138; Thompson, *The Imperial War Museum Book of Victory in Europe*, 36 ("*a giant sheet*"); Howarth, *Dawn of D-Day*, 46–47.

"*Anything that moved*": Ambrose, *Pegasus Bridge*, 76–83.

One platoon commander fell dead: Holt and Holt, *Major & Mrs. Holt's Battlefield Guide to the Normandy Landing Beaches*, 217–21 (*asked in vain to be shot*).

Across the Orne and Dives: Chatterton, *The Wings of Pegasus*, 140–41; Howarth, *Dawn of D-Day*, 64 (*double bed*); Ryan, *The Longest Day*, 108–9 ("*They got my mate*"); *VW*, vol. 1, 155.

Perhaps the most perilous mission: *VW*, vol. 1, 154–55; *By Air to Battle*, 85 (*banded pigeon*); Shannon and Wright, *One Night in June*, 83 (*sixty lengths of bangalore*).

"*I went in with 150*": Liddle, *D-Day by Those Who Were There*, 75.

Ship by ship: "War Diary of Force 'U,'" June 5–6, 1944, SEM, NHHC, box 82, folder 46; *IFG*, 87; Buffetaut, *D-Day Ships*, 75; Robb, *The Discovery of France*, 312 (*Norman pirates*); Colville, *Footprints in Time*, 161 ("*War in these conditions*"); Colville, *The Fringes of Power*, 492.

On the pitching decks below: John C. Raaen, Jr., "Sir, the 5th Rangers Have Landed Intact," ts, 2000, MMD, 1 (*watched for mines*); Liebling, *Mollie & Other War Pieces*, 188 ("*a passion*"); Alter and Crouch, eds., "*My Dear Moon*," no pagination ("*extra systoles*"); Reynolds, *How I Survived the Three First Wave Invasions*, 89 ("*The mind can wander*"); Balkoski, *Omaha Beach*, 111 ("*when a bullet hits you*"), 163 (*Horace's* Satires).

At two A.M. the ship's loudspeaker: Capa, *Slightly Out of Focus*, 139 (*white jackets*); Liebling, *Mollie & Other War Pieces*, 204 (*tinned beef*); Arthur, *Forgotten Voices of World War II* , 305 ("*superb 1812 brandy*"); K. G. Oakley, "Normandy 'D' Day 1944," ts, n.d., IWM, 96/22/1, 1–2 ("*Do not worry*").

Precisely what the enemy knew: ALH, vol. 2, 35–36; Hinsley, 466–67 (*5 percent*); Leppert, "Communication Plans and Lessons, Europe and Africa," lecture, Oct. 30, 1944, NARA RG 334, E 315, ANSCOL, box 199, L-7-44, 22–24; "The Invasion of Normandy," USNAd, vol. 5, 479–82; Arthur, *Forgotten Voices of World War II* , 290 (*electronic signature*); Dear, ed., *The Oxford Companion to World War II*, 333 (*simulate two large naval fleets*).

The actual OVERLORD fleets: Allen, "Electronics Warfare," lecture, Sept. 21, 1944, NARA RG 334, E 315, ANSCOL, L-7-44, 4; Leppert, "Communication Plans and Lessons, Europe and Africa," lecture, Oct. 30, 1944, NARA RG 334, E 315, ANSCOL, box 199, L-7-44, 22–24; "The Invasion of Normandy," USNAd, vol. 5, 479–82 (*Jamming had begun*).

Of particular concern were glide bombs: *DOB*, 217–19; Sunset 592, June 6, 1944, NARA RG 457, E 9026, SRS–1869 (*145 radio-control bombers*); Martin J. Bollinger, "Warriors and Wizards: The Development and Defeat of Radio-Controlled Bombs of the Third Reich," ts, 2010, a.p., 326, 345–46; Orus Kinney, "Nazi Smart Bombs," VHP, Jan. 2010, www.kilroywashere.org/003-Pages/03-OrusKinney.html ("*like a man's erect penis*").

"*Each time they woke us*": Stiles, *Serenade to the Big Bird*, 127; *WaS*, 42–43; Arthur, *Forgotten Voices of World War II* , 336 ("*a late tea*"); Philip Cole, "Air Planning for Overlord," lecture, Oct. 28, 1944, NARA RG 334, E 315, ANSCOL, box 199, 14–16; Mason, ed., *The Atlantic War Remembered*, 403 (*crash amid the waves*).

Behind the British came: Balkoski, *Utah Beach*, 87–91.

Less precise was the main American force: ibid., 92; Juliette Hennessy, "Tactical Operations of the Eighth Air Force," 1952, AFHRA, historical study no. 70, 15–17 (*forty-five coastal fortifications*).

Conditions were far from perfect: memo, "Statement of Result of D-Day Bombing by 4-Engine Aircraft," Eighth AF, Aug. 8, 1944, NARA RG 407, AFIA, 2-3.7 BG; *AAFinWWII*, 190–93.

For an hour and a half: Robert W. Ackerman, "The Employment of Strategic Bombers in a Tactical Role," 1954, AFHRA, study no. 88, 78; Crane, *Bombs, Cities & Civilians*, 70–71; memo, "Statement of Result of D-Day Bombing by 4-Engine Aircraft," Eighth AF, Aug. 8, 1944, NARA RG 407, AFIA, 2-3.7 BG ("*many seconds*"); Davis, *Bombing the European Axis Powers*, 357.

Heavy chains rattled: Naval Guns, 35–36; Breuer, *Hitler's Fortress Cherbourg*, 83 ("*For Chrissake*"); *IFG*, 93 ("*Anchor holding*").

Aboard Princess Astrid: J. H. Patterson, ts, n.d., IWM, 05/491, 1/7, 6 ("*Troops to parade*"); Ewing, *29 Let's Go!*, 37–39 (*blackout curtains*); Smith, *The Big Red One at D-Day*, 32 ("*metal shoeboxes*"); diary, Cyrus C. Aydlett, June 6, 1944, NWWIIM *("a great abyss*").

Nautical twilight arrived: "War Diary of Force 'U,'" June 6, 1944, SEM, NHHC, box 82, folder 46; Beevor, *D-Day*, 92 ("*gigantic town*"); Raitberger, "French Remember D-Day Landings," Reuters, May 18, 1994 ("*more ships than sea*").

Minesweepers nosed close: Yung, "Action This Day," *Naval History* (June 2009): 20+; Yung, *Gators of Neptune*, 178; *IFG*, 96 (*Two destroyers also took fire*); Naval Guns, 36–37 ("*Commence counterbattery*").

Soon enough eight hundred naval guns: "Notes on the Assault," vol. 1, ts, n.d., Sidney Negretto Papers, MHI, box 4; *VW*, vol. 1, 161; Wilson, ed., *D-Day 1944*, 204 ("*air vibrated*"); Naval Guns, 37; Liebling, *Mollie & Other Pieces*, 180 ("*yellow cordite*"); Baker, *Ernest Hemingway*, 501 ("*railway trains*"); Reynolds, *Hemingway: The Final Years*, 96–98, 102; Heinz, *When We Were One* , 10–11; McManus, *The Americans at D-Day*, 261 (*blue steel*); Lankford, ed., *OSS Against the Reich*, 60–61 ("*There is cannonading*").

"*The arc at its zenith*": John F. Latimer, n.d., NARA RG 38, E 11, U.S. Navy WWII Oral Histories, 12; Dailey, *Joining the War at Sea, 1939–1945*, 314 (*height of the splash*); Ryan, *The Longest Day*, 162 ("*monstrous thing*"); Raitberger, "French Remember D-Day Landings," Reuters, May 18, 1994 ("*It is raining iron*").

Allied planes swaddled: The smoke plane in *Corry*'s sector was shot down, weakening the screen. Buffetaut, *D-Day Ships*, 83; AR, U.S.S. *Corry*, June 19, 1944, MMD; McKernon, *Corry*, 38–52.

"*We seemed to jump*": Karig, *Battle Report: The Atlantic War*, 334;

Most sailors on the destroyer: W. H. Greear, lecture, n.d., NARA RG 334, E 315, ANSCOL, box 199, 7; Hinsley, 478 (" *overlooked it*"); "The Invasion of Normandy," USNAd, vol. 5, 504; http://www.uss-corry-dd463.com/d-day_u-boat_photos/d-day_photos.htm. The cause of *Corry*'s sinking remained controversial long after the war.

Eight minutes after the first explosion: AR, U.S.S. *Corry*, June 19, 1944, NARA RG 38, CNO, 370/45/31/1, box 932, 5; Robert Beeman, "The Sinking of the U.S.S. *Corry*, June 6, 1944," ts, n.d., MMD (*necktie*); memo, R. M. Allan, "U.S.S. *Corry*—Sinking of," n.d., SEM, NHHC, box 81; OH, George D. Hoffman, CO, U.S.S. *Corry*, July 11, 1944, NARA RG 38, E 11, U.S. Navy WWII Oral Histories; Balkoski, *Utah Beach*, 214–15; Hinsley, 478; "The Invasion of Normandy," USNAd, vol. 5, 504.

Experience from the Pacific: Yung, "The Planners' Daunting Task," *Naval History* (June 2009): 12+; *WaS*, 31–33; "Notes on the Assault," vol. 1, ts, n.d., Sidney Negretto Papers, MHI, box 4 (*140,000 shells*); "Enemy Defenses and Beach Obstacles Above Highwater Mark," bulletin Y/23, Nov. 1944, COHQ, CARL, N-6530-12, 7 (*few enemy casemates*); Yung, *Gators of Neptune*, 209 (*Houlgate battery*); AR, Don P. Moon, Force U, June 26, 1944, NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #217 (*none were completely knocked out*); Yung, "Action This Day," *Naval History* (June 2009): 20+ (*pesky St.-Marcouf battery*).

The Channel's idiosyncratic tidal flow: Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 220; Babcock, *War Stories*, 97 ("*I can jump*"); Jeffers, *In the Rough Rider's Shadow*, 236 ("*there are shadows*").

"*Away all boats*": Vining, ed., *American Diaries of World War II*, 101.

He was an unlikely vanguard: Liebling, *Mollie & Other War Pieces*, 221; Howarth, *Dawn of D-Day*, 112–13 ("*frazzle-assed*"); Jeffers, *In the Rough Rider's Shadow*, 4, 243; Morris, *Colonel Roosevelt*, 548.

"*achieve the same heights as his father*": Morris, *Edith Kermit Roosevelt*, 173 (*steel-rimmed spectacles*), 307, 330, 461–63, 474, 487; *AAAD*, 85–86; *DOB*, 94–95; Hamilton, "Junior in Name Only," *Retired Officer* (June 1981): 28+; http://www.loc.gov/rr/mss/text/roosvlt.html*, TR, LOC MS Div; http://www.nps.gov/archive/elro/glossary/smith-al.htm*.

"*What man of spirit*": Morris, *Colonel Roosevelt*, 509; Renehan, *The Lion's Pride*, 239 ("*first, best destiny*"); *DOB*, 160; Michael David Pearlman, "To Make Democracy Safe for the World," Ph.D. diss, University of Illinois, 1978, 606 ("*manhood*"); Roosevelt, *Day Before Yesterday*, 450–51 ("*all right to pull strings*"); Eleanor Roosevelt to GCM, Feb. 7, 1944, GCM Lib, box 83, folder 31 ("*matter considered so serious*").

The Army's chief capitulated: TR to R. O. Barton, May 26, 1944, TR, LOC MS Div, box 39 ("*the behavior pattern*"); Jeffers, *In the Rough Rider's Shadow*, 5 ("*can't be that rough*"); TR to Eleanor, July 11, 1944, TR, LOC MS Div, box 10; *IFG*, 100.

He was on the wrong beach: Balkoski, *Utah Beach*, 182; *IFG*, 98; Drez, ed., *Voices of D-Day*, 172–73; Wilson, ed., *D-Day 1944*, 231 (*two thousand yards south*); Naval Guns, 44 ("*Higher than her length*"); Maynard D. Pederson et al., "Armor in Operation Neptune," May 1949, AS, Ft. K, 21 (*the remaining Shermans*).

"*We're not where we're supposed to be*": James A. Van Fleet, SOOHP, H. Williams, 1973, MHI, 55–56.

The accidental beach: "Combat Engineering," CE, Dec. 1945, NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #547, 19–21; Baker, *Ernest Hemingway*, 501 ("*pikemen*"); Ryan, *The Longest Day*, 179 ("*real estate*"); Rollyson, *Nothing Ever Happens to the Brave*, 197 ("*heavy, dry glove*").

"*How do you boys*": Astor, *June 6, 1944*, 229; Balkoski, *Utah Beach*, 236 ("*great day for hunting*"); "Notes on Utah Beach and the 1st Engineer Special Brigade," n.d., NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #359A, 67; Fane and Moore, *The Naked Warriors*, 68 ("*Fire in the hole*"); OH, Herbert A. Peterson, Naval Combat Demolition, Oct. 1, 1944, NARA RG 38, E 11, U.S. Navy WWII Oral Histories, 2–3 ("*no fear of impaling*").

Through the dunes and across the beach: Royce L. Thompson, "American Strength in D-Day Landings," n.d., CMH, 2-3.7 AE.P-5; Ingersoll, *Top Secret*, 126 ("*ironed flat*"); Fowle, ed., *Builders and Fighters*, 448–49 (*Four causeways*); Balkoski, *Utah Beach*, 236 ("*arm signal*").

The mutter of gunfire: Maynard D. Pederson et al., "Armor in Operation Neptune," May 1949, AS, Ft. K, 28–29; Drez, ed., *Voices of D-Day*, 181 (*shaving cream*); Balkoski, *Utah Beach*, 254 (*horse-drawn 88mm guns*); diary, Cyrus C. Aydlett, June 10, 1944, NWWIIM ("*It sure takes a lot*"); "D-Day Experience of Eugene D. Brierre," ts, March 15, 1998, NWWIIM, 2001.160, 5–6 (*snipped the unit flashes*).

East of Pouppeville: *CCA*, 283; Wilson, ed., *D-Day 1944*, 233–34 ("*Where's the war*"); Babcock, *War Stories*, 52 ("*Hey, boy*").

Eleven miles offshore: "War Diary of Force 'U,'" June 5–6, 1944, SEM, NHHC, box 82, folder 46; Chandler and Collins, eds., *The D-Day Encyclopedia*, 373 (*delay seven assault waves*).

At age fifty, Admiral Moon: Alter and Crouch, eds., "*My Dear Moon*," no pagination; John A. Moreno, "The Death of Admiral

Moon," n.d., a.p., 225+.

In his spare office aboard Bayfield: "Conference on the Operations of the VII Corps," May 16, 1946, SLAM, MHI, box 2; Collins, *Lightning Joe*, 200–201 ("*I had to put my foot down*"); *CCA*, 329. Historian Joseph Balkoski believes 4th ID casualties for June 6 were "certainly over 300." Balkoski, *Utah Beach*, 322.

"*It is our good fortune*": "War Diary of Force 'U,'" June 5–6, 1944, SEM, NHHC, box 82, folder 46.

Hell's Beach

Fifteen miles southeast of Utah: *IFG*, 110–11 (*Spanish galleon*); ALH, 21; "Beach 46—Omaha, Tidal Curves," n.d., CARL, N-7374E; "Operation Report Neptune," Provisional Engineer Special Brigade Group, Sept. 1944, NARA RG 407, ML #951, box 24198, 57; *CCA*, 18; 1st ID, HI; "Operation Report Neptune," Provisional Engineer Special Brigade Group, Sept. 1944, NARA RG 407, ML #951, box 24198, 60 (*two knots to three*).

That Norman tide: *IFG*, 138; "The Invasion of Normandy," USNAd, vol. 5, 566; Balkoski, *Omaha Beach*, 41 (*twenty feet deep*), 22; Royce L. Thompson, "American Strength in D-Day Landings," n.d., CMH, 2-3.7 AE.P-5; "Strategy of the Campaign in Western Europe, 1944–1945," n.d., USFET, General Board study no. 1, 25 (*without stranding the boats*); Drez, ed., *Voices of D-Day*, 53 (*only half an hour*).

OVERLORD's plan called for nine infantry companies: *Omaha Beachhead*, AFIA, 42; Buffetaut, *D-Day Ships*, 101. The nine included a Ranger company.

To minimize the risk of German shore fire : Yung, *Gators of Neptune*, 216; Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 264; *IFG*, 124. Fourteen hundred tons of naval shells fell at Omaha, one-third the bombardment weight at much weaker Kwajalein Island. "Amphibious Operations: Invasion of Northern France," CINC, U.S. Fleet, Oct. 1944, NARA RG 407, ML #252, 2–27.

The German defenses were fearsome: "Comparison of British and American Areas in Normandy in Terms of Fire Support and Its Effects," Army Operational Group Report no. 292, Aug. 14, 1945, UK NA, WO 291/270; McManus, *The Americans at D-Day*, 305 ("*murder holes*"); OH, J. D. Small, June 23, 1944, NARA RG 38, E 11, U.S. Navy WWII Oral Histories, 9 ("*like huckleberries*"); Drez, ed. *Voices of D-Day*, 283 ("*New England town hall*"); "The Invasion of Normandy," USNAd, vol. 5, 512; *IFG*, 114–15 (*aerial photos*).

Also undetected and unexpected: Hinsley et al., *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, vol. 3, part 2, 842–43; Benjamin A. Dickson, "G-2 Journal: Algiers to the Elbe," MHI, 119 (*radio blackout*); Fritz Ziegelmann, "The 352nd Infantry Division," FMS, #B-432, in Isby, ed., *Fighting the Invasion*, 122–24 (*requisitioned milk*), 194–95, 202; Bennett, *Ultra in the West*, 45; Balkoski, *Omaha Beach*, 48–49; Beevor, *D-Day*, 93; Zetterling, *Normandy 1944*, 277–79; Holt, *The Deceivers*, 578; Foot, *SOE in France*, 386–87 (*British tricksters*).

If the Omaha defenses had been thinned: Murray, "Needless D-Day Slaughter," *MHQ* (spring 2003): 26+; Hinsley et al., *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, vol. 3, part 2, 842–43; Balkoski, *Beyond the Beachhead*, 67, 78; Clay, *Blood and Sacrifice*, 201 (*odds of three to five*).

For those who outlived the day: "Greek lyric," epigram, Ridgway, *Soldier* (*this high thing*).

"*utterly inhuman noises*": memo, Cleave A. Jones, July 4, 1944, NARA RG 498, UD 603, ETO HD, box 1, SLAM 201 file; Baumgartner et al., *The 16th Infantry, 1798–1946*, 84 (*gas capes*); OH, J. D. Small, June 23, 1944, NARA RG 38, E 11, U.S. Navy WWII Oral Histories, 9 ("*It's yours*").

They remembered the red splash : Cawthon, *Other Clay*, 51–53; Lebda, *Million Miles to Go*, 81–82 ("*wind-driven hail*"); Alan Anderson, ts, n.d., 467th AA Bn, NWWIIM ("*corn cobs*"); diary, Jack Shea, ts, Nov. 1, 1944, NARA RG 407, CI, 29th ID, box 24034, 17 (*size of shovel blades*); Howarth, *Dawn of D-Day*, 134 ("*wicked living things*"); Scannell, *Argument of Kings*, 152 ("*insectile whine*"); Gaskill, "Bloody Beach," *American Magazine* (Sept. 1944): 26+ (*frightened animals*); AAR, 146th Engineer Combat Bn, June 30, 1944, CEOH, X-37A (*spoons*); Whitehead, "*Beachhead Don*," xxii (*barked knuckles*); W. Garwood Bacon, ts, n.d., 7th Naval Beach Bn, NWWIIM (*eardrums*).

"*walking in the face*": Pogue, *Pogue's War*, 67; Gaskill, "Bloody Beach," *American Magazine* (Sept. 1944): 26+; Howarth, *Dawn of D-Day*, 155 ("*dying scream*").

Army and Navy engineers: OH, John T. O'Neill, 299th Engineer Combat Bn, June 9, 1944, NARA 407, E 427, ML #2210; Beck, 308, 320; "Combat Engineering," CE, ETOUSA, Dec. 1945, report no. 10, NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #547, 10–16 (*all drifted left*); *Omaha Beachhead*, 42–43; AAR, 299th Engineer Combat Bn, July 1944, NARA 407, E 427, ML #2210 (*Team 14's landing craft*); McManus, *The Americans at D-Day*, 340 ("*V for victory*"); Fowle, ed., *Builders and Fighters*, 438 (*Seven died in Team 11*); AAR, 146th Engineer Combat Bn, June 30, 1944, CEOH, X-37A ("*like fence posts*").

Demolitionists shinnied up pilings: Field Order No. 35, 1st ID, Apr. 16, 1944, NARA RG 407, E 427, 301-3.9; Fowle, ed., *Builders and Fighters*, 438 (*the fuse man's fingers*); Howarth, *Dawn of D-Day*, 134 ("*cluster of bees*"); Fane and Moore, *The Naked Warriors*,

56–58 (*engineers screamed*); Yung, *Gators of Neptune*, 187; Balkoski, *Omaha Beach*, 143 (*only six of sixteen gaps*); OH, W. M. Hoge, CO, Provisional Brigade Group, July 3, 1944, NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #493C; *CCA*, 317; *IFG*, 138n.

The fiascos multiplied: Keegan, *Six Armies in Normandy*, 135 ("*like toads*"); Lewis, "Landing Craft," lecture, Sept. 18, 1944, NARA RG 334, E 315, ANSCOL, box 199, 18; Drez, ed., *Voices of D-Day*, 234 (*nine inches of freeboard*); OH, Robert K. Skagg, 741st Tank Bn, June 18, 1944, NARA RG 407, AFIA, 2-3.7 BG (*of thirty-two Shermans*); Howarth, *Dawn of D-Day*, 147 ("*a certain gallantry*").

Artillerymen also struggled: Marshall, "The Mobility of One Man," *IJ* (Oct. 1949): 6+ (*eighteen sandbags*); "111th FA Bn on D Day," n.d., NARA RG 407, AFIA, 2-3.7 BG ("*unseaworthy*"); Balkoski, *Omaha Beach*, 239 ("*I can still hear*").

Two infantry regiments washed: Balkoski, *Omaha Beach*, 28–29, 161 ("*lose heart*"); OH, 116th Inf, Co A, n.d., NARA RG 407, AFIA, 2-3.7 BG; Marshall, *Battle at Best*, 54–55 ("*inert and leaderless*"); Kershaw, *The Bedford Boys*, 144–51 ("*didn't get to kill"*); Drez, ed., *Voices of D-Day*, 213 ("*like hay*").

"*a venetian blind being lifted*": Baumgarten, *Eyewitness on Omaha Beach*, 17; Balkoski, *Beyond the Beachhead*, 125 (LCA-1015); S. L. A. Marshall, "First Wave at Omaha Beach," *Atlantic*, Nov. 1960, www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1960/11/fir*; Drez, ed., *Voices of D-Day*, 209 ("*he sat down*"); Ryan, *The Longest Day*, 176 (*safety pins*); Richler, ed., *Writers on World War II*, 508 ("*I run on*"); Cawthon, *Other Clay*, 57 ("*a debacle*").

"*the greater portion of the dead"*: Baumgartner et al., *The 16th Infantry, 1798–1946*, 107; Pogue, *Pogue's War*, 87 (*rank insignia*); William Haynes, Co. E, 16th Inf, HI, box 24242 ("*big and little stuff*"); Lebda, *Million Miles to Go*, 81–82 ("*twenty thousand bullets*"); Capa, *Slightly Out of Focus*, 139–40 ("Es una cosa").

The four-hundred-ton LCI 85: AR, *LCI (L) 85*, June 24, 1944, NARA RG 38, CNO, 370/45/3/1, box 1102; AAR, Company A, 1st Medical Bn, n.d., NARA 407, AFIA, 2-3.7 BG; Clay, *Blood and Sacrifice*, 195–96 (*White bandages*); Kenneth C. Davey, "Navy Medicine on Bloody Omaha," in "Sixth Naval Battalion 1998 Reunion," MRC FDM ("*we could hear*").

By 8:30 A.M. the Omaha assault: McManus, *The Americans at D-Day*, 327; Cowdrey, *Fighting for Life*, 248 ("*Face downwards*").

Two large boats burned furiously: AR, *LCI 91*, June 10, 1944, MMD; Robert E. Walker, "With the Stonewallers," n.d., MMD (*soles of his boots*); AR, *LCI(L) 92*, Sept. 2, 1944, NARA RG 38, CNO, 370/45/3/1, box 549 (*champagne corks*); "Actions Group, CT 116," n.d., John P. McKnight papers, HIA, box 1; Seth Shepard, "The Story of the *LCI(L) 92*," June 25, 1944, MMD, 9–12; Drez, ed., *Voices of D-Day*, 223 ("*Terror seized me*" and "*shipwreck*").

Only where escarpment: 2nd Ranger Bn, AAR, July 22, 1944, and "A Narrative History of the Second Ranger Infantry Battalion," n.d., both in Robert W. Black collection, MHI, box 3; CI, 2nd and 5th Ranger Bn, n.d., NARA RG 407, E 427-A, folder 337; *IFG*, 126–29; Ryan, *The Longest Day*, 182–84.

"*ripped-open dirt*": Heinz, "I Took My Son to Omaha Beach," *Collier's* (June 11, 1954): 21+; "Amphibious Operations: Invasion of Northern France," CINC, U.S. Fleet, Oct. 1944, NARA RG 407, ML #252, 2–11 (Texas*'s 14-inch barrels*).

Rangers hauled themselves over the lip: Interview, Leonard G. Lommell with author, May 2008; OH, Leonard G. Lommell, 2nd Ranger Bn, Mar. 16, 1993, NWWIIM; Kingseed, *Old Glory Stories*, 198–99; author visit, May 2009.

Back on Hell's Beach: Knickerbocker et al., *Danger Forward*, 212–13 ("*They'll come swarming*"); FCP, "The 25th Anniversary of D-Day," *Congressional Record*, June 25, 1969, E5246+ ("*couldn't look back*"); Kingseed, *From Omaha Beach to Dawson's Ridge*, 145–49, 163 ("*The limitations of life*").

From the gray deck of the command ship: Pyle, *Brave Men*, 246; CBH, June 3 and 6, 1944 (*First Army war room*); Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 252–53; Hastings, *OVERLORD*, 92; memoir, William Puntenney, 29th ID, n.d., MMD, 40–41 ("*bunch of hogs*").

At a plotting table in the center: Hanson W. Baldwin, "Getting the D-Day News Out," in Mason, ed., *The Atlantic War Remembered*, 394; ONB, OH, 1975, Charles Hanson, MHI, VII, 22 ("*get ground quickly*"); Astor, *June 6, 1944*, 212–13 (*expected the two assault regiments*); Bradley and Blair, *A General's Life*, 243–44 (*Photographers were forbidden*).

"*Lincolnesque*": "Doughboy's General," *Time* (May 1, 1944): 23+; Pyle, *Brave Men*, 210–11 ("*he spoke so gently*"); Liebling, "Five-Star Schoolmaster," *New Yorker* (March 10, 1951): 40+.

Few could resist the biography: OH, ONB, Oct. 14, 1946, FCP (*sodbuster twang*); Liebling, "Five-Star Schoolmaster," *New Yorker* (March 10, 1951): 40+; "Doughboy's General," *Time* (May 1, 1944): 23+; CBH, June 3, 1944 (*two flasks of brandy*); Wertenbaker, *Invasion!*, 77 ("*If there's a bird"*), 85–93; ONB, OH, 1975, Charles Hanson, MHI, II, 11, 24–26, 52–53 ("*guidance from God"*); *DOB*, 96, 114–15; *AAAD*, 485–86.

Perhaps. But a few wondered: C. B. Hansen, "General Bradley As Seen Close Up," *NYT Magazine*, Nov. 30, 1947, 14+ ("*superior*"); Blumenson, *The Battle of the Generals*, 37 ("*mediocrity*"); Blumenson, *Patton: The Man Behind the Legend, 1885–1945*, 216 ("*Has a strong jaw*"); Murray, "Needless D-Day Slaughter," *MHQ* (spring 2003): 26+ (*Bradley's design*); "Doughboy's General," *Time*

(May 1, 1944): 23 ("*tommyrot*"). I'm grateful for the insights of Prof. Allan R. Millett on this topic.

Now he was not so sure: Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 271–77; Astor, *June 6, 1944*, 212–13 ("*this is carnage*").

Not for some hours would Bradley learn: Miller, *Division Commander*, 5–14; diary, Jack Shea [Cota aide], ts, Nov. 1, 1944, NARA RG 407, CI, 29th ID, box 24034, 14–17 (*hugging wooden groins*).

Pistol in hand, he sang tuneless: Kershaw, *The Bedford Boys*, 155; John C. Raaen, Jr., "Sir, the 5th Rangers Have Landed Intact," ts, 2000, MMD, 28–29; McManus, *The Americans at D-Day*, 333; OH, 116th Inf, March 25, 1945, NARA RG 407, AFIA, 2-3.7 BG; diary, Jack Shea, ts, Nov. 1, 1944, NARA RG 407, CI, 29th ID, box 24034, 18–22 ("*Medico, I'm hit*").

Up the bluff they climbed: diary, Jack Shea, ts, Nov. 1, 1944, NARA RG 407, CI, 29th ID, box 24034, 19–22, 29; OH, 116th Inf, March 25, 1945, NARA RG 407, AFIA, 2-3.7 BG.

"*Where the hell have you been*": OH, 116th Inf, Mar. 25, 1945, NARA RG 407, AFIA, 2-3.7 BG.

"*a final stubborn reserve*": Howarth, *Dawn of D-Day*, 161; Balkoski, *Omaha Beach*, 346 ("*unwilling soul*"), 262 ("*Watch it*"); "16-G on D-Day," n.d., NARA RG 407, AFIA, 2-3.7 BG (*stepping stones*); diary, Stanley Bach, First Army, NARA RG 407, AFIA, 2-3.7 BG ("*Fire everywhere*"); OH, Joseph Dorchak, Co B, 2nd Ranger Bn, HI ("*shot the corpse*").

A dozen destroyers—some so close: *IFG*, 143; OH, Maurice F. McGrath, 116th Inf, Sept. 20, 1944, a.p. ("*pick them out*"); Buffetaut, *D-Day Ships*, 108 (*knocked the tower into the nave*); Karig, *Battle Report: The Atlantic War*, 327 ("*simply champion*").

"*coagulating haphazardly*": *CCA*, 324; "Operation Neptune Report," Provisional Engineer Special Brigade Group, Sept. 30, 1944, CEOH, box X-24, 91–93, 93n ("*Men believed ours*"); Wheeler, *The Big Red One*, 277–82; *Omaha Beachhead*, 82–83, 87 ("*Troops formerly pinned*").

Cota continued his charmed day: *Omaha Beachhead*, 95; diary, Jack Shea, ts, Nov. 1, 1944, NARA RG 407, CI, 29th ID, box 24034, 23; Balkoski, *Omaha Beach*, 278 ("*Come on down here*").

That left the British and Canadians: *WaS*, 46–48; *IFG*, 183 (*four times longer*); Howarth, *Dawn of D-Day*, 170–71 (*half a dozen gadgets*).

In other respects, "the bitches": Drez, ed., *Voices of D-Day*, 293; "Force G and 50 Division," bulletin Y/36, Nov. 1944, COHQ, CARL, N-6530.16, 19–23 (*engine rooms flooded*); Hastings, *OVERLORD*, 105–6 (*Centaur tanks*); Vian, *Action This Day*, 138 (*two battleships and a monitor*); Thompson, *The Imperial War Museum Book of Victory in Europe*, 56 ("*large packs of grouse*"); *VW*, vol. 1, 197 (*ninety shore guns*); author visit, Crépon, May 25–29, 2009; "Casualties and Effects of Fire Support on the British Beaches in Normandy," Army Operational Research Group (U.K.), report no. 261, n.d., NARA RG 334, E 315, ANSCOL, box 451, 5 ("*not just disorganized*").

During the run to shore: Hastings, *Winston's War*, 393; diary, S. C. Donnison, June 6, 1944, IWM, 94/50/1 ("*thick as syrup*"); Thompson, *The Imperial War Museum Book of Victory in Europe*, 48, 60; "An Account of the Assault by an Infantry Battalion," bulletin Y/44, Feb. 1945, COHQ, CARL, N-6350.22, 5–6; J. H. Patterson, ts, n.d., No. 4 Commando, n.d., IWM, 05/491, 1/7 ("*Jerusalem*"); Hills, *Phantom Was There*, 178 ("*The Beer Barrel Polka*").

Closest to Omaha lay Gold: Roskill, *White Ensign*, 377; "Report on the Battle of Normandy," Royal Engineers, n.d., CARL, N-5785 (*only two boat lanes*); "An Account of the Assault by an Infantry Battalion," bulleting Y/44, Feb. 1945, COHQ, CARL, N-6350.22, 9; Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 270–72; Ryan, *The Longest Day*, 188 ("*Perhaps we're intruding*"); *WaS*, 46–48 (*Port-en-Bessin*); *VW*, vol. 1, 178, 193 (*all four brigades*).

On the eastern lip of the Allied beachhead: *VW*, vol. 1, 185.

"*Ramp down*": Hastings, *OVERLORD*, 103; Ryan, *The Longest Day*, 186 ("*Bash on*"); "Report on the Battle of Normandy," Royal Engineers, n.d., CARL, N-5785 (*cleared no beach obstacles*); Collier, *Fighting Words*, 161 ("*shoulders hunched like boxers*"); Arthur, *Forgotten Voices of World War II*, 313 ("*drowning in their own blood*"); Liddle, *D-Day by Those Who Were There*, 12–13 ("*Beach a shambles*"); D'Este, *Decision in Normandy*, 129 (*within thirty feet*); *VW*, vol. 1, 186, 194–95; Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 278.

Even so a kilted piper with a dirk: Millership, "Scots Piper Dodged Bullets," Reuters, June 1, 1994; Burns, "Bill Millin, Scottish D-Day Piper, Dies at 88," *NYT*, Aug. 19, 2010, B9 ("*Highland Laddie*"); Holt and Holt, *Major & Mrs. Holt's Battlefield Guide to the Normandy Landing Beaches*, 202 ("*Get down*"); Arthur, *Forgotten Voices of World War II*, 316–18 ("*parade-ground style*"); Liddle, *D-Day by Those Who Were There*, 189–90.

The wind-whipped tide and a bullying current: *VW*, vol. 1, 179–83; *VC*, 100–106; Collier, *Fighting Words*, 164 ("*Traitors!*").

Despite such setbacks: Keegan, *Six Armies in Normandy*, 141 (*half the number expected*); Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 275 (*two miles inland*); Saunders, *The Red Beret*, 153; Ambrose, *Pegasus Bridge*, 125; author visit, Crépon, May 25–29, 2009; Isby, ed.,

Fighting the Invasion, 199.

Reporters were told to expect: Ryan, *The Longest Day*, 196–97; Drez, ed., *Voices of D-Day*, 297–301 ("*cycle like mad*").

Yet the day seemed undimmed: author visit, Crépon, May 25–29, 2009; Ryan, *The Longest Day*, 206 (*holding up trousers*); Ambrose, *Pegasus Bridge*, 109 (*French women who emerged*); Howarth, *Dawn of D-Day*, 228 (*Norman dialect)*; Thompson, *The Price of Victory*, 253 (*antique gramophone*).

A Conqueror's Paradise

As if in pursuit: *AAFinWWII*, 159 (*twenty-six bridges*); Irving, *The Trail of the Fox*, Horch photo; Douglas-Home, *Rommel*, 205; Barnett, ed., *Hitler's Generals*, 198 (*youngest but most celebrated*); Fraser, *Knight's Cross*, 457 ("C'est Rommel!").

He had driven home to Herrlingen: Liddell Hart, ed., *The Rommel Papers*, 470–71; Ryan, *The Longest Day*, 237–38 ("*If I was commander*").

At 9:30 P.M., with little left: Ryan, *The Longest Day*, 15; author visit, La Roche–Guyon, May 30, 2009, and "A Visit to La Roche–Guyon Castle," brochure.

"*How peaceful the world*": Fraser, *Knight's Cross*, 471–73; Beevor, *D-Day*, 40 ("*conqueror's paradise*"); Camille Pissarro, "A Square in La Roche–Guyon," Alte Nationalgaleri, Berlin; www.musee-imaginaire.de/lesesaal/renoir/biografi.html*; www.artchive.com/artchive/B/braque/castle.jpg.html.

On the chalk cliffs: Irving, *The Trail of the Fox*, 334, 345–54, 392.

Clacking typewriters: Speidel, *We Defended Normandy*, 53 (*Edict of Nantes*); Irving, *The Trail of the Fox*, 372–74 ("*He's very calm*").

There was much to be grim about: *CCA*, 275; *Germany VII*, 586 ("*There are no signs*"); Lewin, *Rommel as Military Commander*, 223 (*away from their posts*); war diary, Seventh Army, June 6, 1944, NARA RG 407, E 427, ML #2201 ("*not a major action*").

Not until that fantastic armada: Horst Boog, "Invasion to Surrender: The Defense of Germany," in Brower, ed., *World War II in Europe: The Final Year*, 120 (*German aircraft losses*); *Germany VII*, 328–30 (*319 serviceable planes* and *dropped their bombs prematurely*); Keegan, *Six Armies in Normandy*, 143; Davis, *Carl A. Spaatz and the Air War in Europe*, 414; Wieviorka, *Normandy*, 207 (*American planes were gray*).

"*The enemy, penetrating our positions*": war diary, Seventh Army, June 6, 1944, NARA RG 407, E 427, ML #2201.

"*the fighting animal*": Carver, ed., *The War Lords*, 274; Barnett, ed., *Hitler's Generals*, 299; MMB, 462–63; Isby, ed., *Fighting the Invasion*, 48 ("*re-win great fame*").

Hitler's decision in November 1943: Keegan, *Six Armies in Normandy*, 60–61, 65 ("*Once defeated*"); *Germany VII*, 512; Liddell Hart, ed., *The Rommel Papers*, 458 ("*zone of death*"), 464 ("*The enemy will have a rough time*").

If confident enough to travel: Keegan, *Six Armies in Normandy*, 60–61 (*200 million*); Cooper, *The German Army, 1933–1945*, 496 (*eight different languages*); Overy, *Why the Allies Won*, 225–27 (*Army Group B relied*); Friederich Freiherr von der Heydte, "A German Parachute Regiment in Normandy," 1954, FMS, #B-839, MHI, 8 ("*Emplacements without guns*").

"*Our friends from the East*": Liddell Hart, ed., *The Rommel Papers*, 467–68; F. Ruge, "Coast Defense and Invasion," June 9, 1947, NARA RG 334, E 315, ANSCOL, ONI IR 243, box 642, 9, 14 ("*nailed to the ground*"); "Railway Sabotage in France and Belgium," SHAEF, G-3, n.d., CARL, N-16313 (*armed railwaymen*); Mark, *Aerial Interdiction in Three Wars*, 233–41; *CCA*, 225–30; *AAFinWWII*, 160; *GS* V, 287; memo, Erwin Rommel, Apr. 22, 1944, captured document, NARA RG 498, ETO HD, "Combat Engineering," admin file #547, 8–9 ("*The enemy will most likely*").

"*a cock-fight controversy*": Bodo Zimmerman, 1946, FMS, #B-308, MHI, 42–43.

"*main battle line must be the beach*": Fraser, *Knight's Cross*, 455; OH, Hans von Luck to author, Hamburg, Mar. 3 and Apr. 7, 1994 ("*If we can't throw*"); *CCA*, 247.

This impertinence found little favor: Stafford, *Ten Days to D-Day*, 43 ("*unlicked cub*"); Isby, ed., *Fighting the Invasion*, 48 ("*Marshal Laddie*"); Leo Geyr von Schweppenburg, ETHINT 13, Dec. 11, 1947, MHI, 2 (S'engager).

Hitler dithered, then ordered a compromise: *Germany VII*, 508–20 ("*In the East*"); Wood, ed., *Army of the West*, 4; *CCA*, 243–49; Ose, "Rommel and Rundstedt: The 1944 Panzer Controversy," *Military Affairs* (Jan. 1986): 7+; *CCA*, 333–34 (*eight hours passed*); Beevor, *D-Day*, 150 ("*arrive too late*").

"Der Führer vertraut mir": Fraser, *Knight's Cross*, 476–78; Isby, ed., *Fighting the Invasion*, 48 ("*the Führer's marshal*"); Young, *Rommel, the Desert Fox*, 151 (*stamp collector*); Margry, "The Death of Rommel," *AB*, no. 80 (1993): 38+ (*confiscated from Jews*); Liddell Hart, ed., *The Rommel Papers*, 485 ("*come round to the idea*"), 468, ("*fate of the German people*").

The struggle in Normandy would depend: *VW*, vol. 1, 201–4: Lefèvre, *Panzers in Normandy Then and Now*, 65 (*oddments*), 106–8 (*pulverized by naval gunfire*); OH, Hans von Luck to author, Hamburg, Mar. 3 and Apr. 7, 1994; Luck, *Panzer Commander*, 139–44; Reynolds, *Steel Inferno*, 57–58; Daglish, *Operation Goodwood*, 67 (*Parisian fleshpot*); Isby, ed., *Fighting the Invasion*, 241; *VW*, vol. 1, 204–5; Saunders, *Royal Air Force, 1939–1945*, vol. 3, 113 (*almost 250 more British gliders*).

At 10:40 P.M., General Friedrich Dollmann: war diary, Seventh Army, June 6, 1944, NARA RG 407, E 427, ML #2201. The 21st Panzer commander put his tank losses for June 6 at 25 percent, while official British sources calculate the loss at 40 to 44 percent. The official German history states that 80 of 125 deployed panzers were destroyed. *Germany VII*, 593; Hinsley, 474; *VW*, vol. 1, 204; Reynolds, *Steel Inferno*, 57–58.

Swarming enemy aircraft impeded movement: Luther, *Blood and Honor*, 70–73; Hastings, *OVERLORD*, 117 (*Grenadiers skulked back*).

"*We cannot hold everything*": Speidel, *We Defended Normandy*, 98–99; Ryan, *The Longest Day*, 237–38 ("*I've nearly always succeeded*").

A monstrous full moon: *VW*, vol. 1, 222; *AAFinWWII*, 562–63 (*first of 241 airdromes*); *Omaha Beachhead*, 108 (*only a hundred tons*); Balkoski, *Utah Beach*, 317 (*nineteen airborne battalions*); Astor, *June 6, 1944*, 239 ("*to kill each other*").

"*I must have Caen*": notes, Miles Dempsey, May 15, 1944, UK NA, WO 285/1; Hinsley et al., *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, vol. 3, part 2, 841–42; Beevor, *D-Day*, 142; Hastings, *OVERLORD*, 115 ("*not unpleased*").

"*My wife, my children!*": Beevor, *D-Day*, 146; Harris G. Warren, "Special Operations: AAF Aid to European Resistance Movements," 1947, AFHRA, study no. 121, 149 (*seventeen Norman towns*); "Historical Record, A.E.A.F.," n.d., UK NA, AIR 37/1057 (*bomber fleets would follow*); Keegan, *Six Armies in Normandy*, 183 (*eleven days*), 185 (*Westminster Abbey*); Hitchcock, *The Bitter Road to Freedom*, 29–33; Gilbert, *D-Day*, 158–59 (*five hundred coffins*); Arthur Layton Funk, "Caught in the Middle: The French Population in Normandy," in Wilson, ed., *D-Day 1944*, 252.

three thousand Normans would be killed: Hitchcock, *The Bitter Road to Freedom*, 27; Beevor, *D-Day*, 49 (*fifteen thousand French civilians*), 123 (*calvados*); Moorehead, *Eclipse*, 120 ("*excessive hardship*").

As for the liberators: casualty estimates vary substantially. *VW*, vol. 1, 222–23; Buffetaut, *D-Day Ships*, 122.

The 8,230 U.S. casualties: historian Joseph Balkoski tabulates 4,720 casualties at Omaha, plus 3,510 at Utah and on the Cotentin Peninsula. *Omaha Beach* and *Utah Beach*, each appendix 1; Reister, ed., *Medical Statistics in World War II*, 13–20 (*first of almost 400,000 men*).

Many were felled by 9.6-gram bullets: Andrus et al., eds., *Advances in Military Medicine*, vol. 1, 192–201; Capa, *Slightly Out of Focus*, 149 (*corpses into burial sacks*); J. H. Patterson, No. 4 Commando, ts, n.d., IWM, 05/491, 1/7, 13 ("*nothing was being done*"); George E. McIntyre, "As Mac Saw It," ts, n.d., MHI, 159 (*handkerchiefs draped the faces*); OH, Richard Oliphant, NARA RG 38, E 11, U.S. Navy WWII Oral Histories, 2–3 ("*They do not seem to matter*").

Omaha was the worst: "Operation Report Neptune," Provisional Engineer Special Brigade Group, Sept. 1944, NARA RG 407, ML #951, box 24198, 328–29; "Activities of Medical Detachment," 16th Inf, D-Day, n.d., NARA RG 407, AFIA, 2-3.7 BG; diary, Jack Shea, ts, Nov. 1, 1944, NARA RG 407, CI, 29th ID, box 24034, 37 (*cat's-eye headlights*); Fisher, *Legacy of Heroes*, 33, 38, 64 (*gas gangrene*); Kenneth C. Davey, "Navy Medicine on Bloody Omaha," in "Sixth Naval Beach Battalion 1998 Reunion," 1998, MRC FDM (*bullet in the brain*); "Vierville-sur-Mer," ts, n.d., MMD ("*There were men crying*").

"*swollen grayish sacks*": Moorehead, *Gellhorn*, 219.

"*I walked along slowly*": Gaskill, "Bloody Beach," *American Magazine* (Sept. 1944): 26+; Andrew T. McNamara, "QM Activities," 1955, PIR, MHI, 128 (*More than double that number*); Pyle, *Brave Men*, 246 (*toes sticking up*); Richard H. Oliphant, "Eleventh Amphibious Force," n.d., NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #217 ("*staring was rude*").

Graves Registration teams: Perret, *There's a War to Be Won* , 485 (*safety pins*); "Operation Report Neptune," Provisional Engineer Special Brigade Group, Sept. 1944, NARA RG 407, ML #951, box 24198, 341 (*Two inland sites*); Kenneth C. Davey, "Navy Medicine on Bloody Omaha," in "Sixth Naval Beach Battalion 1998 Reunion," 1998, MRC FDM (*fortified with brandy*).

"*since Alexander set out from Macedon*": Saunders, *Royal Air Force, 1939–1945*, vol. 3, 114; Gellhorn, *The Face of War*, 134–36 ("*small shabby men*"); *Reporting World War II*, vol. 2, 155 ("*I'd kill him*").

"*We will never again have to land*": Balkoski, *Omaha Beach*, 261.

"*We have come to the hour*": Stephen E. Ambrose, "Battle Scars Remain But Little Has Changed in Normandy," *International Herald Tribune*, Apr. 22, 1994, 12; Wacker, "The Voices of D-Day," *Retired Officer* (June 1994): 26+ (*scribbling "deceased"*); Crosswell, *Beetle*, 795 ("*dead stock*"); Tapert, ed., *Lines of Battle*, 162–64 ("*I wonder about him*").

CHAPTER 2: LODGEMENT

"This Long Thin Line of Personal Anguish"

Light rain fell in Portsmouth: www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/en-474304-18-gun-battery-and-flanking-battery-king; *Three Years*, 571 (*four white stars*).

"*A scene of great confusion*": Love and Major, eds., *The Year of D-Day*, 84–85.

Mines continued to bedevil: AR, *Tide*, July 6, 1944, NARA RG 38, CNO, 370/45/3/1, 2–3; OH, George Crane, XO, *Tide*, Sept. 30, 1944, NARA RG 38, E 11, U.S. Navy WWII Oral Histories; AR, *Susan B. Anthony*, June 7, 1944, NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #217; "The United States Medical Department at War, 1941–1945," vol. 1, part 3, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, 1946, NHHC, 732–33 ("*ship lifted and hogged*"); OH, Byron S. Huie, salvage officer, Aug. 18, 1944, NARA RG 38, E 11, U.S. Navy WWII Oral Histories (*frightened men off the prow*); Liebling, *Mollie & Other War Pieces*, 191 ("*put her nose in the air*").

"*Why in the devil didn't you*": Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 280–81.

"*firmly rooted in France*": Bradley and Blair, *A General's Life*, 256–57; Bradley Commentaries, CBH, MHI, box 41 (*truck's running board*); "The Administrative History of the Operations of 21 Army Group," n.d., NARA RG 334, E 315, ANSCOL, GB 21-AG AH, box 458, 25 (*build their own cages*); memo, F-48 to "Secret Mail Room," Aug. 12, 1944, U.S. Fleet, OPD Information Bulletin, amphibious supplement no. 8, June 9, 1945, GCM Lib, box 1, file 34 (*More than one-third of all shore obstacles*); Bertram H. Ramsay, dispatch, *London Gazette*, Oct. 30, 1947, CMH, 5109+ (*Straits of Dover*); memo, B. B. Talley, Feb. 1948, RG 407, AFIA, 2-3.7 BG (*pinpointed not only enemy gun batteries*); corr, John H. Lauten, 16th Inf, to WD, July 22, 1947, "1st U.S. Infantry Division, G-2 report intelligence activities, MMD (*now being pummeled*).

Yet First Army still had not reached: *CCA*, 341, 351 (*Only a quarter*); "A Narrative History of the Second Ranger Infantry Battalion," ts, n.d., Robert W. Black papers, MHI, box 3; OH, Charles M. Bulap, Co E, 2nd Ranger Bn, HI (*Pointe du Hoc*).

Beyond Utah Beach, confusion remained: "Continuation of Command Narrative," n.d., JMG, MHI, box 12; Blair, *Ridgway's Paratroopers*, 257 (*Benzedrine)*, 259–60 ("*where's the picnic?*").

The 82nd now occupied: Gavin, *On to Berlin*, 111; *CCA*, 291 (*no real bridgehead existed west*); Ruppenthal, *Utah Beach to Cherbourg*, 74–75.

"*Bridgehead still very shallow*": Love and Major, eds., *The Year of D-Day*, 84–85; Bradley and Blair, *A General's Life*, 257 ("*pointless interruption*").

"*With the mast swaying*": *Three Years*, 572–73; Love and Major, eds., *The Year of D-Day*, xvi ("*aura of vinegar*").

"*We've started*": Eisenhower, *Letters to Mamie*, 190.

Even war could not dim the radiance: *VW*, vol. 1, 265; *CCA*, 339; Aron, *France Reborn*, 30 (*cadging cigarettes*), 24 (*forty thousand*); OH, Lt. Richard Oliphant, NARA RG 38, E 11, U.S. Navy WWII Oral Histories (*White blossoms rioted*); Liddle, *D-Day by Those Who Were There*, 145 (*cows lowed*); Watney, *The Enemy Within*, 108 (*blue smocks*); CBH, July 2, 1944, MHI, box 4 (*fascist salutes*); Lankford, ed., *OSS Against the Reich*, 88 (*shops offered goods*); author visit, Bayeux, May 26–27, 2009; Osmont, *The Normandy Diary of Marie-Louise Osmont*, 45, 49 ("*without overcoats*").

"*belted with gigantic floats*": Aron, *France Reborn*, 30 and foreword (*Thirty-six thousand French communes*); Drez, ed., *Voices of D-Day*, 293; Donnison, *Civil Affairs and Military Government in North-West Europe*, 74–77 ("*impossible to differentiate*" and "*Looting by troops*"); Middleton, *Our Share of Night*, 315 (*set up a press camp*); Moorehead, *Eclipse*, 113 ("*a dry Sauterne*").

"*only shells with their insides blown out*": Moorehead, *Eclipse*, 109; Thompson, *The Imperial War Museum Book of Victory in Europe*, 90–91 ("*please stop the shells*"); Scannell, *Argument of Kings*, 157, 165–66 ("*What I can never understand*"); Osmont, *The Normandy Diary of Marie-Louise Osmont*, 41, 46–47 ("*Overhead the hisses*").

"*looking helpless and insignificant*": CBH, June 8, 1944, MHI, box 4; Pyle, *Brave Men*, 251–52; Tobin, *Ernie Pyle's War*, 173–79.

A Gunman's World

Enemy soldiers by the tens of thousands: Keegan, *Six Armies in Normandy*, 157; Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 305 (*French buses upholstered*).

Traveling by five dusty routes: Lefèvre, *Panzers in Normandy Then and Now*, 81; *VW*, vol. 1, 23; Carell, *Invasion—They're Coming!*, 107–8 ("*bombers hovering*"); Mark, *Aerial Interdiction in Three Wars*, 246 (*six miles per hour*); Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 300; Cooper, *The German Army, 1933–1945*, 503 (*Not until June 9*). Historian Niklas Zetterling asserts that Panzer Lehr march losses were exaggerated, although delays were significant. *Normandy 1944*, 47, 384–89.

Half a dozen flak battalions: Carell, *Invasion—They're Coming!*, 114–15; Zetterling, *Normandy 1944*, 48 (*sixty trains*); Keegan, *Six Armies in Normandy*, 156 (Das Reich *matériel and troops*).

"*My friends, you are going to appear*": Hastings, *Das Reich*, 116–26, 170–82; Foot, *SOE in France*, 399 ("*book of iniquity*").

Evil also shadowed: Cooper, *The German Army, 1933–1945*, 503; Milner, "Stopping the Panzers," *JMH* (Apr. 2010): 491+; Isby, ed., *Fighting the Invasion*, 241; Zetterling, *Normandy 1944*, 46 (*too low on fuel*); Chandler and Collins, eds., *The D-Day Encyclopedia*, 361 (*former miner and policeman*); Luther, *Blood and Honor*, 72–73 (*broken nineteen bones*); Murray and Millett, *A War to Be Won*, 423 (*tossing live hand grenades*).

Like hornets the grenadiers swarmed: Milner, "Stopping the Panzers," *JMH* (Apr. 2010): 491+; Luther, *Blood and Honor*, 147 (*chocolate, peanuts*).

Belated salvos from the warships: *VC*, 132–33; C. P. Stacey, "Operation Overlord and Its Sequel," Canadian Military HQ, report no. 131, n.d., NARA RG 407, E 427, ETO ML, #640, 13–14 (*more than two miles*); OH, Dixon M. Raymond, 1981, Craig W. H. Luther papers, HIA, box 1, 4–5 ("*couple days*").

Yet Panzermeyer lacked the strength: Margolian, *Conduct Unbecoming*, 58–64.

"*Why do you bring prisoners*": Luther, *Blood and Honor*, 181–82; C. P. Stacey, "Canadian Participation in the Operations of North-West Europe," Canadian Military HQ, report no. 147, Oct. 1945, NARA RG 407, E 427, ETO ML (*Murder Division*); "Report on the Court of Inquiry," SHAEF, July 1944, NARA RG 331, 290/715/2, E-56, box 2; Margolian, *Conduct Unbecoming*, 102; Hart, *Clash of Arms*, 383–85 (*cycle of atrocity*); McKee, *Caen: Anvil of Victory*, 201 ("*We just shoot them*"); Beevor, *The Second World War*, 594 ("*NPT below rank major*"). War crimes courts later found the 12th SS Panzer Division culpable for sixty-two cold-blooded murders; many scholars and soldiers believe the number of victims was at least double that. Reynolds, *Steel Inferno*, 94.

Canadian battle casualties approached three thousand: *VC*, 140; Granatstein, *The Generals*, 132 ("*fuck and frontal*"); English, *The Canadian Army and the Normandy Campaign*, 310 (*expanded to more than fiftyfold*).

"*They went at it like hockey players*": Hastings, *OVERLORD*, 125; *CCA*, 373–74 (*Authie impossible to replicate*); Luther, *Blood and Honor*, 175 ("*screamed from rage*"); Milner, "Stopping the Panzers," *JMH* (Apr. 2010): 491+ ("*stupid things*").

Among the bastards watching: Bodo Zimmermann, 1946, FMS, #B-308, MHI, 42–43; MMB, 181; Luther, *Blood and Honor*, 170 ("*My dear Meyer*"); *CCA*, 373–74.

Trailers, tents, and four large radio trucks: Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 303; Bennett, *Ultra in the West*, 58–59 (*rely increasingly on the radio*), 68–69; George F. Howe, "American Signal Intelligence in Northwest Africa and Western Europe," n.d., SRH 391, NSA, NARA RG 457, E 9002, 134 (*seventeen thousand messages a day*); Hinsley, 486–90.

Geyr now cocked an ear: Luther, *Blood and Honor*, 179–80.

Geyr escaped with minor wounds: Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 303; Bennett, *Ultra in the West*, 68–69 (*fled to Paris*).

Similar decapitations further impaired: Geyr, "Reflections on the Invasion," *Military Review* (Jan. 1961): 2+; Luther, *Blood and Honor*, 195; Günther Keil, "919th Grenadier Regiment," n.d., FMS, #C-018, MHI, 36–38 ("*little piece of life*"); Hastings, *OVERLORD*, 173–74 (*wooden leg*); McLean, *Quiet Flows the Rhine*, 2, 130 (*675 World War II German generals*).

"*The Seventh Army is everywhere*": *VW*, vol. 1, 258; "Special Messages," June 11, 1944, UK NA, HW 1/2927 (*intercepted by Ultra*); Leo Geyr von Schweppenburg, ETHINT 13, Dec. 11, 1947, MHI, 6 (*antiaircraft gun carriers*); *BP*, 33 (*borrow fifteen machine guns*).

Rommel too was unnerved: Liddell Hart, ed., *The Rommel Papers*, 477–78; Ruge, *Rommel in Normandy*, 183 ("*territory for bargaining*"); Cooper, *The German Army, 1933–1945*, 504–5 ("*every man shall fight*").

"*The battle is not going*": Liddell Hart, ed., *The Rommel Papers*, 491–93.

Rommel's lament would have delighted: "Monty's Wartime Caravans," *AB*, no. 20 (1978): 32+; Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 336. John Colville, who was Churchill's private secretary, reported that Montgomery had even signed some of his own photographs. Colville, *Footprints in Time*, 184–87 ("*three of Rommel*").

On D+2 he had come home to Normandy: Montgomery, *A Field-Marshal in the Family*, 7–8; author visit, Creullet, May 29, 2009; Eisenhower, *General Ike*, 115 ("*keep left*"); Kennedy, *The Business of War*, 343 ("*betting book*"); Hamilton, *Master of the Battlefield*, 718 ("*beaten when necessary*"); Hamilton, *Monty: Final Years of the Field-Marshal, 1944–1976*, 419 (*menagerie*); Kingston McCloughry, *Direction of War*, 158 ("*slender, hard, hawk-like*"); J. S. W. Stone, memoir, n.d., LHC, folder 5, 22 (*reading scripture*).

"*The way to fame*": D'Este, *Decision in Normandy*, 504; Moorehead, *Montgomery*, 188–89 (*275 guineas*); Howarth, ed., *Monty at Close Quarters*, 22 ("*Master*"), 79 ("*interesting personage*"); Lewin, *Montgomery as Military Commander*, 349 ("*Cromwellian figure*"); Granatstein, *The Generals*, 113 ("*God Almonty*"); *PP*, 472 ("*little monkey*"); Hastings, *Armageddon*, 26 ("*little shit*"); Moran, *Churchill: Taken from the Diaries of Lord Moran*, 174 ("*Monty wants to be a king*"); OH, Charles Miles Dempsey, March 12–13, 1947, FCP, MHI ("*Monty is a good man*").

He had arrived for the second time: Carver, ed., *The War Lords*, 501; Raymond Callahan, "Two Armies in Normandy," in Wilson, ed., *D-Day 1944*, 261 ("*last great field army*"); Belfield and Essame, *The Battle for Normandy*, 47 (*British Liberation Army*).

"*the power of commanding affection*": Carver, ed., *The War Lords*, 503; Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 319–20 ("*tolerant and judicious*"); Moorehead, *Montgomery*, 36 ("*mousetrap*"); Howarth, ed., *Monty at Close Quarters*, 11 ("*a burning glass*").

"*I keep clear of all details*": Richardson, *Send for Freddie*, 146; Leasor, *The Clock with Four Hands*, 7 ("*Do you agree"*); Howarth, ed., *Monty at Close Quarters*, 28 ("*One was impressed"*); OH, Field Marshal Montgomery of Alamein, Oct. 1, 1966, John S. D. Eisenhower, CBM, MHI, box 6, 9 (*usual bedtime*).

"*too many of his best qualities*": Lewin, *Montgomery as Military Commander*, 342; Carver, ed., *The War Lords*, 501–3 ("*Like Bottom*"); Howarth, ed., *Monty at Close Quarters*, 37 ("*only rude intentionally*").

"*very small-boyish*": Hamilton, *Master of the Battlefield*, 537, 546 ("*As long as 51 percent*"); Miller, *Ike the Soldier*, 660 (*refuse to attend her funeral*); Irving, *The War Between the Generals*, 170; Moorehead, *Montgomery*, 36; Howarth, ed., *Monty at Close Quarters*, 23 ("*Alone I done it*").

"*Enjoying life greatly*": Hamilton, *Master of the Battlefield*, 652.

The OVERLORD *plan* was *largely his*: Ellis, *Brute Force*, 374; OH, David Belchem, 21st AG, Feb. 20, 1947, FCP, MHI (*American right to capture Cherbourg*); Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 311–12 ("*My general policy*"); memo, B. L. Montgomery, Apr. 14, 1944, IWM, Christopher "Kit" Dawnay collection, PP/MCR, C46, Ancillary Collections, micro R-1 ("*armored force thrusts*").

Thirty-four Allied armored battalions: Zetterling, *Normandy 1944*, 107; Davis, *Carl A. Spaatz and the Air War in Europe*, 457 ("*gutless bugger*").

A flanking attack from west of Caen: D'Este, *Decision in Normandy*, 176–89; *VW*, vol. 1, 254–56.

"*The whole show on land*": Trafford Leigh-Mallory, "Daily Reflections on the Course of the Battle," UK NA, AIR 37/784; Moorehead, *Montgomery*, 217 ("*a gunman's world"*); Hastings, *Inferno*, 524 ("*Bloody murder*"); Lewis, ed., *The Mammoth Book of Eyewitness World War II*, 405–6 ("*Day of Hell*").

For the Americans in the west: Friedrich Freiherr von der Heydte, "A German Parachute Regiment in Normandy," 1954, FMS, #B-839, MHI, 16–19; *CCA*, 366–67; Schrijvers, *The Crash of Ruin*, 93 ("*Lousy & undersized*"), 125 ("*I thought of Carthage*"); "FUSA Weekly Report, 6–14 June 1944," in "Memorandum to Harrison," May 27, 1948, CMH.

Bradley late on June 13: corr, Clarence R. Huebner to G. A. Harrison, Oct. 17, 1947, NARA RG 319, *CCA* historical files, box 164.

"*I'm sitting in a little gray stone*": TR to Eleanor, June 11, 1944, LOC MS, box 10.

No one took a greater proprietary interest: "General de Gaulle Visit to Normandy, 14 June 1944," UK NA, ADM 1/16018; Aron, *France Reborn*, 45–47 ("*not altogether in accordance*").

"*I wrote to Mr. Churchill"*: Kersaudy, *Churchill and De Gaulle*, 357; Beevor and Cooper, *Paris After the Liberation, 1944–1949*, 29 ("*Has it occurred to you*"); Fenby, *The General*, 142-44.

"*We have not come to France"*: Beevor and Cooper, *Paris After the Liberation, 1944–1949*, 109; "General de Gaulle Visit to Normandy, 14 June 1944," UK NA, ADM 1/16018 ("*dislike of smoking*"); Aron, *France Reborn*, 45–47 ("*I missed him in Africa*").

"*a stiff, lugubrious figure"*: Moorehead, *Eclipse*, 122; Beevor and Cooper, *Paris After the Liberation, 1944–1949*, 30 (*saluting gendarmes*); Whitehead, "*Beachhead Don*," 130–31 ("Vive De Gaulle"); Donnison, *Civil Affairs and Military Government in North-West Europe*, 78–79 (*Several thousand people awaited*); De Gaulle, *The Complete War Memoirs of Charles de Gaulle*, 563–64 ("*women smiled and sobbed*"); author visit, Bayeux, May 27, 2009, historical signage, Place de Gaulle ("*glorious and mutilated*"); Aron, *France Reborn*, 45–47 ("*The path of war*").

After belting out "*La Marseillaise*": "General de Gaulle Visit to Normandy, 14 June 1944," UK NA, ADM 1/16018 (*fourteen hotel rooms*); Hamilton, *Master of the Battlefield*, 666; De Gaulle, *The Complete War Memoirs of Charles de Gaulle*, 638 ("*France would live*"); Robb, *The Discovery of France*, 29 ("*cheese*").

Montgomery wrote Churchill: BLM to WSC, June 15, 1944, UK NA, CAB 120/867; Guérard, *France: A Short History*, 239 ("*Blessed be he*").

Terror Is Broken by Terror

In happier days, when the Reich: *Germany IX*, 415 (*a force of 28,000 workers*); *World War II Diary of Jean Gordon Peltier*, MRC FDM, 181–82 (*new maple furniture*); Mark Watson, "As I Saw It," in Knickerbocker et al., *Danger Forward*, 269–70 (*bootjack*); Stenbuck, ed., *Typewriter Battalion*, 222–24 (*Potemkin farmhouses*); Speidel, *We Defended Normandy*, 105 (*Soissons Cathedral*).

"*the most forbidden place in France*": Stenbuck, ed., *Typewriter Battalion*, 222–24; Beevor, *D-Day*, 172 ("*meat flies*");

http://www.hitlerpages.com/pagina33.html.

This was Hitler's first return to France: *CCA*, 140; Fest, *Hitler*, 695–98 ("*tipping to the right*"); Bodo Zimmermann, 1946, FMS, #B-308, MHI, 111 (*personal command*).

Hitler sat hunched on a wooden stool: Speidel, *We Defended Normandy*, 106–7; Bertram H. Ramsay, dispatch, *London Gazette*, Oct. 30, 1947, CMH, 5109+. Twenty Allied divisions had landed by D+9, but Rommel put the number at twenty-six. James Hodgson, "The German Defense of Normandy," Sept. 1953, R-24, NARA RG 319, 270/19/30/4-7, box 6, 8–9.

The German Seventh Army opposed them: Cooper, *The German Army, 1933–1945*, 503; Edward J. Drea, "Unit Reconstitution: A Historical Perspective," Dec. 1983, CSI, 16 (*averaged under eleven thousand*); *VW*, vol. 1, 262 (*casualties had reached 26,000*); *WaS*, 62; James Hodgson, "The German Defense of Normandy," Sept. 1953, R-24, NARA RG 319, 270/19/30/4-7, box 6, 8–9 (*superiority in matériel*).

Anglo-American warplanes harried: G. Rundstedt, "Experiences from the Invasion Battles of Normandy," June 20, 1944, in *Naval Intelligence Weekly*, Nov. 15, 1944, Sidney Negretto Papers, MHI, box 4; Biddle, *Rhetoric and Reality in Air Warfare*, 280 (*three hundred trains*); *Germany VII*, 328–30 (*German aircraft reinforcements*); F. Ruge, "Coast Defense and Invasion," June 9, 1947, ONI IR 243, NARA RG 334, E 315, ANSCOL, box 642; Buffetaut, *D-Day Ships*, 147 (*Le Havre*).

American tanks had crossed the Cherbourg–Coutances road: Isby, ed., *Fighting the Invasion*, 30.

"*Don't call it a beachhead*": Keegan, *Six Armies in Normandy*, 165; Blumentritt, *Von Rundstedt*, 235; Speidel, *We Defended Normandy*, 106–7 ("*Cherbourg is to be held*").

Rundstedt said little: Barnett, ed., *Hitler's Generals*, 175–76, 191–98; Roberts, *The Storm of War*, 501 (Der alte Herr); Holt, *The Deceivers*, 570–71 (Der schwarze Ritter); Blumentritt, *Von Rundstedt*, 13–15 (*Junker gentry*); MMB, 477–78.

Beset by rheumatism: Liddell Hart, *The Other Side of the Hill*, 390 ("*psychic resignation*"); Holt, *The Deceivers*, 570–71 (*slept late*); Isby, ed., *Fighting the Invasion*, 47 (*disdained both the telephone*), 50 ("*just as before 1866*"); Liddell Hart, *The German Generals Talk*, 71–72 ("*brown dirt*"); Speidel, *We Defended Normandy*, 89–90 ("*Bohemian corporal*"); "Battle of the Bulge," PIR, MHI, 12 ("Quatsch!"); G. Rundstedt, British interrogation, July 9, 1945, NARA RG 407, E 427, ETO ML #2126, box 24231 ("*cheap bluff*"); Barnett, ed., *Hitler's Generals*, 185; Günther Blumentritt, ETHINT 73, Jan. 1946, MHI, 2–4 (*deepened his gloom*).

Now Rundstedt stepped forward: James Hodgson, "The German Defense of Normandy," Sept. 1953, R-24, NARA RG 319, 270/19/30/4-7, box 6, 8–9; Irving, *The Trail of the Fox*, 387 ("*The fortress is to hold out*"); Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 326 ("*They must hold here*").

Rundstedt thought another invasion was likely: G. Rundstedt, British interrogation, July 9, 1945, NARA RG 407, E 427, ETO ML #2126, box 24231; Holt, *The Deceivers*, 580–81 (*diverted but a single division*); Howard, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, vol. 5, *Strategic Deception*, 189 (*twenty-one others*); Bodo Zimmermann, 1946, FMS, #B-308, MHI, 86 (*Rundstedt agreed with Marshal Rommel*); Liddell Hart, *The Other Side of the Hill*, 401; Speidel, *We Defended Normandy*, 98–99; *CCA*, 412–13.

"*You must stay where you are*": Liddell Hart, *The Other Side of the Hill*, 410.

Great things were afoot: *IFG*, 46–47; Hinsley, 483–84; *WaS*, 69.

"*imagination run wild*": *Germany VII*, 420; Hinsley, 424 (*Volkswagen factory*); *AAFinWWII*, 105 (*thirty-six thousand tons*); "The V-Weapons," *AB*, no. 6 (1974): 2+ (*simple mobile equipment*); M. C. Helfers, "The Employment of V-Weapons by the Germans During World War II," 1954, OCMH, NARA RG 319, 2-3.7 AW, 85 (*weapon was a flying torpedo*); Irving, *The Mare's Nest*, 299 ("*cherry stones*").

The first salvo, launched from western France: Hinsley, 428–29; *Germany VII*, 375 ("*Terror is broken by terror*").

Rundstedt suggested that the V-1: Liddell Hart, ed. *The Rommel Papers*, 454n; Goerlitz, *History of the German General Staff, 1657–1945*, 460–61; *Germany VII*, 426–29 (*margin of error*); Speidel, *We Defended Normandy*, 109 ("*easier for peace*").

They broke for lunch: Blumentritt, *Von Rundstedt*, 235; Speidel, *We Defended Normandy*, 110; Irving, *The Trail of the Fox*, 386–88 (*three liqueur glasses*).

"*What do you really think of our chances*": Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 333; Goerlitz, *History of the German General Staff, 1657–1945*, 460–61 ("*Attend to your invasion front*").

"*The discussion had no success*": *VW*, vol. 1, 269; Bodo Zimmermann, 1946, FMS, #B-308, MHI, 112 (*V-1 flew east rather than west*); *Germany VII*, 432 (*court-martial investigators*); Kershaw, *Hitler, 1936–45: Nemesis*, 643 ("*Only optimists*").

"*cannot escape the Führer's influence*": Irving, *The Trail of the Fox*, 387; Ruge, *Rommel in Normandy*, 190–97, 234 ("*endless parallels*").

Rommel retired to his chambers: author visit, La Roche–Guyon, May 30, 2009; Liddell Hart, ed., *The Rommel Papers*, 492 ("*The long-range action*").

Even on the Sabbath morn: http://myweb.tiscali.co.uk/homefront/arp/arp4a.html (*crowed in jubilaton*).

In the Guards Chapel at Wellington Barracks: "Services Tomorrow," *Times* (London), June 17, 1944, 8; Ziegler, *London at War, 1939–1945*, 290 ("*Te Deum*"); Baker, *Ernest Hemingway*, 501–3 ("*white-hot bunghole*"); Churchill, *Triumph and Tragedy*, 39–40.

Then they heard nothing: King and Kutta, *Impact*, 198–99; www.flyingbombsandrockets.com/V1*; War Damage Report No. 1861, Royal Military Guards Chapel, Aug. 3, 1944, UK NA, IR 37/59 (*blew out walls*); author visit, Guards Chapel and Museum, Apr. 5, 2010; McKee, *Caen: Anvil of Victory*, 133–34 ("*Be thou faithful*").

Clementine Churchill hastened home: Churchill, *Triumph and Tragedy*, 39–40; reminiscence, George Laity, Aug. 15, 2005, www.bbc.co.uk/print/ww2peopleswar/stories/66* (*wax tableau*); McKee, *Caen: Anvil of Victory*, 133–34 (*Churchill wept*).

That afternoon he motored to Bushy Park: Chandler, 1933; *AAFinWWII*, 526–32; *CCA*, 215–17 (*thirty thousand attack sorties*); www.discoverfrance.net/France/Paris/Monuments-Paris/Eiffel.shtml *(four Eiffel Towers*); M. C. Helfers, "The Employment of V-Weapons by the Germans During World War II," 1954, OCMH, NARA RG 319, 2-3.7 AW, 33–34 (*forty or more times*); Lyall, ed., *The War in the Air*, 374 (*harpoons*).

CROSSBOW *countermeasures in the coming weeks*: Hillson, "Barrage Balloons for Low-Level Air Defense," *Airpower Journal* (summer 1989): 37+; *Germany VII*, 430; Lyall, ed., *The War in the Air*, 378 (*learned to use their wings*); Baldwin, *The Deadly Fuze*, 257–58 (*eight times more difficult*); Collier, *The Defence of the United Kingdom*, 383–84 (*guns were shifted from greater London*); Churchill, *Triumph and Tragedy*, 40 (*Bomb Alley*).

Eisenhower's "first priority" edict: *AAFinWWII*, 532, 528 (*one hundred V-1s were still fired at Target 42 each day*); M. C. Helfers, "The Employment of V-Weapons by the Germans During World War II," 1954, OCMH, NARA RG 319, 2-3.7 AW, 100 (*one-quarter of all combat sorties*); Collier, *The Defence of the United Kingdom*, 387 (*73,000 tons*); Davis, *Carl A. Spaatz and the Air War in Europe*, 432 (*bombers had little impact*); diary, July 4, 1944, Frederick L. Anderson papers, HIA, box 2 ("*give the enemy full credit*").

A British study calculated: "CROSSBOW Probable Scale and Effect of Attack on London by Pilotless Aircraft," Jan. 10, 1944, British COS, NARA RG 331, E 3, SHAEF SGS, 290/7/4/4-5, box 132; corr, Bernard Lipford, 115th Inf, NARA RG 407, E 427, HI (" *pushed through the walls*").

Soon not a pane of glass remained: King and Kutta, *Impact*, 202, 211; Fussell, *Wartime*, 215 ("*little devilish laughs*"); Eisenhower, *Letters to Mamie*, 197 (*nineteen times*); Ziegler, *London at War, 1939–1945*, 306 ("*How squalid*").

Fewer and fewer were willing: King and Kutta, *Impact*, 211; Collier, *The Defence of the United Kingdom*, 395 ("*an ordeal perhaps as trying*").

How Easy It Is to Make a Ghost

West of Bayeux, the Norman uplands: Keegan, *Six Armies in Normandy*, 152–53; Davies, "Geographical Factors in the Invasion and Battle of Normandy," *Geographical Review* (Oct. 1946): 613+ (*pre-Cambrian schist*); memo, Cleave A. Jones, July 17, 1944, SHAEF, NARA RG 498, ETO HD, UD 603, SLAM 201 file, box 1 (*sunken lanes*) ; *Nouveau Petit Larousse*, 1934, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bocage ("*agreeable shady*"); Wellard, *The Man in a Helmet*, 126 ("*Gethsemane*"); Doubler, *Busting the Bocage*, 21 (*Guadalcanal*).

"*I couldn't imagine the bocage"*: OH, ONB, 1974–75, Charles Hanson, MHI, IX-4; "Neptune Monograph," TF 122, Apr. 21, 1944, NARA RG 331, E 23, SHAEF G-3 Plans, 290/7/10/6, box 43 (*amply forewarned*); *The 35th Infantry Division in World War II* ("*fortification like a wall*"); terrain study, Charles H. Bonesteel III, FUSA, Apr. 18, 1944, Arthur S. Nevins papers, MHI (" *Norman bocage*"); OH, Charles H. Bonesteel III, 1973, Robert St. Louis, SOOHP, MHI, 164; "Appreciation of Possible Development of Operations to Secure a Lodgment Area," May 7, 1944, 21st AG, UK NA, WO 205/118, 2; *St.-Lô*, 4 (*four thousand hedged enclosures*); Cawthon, *Other Clay*, 76 ("*We were rehearsed endlessly*").

"*I feel we'll be getting to St. Lô*": *CCA*, 383.

Tank companies now reported: Doubler, *Closing with the Enemy*, 43–44; Mack Morriss, "My Old Outfit," in *Reporting World War II*, vol. 2, 539 ("*a wall of fire"*); "Terrain—Cotentin Peninsula," July 8, 1944, VIII Corps, NARA RG 498, G-3 OR, box 10 (" *spitting range*"); Charles H. Coates, "German Defense in Hedgerow Terrain," WD Observer Board, July 27, 1944, NARA RG 334, E 315, ANSCOL, AGF ETO C-117 (*intimacy neutralized Allied air and artillery*); Pyle, *Brave Men*, 255 ("*snipers everywhere"*); msg, 15th Army Group to SHAEF, Feb. 11, 1945, NARA RG 331, SHAEF SGS, 383.6/4 (*sliding scale of rewards*).

Enemy panzers, artillery, and savage small-arms fire: Simpson, *Selected Prose*, 139, 122 ("*purr of the bullets*"), 125 ("*Some ideas stink*"); Linderman, *The World Within War* , 85 ("*I lie in the grass*"); Shephard, *A War of Nerves*, 252 ("*a soft siffle*"); Whitaker et al., *Victory at Falaise*, 309–10 (*Mortar fragments*).

French civilians waving white strips: Pyle, *Brave Men*, 284–85 (*eight cents*); Belfield and Essame, *The Battle for Normandy*, 132 ("*plastered to the walls*"); Wilson, ed., *D-Day 1944*, 254 (*stiff-legged as wooden toys*); Rosse and Hill, *The Story of the Guards Armoured Division*, 33 ("*gigantic rake*"); Daglish, *Operation Goodwood*, 96 (*smoke tinted red*); Whitehead, "*Beachhead Don*," 133 ("*not a building standing whole*"); Peckham and Snyder, eds., *Letters from Fighting Hoosiers*, vol. 2, 120 ("*deserted and silent*").

Each contested town, like each hedgerow: memo, Royce L. Thompson, "ETO Invasion Casualties," May 27, 1948, OCMH, GCM Lib, Royce L. Thompson collection, box 1; Osmont, *The Normandy Diary of Marie-Louise Osmont*, 88 ("*white as sheets*" and "*like hunted animals*"); Shephard, *A War of Nerves*, 252; memo, July 15, 1944, NARA RG 498, ETO, SGS, 333.5, 290/50/10/11/7-1, box 35; memo, First Army IG, Aug. 7, 1944, NARA RG 338, First Army AG Gen'l Corr, OIG, box 218 (*five hundred cases of suspected* "*S.I.W.*"); memo, Cleave A. Jones, July 17, 1944, SHAEF, NARA RG 498, ETO HD, UD 603, SLAM 201 file, box 1 (" *Have we 100 divisions*").

"*Things are always confusing*": Pyle, *Brave Men*, 269, 305; Hadley, *Heads or Tails*, 90 ("*make a ghost*"); Holt and Holt, *Major & Mrs. Holt's Battlefield Guide to the Normandy Landing Beaches*, 133 (*slain by a mortar splinter*); L. F. Skinner, "The Man Who Worked on Sundays," n.d., IWM, 01/13/1, 18 ("*I buried him close*").

Only the sharpest weather eye: *WaS*, 64; Stagg, *Forecast for Overlord*, 126; Bates and Fuller, *America's Weather Warriors*, 96; Woodward, *Ramsay at War*, 164–65 (*SHAEF forecasters predicted*); Karig, *Battle Report: The Atlantic War*, 352–56 (*chance of a June gale*); "Operation OVERLORD: Report on the Effect of Bad Weather, 19–23 June 1944," SHAEF, n.d., NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #220 (*three hundred to one*).

More than two hundred ships now plied: "Report by the Allied Naval Commander-in-Chief," Oct. 1944, NARA RG 407, ML, #624, 94–95; *CCA*, 423 (*218,000 tons*); Bynell, "Logistical Planning and Operations—Europe," lecture, March 16, 1945, NARA RG 334, E 315, ANSCOL, box 207, 5 (*30 percent less than planned*); *LSA*, vol. 2, 392–93 (*anchored off the wrong strand*); "Amphibious Operations: Invasion of Northern France," CINC, U.S. Fleet, Oct. 1944, NARA RG 407, ML #252, box 24148, 5–13 (*officers in small boats*); Waddell, *United States Army Logistics*, 65, 134 ("*Please, oh, please*").

But shortages were more common: Waddell, *United States Army Logistics*, 75–76, 83 (*strict firing limits*); Bynell, "Logistical Planning and Operations—Europe," lecture, Mar. 16, 1945, NARA RG 334, E 315, ANSCOL, box 207, 5; Charles F. MacDermut and Adolph P. Gratiot, "History of G-4 Com Z ETO," 1946, CMH, 8-3.4 AA, 73 (*bundles of maps*); "Supply and Maintenance on the European Continent," NARA RG 407, E 427, AG WWII operations report no. 130, 97-USF5-0.3.0, 41; "G-4 History," n.d., NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #553A-C, 22 (*145,000 tons*); Howard, lecture, Aug. 8, 1944, NARA RG 334, E 315, ANSCOL, L-6-44, H-83, box 191, 9 (*expected to shoot 125 rounds*).

Before dawn on Monday, July 17: Balkoski, *Beyond the Beachhead*, 262; memoir, William Puntenney, ts, n.d., MMD, 59–63 (*killing the new commander*); *St.-Lô*, 110–11 (*undershirts*); *BP*, 167 (*plasma bags*); Robert E. Walker, "With the Stonewallers," ts, n.d., MMD, 65 ("*unbearably sorry scene*").

But German defenses were melting: *BP*, 170–71; Johns, *The Clay Pigeons of St. Lo*, 198, 233–34 (*stone sarcophagus*); Whitehead, "*Beachhead Don*," 195 ("*Here among the dead*"); Miller, *Division Commander*, 90 (*slashed his arm*); *St.-Lô*, 117–19 (*seventeen strongpoints*); Balkoski, *Beyond the Beachhead*, 278 (*Howie's body arrived by jeep*).

"*You couldn't identify anything*": "Between Collaboration and Resistance: French Literary Life Under Nazi Occupation," New York Public Library, exhibition, June 2009; Carpenter, *No Woman's World*, 59 ("*On this lake*"); Blumenson, *Liberation*, 28 ("*liberated the hell*"); Bair, *Samuel Beckett: A Biography*, 242–44; Perloff, "In Love with Hiding," *Iowa Review* (2005): 82 ("*capital of ruins*"); Linderman, *The World Within War*, 117 ("*fence posts, teacups, doorbells*"); AAR, George V. Bleier, Jr., graves registration, 11th Inf, n.d., NARA RG 407, ETO G-3 OR, 290/56/5/1-3, box 11 (*booby-trapped German bodies*); "Graves Registration Service," NARA RG 407, E 427, AG WWII operations reports, 97-USF5-0.3.0, no. 107, 10 ("*jerked by a rope*").

"*If there was a world beyond*": Cawthon, "Pursuit: Normandy, 1944," *American Heritage* (Feb. 1978): 80+.

"*eaten the guts out*": OH, 2nd ID, July 13–18, 1944, NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, folder 12.

"*Here!*": Whitehead, "*Beachhead Don*," 198; Balkoski, *Beyond the Beachhead*, 278. Many bodies of the division dead had yet to be recovered.

Rommel rose with the sun: Irving, *The Trail of the Fox*, 372–74; Liddell Hart, *The Rommel Papers*, 463–64 ("*can take your mind off*").

Troubles he had: Ruge, *Rommel in Normandy*, 228; *VW*, vol. 1, 307; memoir, J. S. W. Stone, n.d., LHC, folder 5, 54 ("*funk holes*").

"*Militarily things aren't at all good*": Liddell Hart, *The Rommel Papers*, 491–93; Davis, *Carl A. Spaatz and the Air War in Europe*, 460 (*six thousand half-ton bombs*); *BP*, 120 (*forty minutes*); Moorehead, *Eclipse*, 145 ("*nothing more to see*"); Aron, *France Reborn*, 106 (*Eight thousand French refugees*); *VW*, vol. 1, 316 (*a single battalion*).

On any given day now: Liddell Hart, *The Rommel Papers*, 496, 486–87 (*Only 10,000 replacements*); *BP*, 181 (*80,000 artillery rounds*); Ruge, *Rommel in Normandy*, 213–19 ("*bleeding white*"); James Hodgson, "The Battle of the Hedgerows," Aug. 1954, NARA RG 319, OCMH, R-54, box 8, IV-5 (*1.6 million German casualties*).

That bloodletting had intensified: Gilbert, *The Second World War*, 544; Megargee, *Inside Hitler's High Command*, 210; Erickson, *The Road to Berlin*, 228 (*shuffle through Moscow*).

Rommel's disaffection grew: Lewin, *Rommel as Military Commander*, 230; Young, *Rommel, the Desert Fox*, 165 ("*without the least regard*"); Speidel, *We Defended Normandy*, 84–85 (*dangerous talk*); Beevor, *D-Day*, 326–30 (*would consider taking command*); Barnett, ed., *Hitler's Generals*, 200 (*Rundstedt had been removed*); Günther Blumentritt, ETHINT 73, Jan. 8–11, 1946, MHI, 2–4 ("*make an end to the whole war*"); Carver, ed., *The War Lords*, 197 (*250,000-mark gratuity*); *CCA*, 447 ("*I will be next*").

Rundstedt's successor: MMB, 282–83 (*Cunning Hans*); Barnett, ed., *Hitler's Generals*, 404–5; Speidel, *We Defended Normandy*, 120–22 ("*obstinate self-will*"); Keegan, *Six Armies in Normandy*, 240 ("*couldn't be grimmer*"); Liddell Hart, ed., *The Rommel Papers*, 486–87 ("*growing worse every day*"); *VC*, 179 (*Kluge had endorsed*).

Fried eggs and brandy: Ruge, *Rommel in Normandy*, 233; "Rommel's Accident," *AB*, no. 8 (1975): 42+; Luther, *Blood and Honor*, 229 ("*Who do you think*").

During a conference at St.-Pierre: Belfield and Essame, *The Battle for Normandy*, 149; McKee, *Caen: Anvil of Victory*, 256 (*efforts to conceal the noise*); *Germany VII*, 596–97 (*still expected in the Pas de Calais*).

Dietrich agreed that an attack seemed imminent: Daglish, *Operation Goodwood*, 83–86; Liddell Hart, *The Tanks*, vol. 2, 362 (*ear pressed to the ground*); Irving, *The Trail of the Fox*, 417–18 ("*I obey only you*").

The car raced east on Route D-4: Fraser, *Knight's Cross*, 510. Conflicting claims were advanced for this action. The British official RAF history credits Spitfires of Squadron No. 602, flying from airfield B11. Saunders, *Royal Air Force, 1939–1945*, vol. 3, 121.

Slugs stitched the left side of the Horch: "Rommel's Accident," *AB*, no. 8 (1975): 42+; Young, *Rommel, the Desert Fox*, 170–71 (*Rommel lay in the roadbed*).

He was grievously hurt: Brown, *Bodyguard of Lies*, 743–44; "Rommel's Death Reported," (Melbourne, Australia) *Argus*, Aug. 23, 1944, 16.

Not for weeks would Reich propagandists: Bodo Zimmermann, 1946, FMS, #B-308, MHI, 121–22.

Salvation appeared to be rising: Churchill, *Triumph and Tragedy*, 8 ("*synthetic harbors*"); H. D. Bynell, lecture, Oct. 31, 1944,

NARA RG 334, E 315, ANSCOL, L-7-44, box 199, 6 (*$100 million*); "Invasion Harbors Towed to France," British Information Services, Oct. 17, 1944, Hanson Baldwin papers, YU, box 109, folder 862 (*another ten thousand now bullied*); Keegan, *Six Armies in Normandy*, 161; *IFG*, 25–26; "Prefabricated Ports," Oct. 1944, British Information Services, Hanson Baldwin papers, YU, box 109, folder 862; *WaS*, 28 (*160 tugs*); *VW*, vol. 1, 88–90; *IFG*, 25–26; *WaS*, 26–27 ("*journey of self-immolation*"); Karig, *Battle Report: The Atlantic War*, 347 (*antique side-wheelers*); "Mulberry B," SHAEF G-4, Nov. 1944, NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #44 (*enormous tricolor*).

To this suicide fleet were added: "Prefabricated Ports," Oct. 1944, British Information Services, Hanson Baldwin papers, YU, box 109, folder 862; "Mulberry B," SHAEF G-4, Nov. 1944, NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #44 (*ten miles of floating piers*); *VW*, vol. 1, 88–90 (*two million tons*); www.nycgovparks.org/sub_your_park/historical_signs/hs_historical_sign.php?id=8771 (*seventeen times more concrete*); Mason, ed., *The Atlantic War Remembered*, 377 ("*One storm will wash*"); "Task Force 128: Report on Installation of Mulberry A," n.d., DDE Lib, A. Dayton Clark papers, box 2 (*unloading had begun at Mulberry A*); Karig, *Battle Report: The Atlantic War*, 352–56 (*LSTs could be emptied*).

one of the worst June gales in eighty years: Woodward, *Ramsay at War*, 164–65; log, H.M.S. *Despatch*, June 19, 1944, UK NA, WO 32/12211; "Construction Battalions in the Invasion of Normandy," Nov. 30, 1944, SEM, NHHC, box 81, folder 28, 39–40 (*Anchors dragged and fouled*); Thompson, *The Imperial War Museum Book of Victory in Europe*, 96 ("*Storm continues*").

Swept away they were, pier by pier: "Task Force 128: Report on Installation of Mulberry A," n.d., DDE Lib, A. Dayton Clark papers, box 2; *IFG*, 177 (*gunshots from sailors*); Buffetaut, *D-Day Ships*, 140–42; *CCA*, 423–26; Karig, *Battle Report: The Atlantic War*, 352–56 (*Distress calls jammed*); Love and Major, eds., *The Year of D-Day*, 93 ("*a damnable spell*").

After eighty hours, the spell broke: *WaS*, 64 ("*a rent in the sky*"); log, H.M.S. *Despatch*, June 19, 1944, UK NA, WO 32/12211 (*Force seven gusts*); OH, Byron S. Huie, Jr., Aug. 18, 1944, NARA RG 38, E 11, U.S. Navy WWII Oral Histories, 5–6 ("*Not even a thousand-bomber raid*"); Belfield and Essame, *The Battle for Normandy*, 102–3; Fergusson, *The Watery Maze*, 346–47 (*small tanker deep in the dunes*); AAR, 21st Weather Squadron, AAF, 1944, NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #493-A (*sea wrack*); *VW*, vol. 1, 272–73 (*two miles of articulated steel pier*).

Mulberry A was a total loss: R. W. Crawford, "Guns, Gas and Rations," June 1945, SHAEF G-4, NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #145; Chalmers, *Full Cycle*, 238–39 (*Gooseberries were positioned*); Mason, ed., *The Atlantic War Remembered*, 377 ("*formidable abortion*").

Mulberry B ultimately did prove: Buffetaut, *D-Day Ships*, 136 (*completed in mid-July*); Hickling and Mackillop, "The OVERLORD Artificial Harbors," lecture, Nov. 6, 1944, CARL, N-12217; Charles C. Bates, "Sea, Swell and Surf Forecasting for D-Day and Beyond: The Anglo-American Effort, 1943–1945," 2010, a.p., 20 (*Port Winston*); H. D. Crerar, "Notes on Conference Given by C-in-C 21 Army Group," June 22, 1944, National Archives of Canada, RG 24, vol. 1054 2, file 215A21.016 (9) ("*at least six days behind*"); *WaS*, 65–66 (*until late July*); *VW*, vol. 1, 274 (*Rommel had exploited the bad weather*); "Supply and Evacuation by Air," n.d., NARA RG 407, E 427, AG WWII Operations Reports, 97-USF5-0.3.0, no. 26 (*hand grenades were flown*); *LSA*, vol. 1, 407 (*eight coasters deliberately beached*).

With the beaches again in disarray: memo, R. C. Partridge and C. H. Bonesteel III, Dec. 31, 1943, NARA RG 407, ETO ML, #205, box 24143 ("*overwhelm us*"); "Official Study of Port of Cherbourg," 1945, NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #492 (*supplying up to thirty divisions*); Coles and Weinberg, *Civil Affairs*, 721 ("*most important port*").

Great misfortune had befallen Cherbourg: "Official Study of Port of Cherbourg," 1945, RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #492 (*pillage by the heriditary enemy*); Baedeker, *Northern France*, 158–61; "Cherbourg, Gateway to France: Rehabilitation and Operation of the First Major Port," 1945, NARA RG 319, ETO HD, 8-3.1 AE (*financed with German reparations*).

Now Cherbourg was again besieged: *CCA*, 420–22; Whitehead, "*Beachhead Don*," 146–47 (*French farmers tossed roses*); Pyle, *Brave Men*, 273–75 ("*terribly pathetic*"); Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 308 (*Strauss waltzes*); *Three Years*, 596–97 (*hog calling*); Fussell, *Wartime*, 255 ("*bumf*"); Lasky, "Military History Stood on Its Head," *Berlin Journal* 14 (spring 2007), American Academy of Berlin: 20+ ("Ei sörrender").

An American ultimatum: Ruppenthal, *Utah Beach to Cherbourg*, 172–77, 189; Whitehead, *World War II: An Ex-Sergeant Remembers*, 79 ("*All you sons-a-bitches*").

In radio messages decrypted by Ultra: *CCA*, 431–34 ("*bunker paralysis*"); Sunset 604, June 25, 1944, NARA RG 457, E 9026, SRS-1869 ("*greatly worn out*"); Reardon, ed., *Defending Fortress Europe*, mss, 165 (*five thousand cows*); Saunders, *Royal Air Force, 1939–1945*, vol. 3, 123 (*four U-boats*); *CCA*, 434 ("*You will continue to fight*").

Schlieben's miseries multiplied: "The Reminiscences of Alan Goodrich Kirk," 1962, John Mason, Col U OHRO, NHHC, 349–50 (*bombardment force split*); Karig, *Battle Report: The Atlantic War*, 362–65.

Great salvos soon arced: OH, John F. Latimer, n.d., NARA RG 38, E 11, U.S. Navy WWII Oral Histories, 19–20 ("*more concentrated firing*"); Morton L. Deyo, "Cherbourg," Feb. 1956, SEM, NHHC, box 81, file 33; *IFG*, 198–205 (*most pugnacious*

German battery).

Six miles east of Cherbourg: Buffetaut, *D-Day Ships*, 151–52; AR, U.S.S. *Texas*, July 12, 1944, NARA RG 38, CNO, 370/45/3/1, box 1470, 3–5; *IFG*, 205–12 (*eight hundred rounds dumped on Battery Hamburg*).

In this General Collins was ready to oblige: memo, Cleave A. Jones, June 22, 1944, SHAEF, NARA RG 498, ETO HD, UD 603, SLAM 201 file, box 1; Johnson, *History of the Twelfth Infantry Regiment in World War II*, 111 (*four hundred feet above*); Collins, *Lightning Joe*, 221 ("*The view of Cherbourg*").

"*you can make the other fellow conform*": OH, JLC, Jan. 21, 1954, CBM, NARA RG 319, OCMH, 2-3.7 CB 3; CBH, July 15, 1944, MHI, box 4 (*gift for persuasion*); Keegan, *Six Armies in Normandy*, 159 (*nonchalance about casualties*); Berlin, *U.S. Army World War II Corps Commanders*, 3–5 (*youngest of the thirty-four*), 16 ("*concentration and decision*"); diary, JMG, May 16, 1944, MHI, box 10 ("*runty, cocky*"); Collins, *Lightning Joe*, 2–3 (*New Orleans emporium*); OH, JLC, 1972, Charles C. Sperow, SOOHP, MHI, 6 (*malarial shakes*); Arlington National Cemetery website, http://www.arlingtoncemetery.net/josephla.htm; corr, JLC to Brentano's, Oct. 24, 1944, JLC papers, DDE Lib, box 3, 201 file (Moby Dick); Carafano, *After D-Day*, 186 ("*An order is but an aspiration*").

Now Cherbourg was nearly his: Ruppenthal, *Utah Beach to Cherbourg*, 193; Wertenbaker, *Invasion!*, 150–52 (*GIs fought to the docks*); Johnson, *History of the Twelfth Infantry Regiment in World War II*, 112.

General von Schlieben had by now retreated: Carell, *Invasion—They're Coming!*, 177 ("*swing a cat*"); *CCA*, 438 ("*Documents burned*"); memo, Cleave A. Jones, June 26, 1944, SHAEF, NARA RG 498, ETO HD, UD 603, SLAM 201 file, box 1 ("*It was good*").

Within minutes a German soldier: Wertenbaker, *Invasion!*, 158–59; Breuer, *Hitler's Fortress Cherbourg*, 232; Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 313 (*a printed menu*); Mittelman, ed., *Hold Fast!*, 17 ("*I too am tired*").

a "looter's heaven": corr, Thor M. Smith to family, July 5, 1944, Smith papers, HIA; Whitehead, "*Beachhead Don*," 159–60 ("*shaving cream*"); OH, Albert Mumma, July 22, 1944, NARA RG 38, E 11, U.S. Navy WWII Oral Histories, 11 (*Hôtel Atlantique*); memo, Cleave A. Jones, June 26, 1944, SHAEF, NARA RG 498, ETO HD, UD 603, SLAM 201 file, box 1 (*canned octopus*); "Cherbourg, Gateway to France: Rehabilitation and Operation of the First Major Port," 1945, NARA RG 319, ETO HD, 8-3.1 AE; Andrew T. McNamara, "QM Activities of II Corps," 1955, PIR, MHI, 136 (*two bottles of wine and three of liquor*); Mason, ed., *The Atlantic War Remembered*, 411–15 ("*one big drunk*"); Wertenbaker, *Invasion!*, 162–63. Capture of the oil tanks "ranked with the seizure of the Remagen bridge" across the Rhine nine months later, in one logistian's analysis. *LSA*, vol. 1, 500.

Those who had inspected the port: Frank A. Osmanski, "Critical Analysis of the Planning and Execution of the Logistic Support of the Normandy Invasion," Dec. 1949, Armed Forces Staff College, Osmanski papers, MHI; *CCA*, 441–42 ("*a masterful job*"); "Official Study of Port of Cherbourg," 1945, NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #492 ("*completely wrecked*"); "Port Plans, Pre-Invasion," n.d., NARA RG 319, *LSA* background files, 2-3.7 CB 6 (*Trainloads of explosives*); F. K. Newcomer, Jr., "Analytical Study of the Rehabilitation of the Port of Cherbourg," n.d., NARA RG 334, E 315, NWC, ANSCOL, box 234, 14–18; Beck, 352.

Countless booby traps seeded the ruins: "Cherbourg Port Reconstruction," Office of the Chief Engineer, ETO, March 1945, NARA RG 334, E 315, NWC, ANSCOL, USA ETO Z-2, box 1128, 30–32; Mason, ed., *The Atlantic War Remembered*, 410 (*four hundred mines*); *IFG*, 217 (*eight magnetic and eight acoustical sweeps*); Harlan D. Bynell, "Logistical Planning and Operations—Europe," lecture, Oct. 31, 1944, NARA RG 334, E 315, NWC, ANSCOL, L-7-44, box 199, 9 (*tedious, dangerous reconstruction*); *LSA*, vol. 2, 71–75; "Official Study of Port of Cherbourg," 1945, NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #492 (*not until mid-July*); Beck, 355 (*deepwater basins*); "Port Plans, Pre-Invasion," n.d., NARA RG 319, *LSA* background files, 2-3.7 CB 6 ("*One cannot avoid noticing*").

"*this most pregnant victory*": WSC to J. Stalin, June 29, 1944, "Strategy and Operations, vol. 2," UK NA, CAB 120/421.

22,000 VII Corps casualties: Ruppenthal, *Utah Beach to Cherbourg*, 199; Coles and Weinberg, *Civil Affairs*, 731 (*sewn from American parachutes*), 735 (*firearms and pigeons*); Wertenbaker, *Invasion!*, 162–63 ("*the fucking generals*").

Prisoners by the acre: Wertenbaker, *Invasion!*, 153; Moorehead, *Eclipse*, 138 ("*lines of invective*"); OH, Albert Mumma, July 22, 1944, NARA RG 38, E 11, U.S. Navy WWII Oral Histories, 7 (*floatable conveyance*); memo, W. H. S. Wright, July 25, 1944, NARA RG 337, E 54, AGF Top Secret Gen'l Corr, box 2, folder 319.1 (*ballads from the Seven Years' War*); Blumentritt, *Von Rundstedt*, 238–39; MMB, 138; Keegan, *Six Armies in Normandy*, 160–61.

"*To Alton C. Bright*": Babcock, *War Stories*, 213–16.

In a nearby nineteenth-century French naval hospital: Cosmas and Cowdrey, *Medical Service in the European Theater of Operations*, 261–63; Joseph R. Darnall, "Powdered Eggs and Purple Hearts," 1946, MHUC, Professional Papers, Group 1, box 24, 133 ("*stinking in their blood-soaked dressings*"); Sforza, *A Nurse Remembers*, no pagination ("*dirty instruments everywhere*"); Wertenbaker, *Invasion!*, 164 ("*Perhaps more men should know*"), 159.

Two bordellos promptly opened: "Official Study of Port of Cherbourg," 1945, NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #492; Hitchcock,

The Bitter Road to Freedom, 49 ("*Collaborators' Wagon*"), 382n; Beevor, *D-Day*, 449 (*smelled for miles*), 516.

"*cosmoline gun-metal preservative*": Babcock, *Taught to Kill*, 84.

CHAPTER 3: LIBERATION

A Monstrous Blood-Mill

One million Allied soldiers: The millionth soldier landed on July 5. Dispatch, Bertram H. Ramsay, *London Gazette*, Oct. 30, 1947, CMH, 5109+.

the invasion increasingly resembled the deadlock at Anzio: OH, ONB, June 7, 1956, CBM, NARA RG 319, OCMH, 2-3.7, 270/19/5/4, box 184; Sylvan, 31 (*labyrinthine burrows*); Faubus, *In This Faraway Land*, 157 ("*They keep lobbing mortars*"); Thompson, *The Imperial War Museum Book of Victory in Europe*, 137 (*daily casualties in Normandy*); msg, Dietrich von Choltitz, July 15, 1944, in James Hodgson, "The Battle of the Hedgerows," Aug. 1954, NARA RG 319, OCMH, R-54, box 8, IV-27 ("*a monstrous blood-mill*"); Zuckerman, *From Apes to Warlords*, 280 ("*I can't afford to stay here*").

"*concentrate all available air*": ALH, vol. 2, 104.

The supreme commander's jitters: Crosswell, *Beetle*, 657 (*Chesterfields*); Miller, *Ike the Soldier*, 662 ("*slow-up medicine*"); *Three Years*, 584, 602 (*sucking panes*); diary, June 30 and July 8, 1944, Barbara Wyden papers, DDE Lib, box 1 ("*How I suffer!*"); Eisenhower, *Eisenhower at War, 1943–1945*, 348 (*back of a P-51 Mustang*); Davis, *Soldier of Democracy*, 501 ("*Marshall would raise hell*"); diary, CBH, July 2, 1944, MHI, box 4 ("*Shoot the bastard*").

"*the Dogfight*": Jackson, *Overlord*, 174.

"*I am familiar with your plan*": DDE to BLM, July 7, 1944, NARA RG 331, E 1, SHAEF SGS, 381.

Montgomery's reply a day later: Copp and McAndrew, *Battle Exhaustion*, 116–17 (*Canadian 3rd Division*); BLM to DDE, July 8, 1944, DDE Lib, PP-pres, box 83 ("*I am, myself, quite happy*"); BLM to DDE, July 8, 1944, NARA RG 331, E 1, SHAEF SGS, 381 ("*the battle is going very well*").

"*I like him very much*": D'Este, *Eisenhower: A Soldier's Life*, 564; Hamilton, *Monty: Final Years of the Field-Marshal, 1944–1976*, 273 ("*making sure I'm not sacked*").

"*Chief Big Wind*": Crosswell, *Beetle*, 659; Kingston McCloughry, *Direction of War*, 144 ("*something of a dictator*"); Tedder, *With Prejudice*, 556 (*told Churchill in late June*); "Excerpts from Diary, D/SAC," kept by Wing Commander Leslie Scarman, July 8, 1944, NARA RG 319, *Supreme Command* background files, 2-3.7 CB 8 ("*The problem is Monty*"); Trafford Leigh-Mallory, "Daily Reflections on the Course of the Battle," June 15, 19, 27, July 17, 1944, UK NA, AIR 37/784 ("*egg-bound*").

Churchill too grew waspish: WSC to A. Brooke, June 18, 1944, and WSC to H. Ismay, July 16, 1944, "Strategy and Operations, vol. II," UK NA, CAB 120/421; Parkinson, *A Day's March Nearer Home*, 334–41 (*anthrax looked promising*); Addison, *Churchill, the Unexpected Hero*, 194–95 ("*one by one by bombing attack*").

"*a cold-blooded calculation*": Addison, *Churchill, the Unexpected Hero*, 194–95.

whether Allied poison gas would shorten: Eisenhower had reiterated SHAEF's no-first-use policy in late June 1944. ALH, vol. 2, 116.

"*It would be absurd*": Addison, *Churchill, the Unexpected Hero*, 194–95; Parkinson, *A Day's March Nearer Home*, 334–41 ("*harassing effect*"); margin note, SHAEF chief of staff meeting minutes, July 5, 1944, NARA RG 331, E 3, SGS, 290/7/4/4-5, box 128 ("*I will* not *be party*").

Montgomery's battle plan required: Hogan, *A Command Post at War*, 91–95 (*little imagination*); Blumenson, *The Battle of the Generals*, 113 (*three corps abreast*); *BP*, 125–27 ("*more or less confused*").

Beyond Omaha Beach, on the left flank: *BP*, 109–14 (*congestion, fratricide*), 82–84 ("*That is exactly what I* don't *want*"); Baker, *Ernest Hemingway*, 511 ("*the deads*"); Hogan, *A Command Post at War*, 100 (*nine generals*); Belfield and Essame, *The Battle for Normandy*, 187 ("*the sadness of it*").

"*too softhearted to take a division*": Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 333.

Roosevelt had been frantically busy: Jeffers, *In the Rough Rider's Shadow*, 261; *BP*, 86, 131; corr, TR to Eleanor, June 17, 24, July 3, 7, 1944, TR, LOC MS Div, box 10; Renehan, *The Lion's Pride*, 239 ("*a desperate weariness*"); Michael David Pearlman, "To Make Democracy Safe for the World," Ph.D. diss, University of Illinois, 1978, 603 ("*Maybe my feet hurt*").

After a conference with Collins: "Official Statement of the Military Service and Death of Theodore Roosevelt, Jr.," Aug. 29, 1958, TR, LOC MS Div, box 39; corr, R. O. Barton to Eleanor Roosevelt, July 13, 1944, TR, LOC MS Div, box 32 ("*The show goes on*").

An Army half-track bore Roosevelt: Liebling, *Mollie & Other War Pieces*, 220 ("Libérateurs").

Roosevelt never knew: Medal of Honor recommendation, R. O. Barton, June 27, 1944, TR, LOC MS Div, box 39; Wheeler, *The Big Red One*, 300–301 (*Marshall made certain*); corr, Elizabeth Beston Henry to Eleanor Roosevelt, July 25, 1944, TR, LOC MS Div, box 26 ("*Elizabethan quality*").

"*a very ancient place*": Baedeker, *Northern France*, 162–63.

Although sacked by Vikings: Balkoski, *Beyond the Beachhead*, 268; Weigley, *Eisenhower's Lieutenants*, 138 (*Calvinist apostates*); *BP*, 146 (*bombers returned every day*); Aron, *France Reborn*, 104 (*ten living inhabitants*).

Eight roads and a rail line: Mansoor, *The GI Offensive in Europe*, 153; Doubler, *Busting the Bocage*, 15; Whitehead, "*Beachhead Don*," 190 (*fifty-mile front*); *Reporting World War II*, vol. 2, 541 ("*big-stuff bombs*"); *BP*, 150–51 ("*moth-eaten*"), 140 ("*on their last legs*"); Mayo, *The Ordnance Department*, 250 (*Civil War battlefields*); Daglish, *Operation Goodwood*, 27 (*five hundred yards a day*); *St.-Lô*, 51 (*29th Infantry Division*).

"*Everything about him was explosive*": Cawthon, *Other Clay*, 27–28, 34 ("*Twenty-nine, let's go!*"); Cawthon, "Pursuit: Normandy, 1944," *American Heritage* (Feb. 1978): 80+ ("*eradicator of lethargy*"); "Memoirs of Charles Hunter Gerhardt," July 1964, MHI; Gerhardt biographical material, MMD; Miller, *Division Commander*, 71 ("*Loose Reins*"); e-mail, Roy Livengood to author, Nov. 8, 2008 ("*General Chickenshit*"); OH, Charles L. Bolte, Maclyn Burg, Jan. 29, 1975, MHI, 172–77 ("*describe the resuscitation*" and "*dashing Indian fighter*"); Ewing, *29 Let's Go!*, 283 ("*hard, exacting, aggressive*"); Balkoski, *Beyond the Beachhead*, 253–54 (*a corps of three divisions*).

By late afternoon on July 15: *BP*, 154; OH, 2nd ID, July 13–18, 1944, NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, folder 12 (*slabs of TNT*); Cawthon, "July, 1944: St. Lô," *American Heritage* (June 1974): 4+ ("*jerked with a rope*"); Linderman, *The World Within War*, 346 ("*the end of everything*").

Rommel was right about the Allied attack: Trafford Leigh-Mallory, "Daily Reflections on the Course of the Battle," July 18, 1944, UK NA, AIR 37/784 ("*Aircraft were spread out*"); McKee, *Caen: Anvil of Victory*, 258–59 ("*little dots detach themselves*").

The first bombing wave alone: D'Este, *Decision in Normandy*, 371; "Operation Goodwood," Oct. 1946, (U.K.) Military Operational Research Unit, report #23, CARL, R-14999, 15, 22 (*twenty-five pounds of high explosives*); Watney, *The Enemy Within*, 217 ("*canopy of noise*"); Copp, ed., *Montgomery's Scientists*, 85; *VW*, vol. 1, 338–39 ("*unalterable dignity*"); Liddell Hart, *The Tanks*, vol. 2, 366–67 ("*Move now!*"); Daglish, *Operation Goodwood*, 11 (*biggest tank battle fought by Britain*).

Operation GOODWOOD massed three British and Canadian corps: "Operation Goodwood," Oct. 1946, (U.K.) Military Operational Research Unit, report #23, CARL, R-14999, 7, 18–22; *VW*, vol. 1, 329–30, 336; *TSC*, 186–87 ("*draw the main enemy forces*").

That modest, credible battle plan: Callahan, *Churchill & His Generals*, 214–15; B. L. Montgomery, "Notes on Second Army Operations," July 15, 1944, National Archives of Canada, RG 24, vol. 1054 2, file 215A21.016(9) ("*engage the German armor*"); BLM to A. Brooke, July 14, 1944, Alanbrooke papers, LHC, 6/2/27; Beevor, *D-Day*, 321 ("*Russian style*" *breakthrough*).

Montgomery had overegged the pudding: AAR, "Operation Goodwood," 1945, UK NA, CAB 106/959, 4–8; "Lessons from Operation Goodwood," July 1944, UK NA, AIR 37/858; Liddell Hart, *The Tanks*, vol. 2, 360–61; Daglish, *Operation Goodwood*, 31–32 (*titanic battle*); Chandler, 2003–04 ("*burst into flames*").

"*to paint his canvas in rather glowing colors*": OH, M. Dempsey, March 8, 1951, G. S. Jackson, UK NA, CAB 106/1061; OH, M. Dempsey, Mar. 28, 1952, B. H. Liddell Hart, UK NA, CAB 106/1061 ("*did not take Eisenhower into his confidence*"); Hamilton, *Master of the Battlefield*, 760 ("*had to be overconfident*").

"*like a fleet raising anchor*": Daglish, *Operation Goodwood*, 101–03; AAR, "Operation Goodwood," 1945, UK NA, CAB 106/959, 4–8 (*one vehicle every twenty seconds*); "Operation Goodwood," Oct. 1946, (U.K.) Military Operational Research Unit, report #23, CARL, R-14999, 5 (*long fields of fire*), 15, 22; Watney, *The Enemy Within*, 217 ("*angry women swishing*"); Liddell Hart, *The Tanks*, vol. 2, 363–64 (*three hundred yards every two minutes*); William Steel Brownlie, "And Came Safe Home," ts, n.d., IWM, 92/371, 18 ("*grey wall of shellbursts*"); *VW*, vol. 1, 340–41 (*rail embankment*).

Torrid orange sheaves: Daglish, *Operation Goodwood*, 131; OH, Hans von Luck, with author, Mar. 3, Apr. 7, 1994, Hamburg; Luck, *Panzer Commander*, 157 ("*like torpedoes*"); AAR, "Operation Goodwood," 1945, UK NA, CAB 106/959, 4–8 ("*great difficulty in locating*"); Baynes, *The Forgotten Victor*, 203–4 (*sixteen Shermans stood burning*); Rosse and Hill, *The Story of the Guards Armoured Division*, 42.

Many more tanks soon burned: Belfield and Essame, *The Battle for Normandy*, 155; Liddell Hart, *The Tanks*, vol. 2, 362–63; "Operation Goodwood," Oct. 1946, (U.K.) Military Operational Research Unit, report #23, CARL, R-14999, 18; "Lessons from Operation Goodwood," July 1944, UK NA, AIR 37/858 (*smokeless powder*); Howard and Sparrow, *The Coldstream Guards, 1920–1946*, 268 ("*Violent, impassable fire*").

"*Some tank crews are on fire*": John M. Thorpe, "A Soldier's Tale, to Normandy and Beyond," ts, Nov. 1982, IWM, 84/50/1, 96–98;

William Steel Brownlie, "And Came Safe Home," ts, n.d., IWM, 92/371, 19 ("*burnt and injured men*"); Arthur, *Forgotten Voices of World War II*, 337 ("*horrible graveyard*").

"*Operations this morning a complete success*": *VW*, vol. 1, 344–46, 355–57; BLM to DDE, July 18, 1944, DDE Lib, PP-pres, box 83 ("*Am very well satisfied*"); Fraser, *And We Shall Shock Them*, 335 (*pure fantasy*); McKee, *Caen: Anvil of Victory*, 278 ("*Second Army attacked and broke through*"); "Caen: The Big Break-Through," (U.K.) *Daily Mail*, July 19, 1944, 1.

"*E worried*": desk calendar, July 19, 1944, Barbara Wyden papers, DDE Lib, box 1; *VW*, vol. 1, 347–50 ("*groaning with enemy*"); Copp and McAndrew, *Battle Exhaustion*, 124–25 ("*men who were still alive*"); Rosse and Hill, *The Story of the Guards Armoured Division*, 46 ("*tropical violence*"); Howard and Sparrow, *The Coldstream Guards, 1920–1946*, 270 (*rum rations*).

The offensive had liberated another thirty-four square miles: "Operation Goodwood," Oct. 1946, (U.K.) Military Operational Research Unit, report #23, CARL, R-14999, 15, 22; AAR, "Operation Goodwood," 1945, UK NA, CAB 106/959, 4–8 (*Canadian First Army vanguard*); Daglish, *Operation Goodwood*, 170, 183 (*panzer forces were lured*); Reynolds, *Steel Inferno*, 186–87; Liddell Hart, *The Tanks*, vol. 2, 369. Most of the lost British tanks were soon repaired or replaced. "Operation Goodwood," Oct. 1946, (U.K.) Military Operational Research Unit, report #23, CARL, R-14999, 15, 22.

After nearly seven weeks: *TSC*, 189–93; Everett S. Hughes to wife, July 22, 1944, Hughes papers, LOC, box 2; *VW*, vol. 1, 353 ("*Allies in France Bogged Down*"); Daglish, *Operation Goodwood*, 11 ("*limited meaning*"); Trafford Leigh-Mallory, "Daily Reflections on the Course of the Battle," July 28, 1944, UK NA, AIR 37/784 ("*The fault with us*").

"*Then we must change our leaders*": "Excerpts from Diary, D/SAC," July 21, 1944, NARA RG 319, *TSC* background files, 2-3.7 CB 8; Orange, *Tedder: Quietly in Command*, 271 ("*I do not believe*"); Tedder, *With Prejudice*, 566; Kershaw, *Hitler, 1936–45: Nemesis*, 693 (*at least two hundred others*); Warlimont, *Inside Hitler's Headquarters*, 477; Evans, *The Third Reich at War*, 642–43; Megargee, *Inside Hitler's High Command*, 222 (*stiff-armed Nazi* Heil). Martin Gilbert put the number of executed at more than five thousand (*The Second World War*, 558). Andrew Roberts reports that fifty-eight hundred linked to the plot were arrested in 1944, and a similar number in 1945 (*The Storm of War*, 482).

"*What do your people think*": D'Este, *Decision in Normandy*, 398; Chandler, 2020(n) ("*get on his bicycle*"), 2018–19 ("*Time is vital*"), 2026 ("*I could lie down*").

The Bright Day Grew Dark

Wearing the West Point bathrobe: corr, Chester B. Hansen to wife, n.d., CBH, MHI; diary, CBH, July 28 & 12, 1944, MHI, box 4 (*sedatives at bedtime* and "*biggest thing*"); Pyle, *Brave Men*, 213 ("*frightful country ahead*"); Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 330; OH, ONB, June 7, 1956, CBM, NARA RG 319, OCMH, 2-3.7, box 184; Whitehead, "*Beachhead Don*," 136 (*long beech twig*).

"*Take all the time you need, Brad*": OH, M. Dempsey, March 28, 1952, B. H. Liddell Hart, UK NA, CAB 106/1061; OH, J. Lawton Collins, 1972, Charles C. Sperow, SOOHP, MHI, 195 (*bocage copse*); Weigley, *Eisenhower's Lieutenants*, 162–63; memo, B. L. Montgomery to ONB, July 21, 1944, NARA RG 407, ML, box 24143; DDE to ONB, July 24, 1944, in *BP*, 331 ("*Pursue every advantage*"). The attack sector chosen by Bradley also avoided the area's larger rivers. Prados, *Normandy Crucible*, 86.

That advantage lay mainly in airpower: Davis, *Bombing the European Axis Powers*, 386; Carafano, *After D-Day*, 102 (*more than one hundred howitzers*); Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 341 (*fifteen hundred heavies*); *AAFinWWII*, 231 (*swatch five miles wide*); diary, CBH, July 19, 1944, MHI, box 4 (*bomb every sixteen feet*).

Very little in Bradley's vision appealed: Report of Investigation, Aug. 14, 1944, HQ, USSAFE, Frederick L. Anderson Papers, HIA, box 84, folder 10, 1–2, 5–6; "Handbook for Bombardiers," TM 1-251, March 31, 1941, Frederick L. Anderson Papers, HIA, box 93; "Use of Heavy Bombers in a Tactical Role," Oct. 1944, SHAEF, NARA RG 334, E 315, ANSCOL, box 94 (*Only if the planes attacked perpendicular*); report, signature illegible, July 27, 1944, UK NA, AIR 37/762 ("*between the Army's legs*").

Bradley agreed to pull his assault battalions: *BP*, 220–21. An AAF colonel reported warning Bradley that 3 percent of the bombs would fall short, but he mistakenly believed that Bradley had acceded to a perpendicular flight path, whereas Bradley still believed the bombers would attack parallel to the road, which would make "short" drops less risky. OH, John R. De Russey, Eighth AF liaison officer, Sept. 9–12, 1947, NARA RG 319, *CCA* background files.

"*nothing more than tools to be used*": Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 154; Pyle, *Brave Men*, 214 ("*I've spent thirty years*").

Pyle spent Monday night, July 24: Pyle, *Brave Men*, 296; Tobin, *Ernie Pyle's War*, 199 ("*your own small quota*"); Cawthon, "July, 1944: St. Lô," *American Heritage* (June 1974): 4+ ("*they area*").

Now he had returned to the front: Field Order 44, 305th Bomb Group, July 25, 1944, NARA RG 18, AAF WWII, 190/58/17/1, box 925; "Investigation of Bombing of Ground Troops," Aug. 16, 1944, FUSA IG, NARA RG 338, FUSA AG gen'l corr., box 216; *BP*, 222–23 (*Allied white-star insignia*); corr, J. H. Phillips to Ray E. Porter, WD, May 6, 1944, James H. Phillips papers, HIA (*geometric design*).

"*like kids at a football game*": Carafano, *After D-Day*, 119; Nichols, ed., *Ernie's War*, 333; Tobin, *Ernie Pyle's War*, 195 ("*heavy*

rip").

Not much had gone right with COBRA: "World Battlefronts, Western Front," *Time* (Dec. 4, 1944) (*three barometers*).

Flying from Stanmore: Sullivan, "The Botched Air Support of Operation COBRA," *Parameters* (March 1988): 97+; Davis, *Carl A. Spaatz and the Air War in Europe*, 470–72; AAR, 305th Bomb Group, July 24, 1944, NARA RG 18, AAF WWII, 190/58/17/1, box 925 ("*not to bomb short*"); memo, "Bombing Errors Committed on the Normandy Battle Front, 24 July 1944," HQ, Eighth AF, July 30, 1944, Frederick L. Anderson papers, HIA, box 84, folder 10 (*chaff bundle smacked the nose*); "The Effectiveness of Third Phase Tactical Air Operations," AAF Evaluation Board, Aug. 1945, NARA RG 334, E 315, ANSCOL, box 15; "Investigation of Bombing of Ground Troops," Aug. 16, 1944, FUSA IG, NARA RG 338, FUSA AG gen'l corr, box 216 ("*As a fiasco*").

Bradley's fury knew no bounds: Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 347; Bradley and Blair, *A General's Life*, 278–79; memo, ONB, July 25, 1944, in diary, CBH, MHI, box 4 (*At 10:30* P.M. *he phoned Bradley*); T. Leigh-Mallory to ONB, July 19, 1944, UK NA, AIR 37/762 (*had left that meeting early*); *BP*, 229–37.

From his farmyard redoubt: Tobin, *Ernie Pyle's War*, 198; Pyle, *Brave Men*, 298–301 ("*Goddammit*").

The star-crossed 30th Division took more casualties: Hewitt, *Workhorse of the Western Front*, 36–37.

"*that awful rush of wind*": Sullivan, "The Botched Air Support of Operation COBRA," *Parameters* (March 1988): 97+; *History of the 120th Infantry Regiment*, 35–36 (*Bombs entombed men*); Alosi, *War Birds*, 64 (*cows into trees*); Regan, *Blue on Blue*, 166–67 ("*beating you with a club*"); "Investigation of Bombing of Ground Troops," Aug. 16, 1944, FUSA IG, NARA RG 338, FUSA AG gen'l corr, box 216 (*body part*); "Operations of 30th Infantry Division, 24 Jul–1 Aug 1944," n.d., CMH, 8-3.1, part 5, 6–7 ("*American Luftwaffe*").

Just over fifteen hundred heavies dropped: Sullivan, "The Botched Air Support of Operation COBRA," *Parameters* (March 1988): 97+; *BP*, 236–37 (*three dozen bombed American troops*); *AAFinWWII*, 233–34 (*forty-two medium bombers*); Juliette Hennessy, "Tactical Operations of the Eighth Air Force," 1952, AFHRA, historical study no. 70, 53–56 (*Red marking smoke*); diary, July 25, 1944, Hoyt S. Vandenberg papers, LOC MS Div, box 1 (*five-knot southerly breeze*); Sylvan, 68–71; diary, CBH, July 25, 1944, MHI, box 4 (*corpse was spotted sixty-five feet away*); DDE to GCM, July 26, 1944, GCM Lib, box 67, folder 10 ("*I warned him time and again*"); Individual Deceased Personnel File, Lesley J. McNair, a.p. under FOIA, U.S. Army Human Resources Command, Dec. 2008 ("*6 Lt. Gen. stars*").

By the time the last medium bomber flew off: *BP*, 222–23; Pyle, *Brave Men*, 301 ("*Anybody makes mistakes*").

"*That's a job for artillery*": Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 349.

"*I fired three rounds and they all bounced off*": Hewitt, *Workhorse of the Western Front*, 37; *History of the 120th Infantry Regiment*, 37 ("*Just his legs*"); *BP*, 246 (*no more than a mile*); Kenneth W. Hechler, "VII Corps in Operation COBRA," n.d., CMH, 8-3.1 AK, part 2 ("*enemy artillery was not touched*").

Africa veterans like Eisenhower and Bradley: Reardon, ed., *Defending Fortress Europe*, mss, 179 ("*worn out*"); *BP*, 240 (*flipping tanks*); James Hodgson, "Thrust-Counterthrust: The Battle of France (21 Jul–25 Aug 44)," March 1955, NARA RG 319, R-58, 20–21 ("*half-crazed soldiers*"); Spayd, *Bayerlein*, 167 ("*Everything was burned*" and "*Only the dead can still hold*"); "Air Power in the ETO," USFET General Board study no. 56, n.d., NARA RG 407, E 427, 97-USF5-0.30, 16–17 (*70 percent of his men*). An Eighth Air Force study put German physical casualties at less than 10 percent. Kenneth W. Hechler, "VII Corps in Operation COBRA," n.d., CMH, 8-3.1 AK, part 2 ("*conveyor-belt bombing*" and "*feeling of helplessness*").

Unaware of the size of the American host: Kenneth W. Hechler, "VII Corps in Operation COBRA," n.d., CMH, 8-3.1 AK, part 2; Bennett, *Ultra in the West*, 43; Hinsley, 500 (*thirty Allied divisions*).

"*The front has, so to speak, burst*": James Hodgson, "Thrust-Counterthrust: The Battle of France (21 Jul–25 Aug 44)," March 1955, NARA RG 319, R-58, appendix, 30.

Collins had massed 120,000 troops: Kenneth W. Hechler, "VII Corps in Operation COBRA," n.d., CMH, 8-3.1 AK, part 2; "List of Weapons Available to VII Corps for the Attack of July 25," Aug. 4, 1944, NARA RG 407, AFIA, 2-3.7 BG (*six hundred artillery tubes*); "Artillery in Operation Cobra," n.d., NARA RG 407, E 427, ML #2229 (*140,000 rounds*); Cooper, *Death Traps*, 51–52 (*rugged tusks*); Mark J. Reardon, "Conquering the Hedgerows," ts, 2009, a.p.; Mayo, *The Ordnance Department*, 254–55 (*oxygen acetylene cylinders*); *AAFinWWII*, 239–41 ("*hazing the Hun*").

Collins had not planned to launch: Persons, "St. Lô Breakthrough," *Military Review* (Dec. 1948): 13+; OH, J. Lawton Collins, 1972, Charles C. Sperow, SOOHP, MHI, 196–99; Collins, *Lightning Joe*, 242–43; *BP*, 246; Hewitt, *Workhorse of the Western Front*, 41 (*feeling for booby traps*).

With the new day, the American onslaught: Doubler, *Busting the Bocage*, 58 ("*Russian style*"); Weigley, *Eisenhower's Lieutenants*, 155 (*under three minutes*); "Operations of 30th Infantry Division, 24 Jul–1 Aug 1944," n.d., CMH, 8-3.1, part 5, 18 (*sunken road to*

St.-Gilles); *BP*, 253–54, 275 (*killed the Das Reich commander*); Seventh Army documents, July 26, 1944, NARA RG 407, ML #488, box 24154 (*seven punctures*); Hart, *Clash of Arms*, 390 (*abandonment of two Panther companies*); Kenneth W. Hechler, "VII Corps in Operation COBRA," n.d., CMH, 8-3.1 AK, part 2 (*no further reinforcements*).

"*Rem*"*—remnants*: Benjamin A. Dickson, "G-2 Journal: Algiers to the Elbe," MHI, 130; *BP*, 250–51 ("*busted wide open*").

French farmers flitted: Schrijvers, *The Crash of Ruin*, 194; George E. McIntyre, "As Mac Saw It," ts, n.d., MHI, 273–74 (*copies of* Life); Hastings, *OVERLORD*, 261–62 ("*holes in his head*").

On Friday enemy forces leaked to the rear: *BP*, 278–79, 287 ("*Things on our front really look good*").

Ahead lay Avranches: Abram et al., *The Rough Guide to France*, 389; *BP*, 308 ("*We face a defeated enemy*"), 323 ("*It's a madhouse here*"), 333 (*ten thousand tactical air sorties*).

Ministers of Thy Chastisement

Down metalled roads and farm lanes: Liebling, *Mollie & Other War Pieces*, 232; Pogue, *Pogue's War*, 193 (*scolding dawdlers*); Belfield and Essame, *The Battle for Normandy*, 228 (*grayed their hair*); Lee Miller, "The Siege of St. Malo," in *Reporting World War II*, vol. 2, 233 ("*Cartier clips*").

On they marched, south, east, and west: diary, CBH, July 17, 1944, MHI (*copper urns*); Lankford, ed., *OSS Against the Reich*, 152 (*perfume*); AAR, "Battle of Mortain," n.d., NARA RG 165, 330 (Inf), 120-0.3, 42 (*crude swastikas*); Pogue, *Pogue's War*, 199, 209, 134 ("*My wife doesn't understand me*"); "Combat Diary of Edward McCosh Elliott, 1944," n.d., 2nd Bn, Glasgow Highlanders, IWM, 99/61/1, VI-18 (*tricolor nosegays*); Joseph R. Darnall, "Powdered Eggs and Purple Hearts," ts, 1946, MHUC, Group 1, MHI, box 24, 190 ("*I speeg Engless*"); Neal Beaver, 3rd Bn, 508th PIR, ts, n.d., MMD (*jugs of calvados*); Rottman, *FUBAR: American Soldier Slang of World War II*, 55.

German tourist posters still hung: Lee Miller, "The Siege of St. Malo," in *Reporting World War II*, vol. 2, 233; Cawthon, "Pursuit: Normandy, 1944," *American Heritage* (Feb. 1978): 80+ (*Milwaukee German*); Watney, *The Enemy Within*, 186 ("*A German*"); Keegan, *Six Armies in Normandy*, 259 ("*No matter how many orders are issued*").

In hasty bivouacs the surging columns: Perry Wolff, "Why We Fight," panel, International Conference on WWII, NWWIIM, Apr. 10, 2008; McManus, *The Deadly Brotherhood*, 254 ("*a little piece of metal*"); Beevor, *D-Day*, 390 ("*We buried him darkly*").

SHAEF planners in late July estimated: ALH, vol. 2, 114–17; *PP*, 524 ("*roaring comet*"); Allen, *Lucky Forward*, 26 ("*gamecock with brains*").

The first glimpse of Lieutenant General George S. Patton, Jr.: Codman, *Drive*, 159 ("*Could anything be more magnificent?*"); D'Este, *Patton: A Genius for War*, 630, 636–37 ("*goddamned bastards*").

At noon on Tuesday, August 1: Allen, *Lucky Forward*, 71–72 ("*win or die*"); *PP*, 491 ("*very happy*").

"*There are apparently two types*": *PP*, 464.

"*Patton has broken out again*": msgs, GCM to DDE, W. B. Smith to GCM, DDE to GCM, etc., Apr. 26–May 3, 1944, NARA RG 165, E 422, WD, OPD, history unit, box 4; affidavits, GSP, LOC MS Div, box 12, folder 1.

Narrowly pardoned, Patton spent the spring: corr, Everett S. Hughes to wife, May 12, 1944, LOC MS Div, Hughes papers, box II:3, folder 1 (*guns and saddles*); diary, CBH, July 2, 1944, MHI, box 4 (*offered Eisenhower $1,000*); White, *Conquerors' Road*, 34 ("*neurotic and bloodthirsty*"); Patton, *The Pattons*, 109 (*tattoo parlor)*; GSP to Beatrice, July 3, 1944, GSP, LOC MS Div, box 12 ("*Can't stand the times between wars*").

He also reflected deeply on generalship: Essame, *Patton: A Study in Command*, 122–24; Collins, *Lightning Joe*, 248–49 ("*I'm in the doghouse*"); Blumenson, "Bradley-Patton: World War II's 'Odd Couple,'" *Army* (Dec. 1985): 56+ ("*I didn't ask for you*"); Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 356 ("*judicious, reasonable*"); speech, GSP, n.d., George Smith Patton Papers, HIA, folder 1 ("*raise up on their hind legs*").

"*I had to keep repeating to myself*": *PP*, 499; Koch and Hays, *G-2: Intelligence for Patton*, 61 ("*I'm going to Berlin*").

First he was going to Brest: Waddell, *United States Army Logistics*, 46; *IFG*, 297; *LSA*, vol. 2, 467–74 (*failed to dampen the ardor*).

But the collapse of the German left wing: Ganz, "Questionable Objective: The Brittany Ports, 1944," *JMH* (Jan. 1995): 77+; *BP*, 370 (£5 and "*Take Brest*"); GSP to Robert Howe Fletcher, Apr. 25, 1945, LOC MS Div, box 13 ("*sixth sense*"); Price, *Troy H. Middleton: A Biography*, 189 (*ten thousand Krauts*).

Third Army's other spearhead, the 4th Armored Division: *BP*, 357–59; Ganz, "Patton's Relief of General Wood," *JMH* (July 1989): 257+ (*because he had tutored his classmates*); Carr, "The American Rommel," *MHQ* (summer 1992): 77+ (*rose gardener*); Raines, *Eyes of Artillery*, 213 (*Piper Cub*).

"*We're winning this war*": Price, *Troy H. Middleton: A Biography*, 188; *BP*, 361–65 ("*Dear George*"); D'Este, *Patton: A Genius for War*, 631 (*Proposing to reach Chartres*); Hirshson, *General Patton: A Soldier's Life*, 508–9 (*bloody siege at Lorient*).

"*the main business lies to the east*": *BP*, 431–32; Ganz, "Questionable Objective: The Brittany Ports, 1944," *JMH* (Jan. 1995): 77+.

The Brittany campaign soon proved bootless: *BP*, 340 ("*last cartridge*"); Blumenson, *The Battle of the Generals*, 164 (*siege of St.-Malo*); Mitcham, *Retreat to the Reich*, 214 (*seventy-five strongpoints*); "Combat Engineering," CE, report No. 10, Dec. 1945, NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #547, 47–53 (*walls up to twenty-five feet thick*); OH, ONB, June 7, 1956, CBM, NARA RG 319, OCMH, 2-3.7 (*garrison was too dangerous*); diary, GSP, Sept. 9, 1944, LOC MS Div, box 3, folder 5 ("*We must take Brest*").

The war ended with not a single cargo or troopship: Balkoski, *From Beachhead to Brittany*, 331; memo, "Fighting in Cities," Ninth Army, Oct. 26, 1944, NARA RG 498, G-3 Observers' Rpt, box 9 (*half a million American shells*); Ganz, "Patton's Relief of General Wood," *JMH* (July 1989): 257+ ("*colossally stupid*"); M-516, Aug. 4, 1944, and M-517, Aug. 6, 1944, National Archives of Canada, RG 24, vol. 1054 2, file 215A21.016(9) ("*We have unloosed the shackles*").

Montgomery's plan was a simple, handsome thing: BLM, "Task of First Canadian Army," Aug. 4, 1944, National Archives of Canada, RG 24, vol. 1054 2, file 215A21.016(9); *BP*, 435, 449–52 (*struggling ten miles toward Vire*); *VW*, vol. 1, 386, 408.

"*a queer script of its own*": Catton, *A Stillness at Appomattox*, 149.

Such a place was Mortain: *The Green Guide to Normandy*, 309; Beevor, *D-Day*, 401 (*children wearing tags*).

The last German occupier in Mortain: *BP*, 466n; Hewitt, *Workhorse of the Western Front*, 51 (*civilians tossed flowers*); *SLC*, 102.

Of keen interest was stony, steep Montjoie: author visit, signage, May 29, 2009; Weiss, *Fire Mission*, 5, 25, 35, 75–76.

"*a unique opportunity, which will never return*": James Hodgson, "Thrust-Counterthrust: The Battle of France," March 1955, NARA RG 319, R-series, R-58, 80; *TSC*, 203 ("*he should keep his eyes riveted*").

"*such an attack if not immediately successful*": Rosengarten, "With Ultra from Omaha Beach to Weimar, Germany," *Military Affairs* (Oct. 1978): 127+; Hans Eberbach, "Panzer Group Eberbach and the Falaise Encirclement," Feb. 1946, FMS, #A-922, MHI, 9–10; *BP*, 442; order of battle, Gilmore, ed., *U.S. Army Atlas of the European Theater in World War II*, 52 (*a dozen divisions in four corps*); Mitcham, *Retreat to the Reich*, 120–21 ("*recklessly to the sea*").

Swirling fog lifted and descended: AAR, "Battle of Mortain," n.d., NARA RG 165, 330 (Inf), 120-0.3, 4–5; Baily and Karamales, "The 823rd at Mortain," *Armor* (Jan.–Feb. 1992): 12+ (*26,000 Germans*); *BP*, 461 (*120 tanks*); Lefèvre, *Panzers in Normandy Then and Now*, 62 (*imperial cavalry*); Hewitt, *Workhorse of the Western Front*, 57 (*firing by earshot*); "Armored Reconnaissance in the ETO," n.d., NARA RG 337, AGF OR #157 ("*all-gone feeling*"); Robert J. Kenney, "Somewhere in France," ts, 1978, 1st Bn, 117th Inf, a.p. (*Wounded men mewed*).

But almost nothing went right in the German attack: Isby, ed., *Fighting the Breakout*, 128–29 (*not one reached the front*); *BP*, 464–65 (*three of six enemy spearheads*); war diary, Seventh Army, Aug. 6, 1944, NARA RG 407, E 427, ML, #2201 ("*uninspired and negative*").

The German weight fell heaviest on St.-Barthélemy: Baily and Karamales, "The 823rd at Mortain," *Armor* (Jan.–Feb. 1992): 12+; Reynolds, *Steel Inferno*, 216–17 (*let the panzers roll through*); McManus, *The Americans at Normandy*, 381–82 (*delayed six hours*); Baedeker, *Northern France*, 180 (*Abbaye Blanche*); author visit, signage, May 29, 2009 (*sixty-six men with bazookas*); OH, 120th Inf, Aug. 1944, NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, folder 96; AAR, "Battle of Mortain," n.d., NARA RG 165, 330 (Inf), 120-0.3, 13–14 (*More than sixty enemy vehicles*).

"*First really large concentration*": *VC*, 233; Featherston, *Saving the Breakout*, 133–35; Saunders, *Royal Air Force, 1939–1945*, vol. 3, 132; *BP*, 464–65.

"*Hundreds of German troops began spilling*": Featherston, *Saving the Breakout*, 133–35. Pilots claimed four times more vehicle kills than could be confirmed by later ground investigation. Copp, ed., *Montgomery's Scientists*, 175.

sorties mistakenly hit American revetments: OH, 120th Inf, Aug. 1944, NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, folder 96; OH, Brig. Gen. James M. Lewis, 30th ID, Aug. 25, 1944, NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, folder 96 (*raked the two roads leading west*); *VW*, vol. 1, 414 ("*well-nigh unendurable*").

"*exceptionally poor start*": war diary, Seventh Army, Aug. 6, 1944, NARA RG 407, E 427, ML, #2201.

two traitorous French guides: Reardon, *Victory at Mortain*, 99; OH, 120th Inf, Aug. 1944, NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, folder 96 (*hospital larder*); *BP*, 487 ("*Looks like hell*").

Lieutenant Weiss, with his field glasses: Weiss, *Fire Mission*, 53, 68–69, 82, 105; Hewitt, *Workhorse of the Western Front*, 69–74; Alosi, *War Birds*, 68 ("*No birds were singing*").

Nor were the Germans advancing: Reardon, *Victory at Mortain*, 117, 143; Baily and Karamales, "The 823rd at Mortain," *Armor* (Jan.–Feb. 1992): 12+ (*fewer than six thousand infantrymen*); *VW*, vol. 1, 416 ("*If only the Germans will go on attacking*").

"*Bruised them badly*": McManus, *The Americans at Normandy*, 399–400.

"*We have to risk everything*": Hewitt, *Workhorse of the Western Front*, 66.

"*thorn in the flesh*": *BP*, 488–90.

Hitler on August 9 again demanded: Hans Eberbach, "Panzer Group Eberbach and the Falaise Encirclement," Feb. 1946, FMS, #A-922, MHI, 9–12 ("*very unpleasant*"); Rudolph Freiherr von Gersdorff, "Avranches Counterattack, Seventh Army," n.d., FMS, #A-921, 27-31; OH, 120th Inf, Aug. 1944, NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, folder 96 ("*don't surrender*"); Ralph A. Kerley, "Operations of the 2nd Battalion, 120th Infantry at Mortain," 1949, IS, 14.

Each night more slain soldiers on Hill 314: Ralph A. Kerley, "Operations of the 2nd Battalion, 120th Infantry at Mortain," 1949, IS, 19 (*bolster morale*); OH, 120th Inf, Aug. 1944, NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, folder 96; AAR, "Battle of Mortain," n.d., NARA RG 165, 330 (Inf), 120-0.3, 24 (*turnips, cabbages*); Weiss, *Fire Mission*, 124 (*surgical tape*); Hewitt, *Workhorse of the Western Front*, 67 (*half the bundles drifted*); Reardon, *Victory at Mortain*, 267 ("*I want Mortain demolished*").

"*The attack failed*": Warlimont, *Inside Hitler's Headquarters*, 449; Liddell Hart, *The Other Side of the Hill*, 416–17 ("*where I lose my reputation*").

French civilians returning to wrecked Mortain: Schrijvers, *The Crash of Ruin*, 200 ("*crying and rocking*"); corr, Thor M. Smith to family, Aug. 28, 1944, HIA, box 1 ("*ob-liberated*"); Weiss, "Normandy: Recollections of the 'Lost Battalion' at the Battle of Mortain," *Prologue* (spring 1996): 44+ ("*Not much to write home about*").

Ultra's big ears had given the Allied high command: Lewin, *Ultra Goes to War*, 405–9; Sunset 647-649, Aug. 7–9, 1944, NARA RG 457, E 9026, SRS-1869; Hinsley et al., *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, vol. 3, part 2, 246; Prados, *Normandy Crucible*, 181; Bennett, *Ultra in the West*, 118–19; Sunset 650, Aug. 10, 1944, NARA RG 457, E 9026, SRS-1869 ("*decisive thrust* must *lead*").

Encouraged by Eisenhower, Bradley kept: Chandler, 2060; Reardon, *Victory at Mortain*, 152; memoir, John W. Castles, Jr., n.d., USMA Arch ("*I am General Patton's commanding officer*").

Certainly they were thinking of it: Keegan, *Six Armies in Normandy*, 251 (*one-tenth of France's landmass*); *Three Years*, 789 ("*obstinated*"); Greenfield, ed., *Command Decisions*, 308; *VC*, 216–24; Liddell Hart, *The Tanks*, vol. 2, 383–86 ("*blind leading the blind*"); Copp and Vogel, *Maple Leaf Route: Falaise*, 94–99 (*stalling in confusion*); BP, 479; "Battlefield Tour: Operation Totalize," Sept. 1947, HQ, British Army of the Rhine and Canadian Army Historical Section, CMH, 65 ("*Push on, you dogs!*").

As this unspooled, Bradley was once again poring: Featherston, *Saving the Breakout*, 144–45; Bradley and Blair, *A General's Life*, 294–95 (*roadside K-ration lunch*); diary, Aug. 8, 1944, Hobart Gay papers, MHI, box 2, 446 (*sharp turn at Le Mans*).

An exuberant Eisenhower followed Bradley: Blumenson, *The Battle of the Generals*, 190–91; *PP*, 505 ("*If I were on my own*").

"*This is a first priority*": *VC*, 236; Hills, *Phantom Was There*, 211 ("*ministers of Thy chastisement*").

"*greatest tactical blunder*": McManus, *The Americans at Normandy*, 391; Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 375 ("*This is an opportunity*").

Leclerc instead fanned out on all available roads: Blumenson, *The Battle of the Generals*, 204–5; Essame, *Patton: A Study in Command*, 166–67 (*giving the Germans six hours*).

Patton was peeved but undeterred: Essame, *Patton: A Study in Command*, 166–67; D'Este, *Decision in Normandy*, 429 ("*push on slowly*"); diary, CBH, Aug. 12, 1944, MHI, 1944, box 4 ("*Shall we continue*").

"*Nothing doing*": Blumenson, *The Battle of the Generals*, 206–7; Blumenson, *Patton: The Man Behind the Legend, 1885–1945*, 223 (*Bradley wrongly believed*); Greenfield, ed., *Command Decisions*, 313 (*nineteen German divisions*); Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 376–77 ("*I did not consult*"); *PP*, 509 ("*a great mistake*"); Codman, *Drive*, 163 ("*beside himself*").

Canadian difficulties further unstitched: Granatstein, *The Generals*, 114; English, *Patton's Peers*, 32–33; BLM to Brooke, July 26, 1944, Alanbrooke papers, LHC, 6/2/27 ("*I fear he thinks*").

Worse yet, the Germans on August 13: "Operations of the First Canadian Army in North-west Europe," Oct. 1945, Historical Section, Canadian Military HQ, report no. 146, NARA RG 407, E 427, ML; Stacey, *The Canadian Army, 1939–1945*, 202; Copp and Vogel, *Maple Leaf Route: Falaise*, 117 ("*molten fire bath*"); *VW*, vol. 1, 430–31 ("*troops burnt yellow flares*"); *VC*, 240–44 ("*dust like I've never seen*").

Bradley now made another momentous decision: *BP*, 523–27; ONB, Aug. 15, 1944, "Twelfth U.S. Army Group Directives," CMH ("*Due to the delay*").

"*For the first and only time*": Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 379; OH, ONB, June 7, 1956, CBM, NARA RG 319, OCMH, 2-3.7, 270/19/5/4, box 184; Prados, *Normandy Crucible*, 216–21, 251.

The two most senior Allied field commanders: Weigley, "From the Normandy Beaches to the Falaise-Argentan Pocket," *Military Review* (Sept. 1990): 45+; Belchem, *All in the Day's March* , 208; Hastings, *OVERLORD*, 301; Beevor, *D-Day*, 455; Blumenson, *The Battle of the Generals*, 217–18 (*little effort to confirm*); Kennedy, *The Business of War*, 344 ("*squeaking and scuffling*"); D'Este, *Decision in Normandy*, 449 ("*These are great days*").

Bradley was quick to fault Montgomery: Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 376–79; Wertenbaker, *Invasion!*, 91 ("*quality all the great generals had*"); Weigley, "From the Normandy Beaches to the Falaise-Argentan Pocket," *Military Review* (Sept. 1990): 45+ ("*operational forethought*").

Nor was Eisenhower much help: Weigley, *Eisenhower's Lieutenants*, 216; diary, CBH, Aug 12, 1944, MHI, 1944, box 4 ("*garbed in suntans*"); Essame, *Patton: A Study in Command*, 171 ("*never really got the feel*").

Whatever shortcomings vexed the Allied high command: memos, Seventh Army, Aug. 12, 15, 19, 1944, NARA RG 407, M.L. #483, box 24154; Hans Eberbach, "Panzer Group Eberbach and the Falaise Encirclement," Feb. 1946, FMS, #A-922, MHI, 20 ("*strength of a company*"); Lucas and Barker, *The Killing Ground*, 122 ("*Such tiredness*"); *BP*, 516–19 ("*five minutes before midnight*").

Then Kluge vanished: Mitcham, *Retreat to the Reich*, 138–39; Hans Eberbach, "Panzer Group Eberbach and the Falaise Encirclement," Feb. 1946, FMS, #A-922, MHI, 24 ("*Ascertain whereabouts*"); Speidel, *We Defended Normandy*, 142 (*might have defected*).

Shortly before midnight he appeared: Reardon, ed., *Defending Fortress Europe*, mss, 378–79; Hans Eberbach, "Panzer Group Eberbach and the Falaise Encirclement," Feb. 1946, FMS, #A-922, MHI, 24 ("*live in another world*"); *VC*, 254; Reardon, *Victory at Mortain*, 277 (*in a borrowed car*); Blumenson, *The Battle of the Generals*, 227–28 (*Hitler affirmed the decision*).

The order would be Kluge's last: Reardon, ed., *Defending Fortress Europe*, mss, 382–83; *MMB*, 369 (*Prussian music director*); Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 436 ("*Hitler's fireman*"); Kershaw, "*It Never Snows in September*," 76 (*stabilize the field after defeats*); Charles V. von Lüttichau, "Diary of Thuisko von Metzch," May 1952, NARA RG 319, R-10, 32 (*firing squads*); Barnett, ed., *Hitler's Generals*, 320–26 ("*a good sergeant*"); Kessler, *The Battle of the Ruhr Pocket*, 4 ("*Did you see those eyes?*").

"Den lieb' ich": Lewin, *Montgomery as Military Commander*, 312; Hans Eberbach, "Panzer Group Eberbach and the Falaise Encirclement," Feb. 1946, FMS, #A-922, MHI, 26 ("*My intention is to withdraw*").

Legend had it: author visit, Falaise, May 29, 2009; Abram et al., *The Rough Guide to France*, 398; *The Green Guide to Normandy*, 74, 237; Baedeker, *Northern France*, 185–86.

Bullet holes dinged the hoary castle keep: *VC*, 250–51; Lucas and Barker, *The Killing Ground*, 124 (*last Tigers had rumbled*); Carell, *Invasion—They're Coming!*, 260–61 (*two teenagers*).

Ultra had decrypted Kluge's withdrawal order: Sunset 657, Aug. 16, 1944, NARA RG 457, E 9026, SRS-1869; Hinsley, 508.

Bradley now confessed: Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 379; Weigley, *Eisenhower's Lieutenants*, 211 (*three jeeps, nine officers*); *BP*, 515, 529–30; diary, Aug. 16–17, 1944, Hobart Gay papers, MHI, box 2, 446 (*poised to attack in an hour*).

Napoleonic it was not: Blumenson, *The Battle of the Generals*, 239–42; *VC*, 257–59; "The Battle of the Falaise Pocket," *AB*, no. 8 (1975): 1+ ("*comparatively easy business*"); *VW*, vol. 1, 442–43 ("*damage was immense*").

"*inferno of incandescent ruins*": author visit, Trun, May 29, 2009, signage; Kennedy, *The Business of War*, 344 ("*Shoot* everything"); Saunders, *Royal Air Force, 1939–1945*, vol. 3, 135 (*Shambles*); "Closing of the Chambois Gap," n.d., CMH, 8-3.1 AK, part 1, 22–23 ("*streams in the gutters*"); Colby, *War from the Ground Up* , 230–41 ("*vertebrae*"); Keegan, *Six Armies in Normandy*, 275 ("*lifted me in the air*"); Maczek, *Od Podwody do Czolga, Wspomnienia Wojenne 1918–1945*, 167–68 (*toasts drunk*).

With eastbound roads now cut: Zuckerman, *From Apes to Warlords* , 282; *VW*, vol. 1, 446–47 (*by compass course*); Horrocks, *Corps Commander*, 46–50 (*Three thousand Allied guns*); diary, D. K. Reimers, "My War," Aug. 19, 1944, MHI, 151 ("*The pocket surrounding the Germans*").

"*We always hit something*": Raines, *Eyes of Artillery*, 220; Saunders, *Royal Air Force, 1939–1945*, vol. 3, 133 ("*Many go barefoot*"), 136–37 (*telltale glint*); Copp, ed., *Montgomery's Scientists*, 189 ("*Heavy firing into the sunken road*"); McKee, *Caen: Anvil of Victory*, 350 ("*I saw a truck crew*"); Keegan, *Six Armies in Normandy*, 271–73 ("*surrounded by fire*").

Two death struggles: Copp and Vogel, *Maple Leaf Route: Falaise*, 121 ("*grey-clad men*"); Freiherr von Lüttwitz, Oct. 1945, FMS, #A-904, MHI, 21–22 ("*awful heap*"); OH, Dixon M. Raymond, n.d., Craig W. H. Luther papers, HIA, box 1, 7–8 ("*gun boiled away*"); Reynolds, *Steel Inferno*, 264 ("*like burrs*"); Stacey, *The Canadian Army, 1939–1945*, 205–6.

Three miles northeast, eighteen hundred men: Maczek, *Od Podwody do Czolga, Wspomnienia Wojenne 1918–1945*, 167;

Mieczkowski, ed., *The Soldiers of General Maczek in World War II*, 50–52 (*Poles caught the brunt*); "The Battle of the Falaise Pocket," *AB*, no. 8 (1975): 1+ (*escaping Germans streamed past*); Whitaker et al., *Victory at Falaise*, 277–87 (*SS bodies roasted*).

"Merde pour la guerre": Saunders, *Royal Air Force, 1939–1945*, vol. 3, 136–37; Hastings, *OVERLORD*, 305 ("*more of an execution*"); OH, Dixon M. Raymond, n.d., Craig W. H. Luther papers, HIA, box 1, 7–8 ("*shot them down in droves*"); Carpenter, *No Woman's World*, 75 (*urinated on the body*).

"*one of those paintings of Waterloo*": "The Battle of the Falaise Pocket," *AB*, no. 8 (1975): 1+; Collier, *Fighting Words*, 170 ("*the end of Germany*"); *DOB*, 168 (*escaped seemingly sure destruction at Messina*).

"*All German formations*": Blumenson, *The Battle of the Generals*, 241–42, 254–57.

After liberating Orléans and Chartres: "Memoranda for Record," Aug. 19, 1944, XII AG, NARA RG 407, ML #205; *BP*, 566–70, 574–75; AAR, "Bridging the Seine," XV Corps, Nov. 1944, NARA RG 498, G-3 OR, box 10; Gerhard Graf von Schwerin, ETHINT 18, Oct. 1945, MHI, 1.

"*inextricable confusion*": Gerhard Graf von Schwerin, ETHINT 18, Oct. 1945, MHI, 6–7; *AAFinWWII*, 272 (*sixty Seine crossing sites*); Keegan, *Six Armies in Normandy*, 285 (*improvised ferries*); *BP*, 557, 581 (*25,000 vehicles*); Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 433 (*cider barrels*), 424 (*twelve of fifteen division commanders*); Luck, *Panzer Commander*, 165 (*empty fuel cans*); Hastings, *OVERLORD*, 309 (*dead cow*); Zuckerman, *From Apes to Warlords*, 282 (*95 percent of German troops*); *TSC*, 215. Historian John Prados estimates that 115,000 got away (*Normandy Crucible*, 249, 262).

Yet by any measure the defeat at Falaise: Weigley, *Eisenhower's Lieutenants*, 214; diary, D. K. Reimers, "My War," Aug. 24, 1944, MHI, 157 ("*Life in the cages*"); Beevor, *D-Day*, 460–61; *BP*, 535–36 ("*When you receive these lines*"); Warlimont, *Inside Hitler's Headquarters*, 454 ("*western thriller*").

Allied investigators counted: Ellis, *Brute Force*, 391. Various tallies have been offered. 21st Army Group reported finding 571 German guns, 358 tanks and self-propelled guns, and 4,700 trucks, cars, and armored tracks in the pocket. "The Operations of 21 Army Group," 1946, CARL, N-133331, 15. Ludewig puts panzer losses at Falaise at more than 400, over half the total fleet. Ludewig, *Rückzug*, 99–100.

No Seine ferry could carry a Tiger: Lefèvre, *Panzers in Normandy Then and Now*, photo (*charred on the docks*); Westermann, *Flak*, 260; Ellis, *Brute Force*, 391; *VW*, vol. 1, 448 (*twenty-five hundred trucks and cars*); Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 434 ("*five to ten tanks each*"); Ludewig, *Rückzug*, 164 (*Fifth Panzer Army*); Keegan, *Six Armies in Normandy*, 283–84 (*Army Group Center*); Callahan quoted in Blumenson, *The Battle of the Generals*, 272 ("*remarkable resurgence*").

Eisenhower took a quick tour: corr, Thor M. Smith to family, Aug. 28, 1944, HIA, box 1 ("*bloated dead*"); Thompson, *The Imperial War Museum Book of Victory in Europe*, 139 (*paybooks*); "The Battle of the Falaise Pocket," *AB*, no. 8 (1975): 1+ (*bulldozed mass grave*); Skibinski, *Pierwsza Pancerna*, 311 ("*coal monuments*"); Hastings, *OVERLORD*, 312 (*evacuate gases*); Saunders, *Royal Air Force, 1939–1945*, vol. 3, 136–37 (*rear seat of a limousine*); *BP*, 558 ("*avenging angel*").

Troops cleansing the pocket wore gas masks: Lyall, ed., *The War in the Air*, 428; *Reporting World War II*, vol. 2, 217 ("*Everything is dead*"); Moorehead, *Eclipse*, 158 ("*waiting to die in the water*"); Stacey, *The Canadian Army, 1939–1945*, 205–6 (*eight thousand slaughtered horses*); Lucas and Barker, *The Killing Ground*, 158–59 (*Not until 1961*).

"*Thank you for liberating us*": Copp, *Cinderella Army*, 27; Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Soldier, General of the Army, President-Elect, 1890–1952*, vol. 1, 331 (*Many recalled November 1918*); memo, BLM, Aug. 20, 1944, NARA RG 407, ML, box 24143 ("*beginning of the end*").

The Loveliest Story of Our Time

Warm summer rain: Marshall, *Battle at Best*, 226 ("*booming like bitterns*").

Tricolor pennants flew: Keegan, *Six Armies in Normandy*, 306; Hills, *Phantom Was There*, 217–18 (*white silhouette*); Beevor and Cooper, *Paris After the Liberation, 1944–1949*, 31; Yeide and Stout, *First to the Rhine*, 201.

Scores of frisky "warcos": Moorehead, *Eclipse*, 160; Lankford, ed., *OSS Against the Reich*, 168–69 (*any procession into Paris*), 160–62 ("*Paris/Orléans*"); Baker, *Ernest Hemingway*, 521; Reynolds, *Hemingway: The Final Years*, 105–6; Voss, *Reporting the War*, 185–90 ("le grand capitaine"); Capa, *Slightly Out of Focus*, 179 ("*spitting short sentences*"); Babcock, *War Stories*, 178 ("*just in case*").

Astride the road outside Limours: Beevor, *D-Day*, 387; Baker, *Ernest Hemingway*, 525 ("*Like the Scarlet Pimpernel*"); Clayton, *Three Marshals of France*, 39–42 (*child's toy printing set*); MMB, 310; Porch, *The Path to Victory*, 583–84; OH, SLAM, 1973, George J. Stapleton, MHI, V, 19–24 ("*Have no fear*"); Marshall, *Battle at Best*, 226.

"*a weird assortment of private cars*": Whitehead, "*Beachhead Don*," 211–12; Marshall, *Battle at Best*, 226 (*Veterans of the Franco-Prussian War*); Lankford, ed., *OSS Against the Reich*, 171 ("*wreck one's constitution*").

By Thursday evening the spearhead remained five miles: *BP*, 611–14.

"*advancing on a one-tank front*": Keegan, *Six Armies in Normandy*, 308; Blumenson, "Politics and the Military in the Liberation of Paris," *Parameters* (summer 1998): 4+ ("*slam on in*"); Zaloga, *Liberation of Paris 1944*, 67–68 ("Tenez bon").

Eisenhower had long planned: "Crossing of the Seine and Capture of Paris," Aug. 17, 1944, SHAEF, planning staff, Post-Neptune, NARA RG 331, E 23 ("*eight divisions*"); Wieviorka, *Normandy*, 350–1; Keegan, *Six Armies in Normandy*, 291–92; Beevor and Cooper, *Paris After the Liberation, 1944–1949*, 39 (*convoys were hijacked*); Riding, *And the Show Went On*, 308 (*Jewish deportees*).

"*Paris is worth 200,000 dead*": Zaloga, *Liberation of Paris 1944*, 34, 24; Keegan, *Six Armies in Normandy*, 296 ("*holier-than-thouery*").

The moment grew riper: Beevor and Cooper, *Paris After the Liberation, 1944–1949*, 37 (*foretelling catastrophe*), 40 (*opened their windows*); "Paris," *AB*, No. 14, 1976, 11+; Collins and Lapierre, *Is Paris Burning?*, 149–50 (*four hundred such redoubts*), 133 ("*things are going to get bad*"), 219; Jacques Kim, ed., *La Libération de Paris*, 1944, no pagination, in HIA, Boris T. Pash papers, box 4, folder 4 (*portraits of Hitler*); Thornton, *The Liberation of Paris*, 165 ("*pictures of Delacroix*"); Aron, *France Reborn*, 262 (*Hèrmes scarves*); Riding, *And the Show Went On*, 309 ("*For every Parisian*"); Collier, *The Freedom Road, 1944–45*, 165 (*Swedish ball-bearing factory manager*).

"*If the enemy tries to hold Paris*": Chandler, 2088–89.

"*Gestapo small fry*": Thornton, *The Liberation of Paris*, 127, 121 (*Ash from burning documents*); Joseph R. Darnall, "Hospitalization in European Theater of Operations," n.d., MHUC, Group 1, box 24, 25 (*clogged the plumbing*); Collins and Lapierre, *Is Paris Burning?*, 72–73 ("*back for Christmas*"); Blumenson, *Liberation*, 13 ("la ville sans regard"); Beevor, *D-Day*, 485 (*toilet brushes*).

With his main thrust delayed by skirmishers: "Paris," *AB*, No. 14, 1976, 11+ ("Les Américains!"; *BP*, 615; Maule, *Out of the Sand*, 214 ("*Rejoice!*").

From a balcony of the Hôtel Meurice: MWB, 89–90; Neiburg, *The Blood of Free Men*, 85. Choltitz had been linked to the murder of Jews in the Crimea. Roberts, *The Storm of War*, 495–96.

"*field of ruins*": *BP*, 598.

"*It has been my fate*": Collins and Lapierre, *Is Paris Burning?*, 24, 158 ("*Our task is hard*"); Ludewig, *Rückzug*, 138 (*Saxon*), 143 (*eight centuries*).

With only twenty thousand men: *Germany VII*, 615; Ludewig, *Rückzug*, 144–47; Blumenson, "Politics and the Military in the Liberation of Paris," *Parameters* (summer 1998): 4+ ("*Ever since our enemies*"); *BP*, 609 (*told superiors of placing explosives*); Aron, *France Reborn*, 279–80 ("*prudent and intelligent attitude*"), 284–85; Maule, *Out of the Sand*, 214 ("*the Allies are here*"). Choltitz's role in saving Paris would be vigorously debated for more than sixty years after the war. http://www.ina.fr/recherche/recherche/search/la+liberation+de+paris*

Leclerc managed to slide his entire division: "Paris," *AB*, No. 14, 1976, 11+; *BP*, 615 (*12th Infantry reached Notre Dame*); Keegan, *Six Armies in Normandy*, 309; Beevor and Cooper, *Paris After the Liberation, 1944–1949*, 45 (*women curled their hair*); Aron, *France Reborn*, 286 (*colors flew from the Eiffel Tower*); Thornton, *The Liberation of Paris*, 173 (*Animals set loose*), 187 (*scent of mothballs*).

"*The rip tide of courage*": *Reporting World War II*, vol. 2, 251, 260 (*Yiddish*); Marshall, *Battle at Best*, 246–47 ("*not less than five thousand bullets*"); Moorehead, *Eclipse*, 168–69 (*from the rumble seats*); chronology, Aug. 25, 1944, 1556 hours, GSP, LOC MS Div, box 53, folder 1 ("*massacred or made prisoners*"); "Paris," *AB*, no. 14, 1976, 11+ (*surrendered to a Signal Corps photographer*); Collins and Lapierre, *Is Paris Burning?*, 313, 325 (*weapons in the cloakroom*); Aron, *France Reborn*, 286–87 (*lunch at the usual hour*).

"*Germany's lost the war*": Collier, *The Freedom Road, 1944–45*, 170; Collins and Lapierre, *Is Paris Burning?*, 312 (*packed a valise*), 307 ("*our last combat*"); Beevor, *D-Day*, 508 ("*silent from the effort*"); Aron, *France Reborn*, 287–89 ("*particularly not today*").

Just down the street, fighting swept: Tillier et al., *Paris*, 131; Choltitz, *Soldat Unter Soldaten*, 268–69 ("Sprechen deutsch?").

A furious mob punched and spat: Beevor, *D-Day*, 510; Aron, *France Reborn*, 291–92 ("*Oh, no*"). Choltitz would be court-martialed in absentia after his capture. Ludewig, *Rückzug*, 148–49.

Teams of French and German officers: Collins and Lapierre, *Is Paris Burning?*, 338–39; *Germany VII*, 615; Riding, *And the Show Went On*, 313 (*Louvre*).

"*German spoken*" *signs*: "Inside Paris," *Newsweek*, Aug. 28, 1944, 25+; Pogue, *Pogue's War*, 199 ("*Supplier of the Boche*"); Marshall, *Battle at Best*, 212 ("*Leave her alone*"); Edsel, *The Monuments Men*, 121 ("*Arrests and Purges*"); Aron, *France Reborn*, 423 ("*a psychosis*"); Riding, *And the Show Went On*, 318 (indignité nationale). Biographer Jonathan Fenby notes that the Aron figure

was disputed, and that an Interior Ministry study found that the Resistance carried out 9,673 summary executions during the war. In Paris, 126,000 people were arrested for collaboration. *The General*, 659-60, 722.

At ten P.M., the first of an eventual eighteen hundred: AAR, "T Force and T Branch," n.d., 12th AG, NARA RG 331, E 180, SHAEF, box 44; "T Force—The CIC in Paris," Military Intelligence Service, No. 25, Jan. 1945, NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #494L, 66+; AAR, T Force, n.d., 6th AG, G-2, Boris T. Pash papers, HIA, box 4, file 6; Gellhorn, *The Face of War*, 180–82 ("*Revenge me*"); Moorehead, *Eclipse*, 178 ("*a knock on my door*").

"*a great city where everybody is happy*": Liebling, *Mollie & Other War Pieces*, 235; Prinsburg (Minn.) *Record News*, Sept. 1944, 2 ("*never in my life been kissed*"); George E. McIntyre, "As Mac Saw It," n.d., MHI; Collier, *Fighting Words*, 172 ("*Had we ever been away?*"); Nicholas, *The Rape of Europa*, 292 (*treasures from the Jeu de Paume*); Thornton, *The Liberation of Paris*, 154 (*Bank of France cellars*).

"*You've got just thirty seconds*": OH, SLAM, 1973, George J. Stapleton, MHI, V, 19–28; Collier, *Fighting Words*, 173 ("*seventy-three dry martinis*"); Carpenter, *No Woman's World*, 113 (*raspberries in liquer*); Marshall, *Battle at Best*, 212 ("*It's the law*"); Blumenson, *Liberation*, 156 ("*the day the war should have ended*").

"*Paris seems to have*": Nichols, ed., *Ernie's War*, 354; Pyle, *Brave Men*, 314 ("*the loveliest, brightest story*").

De Gaulle entered the city: De Gaulle, *The Complete War Memoirs of Charles de Gaulle*, 648 ("*Nothing was missing*"); Aron, *France Reborn*, 293 (*whence he had fled*); Foote, *SOE in France*, 416 (*blotting paper*); Beevor and Cooper, *Paris After the Liberation, 1944–1949*, x (*He uttered hardly a word*); D'Este, *Decision in Normandy*, 517; *VW*, vol. 1, 488, 493; Collins and Lapierre, *Is Paris Burning?*, 349 (*Coleman lanterns*). Jonathan Fenby writes that de Gaulle made a perfunctory reference to "our dear and admirable Allies." *The General*, 679–80. Michael Neiberg calls it "the best speech of his life." *The Blood of Free Men*, 237.

"*City is scarcely damaged*": memo, N. H. Vissering, SHAEF G-4, Aug. 30, 1944, NARA RG 331, SHAEF SGS, Geog Corr, box 108; "The Coal Situation on the Continent," n.d., "G-4 History," NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #553A-C; Harold S. Frum, "The Soldier Must Write," 1984, GCM Lib (*charcoal burners*); "Paris Is Free!," *Time* (Sept. 4, 1944): 34+ (*cafés in Montparnasse*); Wieviorka, *Normandy*, 354 (*two thousand Resistance fighters and twenty-five hundred civilians*); Zaloga, *Liberation of Paris, 1944*, 83–90 (*twelve hundred casualties in the eastern suburbs*); Lankford, ed., *OSS Against the Reich*, 175–77 ("*After a noisy hour*"); Chandler, 2108 ("*We should not blame the French*"). Some question whether Hitler personally asked, "Is Paris burning?" Neiberg, *The Blood of Free Men*, 214.

At three P.M. on Saturday, August 26, De Gaulle appeared: Aron, *France Reborn*, 297–300 ("*confides his safety*"); Foote, *SOE in France*, 416 ("*nunnery*").

A million people or more lined the boulevard: Beevor and Cooper, *Paris After the Liberation, 1944–1949*, 53; Thornton, *The Liberation of Paris*, 204–5 (*shots rang out*); Moorehead, *Eclipse*, 170–73 ("*like a field of wheat*"); Lankford, ed., *OSS Against the Reich*, 175–77 ("*firing wildly with machine guns*"); corr, P. B. Rogers to family, Sept. 23, 1944, Pleas B. Rogers papers, MHI (*fired* "*to beat hell*").

"*The huge congregation, who had all been standing*": Beevor and Cooper, *Paris After the Liberation, 1944–1949*, 56; Voss, *Reporting the War*, 90–91 (*FFI fighters fired at the organ pipes*); Blumenson, *Liberation*, 166 ("*extraordinary example of courage*"); Maule, *Out of the Sand*, 226 ("*Have you no pride?*").

"*The first wild shots*": Aron, *France Reborn*, 300.

So ended the great struggle: Keegan, *Six Armies in Europe*, 317; Fritz Bayerlein, ETHINT 67, Aug. 15, 1945, MHI, 7.

German casualties in the west: memo, DDE to CCS, Aug 30, 1944, NARA RG 331, E 1, SHAEF SGS, 381; D'Este, *Decision in Normandy*, 517; Zetterling, *Normandy 1944*, 82; Ellis, *Brute Force*, 355–56; Zaloga, *Armored Thunderbolt*, 169; memo, DDE to CCS, Aug 30, 1944, NARA RG 331, E 1, SHAEF SGS, 381 ("*very badly cut up*"); Keegan, *Six Armies in Normandy*, 316 (*early warning network*); "The Process of Collapse of the German Armies," Aug. 29, 1944, OSS, research and analysis, no. 2458, NARA RG 334, E 315, ANSCOL, box 922 (*monthly casualties of a quarter million*); "Age-Distribution of Dead in the German Ground Forces," Apr. 3, 1945, OSS, research and analysis, no. 1087.6, NARA RG 334, E 315, ANSCOL, box 888.

Americans killed, wounded, missing, or captured: The figures include air crews. D'Este, *Decision in Normandy*, 517.

In half a million sorties flown: *VW*, vol. 1, 488.

The 82nd Airborne had given battle: Gavin, *On to Berlin*, 12.

Normandy paid a fell price: Blumenson, *Liberation*, 73 (*of 3,400 Norman villages and towns*); Vigneras, *Rearming the French*, 306 (*24,000 FFI fighters*); Wieviorka, *Normandy*, 131; Neiberg, *The Blood of Free Men*, 13; Kedward, *France and the French*, 298; http://www.discoverfrance.net/France/Paris/Monuments-Paris/Eiffel.shtml.

Most prominent among the German dead: Ruge, *Rommel in Normandy*, 246; Marshall, *A Ramble Through My War*, 232 (*merely*

lifting the eyelid); Margry, "The Death of Rommel," *AB*, no. 80 (1993): 38+ ("*Just one thought*").

The killers would come to Herrlingen: Liddell Hart, ed., *The Rommel Papers*, 501–5; Margry, "The Death of Rommel," *AB*, no. 80 (1993): 38+ ("*another of the old ones*"); Douglas-Home, *Rommel*, 210 ("*His heart belonged*").

"*If I ever was brave*": Miller, *The Story of Ernie Pyle*, 345.

"*a flat, black depression*": Pyle, *Brave Men*, 319; Miller, *The Story of Ernie Pyle*, 364 ("*I have had all I can take*"); CBH, Sept. 2, 1944, box 4 ("*worn out, thin*").

For many rank-and-file troops: corr, T. M. Smith to family, Aug. 8, 1944 ("*spreading like a disease*"), and Aug. 15, 1944 ("*just a damn fool*"), HIA, Thor M. Smith papers, box 1; Pogue, *George C. Marshall of Victory*, 430 (*holiday gifts*); corr, P. B. Rogers, Aug. 17, 1944, Pleas B. Rogers papers, MHI ("*space for a long time*").

"*fundamental inability to make sound strategic judgments*": Megargee, *Inside Hitler's High Command*, 232–36; Overy, *Why the Allies Won*, 227 (*tactical edge*); "The Effectiveness of Third Phase Tactical Air Operations," AAF Evaluation Board, Aug. 1945, NARA RG 334, E 315, ANSCOL, box 15 (*thirty-one airfields*); Murray and Millett, *A War to Be Won*, 416–17; Thompson, *The Imperial War Museum Book of Victory in Europe*, 135 ("*much more amusing*").

"*a vivid moral structure*": Fussell, *The Boys' Crusade*, ix.

Soviet troops in Poland: Some historians put the toll at Majdanek at three hundred thousand or more. Weinberg, *A World at Arms*, 708.

"*I have just seen the most terrible place*": Robert H. Abzug, "The Liberation of the Concentration Camps," in *Liberation 1945*, 35–36; "Murder, Inc.," *Time* (Sept. 11, 1944): 36 ("*Children's shoes*"); William J. vanden Heuvel, "Comments on Michael Beschloss' *The Conquerors*," *SHAFR Newsletter*, March 2003, 27+ ("*systematic murder*").

"The saviors come not home": Harold S. Frum, "The Soldier Must Write," 1984, GCM Lib; Whitehead, "*Beachhead Don*," 365 ("*like a lamb*").

It will be my cross: Carroll, *Behind the Lines*, 69–73.

"*It is summer*": Stiles, *Serenade to the Big Bird*, 215.

A final gesture of American arms: Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, 316 ("*show of force*"); Huie, *The Execution of Private Slovik*, 106–7 (*Benjamin Franklin*).

Hurriedly trucked to Versailles: Miller, *Division Commander*, 100; Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 396 ("*Khaki Bill*"); Ent, ed., *The First Century*, 165 (*three-cent postage stamp*).

CHAPTER 4: PURSUIT

"The Huntsman Is Hungry"

Naples in August 1944 still carried scars: Taylor and Taylor, eds., *The War Diaries*, 128 (*carved from the bones of saints*); Kennett, *G.I.: The American Soldier in World War II*, 204–5 (*one-third of all arriving cargo*); Lewis, *Naples '44*, 134–35 (*civilian suits*); Richler, ed., *Writers on World War II*, 477 ("*kingdom come*").

The city was "*colorful*": Fairbanks, *A Hell of a War*, 224; Taylor and Taylor, eds., *The War Diaries*, 448 (*touch their testicles*); Lewis, *Naples '44*, 93 ("*romantic frustration*"); Vining, ed., *American Diaries of World War II*, 114 (*prices had jumped thirtyfold*); diary, Cyrus C. Aydlett, July 15, 1944, NWWIIM ("*Piece ass!*").

More than ever Naples was a military town: Fisher, *Cassino to the Alps*, 292–99.

under Plan 4-44: Hewitt, "Planning Operation Anvil-Dragoon," *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings* (July–Aug. 1954): 731+; "Southern France," n.d., NARA RG 319, OCMH background files, chapter 10 (*nine hundred vessels*); *IFG*, 238–39.

By August 13, the 36th and 45th Infantry Divisions: "Southern France," n.d., NARA RG 319, OCMH background files, chapter 10; Mauldin, *Up Front*, 198–99 (*moldering corpses*); Even, *The Tenth Engineers*, 38 (*makeshift aircraft carrier*); Wyant, *Sandy Patch*, 114–15 ("*Many a New Day*"); Taggart, ed., *History of the Third Infantry Division*, 202 (*never glanced up*).

Pacing the bridge of the flagship: OH, "The Reminiscences of Admiral H. Kent Hewitt," Col U OHRO, 1962, 6: 1–3; *AAAD*, 21–23; *DOB*, 30–32.

DRAGOON *had begun dreadfully*: Hewitt, "Planning Operation Anvil-Dragoon," *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings* (July–Aug. 1954): 731ff.; John A. Moreno, "The Death of Admiral Moon," n.d., a.p., 225+; Alter and Crouch, eds., "*My Dear Moon*," no pagination; OH, "The Reminiscences of Admiral H. Kent Hewitt," Col U OHRO, 1962, 24: 33–35 ("*I don't think it's as bad*").

At seven the next morning: Alter and Crouch, eds., "*My Dear Moon*," no pagination ("*I am sick*"); Individual Deceased Personnel File, Don P. Moon, a.p., obtained under FOIA, 2008 ("*Cause: suicide*"); corr, JLC to Mrs. Don P. Moon, Aug. 17, 1944, JLC papers, DDE Lib, box 3, 201 file ("*a casualty of this war*").

At two P.M. on August 13, under clear skies: Hewitt, "Planning Operation Anvil-Dragoon," *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings* (July–Aug. 1954): 731+; Moran, *Churchill: Taken from the Diaries of Lord Moran*, 179 ("*All that they felt*").

Vesuvius had begun to recede: Hewitt, "Planning Operation Anvil-Dragoon," *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings* (July–Aug. 1954): 731+; Pawle, *The War and Colonel Warden*, 315–16 (*light tropical suit*); Taggart, ed., *History of the Third Infantry Division*, 202 ("*It's Churchill!*"); Reitan, *Riflemen*, 41.

Colonel Kent: Jackson, *The Mediterranean and the Middle East*, vol. 6, part 2, 174.

on a fortnight's bathing holiday: Jenkins, *Churchill: A Biography*, 752–53; Reynolds, *In Command of History*, 3 ("*benevolent hippo*"); Macmillan, *War Diaries*, 502 (*portable map room*).

DRAGOON, originally called ANVIL: A recent history on the German retreat from France states that the two Wehrmacht armies in Army Group G together numbered sixteen divisions on June 6, 1944. Ludewig, *Rückzug*, 48.

Shipping shortages and delays in capturing Rome: Charles V. von Lüttichau, "Army Group G Prepares to Meet the Invasion," 1957, OCMH, NARA RG 319, R-series #103, box 16; H. Maitland Wilson, "Dispatch, Invasion of Southern France," 1944, NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #108, 4–31; *CCA*, 76n, 100; "The Invasion of Southern France, Operation Dragoon," ETOUSA, 1944, NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #314; *TSC*, 220–21 ("*decisive theater*"); Howard, *The Mediterranean Strategy in World War II*, 61; Ambrose, *The Supreme Commander*, 338; OH, Charles de Gaulle, Jan. 14, 1947, FCP, MHI; De Gaulle, *The Complete Memoirs of Charles de Gaulle*, 613–14.

The British disagreed, politely at first: *TSC*, 221–22 ("*bleak and sterile*"); *IFG*, 229–30 ("*great hazards*"); Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, 301 (*would take three months*); memo, British chiefs, June 26, 1944, NARA RG 165, E 422, OPD, history unit, box 12 ("*unacceptable to us*"); H. Maitland Wilson, "Dispatch, Invasion of Southern France," 1944, NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #108, 31; Macmillan, *War Diaries*, 470 ("*eliminate the German forces*"); Kennedy, *The Business of War*, 333 ("*dagger under the armpit*").

"*We need big ports*": Chandler, 1938; Howard, *The Mediterranean Strategy in World War II*, 67 (*threading the gap*); Pogue, *George C. Marshall: Organizer of Victory*, 408 ("*Austrians held off the Italians*"); OH, John E. Hull, 1974, James W. Wurman, SOOHP, MHI, III-54, V-26 ("*not more than seven divisions*"); Barker, "The Ljubljana Gap Strategy," *JMH* (Jan. 1992): 57+ (*dash to Vienna*); Moran, *Churchill: Taken from the Diaries of Lord Moran*, 233 ("*Winston is a gambler*"); Danchev, 561–65 ("*damned fools*").

The prime minister would have none of it: Kimball, ed., *Churchill & Roosevelt: The Complete Correspondence*, vol. 3, 523 (*forestall Soviet domination*), 214–23 ("*complete ruin*").

Still Churchill persisted: diary, CBH, Aug. 7, 1944, MHI, box 4 ("*beautifully colored speech*"); dispatch, Henry Maitland Wilson to CCS, n.d., CMH, UH 0-1, 23 ("*greatest secrecy*"); msg, U.S. JCS, Aug. 5, 1944, NARA RG 331, AFHQ micro, R-323-A ("*extremely unwise*"); Jackson, *The Mediterranean and the Middle East*, vol. 6, part 2, 174 ("*utmost confusion*"); *IFG*, 231 (*insufficiently seaworthy*); Chandler, 2057 (*no major Breton port would open*), 2066–67; *Three Years*, 635 ("*Ike said no*"), 639 ("*lay down the mantle*"), 644; Strong, *Intelligence at the Top*, 197 (*wept copiously*); Churchill, *Triumph and Tragedy*, 68–71 ("*no more to be done*").

Denouncing the "*sheer folly*": Moran, *Churchill: Taken from the Diaries of Lord Moran*, 173.

"*strong and dominating partner*": *TSC*, 226.

"*We have been ill-treated*": Pogue, *George C. Marshall: Organizer of Victory*, 412–13; Roberts, *Masters and Commanders*, 501 ("*lying down*"), 500 ("*Winston is very bitter*"); Hastings, *Armageddon*, 232 ("*one of the stupidest strategic teams*"); Wilson, ed., *D-Day 1944*, 38 ("*The only times I ever quarrel*").

"*an Englishman's idea of cooperation*": Brower, ed., *World War II in Europe: The Final Year*, 59; Pogue, *George C. Marshall: Organizer of Victory*, 491 ("*always a disperser*"); Howard, *The Mediterranean Strategy in World War II*, 67 (*incoherent*); Brower, ed., *World War II in* Europe, 42 ("*slogan not a strategy*"); *VW*, vol. 2, 19; *TSC*, 246–47 ("*tearing the guts out*").

Certainly the fraught imperatives: Powers, "The Battle of Normandy," *JMH* (July 1992): 455+; Roberts, *Masters and Commanders*, 505 ("*full-blown professionals*"); pamphlet, "Beachheads and Mountains," MTO, U.S. Army, June 1945, Theodore J. Conway papers, MHI, box 2 (*one in every ten*).

"*He must always be right*": Roberts, *Masters and Commanders*, 500.

"*He was literally frothing*": Danchev, 571; Colville, *The Fringes of Power*, 564 ("*corrective sneering*"), 522 (*black bristles of the hair brushes*); Hastings, *Winston's War*, 411 ("*his own vivid world*"); Buhite, *Decisions at Yalta*, 15 ("*Of course I am an egotist*").

"*that unresting genius*": Fraser, *Alanbrooke*, 22.

"*The P.M. is very tired*": Moran, *Churchill: Taken from the Diaries of Lord Moran* , 194; Macmillan, *War Diaries*, 474 ("*old and weary*"); Foreman, "Winston Churchill, Distilled," *Wall Street Journal*, Dec. 10, 2009, D6 ("*economy of effort*").

Already this Mediterranean sojourn had revived him: Addison, *Churchill, the Unexpected Hero*, 184 (*Champagne lunches*); Kimball, *Forged in War*, 22 (*Churchill was no alcoholic*); msg, U.S. JCS, Aug. 5, 1944, NARA RG 331, AFHQ micro, R-323-A ("DRAGOON *will be successful*").

In the smallest hours of Tuesday, August 15: "Invasion of Southern France," n.d., Office of the Theater Historian, NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #607, 11–12; *IFG*, 255–57 (*one hundred fathoms*); Robichon, *The Second D-Day*, 163 ("*deluge of metal*").

"*Nancy has a stiff neck*": De Lattre de Tassigny, *The History of the French First Army*, 64. In southern France, the OSS had twenty-eight agent networks radioing reports on German defenses and troop movements. Waller, *Wild Bill Donovan*, 264.

Each soldier aboard the combat loaders: Stephen J. Weiss, "Operation ANVIL-DRAGOON: The Allied Invasion of Southern France," n.d., a.p.; Garland, *Unknown Soldiers*, 277 ("*Swilled coffee*"), 309 ("*sunstorms*"); Langan W. Swent, "Personal Diary," Aug. 14, 1944, HIA, box 1 ("*things are so quiet*").

Catoctin's *malfunctioning ventilation system*: Will Lang, draft cable to *Life*, Aug. 1, 1944, LKT Jr. papers, GCM Lib, box 21 ("*predatory*" *face*); corr, Don E. Carleton to Sarah Truscott, July 1944, LKT Jr. papers, GCM Lib, box 1 (*silver nitrate*); Mauldin, *The Brass Ring*, 241 ("*one of the really tough generals*").

Truscott's was an unorthodox path: biographical material, LKT Jr. papers, GCM Lib, box 21, folder 7; Jeffers, *Command of Honor*, 215 (*unlucky dabbler*); Heefner, *Dogface Soldier*, 9–13 (*renounced strong drink*).

"*willpower, decision, and drive*": description by Ernest Harmon in Layne Van Arsdale, ed., "Allied Biographies," USAREUR staff ride, Alsace, May 2009; Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Soldier, General of the Army, President-Elect, 1890–1952* , vol. 1, 296 (*lamented his inability to get Truscott released*); Will Lang, draft cable to *Life*, Aug. 1, 1944, LKT Jr. papers, GCM Lib, box 21 ("*Bullshit*"); Jeffers, *Command of Honor*, 215 ("*hunters by instinct*").

"*far removed from the softening touch*": LKT Jr. to Sarah, July 19 and Aug. 14, 1944, LKT Jr. papers, GCM Lib, box 1; *DOB*, 586.

The enemy never had a chance: *IFG*, 251; OH, Paul D. Adams, 1975, Irving Monclova and Marlin Lang, SOOHP, MHI (*Quaker guns*); signals report, appendix H, "Airborne Diversion in Support of Operation Dragoon," NARA RG 331, AFHQ micro, R-69 Spec, box 294; John C. Warren, "Airborne Missions in the Mediterranean, 1942–1945," 1955, AFHRA, study no. 74, 92–93; Holt, *The Deceivers*, 619–20 (*attack at Genoa*).

The usual anarchy and intrepidity: "Report on Airborne Operations in Dragoon," Oct. 30, 1944, Allied Force HQ, HIA, 10; *RR*, 104; John C. Warren, "Airborne Missions in the Mediterranean, 1942–1945," 1955, AFHRA, study no. 74, 99–102; "The Night Landing in Provence, Aug. 1944," n.d., SEM, NHHC, box 87, file 97, 2–3.

At eight A.M.*, eleven American assault battalions*: "Invasion of Southern France," n.d., WD HD, CMH, 8-3 SF, 50; "Operation Dragoon," Dec. 1944, COHQ, bulletin Y/42, CARL, N-6530.20.

Among those at the point of the spear: certificate of service, ALM; Simpson, *Audie Murphy, American Soldier*, 1 ("*greatest folk hero*"); Graham, *No Name on the Bullet*, 16–17 ("*can't remember*"); Audie L. Murphy Memorial Website, http://www.audiemurphy.com/biography.htm (*eighteen*); Arlington National Cemetery website, http://www.arlingtoncemetery.mil/History/Military/HF_AudieMurphy.aspx; Hubler, "He Doesn't Want to Be a Star," *Saturday Evening Post* (Apr. 18, 1953): 34+ (*fainted*).

Sharpshooting now served him well: Simpson, *Audie Murphy, American Soldier*, 121–22; Murphy, *To Hell and Back*, 176–77 ("*My whole being*").

Only on the invasion right flank: *WaS*, 97; *IFG*, 267–68; *RR*, 115–18; Swent, "Personal Diary," Aug. 9, 1944, HIA, box 1 (*radio-controlled landing craft*); Greear, "Operation Neptune and Landing on Coast of Southern France," lecture, Nov. 1944, NARA RG 334, E 315, ANSCOL, box 199, 12–13 (*same frequencies*); LKT Jr., "Comments on 'Dragoon Secondary Attack Against Fortress Europe,'" n.d., NARA RG 319, OCMH, 2-3.7 CC2, 2–3 ("*milled around at high speed*"); OH, Herbert A. Peterson, Oct. 1, 1944, NARA RG 38, E 11, U.S. Navy WWII Oral Histories, 5 ("*As a general proposition*").

"*All ships and craft reached their final assault*": msg, HKH, Aug. 15, 1944, NARA RG 331, AFHQ micro, R-323-A.

"*quietest beachhead I have ever seen*": Langan W. Swent, "Personal Diary," Aug. 15, 1944, HIA, box 1.

By the close of this D-Day: "Invasion of Southern France," n.d., WD HD, CMH, 8-3 SF, 56; *RR*, 123–24, 63, 70 (*less than 300,000*); "Operation Dragoon," Dec. 1944, COHQ, bulletin Y/42, ANSCOL, NARA 334, E 315, box 465 (*preferred to surrender*); Warlimont, *Inside Hitler's Headquarters*, 451 ("*worst day of my life*"); MMB, 45; Bonn, *When the Odds Were Even* , 68 (*SS atrocities in Poland*);

Pallud, "The Riviera Landings, *AB*, no. 110 (2000): 2+ (*one-quarter of his infantry divisions*); Charles V. von Lüttichau, "The Invasion," 1957, NARA RG 319, OCMH, R-series # 104, box 16, 12–13; Jackson, *The Mediterranean and the Middle East*, vol. 6, part 2, 189; Ludewig, *Rückzug*, 57–61 ("*Russians in France*"). Demands from the Normandy front had reduced the 11th Panzer Division to barely one hundred tanks and assault guns.

By twilight on Tuesday: *Le Victorieux*, n.d., translation, Robert T. Frederick papers, HIA, box 4; Seventh Army war diary, Aug. 16, 1944, MHI ("*weak at most points*"); Sevareid, *Not So Wild a Dream*, 432 ("*faintly sourish smell*"); "The Night Landing in Provence, Aug. 1944," n.d., SEM, NHHC, box 87, file 97, 1 ("*What happiness*"); OH, Theodore J. Conway, 1978, Robert F. Ensslin, SOOHP, MHI, III-21 (*VI Corps crystal*); Conway, "Operation Anvil," lecture, n.d., Norfolk, Theodore J. Conway papers, MHI, box 2, 16 ("*best invasion I ever attended*").

"*frog blackmoors*": Orange, *Tedder: Quietly in Command*, 273.

the Kimberly *ventured no closer*: Churchill, *Triumph and Tragedy*, 94–95; Moran, *Churchill: Taken from the Diaries of Lord Moran* , 180 ("*a querulous mood*"); Pawle, *The War and Colonel Warden*, 315–16 ("*a lot more exciting*").

The Avenue of Stenches

The immediate objective of DRAGOON: memo, Joint Security Council, July 4, 1944, NARA RG 165, E 422, WD OPD, history unit, box 39; *RR*, 137; *IFG*, 282; *The Seventh United States Army in France and Germany*, vol. 1, 151 (*three more divisions*).

Known for now as Army B: Yeide and Stout, *First to the Rhine*, 23; De Lattre de Tassigny, *The History of the French First Army*, 67 (*New Caledonians, Tahitians*); Porch, *The Path to Victory*, 596 (*boots tied around their necks*); Vigneras, *Rearming the French*, 229, 245, 248, 258, 264–66; memo, Charles L. Kades, "Allied Civil Affairs Administration in Southeastern France," Oct. 30, 1944, CARL, N-3972, 14–17 (*cherished wine transports*).

The gimlet-eyed commander of this force: Salisbury-Jones, *So Full a Glory*, 16; Aron, *France Reborn*, 317–18 ("*animal of action*"); Clayton, *Three Marshals of France*, 26–27 ("jupiterien"), 22–23 ("*greatest soldier to serve France*"); OH, "The Reminiscences of Admiral H. Kent Hewitt," Col U OHRO, 1962 copy at NHHC, 24:28 ("*very volatile*"); Truscott, *Command Missions*, 403 ("*thin hair graying*"); Yeide and Stout, *First to the Rhine*, 25 ("*What have you done*").

De Lattre sprang from minor gentry: Clayton, *Three Marshals of France*, 22–33.

Loyal to Vichy for more than two years: Codman, *Drive*, 220–21 (*outside his office door*), 222 ("*a nocturnal*"); Porch, *The Path to Victory*, 594–95 ("*lived on stage*"); Clayton, *Three Marshalls of France*, 117–18 (*might sit for days*).

The DRAGOON *landing plan for Army B*: Aron, *France Reborn*, 314 ("*the price we must pay*"); OH, JLD, 1968, Thomas E. Griess, YCHT, box 110 *(torrent of French*); Porch, *The Path to Victory*, 594–96 ("*ardent to the point of effervescence*").

The Germans waited, too: *RR*, 138–40; Charles V. von Lüttichau, "Army Group G Prepares to Meet the Invasion," 1957, NARA RG 319, OCMH, R-series #103, 24 (*fortifications at Toulon*); Wilt, *The French Riviera Campaign of August 1944*, 121 (*both garrisons reinforced*); Jackson, *The Mediterranean and the Middle East*, vol. 6, part 2, 191

Toulon was the greatest naval base: *The Seventh United States Army in France and Germany*, vol. 1, 155–59; de Belot, *The Struggle for the Mediterranean, 1939–1945*, 260 (*range of twenty-two miles*); Hewitt, "Planning Operation Anvil-Dragoon," *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings* (July–Aug. 1954): 731+; *IFG*, 290–91; AR, U.S.S. *Quincy*, Sept. 6, 1944, NARA RG 38, CNO, 57 (*chasing the interlopers back into their smoke*); OH, John F. Latimer, n.d., NARA RG 38, E 11, U.S. Navy WWII Oral Histories, 23; OH, Glynn Markham, n.d., WWII Oral History Collection, Samuel F. Proctor Archive, Department of History, University of Florida (" *spitting against the wall*").

De Lattre had assumed as much: Yeide and Stout, *First to the Rhine*, 111; "Invasion of Southern France," Office of the Theater Historian, n.d., NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #607, 145–50; *The Seventh United States Army in France and Germany*, vol. 1, 154.

By last light on Monday, August 21: Salisbury-Jones, *So Full a Glory*, 144 (*Monks from a local monastery*); De Lattre de Tassigny, *The History of the French First Army*, 77–78 (*borrowed policeman's uniform*), 92–94 ("*Three hours later*"); *The Seventh United States Army in France and Germany*, vol. 1, 158–59; "Invasion of Southern France," Office of the Theater Historian, n.d., NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #607, 160–62 (*blew up their remaining ammunition*); Hewitt, "Planning Operation Anvil-Dragoon," *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings* (July–Aug. 1954): 731+ (*more than a thousand shells*).

Marseille fell at almost the same moment: *LSA*, vol. 1, 163–64; De Lattre de Tassigny, *The History of the French First Army*, 99–102; Robichon, *The Second D-Day*, 292–93 ("*figures from another world"*), 289–90 (*civilians in nightclothes*); Salisbury-Jones, *So Full a Glory*, 147 (*city soon grew indefensible*); Aron, *France Reborn*, 335 (*spread his maps*).

"*It would be purposeless*": Aron, *France Reborn*, 342; *RR*, 80.

Thirty-seven thousand prisoners: Wilt, *The French Riviera Campaign of August 1944*, 130–31; "Supply and Maintenance on the

European Continent," n.d., USFET General Board, NARA RG 407, E 427, 97-USF5-0.3.0, no. 130, 50. Toulon received its first Liberty ship on Sept. 20. *LSA*, vol. 2, 122.

Marseille was devastated even beyond Allied fears: H. H. Dunham, "U.S. Army Transportation in the ETO," 1946, CMH, 4-13.1 AA 29, 283–84 ("*German masterpiece*" and *five thousand mines*); Aron, *France Reborn*, 343 ("*chaos of steel*"); OH, HKH, June 26, 1945, NARA RG 38, E 11, U.S. Navy WWII Oral Histories, 21 (*blimps*).

Yet the Allies had their port: *LSA*, vol. 2, 122; *The Seventh United States Army in France and Germany*, vol. 2, 331 (*12,500 tons of cargo*); De Lattre de Tassigny, *The History of the French First Army*, 115 ("*no German not dead or captive*").

Following his abdication and removal to Elba: Young, *Napoleon in Exile: Elba*, 136, 229, 283, 292–93, 304–18; Norwich, *The Middle Sea*, 456.

The Route Napoléon led, indirectly, to Waterloo: Conway, "Operation Anvil," lecture, n.d., Norfolk, Theodore J. Conway papers, MHI, box 2, 18–24; memo, LKT Jr. to A. Patch, July 21, 1944, NARA RG 319, OCMH 2-3.7 CC2, Hamilton mss.

To command this scratch assemblage: OH, Frederic B. Bates, Oct. 6, 1967, Raymond Henle, HIA, http://millercenter.org/scripps/archive/oralhistories/detail/2000,1*; Layne Van Arsdale, ed., "Allied Biographies," USAREUR staff ride, Alsace, May 2009.

An order radioed from the German high command: Hinsley, 509 (*deciphered by British cryptologists*); Jackson, *The Mediterranean and the Middle East*, vol. 6, part 2, 193–93. Historian Joachim Ludewig writes that Blaskowitz did not receive the withdrawal order until the morning of August 18, and that Nineteenth Army got it that afternoon (*Rückzug*, 82). David T. Zabecki points out that "Army Group B and Army Group G were not quite the same," in that the former was designated an *Armeegruppe*, tantamount to an oversized army in Allied terms, and the latter a *Heeresgruppe*, the equivalent of an Allied army group (Corr. to author, May 9, 2012).

Now the U.S. Seventh Army could speed north: Donald S. Bussey, "Ultra and the U.S. Seventh Army," May 12, 1945, NARA RG 457, E 9002, NSA, SRH-022; Arthur L. Funk, "General Patch, Ultra, and the Alpine Passes, 1944," n.d., University of Florida, a.p., 3–8 (NOVOCAINE); Beavan, *Operation Jedburgh*, 258–59.

Truscott put the spurs to Butler: Butler, "Task Force Butler," *Armored Cavalry Journal*, part 1 (Jan.–Feb.): 12+ ("*dignified weep*"), and part 2 (March–Apr. 1948): 30+; memo, F. B. Butler, March 3, 1947, NARA RG 319, OCMH background files, Hamilton mss, box 7.

Task Force Butler covered forty-five miles: John A. Hixson, "Analysis of Deep Attack Operations: U.S. VI Corps, Task Force Butler, Aug. 1944," March 1987, CSI, 27–33; Yeide and Stout, *First to the Rhine*, 69; Butler, "Task Force Butler," *Armored Cavalry Journal*, part 1 (Jan.–Feb. 1948): ff. (*formed a fire brigade*); OH, 2nd Bn, 143rd Inf and 117th Cavalry Recon Squadron, n.d., NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, folder 117; Jackson, *The Mediterranean and the Middle East*, vol. 6, part 2, 197.

Across folded limestone hills: "Invasion of Southern France," n.d., WD HD, CMH, 8-3 SF, 109; Sevareid, *Not So Wild a Dream*, 440–42 ("*through civilized, settled Provence*").

In Gap, nearly a hundred miles from the sea: Arthur L. Funk, "Allies and *Maquis*," n.d., NARA RG 319, *RR* background files, FRC 5; Butler, "Task Force Butler," *Armored Cavalry Journal*, part 2 (Mar.–Apr. 1948): 30. (*sixty B-17s*); OH, 117th Cavalry Recon Squadron, n.d., NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, folder 117 (*wearing full packs*).

"*You will move at first light*": "Invasion of Southern France," n.d., WD HD, CMH, 8-3 SF, 199–200; John A. Hixson, "Analysis of Deep Attack Operations: U.S. VI Corps, Task Force Butler, Aug. 1944," March 1987, CSI, 27–33; Truscott, *Command Missions*, 437; Jackson, *The Mediterranean and the Middle East*, vol. 6, part 2, 197; *RR*, 147 (*dash toward the river*).

By now supply shortages threatened to undermine: "Supply and Maintenance on the European Continent," n.d., USFET General Board, NARA RG 407, E 427, 97-USF5-0.3.0, no. 130, 50; *The Seventh United States Army in France and Germany*, vol. 1, 218–20 (*three hundred-mile round-trip*); Leo J. Meyer, "Moving Men and Supplies in Southern France," n.d., NARA RG 319, E 99, OCMH background files, 314.7, box 1, 14-17a (*only eleven thousand gallons*); "History of Ordnance Service in the MTO," n.d., vol. 2, CMH, 8-4 JA, 188–89 (*tire patches*).

Even so, by late Monday afternoon the vanguard: Yeide and Stout, *First to the Rhine*, 74–75; *RR*, 149 (*Fifty Wehrmacht vehicles*).

VI Corps had severed the enemy escape route: Yeide and Stout, *First to the Rhine*, 75–78; *RR*, 149 (*full-throated attack*).

"*Everything has gone better*": LKT Jr. to Sarah, Aug. 17, 21, 29, Sept. 1, 3, 13, 1944, GCM Lib, box 1.

His opponent felt dreadful: Yeide and Stout, *First to the Rhine*, 80 ("*pre-technical days*"); Charles V. von Lüttichau, "Breakout and Withdrawal to the Dijon Salient," Sept. 1958, OCMH, NARA RG 319, R-series #106, 5 (*save itself by fleeing*); Ganz, "The 11th Panzers in the Defense, 1944," *Armor* (Mar.–Apr. 1944): 26+; Giziowski, *The Enigma of General Blaskowitz*, 323–24 (*dangled ropes*).

Truscott took the German feint: De Lattre de Tassigny, *The History of the French First Army*, 356–57 ("*carved out with an axe*"); OH, "The Invasion of Southern France," Seventh Army, NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, folder #368, 160–62 ("*Tell General O'Daniel*"); *RR*, 164.

At Montélimar, Task Force Butler struggled: *RR*, 144–50; "Operation Dragoon," Dec. 1944, COHQ, bulletin Y/42, CARL, N-6530.20 (*Army's swift advance had outrun P-47s*).

This pleased Truscott not at all: Truscott, *Command Missions*, 426–27; msg, LKT Jr. to J. Dahlquist, Aug. 22, 1944, LKT Jr. papers, GCM Lib, box 12, folder 6 ("*Don't you understand*").

In truth, Dahlquist was overmatched: photos, biographical notes, John E. Dahlquist papers, MHI; Steidl, *Lost Battalions*, 24, 57, 142–46 (*given to brooding*); corr, John E. Dahlquist to Ruth, Oct. 29, 1944, Dahlquist papers, MHI ("*I get winded*"); corr, John E. Dahlquist to Homer Case, June 5, 1945, Dahlquist papers, MHI (*Half his transport had yet to be unloaded*); Yeide and Stout, *First to the Rhine*, 76 (*Spanish consul's car*); LKT Jr., "Comments on 'Dragoon Secondary Attack Against Fortress Europe,'" n.d., NARA RG 319, OCMH, 2-3.7 CC2, Hamilton mss, 3 (*carrying three dozen men*); "Invasion of Southern France," n.d., WD HD, CMH, 8-3 SF, 237 ("*Your primary mission*").

The battalion withdrew "*at night from a hill*": Yeide and Stout, *First to the Rhine*, 85.

The German capture of a 36th Division battle plan: "Invasion of Southern France," n.d., WD HD, CMH, 8-3 SF, appendix B, v–xii; Yeide and Stout, *First to the Rhine*, 92 ("*Come on, you bastards*").

"*John, I have come here*": Truscott, *Command Missions*, 430–31.

More than eight battalions—some one hundred guns: "Invasion of Southern France," n.d., WD HD, CMH, 8-3 SF, 243; Holt, *The Deceivers*, 621 (*asphalt caught fire*); OH, 3rd Bn, 143rd Inf, n.d., NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, folder 117 (*2,500 mortar rounds*); Lucian Heichler, "German Defense of the Gateway to Antwerp," Dec. 1953, NARA RG 319, R-series #23, 21–27; Turner and Jackson, *Destination Berchtesgaden*, 62; Giziowski, *The Enigma of General Blaskowitz*, 330–31 (*splashed across the Drôme*).

In a confused mêlée: *RR*, 166.

Task Force Butler, reduced to hardly more than a battalion: OH, 3rd Bn, 36th ID, n.d., NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, folder 117.

"*That's the first time I ever saw a Texan*": Murphy, *To Hell and Back*, 188–89.

The battle of Montélimar was over: Conway, "Operation Anvil," lecture, n.d., Norfolk, Theodore J. Conway papers, MHI, box 2, 22–24 ("*concept was daring*"); "Invasion of Southern France," n.d., WD HD, CMH, 8-3 SF, 245 (*sixty thousand U.S. artillery shells*); Wilt, *The French Riviera Campaign of August 1944*, 141 ("*I fumbled it badly*"); *RR*, 167–68 (*Blaskowitz's losses exceeded ten thousand*); Lucian Heichler, "German Defense of the Gateway to Antwerp," Dec. 1953, NARA RG 319, R-series #23, 31–32; Charles V. von Lüttichau, "Breakout and Withdrawal to the Dijon Salient," Sept. 1958, OCMH, NARA RG 319, R-series #106, 16–17 (*338th Division mustered barely one thousand*); Ludewig, *Rückzug*, 178–79 ("*almost a miracle*").

"*carnage compounded*": Truscott, *Command Missions*, 432–33; Taggart, ed., *History of the Third Infantry Division*, 222 (*Avenue of Stenches*); Simpson, *Audie Murphy, American Soldier*, 125 (*gas masks*).

"*some degree of satisfaction*": Truscott, *Command Missions*, 432–33; OH, "The Invasion of Southern France," Seventh Army, NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, folder #368, 176–77 (*ten thousand square miles*); *RR*, 167 (*captured 23,000 Germans*).

Two field-gray torrents streamed: Dean H. Krasomil, "German Operations in Southern France: The Withdrawal of the LXIV Corps," March 1954, NARA RG 319, R-series #47, 4–18; *Germany VII*, 650–61 ("*improper remarks*"); Ludewig, *Rückzug*, 80 (*kidnapped whenever possible*).

Allied air strikes and FFI marauders: Steidl, *Lost Battalions*, 20 (*8 million francs*); "German Surrenders," *AB*, no. 48 (1985): 1+ (*making bonfires*).

The other retreating gaggle: Wilhelm Heinrich Scheidt, "German Operations in the West," Sept. 1945, OKW Historical Section, NARA RG 407, ML #874, VI, 13–15 ("*trekking Wehrmacht*"); *Germany VII*, 657–61 (*138,000 men*); Marshall, *A Ramble Through My War*, 131 ("*moving bushes*"); *The Seventh United States Army in France and Germany*, vol. 1, 220–21 (*Field Order No. 4*); OH, Viscount Portal, Feb. 7, 1947, FCP ("*swine*"); Wilt, *The French Riviera Campaign of August 1944*, 157 (*shot up a train*). Stalin renewed his suggestion in October 1944. *TSC*, 406.

By early September, almost 200,000 Allied soldiers: *IFG*, 276; Garland, *Unknown Soldiers*, 282 ("*liberation, libation*"); Collier, *Fighting Words*, 177 ("*festooned with humanity*"); Marshall, *A Ramble Through My War*, 151 ("*hand out British flags*"); Pallud, "The Riviera Landings," *AB*, no. 110 (2000): 2+ (*cakes of butter*).

"*Sometimes the sheets on the hotel beds*": Gray, *The Warriors*, 155; Sevareid, *Not So Wild a Dream*, 457–59 (*painted by Picasso*); corr, Gertrude Stein to A. M. Patch, Jr., n.d. and Nov. 15, 1944, Alexander M. Patch, Jr., papers, USMA Arch, box 1; Wyant, *Sandy*

Patch, 141 (“*a lot of repetitions*”).

In Grenoble the fleeing Germans: Sevareid, *Not So Wild a Dream*, 454; Mauldin, *The Brass Ring*, 227–28 (*pistol shot in the ear*).

A 36th Division patrol entered Lyon: Truscott, *Command Missions*, 434; Higgins, *Soft Underbelly*, 220 (“*British opposed to the end*”).

“*In the shops one could buy*”: Garland, *Unknown Soldiers*, 312; Aron, *France Reborn*, 354 (“*capital of repression*”); diary, Sept. 19, 1944, Kingsley Andersson papers, HIA, box 1 (“*Too much gunfire*”).

Tracers fired into a city hospital: Sevareid, *Not So Wild a Dream*, 462; Coles and Weinberg, *Civil Affairs*, 768–69 (*spans over the Rhône*). One recent German account asserts that all thirty-three bridges around Lyon were blown (Ludewig, *Rückzug*, 192).

Precisely where those convoys should go: A. M. Patch, Jr., to Julia, Sept. 14, 1944, Patch papers, USMA Arch, box 1 (“ *temporary notoriety*”).

Sandy Patch was tall, gangly: Truscott, *Command Missions*, 383 (“*expressing himself*”); Colley, *Decision at Strasbourg*, 27 (“*mystic turn of mind*”); “Patch of Provence,” *Time* (Aug. 28, 1944), 22+ (“*devil before dawn*”); Strobridge and Nalty, “From the South Pacific to the Brenner Pass: General Alexander M. Patch,” *Military Review* (June 1981): 41+ (*Apache country*); memo, J. N. Wenger, June 17, 1943; memo, E. J. King “for Gen. Marshall only,” June 21, 1943; memo, A. M. Patch, Jr., June 29, 1943; “eyes only,” GCM to A. M. Patch, Jr., June 29, 1943; memo, GCM to E. J. King, July 28, 1943, GCM Lib, box 78, folder 49 (“*I am puzzled*”).

“*It feels as though it was three months ago*”: A. M. Patch, Jr., to Julia, Sept. 14, 1944, Patch papers, USMA Arch, box 1; Giziowski, *The Enigma of General Blaskowitz*, 355 (*Blaskowitz halted the Nineteenth Army*); Yeide and Stout, *First to the Rhine*, 168–70 (*scaling ladders*); *RR*, 189; Sevareid, *Not So Wild a Dream*, 466 (*stolen bicycles*); Wilt, *The French Riviera Campaign of August 1944*, 154 (“*never saw such confusion*”).

The captured booty included: Wilt, *The French Riviera Campaign of August 1944*, 150–51 (“*fleeting opportunity*”); *The Seventh United States Army in France and Germany*, vol. 2, 399; Salisbury-Jones, *So Full a Glory*, 161 (*irked De Lattre*); *RR*, 182–83, 223 (*Patch agreed to permit*); Truscott, *Command Missions*, 443 (“*gateway to Germany*”).

Then the ground shifted: *RR*, 228–29; Chandler, 2146–47 (*supreme commander in mid-September*); Mansoor, *The GI Offensive in Europe*, 207 (*making the U.S. armies contiguous*).

“*surprised and disappointed*”: diary, VI Corps, Sept. 14–15, 1944, Don E. Carleton papers, HIA, box 1.

“*The assault on the Belfort Gap*”: LKT Jr. to A. M. Patch, Jr., Sept. 15, 1955, LKT Jr. papers, GCM Lib, box 12, folder 6; Truscott, *Command Missions*, 443–44; Wyant, *Sandy Patch*, 138 (*Lons-le-Saunier*).

Patch phoned at 6:30 P.M.: “Telephone Conversation Between Gen. Patch and Gen. Truscott,” 1830 hrs, Sept 16, 1944, NARA RG 319, OCMH 2-3.7 CC2, Hamilton mss.

So ended DRAGOON: *RR*, 563 (“*just one day’s supplies*”), 237 (*barely two dozen tanks left*); John W. Mosenthal, “The Establishment of a Continuous Defensive Front by Army Group G,” Nov. 1955, NARA RG 319, OCMH, R-series, #68, 3–11 (“ *still able to fight*”), 13–15 (*Blaskowitz was sacked*); Ludewig, *Rückzug*, 180 (*His greatest* fear); Charles V. von Lüttichau, “Army Group G Operations in Southern France,” Aug. 1956, NARA RG 319, OCMH, R-series #87, 36 (*130,000 had escaped*); Charles V. von Lüttichau, “Breakout and Withdrawal to the Dijon Salient,” Sept 1958, NARA RG 319, OCMH, R-series #112, 28 (*only 165 of 1,600 artillery pieces*); Giziowski, *The Enigma of General Blaskowitz*, 361 (“*planting cabbage*”). Ludewig estimates that at least 160,000 Germans from southern and southwestern France reached Dijon (*Rückzug*, 267–68).

On the same Tuesday that Blaskowitz was relieved: Pogue, *George C. Marshall*, 415. The official Army history acknowledges that “it is impossible to ascertain with any degree of accuracy” the casualties in Army Group G for late summer 1944. *RR*, 197.

But ahead lay the granite and gneiss uplands: author visit, May 24–28, 2009; Taggart, ed., *History of the Third Infantry Division*, 237–38; Sevareid, *Not So Wild a Dream*, 473 (“*long again for home*”); diary, VI Corps, Sept. 28, 1944, Don E. Carleton papers, HIA, box 1 (“*Looking for skis*”); LKT Jr. to Sarah, Sept. 16, Oct. 18, 1944, LKT Jr. papers, GCM Lib, box 1.

“Harden the Heart and Let Fly”

A world away: Robb, *The Discovery of France*, 42; Roach, *The 8.15 to War*, 170 (*waved with one hand*).

By the end of August the front stretched: *BP*, 667; Gilmore, ed., *U.S. Army Atlas of the European Theater in World War II*, 65; *LC*, 2–3 (*more than two million Allied soldiers*); *AAFinWWII*, 596 (*7,500 bombers and 4,300 fighters*); “Strategy of the Campaign in Western Europe, 1944–1945,” n.d., USFET General Board study no. 1, 50 (*Montgomery’s fifteen divisions*); King and Kutta, *Impact*, 221–23; Hinsley, 570 (*Luftwaffe aircraft*); Howard, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, vol. 5, *Strategic Deception*, 177; *Germany VII*, 434; Churchill, *Triumph and Tragedy*, 48 (“*battle of London is won*”); corr, WSC to A. Eden, Sept. 2, 1944, “Strategy and Operations, vol. II,” UK NA, CAB 120/421 (“*fall out of temper*”).

In 12th Army Group, Bradley commanded: *LC*, 4–5; Balkoski, *From Beachhead to Brittany*, 316–17; Mitcham, *Retreat to the Reich*, 214 (*fishing tackle*).

Under this onslaught the Wehrmacht: Alfred Jodl, ETHINT 52, Aug. 2, 1945, MHI, 6 ("*planless flight*"); Mitcham, *Retreat to the Reich*, 222 (*OB West listed eighteen divisions*); Ludewig, *Rückzug*, 191 ("*We have lost a battle*"); "Penetration of Siegfried Line," 4th ID, n.d., CARL, N-12159.1 ("*Americans will be here*"); Germany *VII*, 624 ("*ignominious rout*"); Boesch, *Road to Huertgen*, 110 (*waving chickens*).

"*Any Boches today?*": Knickerbocker et al., *Danger Forward*, 272.

By truck and by foot the pursuers pursued: *Blue Spaders*, 69; Horrocks, *Corps Commander*, 71–72 ("*harden the heart*"); Pyle, *Brave Men*, 310 (*gray lace of burned powder*); *SLC*, 15 (*among a half-million killed*).

"*We blew up everything*": Will Thornton, "World War II 'M' Co. History as Told by the Survivors," n.d., a.p.

At Braine, near Reims: Wellard, *The Man in a Helmet*, 158 (*Patton's vanguard*); White, *Conqueror's Road*, 10 ("*ecstatic agony*"), 25 ("*tits*"); Kershaw, "*It Never Snows in September*," 19 ("*west front has collapsed*").

Fuel shortages, nettlesome since early August: Waddell, *United States Army Logistics*, 63 (*tripled from six gallons*); *LC*, 24–25 (*100,000 gallons* and *Patton's fuel dumps*), 117–18 (*tanks sent to capture a Meuse bridge*); OH, Lt. Gen. Sir Humphrey Gale, Jan. 27, 1947, FCP; *VW*, vol. 2, 72 (*battleships*); Greenfield, ed., *Command Decisions*, 332 (*stalled for four days*); diary, Sept. 6, 1944, CBH, MHI, box 4 (*corps commanders cadged cans*); "G-4 Periodic Report," Third Army, Sept. 5, 1944, Walter J. Muller papers, HIA, box 6 ("*extremely critical*"); Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 402 ("*Damn it, Brad*").

Onward they pushed, on foot: Heinz, *When We Were One*, 220 (*polka-dot stars*); Kennett, *G.I.: The American Soldier in World War II*, 194 ("*Vote for Dewey*"); Schrijvers, *The Crash of Ruin*, 131 ("*If that was the only mistake*").

Giddy rumors swirled: Hastings, *Armageddon*, 14 (*fled to Spain*); Sylvan, 133–34 (*insurrection in Cologne*); OH, A. F. Kibler, 12th AG, May 29, 1946, NARA RG 407, ML #501, box 24155 (*river crossing sites*); diary, CBH, Sept. 1, 1944, MHI, box 4 ("'*If the war lasts*'"); diary, Raymond G. Moses, Sept. 4, 1944, MHI, box 1.

"*End the war in '44*": Perret, *There's a War to Be Won*, 359; "Ready for V-Day?," *Time* (Sept. 4, 1944): 17 ("*first newsboy*"); Hamilton, *Monty: Final Years of the Field-Marshal, 1944–1976*, 12 (*spare an extra army headquarters*); memo, E. E. MacMorland to H. B. Sayler, July 29, 1944, Henry B. Sayler papers, DDE Lib, box 4 (*Pentagon drafted plans*).

"*There is a feeling of elation*": Colville, *The Fringes of Power*, 507.

"*Militarily the war is won*": *Three Years*, 657; Ferrell, ed., *The Eisenhower Diaries*, 127 ("*advance almost at will*").

The Allied juggernaut aimed vaguely for Berlin: OH, W. B. Smith and H. R. Bull, Sept. 14, 1945, OCMH WWII Europe Interviews, MHI; *SLC*, 28; *LO*, 294 (*Two-thirds of German steel*); "Industrial Value of the Ruhr to the German War Effort," Oct. 30, 1944, British Brief and Action Report, JIC, NARA RG 331, E 3, box 132 (*40 percent drop in artillery ammunition*); *VW*, vol. 1, 82 ("*every chance of bringing to battle*").

Four paths led to the Ruhr: "Strategy of the Campaign in Western Europe, 1944–1945," n.d., USFET General Board study no. 1, 42–50; *BP*, 658–59 (*Eisenhower's planners had proposed*).

Montgomery would have none of it: *BP*, 658–59; *VW*, vol. 1, 459–61; OH, David Belchem, Feb. 20, 1947, FCP, MHI (*preponderance in armor*).

Bradley most certainly did not *agree*: Bradley and Blair, *A General's Life*, 314; De Guingand, *Operation Victory*, 411; OH, Lord Tedder, Feb. 13, 1947, FCP, MHI ("*better to use both hands*"); *VW*, vol. 1, 461 (*Smith was excluded*); Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 468 ("*Victories win wars*").

Montgomery emerged from the caravan: Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Soldier, General of the Army, President-Elect, 1890–1952*, vol. 1, 340–41; *BP*, 659–60 (*First Army would swing largely north*); draft memo, W. B. Smith, "Command and organization after D-day 'Overlord,'" May 23, 1944, Raymond G. Moses papers, MHI, box 1 (*some SHAEF planners had long considered*).

Eisenhower also agreed that a single commander: Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Soldier, General of the Army, President-Elect, 1890–1952*, vol. 1, 340–41; "General Eisenhower's Comments on Command," May 18, 1944, Arthur S. Nevins papers, MHI ("*nothing must be said*").

Churchill, "as a solace": Moran, *Churchill: Taken from the Diaries of Lord Moran*, 254; Roberts, *Masters and Commanders*, 512 ("*proper perspective*"); Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Soldier, General of the Army, President-Elect, 1890–1952*, vol. 1, 345 ("*close and warm friend*").

"*Damn stupid*": Love and Major, eds., *The Year of D-Day*, 129; *PP*, 535 ("*made us sick*"); Hamilton, *Master of the Battlefield*, 799

(“*almost a disaster*”).

Late in the morning of Saturday, September 2: Chandler, vol. 5, chronology, 165; diary, CBH, Sept. 2, 12, 15, 21, 1944, MHI, box 4.

A message from Beetle Smith: Williams, “Supreme Headquarters for D-Day,” *AB*, no. 84 (1994): 1+; Baedeker, *Northern France*, 179.

Eisenhower slipped in the sand: Thomas W. Mattingly and Olive F. G. Marsh, “A Compilation of the General Health System of Dwight D. Eisenhower,” n.d., DDE Lib, Thomas W. Mattingly papers, box 1; Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, 326; Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Soldier, General of the Army, President-Elect, 1890–1952*, vol. 1, 347–48 (*refused to allow his blood pressure*).

For more than a fortnight: Chandler, vol. 5, chronology, 165–67; *Three Years*, 661 (*Two resident cows*); Eisenhower, *Letters to Mamie*, 195 (“*off-key*”), 210–11 (*dead son*); Chandler, 2141 (“*Who is going to buy the plane?*”).

Even for an ambulatory commander: D’Este, *Eisenhower: A Soldier’s Life*, 593; Crosswell, *Beetle*, 700 (*through the RAF*); *BP*, 686 (*reaffirm his commitment to a multipronged advance*); Love and Major, eds., *The Year of D-Day*, 132 (“*Monty-like*”).

On Monday, September 4: *LSA*, vol. 1, 492; *TSC*, 253 (“*now as never before*”).

An exasperated Montgomery: Roberts, *Masters and Commanders*, 531 (“*curious idea*”); “Notes on Conversation with Monty, 18.5.46,” R. W. W. “Chester” Wilmot papers, LHC, LH 15/15/127 (*first call on supplies*).

"*We have now reached a stage*": BLM to DDE, Sept. 4, 1944, DDE Lib, PP-pres, box 83; Chandler, 2120–21.

Eisenhower replied on Tuesday: Weigley, *Eisenhower's Lieutenants*, 278–79; OH, Arthur Coningham, Feb. 14, 1947, FCP, MHI ("'*The war is lost*'").

The misdirected signal was entirely apt: corr, DDE to H. L. Ismay, Jan. 14, 1959, LHC, 4/12/131 ("*preposterous proposal*"); Crosswell, *Beetle*, 687 ("*balderdash*"); Bradley Commentaries, CBH, MHI, box 41 ("*arrogant and egotistical*").

Montgomery's vision had the military virtue of mass: Strong, *Intelligence at the Top*, 199–201 (*counter to SHAEF calculations*); *LSA*, vol. 2, 10–11 (*nearly five hundred truck companies* and "*wholesale grounding*"); *LSA*, vol. 1, 487–88. A three-corps drive to Berlin in late September even under optimal conditions would require grounding five corps, according to SHAEF (*TSC*, 253–54).

Moreover, the need to protect long open flanks: *TSC*, 260; Frank A. Osmanski, "Critical Analysis of the Planning and Execution of the Logistic Support of the Normandy Invasion," Dec. 1949, Armed Forces Staff College, Osmanski papers, MHI ("*easy prey for the German mobile reserves*"); OH, E. J. Foord, Dec. 12, 1946, R. W. W. "Chester" Wilmot papers, LHC, LH 15/15/27 ("*overbidding his hand*"); De Guingand, *Operation Victory*, 412 (*Hitler's eventual defeat*).

Most strategists would come to similar conclusions:: Dan van der Vat, obituary, "Field Marshal Lord Carver," *The Guardian*, Dec. 12, 2001 (*youngest brigadier*); Keegan, ed., *Churchill's Generals*, 162–63 (*In both world wars*).

Two-fisted punching: Weigley, *The American Way of War*, 352; Wilson, ed., *D-Day 1944*, 334 ("*Whatever Montgomery's talents*").

"*political factors can sometimes have the same weight*": Lewin, *Montgomery as Military Commander*, 298.

Eisenhower's "*ignorance*": Hamilton, *Master of the Battlefield*, 799; Danchev, 575 ("quite *unsuited*"), 585 ("*3 to 6 months*").

"*extremely susceptible to the personality*": "Notes on Conversation with Monty, 18.5.46," R. W. W. "Chester" Wilmot papers, LHC, LH 15/15/127.

"*Ike is all for caution*": diary, Sept. 2, 1944, GSP, LOC MS Div, box 3, folder 7.

"*the trouble with Ike*": Crosswell, *Beetle*, 696, 702, 708, 722.

"*hardly decisive in the way he communicated*": Stephen E. Ambrose, "Eisenhower as Commander: Single Thrust Versus Broad Front," in Chandler, vol. 5, 47.

"*There is never a moment*": Eisenhower, *Letters to Mamie*, 195, 217; Chandler, 2158 ("*team is working well*").

The armies fought on, largely unaware: *LC*, 52 (*first five days of September*); *LSA*, vol. 1, 513; war diary, Leroy Irwin, Sept. 6, 1944, 5th ID, Hugh Cole papers, MHI ("*Frankfort*"); *AAFinWWII*, 277 (*flying gas stations*); Semmes, *Portrait of Patton*, 205 (*bounties of cognac and confiscated champagne*); "G-4 Periodic Report," Third Army, Sept. 5, 1944, Walter J. Muller papers, HIA, box 6 (*army shortages*); Allen, *Lucky Forward*, 41, 101–2; *PP*, 549 (*fifty thousand cases of champagne*).

"*a goddam army commander*": *PP*, 542; Blumenson, *Patton: The Man Behind the Legend, 1885–1945*, 240–41 ("*shit through a goose*").

To his northwest, Courtney Hodges's First Army: *BP*, 694–95 ("*pretty girls*"); *Blue Spaders*, 71–72 ("*heterogeneous mass*").

Bounding from the south, the 1st Division: Stanhope B. Mason, "Reminiscences and Anecdotes of World War II," 1988, MRC FDM, 1994.126, 87, 206–10; OH, C. A. Wollmer, 83rd Armored Reconnaissance Bn, n.d., NARA RG 407, E 427, HI; Heinz, *When We Were One*, 197, 213 (*rake the German columns*); Knickerbocker et al., *Danger Forward*, 274 ("*Belgian horses*"); George W. Williams et al., "Exploitation by the 3rd Armored Division—Seine River to Germany," AS, Ft. K, 1949, NARA RG 337, 44–45 ("*You only want to slaughter us*").

In addition to some 3,500 enemy dead: Wheeler, *The Big Red One*, 311–12; Pallud, "The Battle of the Mons Pocket," *AB*, no. 115 (2002): 2+ (*steaks*); AAR, 1st ID, Oct. 31, 1944, a.p., 1–6; Heinz, *When We Were One*, 200–204 ("*You will not love*").

Thirty miles to the north, the British Second Army: *BP*, 686; *VW*, vol. 2, 15 (*surrender in his pajamas*), 6; Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 471 (*fleeing in a Volkswagen*); *Taurus Pursuant*, 67 ("*what used to be*").

At eight P.M. on Sunday, September 3: *VW*, vol. 2, *5*; "Advance of 30 Corps Across R. Seine to Brussels and Antwerp," War Office, n.d., NARA RG 407, ML #226; Moorehead, *Eclipse*, 191 ("*a pallid thing*"); Collier, *Fighting Words*, 177 ("*a flambeau*"); Fitzgerald, *History of the Irish Guards in the Second World War*, 450–53 ("*Goodbye, Tommy*").

Local worthies appeared in sashes: Daniell, *The Royal Hampshire Regiment*, vol. 3, 231; Fitzgerald, *History of the Irish Guards in the Second World War*, 450–53 (*Bistros sent waiters*); Hastings, *Armageddon*, 7 ("*eating their way*"); Moorehead, *Eclipse*, 191 ("*a remarkable claret*").

On Monday at noon British tanks: J. B. Churcher, "A Soldier's Story," 159th Inf Bde, LHC, 52–54 (*houses for belonging to alleged*

collaborators and *search for a cinema*); Collier, *Fighting Words*, 177–79 (*still sipping beer*); *VW*, vol. 2, 5, 10–11, 414–15 (*two million barrels*); Freeman W. Burford, "The Inside Story of Oil in the European War," Nov. 25, 1946, NARA RG 319, 2-37 CB 6; "Advance of 30 Corps Across R. Seine to Brussels and Antwerp," War Office, n.d., NARA RG 407, ML #226 (*petered out by 9:30 P.M.*); Moorehead, *Eclipse*, 192–93 (*cages in the lion house*); Moorehead, *Gellhorn*, 227 ("*sat on the straw*").

With Brittany's ports soon to be forsaken : Baedeker, *Belgium and Holland*, 150–52 ("*at least a year to reduce it*"); Lucian Heichler, "German Defense of the Gateway to Antwerp," Dec. 1953, OCMH, NARA RG 319, R-series #22, 2; *LSA*, vol. 2, 104 (*thousand ships each month*).

The capture of Antwerp and exploitation: Weinberg, *A World at Arms*, 700; Chandler, 2090, 2100, 2116; msg, Montgomery, Aug. 26, 1944, M-520, National Archives of Canada, RG 24, vol. 1054 2, file 215A21.016 (9) ("*destroy all enemy forces*").

Having sailed these waters: *WaS*, 142–43; Fergusson, *The Watery Maze*, 352 (*campaign in 1809*); Jenkins, *Churchill: A Biography*, 248–50 (*rushed to Antwerp*); *VW*, vol. 2, 10–11; Love and Major, eds., *The Year of D-Day*, 131; Roskill, *Churchill and the Admirals*, 245 ("*Timbuctoo*").

"*decisive importance*" *of holding the Scheldt*: Bennett, *Ultra in the West*, 147–48; Ralph Bennett, "Ultra and Some Command Decisions," in Laqueur, ed., *The Second World War*, 231 (*strategic mistake*); Crosswell, *Beetle*, 706 ("*bottle is now corked*").

A Royal Marine Commando unit: Roskill, *White Ensign*, 397; *Taurus Pursuant*, 56–58 (*seize the docks*); Horrocks, *Corps Commander*, 79–81 ("*My eyes were fixed*").

The British drive soon was stymied: Moulton, *Battle for Antwerp*, 30; Ludewig, *Rückzug*, 214 (*Fifteen of seventeen*); J. B. Churcher, "A Soldier's Story," 159th Inf Bde, LHC, 52–54 ("*swift and most unpleasant*"); Copp, *Cinderella Army*, 38–39 (*reinforce the canals*); Moulton, *Battle for Antwerp*, 52; Lamb, *Montgomery in Europe, 1943–1945*, 201–4; Horrocks, *Corps Commander*, 84.

An evacuation of German troops by ferry: Weigley, *Eisenhower's Lieutenants*, 293; Lucian Heichler, "German Defense of the Gateway to Antwerp," Dec. 1953, OCMH, NARA RG 319, R-series #22, 13–14 (*5,000 vehicles*); Ludewig, *Rückzug*, 272 (*eleven thousand troops*).

Montgomery told London on September 7: Orange, *Coningham*, 215; *SLC*, 207 ("*a jewel that could not be worn*"); Hills, *Phantom Was There*, 247 ("*most bewildering*").

Chapter 5: Against the West Wall

"Five Barley Loaves and Three Small Fishes"

Versailles had long proved irresistible : Abram et al., *The Rough Guide to France*, 213 ("*unhygienic squalor*"); McCullough, *The Greater Journey*, 296, 303 (*starving winter of 1870*); Tillier et al., *Paris*, 252; http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles; Macmillan, *Paris 1919*, 474–78 (*Republican Guardsmen*).

And it was here that Eisenhower: Baedeker, *Paris and Its Environs*, 376 (*175 francs*); memo, war room procedures, Mar. 19, 1945, Sidney H. Negrotto papers, MHI (*SHAEF master pass*); memoir, 1974, Raymond H. Croll papers, MHI, 277–89 (*K-ration lunches*); http://www.normandybattlefields.com/normandy_today.htm; Pogue, *Pogue's War* , 202–3 (*Thickets of antennae*); Abram et al., *The Rough Guide to France*, 213 (*Marie Antoinette*) ; *TSC*, 276–78; Hammon, "When the Second Lieutenant Bearded General Eisenhower," *Military Affairs* (Oct. 1983): 129+ ("*state capitols*").

"*he has been a bad boy*": diary, CBH, Sept. 22, 1944, MHI, box 4; Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 422.

Eleven paintings, including a Van Dyck: Coles and Weinberg, *Civil Affairs*, 868–69; Hammon, "When the Second Lieutenant Bearded General Eisenhower," *Military Affairs* (Oct. 1983): 129ff.; Nicholas, *The Rape of Europa*, 302.

SHAEF by midsummer had already tripled: *TSC*, 276–77 (*750,000 square feet*) and appendix B, 529–34. SHAEF's authorized strength on Feb. 1, 1945, was 16,312.

Eventually 1,800 properties: *LSA*, vol. 2, 497; Larrabee, *Commander in Chief*, 473 (*French magazine*); OH, Adolph Rosengarten, Jr., Dec. 22, 1947, FCP, MHI (*Should Have Army Experience First*); OH, Ford Trimble, Dec. 17, 1946, FCP, MHI (*sea serpent*).

Another sea serpent had wrapped: "Activities and Organization of COMZ," U.S. Senate hearing, May 28, 1945, NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #89, 1–5; Robert W. Coakley, "The Administrative and Logistical History of the ETO," vol. 2, 1946, CMH, 8-3.1 AA 2, 119–28; "U.S. Army Operations in the ETO from January 1942 to V-E Day," May 1945, NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #353 (*one in every four GIs*); "Engineer Memoirs: General William M. Hoge," 1993, CEOH, 128; Beck, 350 (*tentage*); Ingersoll, *Top Secret*, 207 ("*tons of files*"); memo, Seine Section, COMZ to SHAEF, Sept. 20, 1944, NARA RG 331, SHAEF SGS, Geog Corr, box 108 (*315 hotels*); memoir, n.d., Pleas B. Rogers papers, MHI (*three thousand additional Parisian properties*); corr, "GHH" to Ralph Ingersoll, May 14, 1946, Thaddeus Holt papers, MHI, box 1 ("*elegance and swank*"); Crosswell, *Beetle*, 739 (*permitted to keep their schools*); *TSC*, 322–23 (*Americans' demands exceeded*).

All this and more was the handiwork: "Miracle of Supply," *Time* (Sept. 25, 1944): 8+ ("*exceptionally friendly*"); "The Tendons of an Army," n.d., NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #531, 5–6; John Kennedy Ohl, "General Brehon B. Somervell and Logistics in the European Theater of Operations in World War II," 1993, Alexandria, Va., Historical Office, U.S. Army Materiel Command, 20–22 ("*personal gift*"); Irving, *The War Between the Generals*, 78 (*standing in a London theater*); John C. H. Lee, "Service Reminiscences," n.d., Lee papers, MHI, box 1 ("*my ability to get along*"); *LSA*, vol. 2, 267 ("*Heavy on ceremony*"); Cowdrey, *Fighting for Life*, 224 ("*fishing with for a week*"); *PP*, 555–57 ("*glib liar*"); diary, GSP, Aug. 7, 1944, LOC MS Div, box 3, folder 7 ("*pompous little son-of-a-bitch*"); D'Este, *Patton: A Genius for War*, 649 (*Patton welcomed him*).

Booted and bedizened: Pogue, *George C. Marshall: Organizer of Victory*, 391 (*riding crop*); "Miracle of Supply," *Time* (Sept. 25, 1944): 8+ (*Bibles in his desk* and *red-cushioned limousine*); John C. H. Lee, "Service Reminiscences," n.d., Lee papers, MHI, box 1 ("*at His altar*"); "Engineer Memoirs: Major General William E. Potter," 1983, CEOH, 35 (*personal retinue of forty*); Irving, *The War Between the Generals*, 92 (*eight correspondence secretaries*); "The U.S. Army Special Train '*Alive*,'" n.d., NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #16; John Connell, "Over Age in Grade," n.d., MHI, 49 (*special railcar*); *LSA*, vol. 2, 267 ("*instrument of torture*"); OH, Henry S. Aurand, 1974, William O. Morrison, SOOHP, MHI (*read scripture aloud*); Irving, *The War Between the Generals*, 316 ("*Dress up*"); OH, Leonard D. Heaton, 1978, Robert B. McLean, SOOHP, MHI ("*had to lie at attention*"); "Engineer Memoirs: General William M. Hoge," 1993, CEOH, 125–26 ("*I can eat it*"); Pyle, *Brave Men*, 233.

In Paris, Lee kept a huge war room: OH, Henry S. Aurand, 1974, William O. Morrison, SOOHP, MHI; Crosswell, *Beetle*, 739 (*three suites upstairs*); Murray and Millett, *A War to Be Won*, 437 (*a piano*); Pogue, *Pogue's War* ("*Avenue de Salute*"); Allen, *Lucky Forward*, 69 ("*General Lee's personal residence*").

"*Why didn't somebody tell me*": OH, Leonard D. Heaton, 1978, Robert B. McLean, SOOHP, MHI; OH, W. B. Smith, May 13, 1947, FCP, MHI; MMB, 311 ("*modern Cromwell*").

"*Due to the heavy shipments*": DDE to J. C. H. Lee, Sept. 16, 1944, attached to memo, W. B. Smith to G-1, "Discipline in the Paris Area," Sept. 17, 1944, NARA RG 331, SHAEF SGS, Geog Corr, box 108.

"*I have no regrets*": John C. H. Lee, "Service Reminiscences," n.d., Lee papers, MHI, box 1.

Lee's "first priority duties": Crosswell, *Beetle*, 739 (*Sears, Roebuck*); Greenfield, ed., *Command Decisions*, 323 (*assumed that by D+90*); "Strategy of the Campaign in Western Europe, 1944–1945," n.d., USFET, General Board study no. 1, 35; *LSA*, vol. 2, 6–7 (*No logistician expected to reach*).

Battlefield exigencies disrupted: Frank O. Osmanski, "Critical Analysis of the Planning and Execution of the Logistic Support of the Normandy Invasion," Dec. 1949, Armed Forces Staff College, Osmanski papers, MHI, 43; "Logistics of Overlord," n.d., CARL, N-13587; *LSA*, vol. 1, 479; Crosswell, *Beetle*, 688–89 (*Marshall and Eisenhower further accelerated*); *TSC*, 258–59; Greenfield, ed., *Command Decisions*, 327 (*2.5 combat divisions*).

Truck convoys that in July: H. H. Dunham, "U.S. Army Transportation in the ETO," 1946, CMH, 4-13.1 AA 29, 216; Hogan, *A Command Post at War*, 145–46 (*quartermaster depot moved six times*); Weinberg, *A World at Arms*, 761 (*two thousand tanks*); *PP*, 555–57 ("*five barley loaves*").

Much more than bread and seafood: "Quartermaster Procurement," chapter 41, PIR, MHI, 7; "Food Service in the ETO," chapter 47, PIR, MHI, 71; "Quartermaster Procurement on the Continent," n.d., SHAEF QM, NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #154, 1–2 ("*one-sixteenth of an inch*"), 11 (*woodcutting camps*), 14 (*toilet paper*).

Average daily supply needs: Coakley, 825; "Supply and Maintenance on the European Continent," USFET General Board study no. 130, NARA RG 407, E 427, 97-USF5-0.3.0, 37 (*eating 30 percent more*); *TSC*, 256–57 (*a million gallons of gasoline*); Charles K. MacDermut and Adolph P. Gratiot, "History of G-4 Com Z ETO," 1946, CMH, 8-3.4 AA, 83 (*ammunition expenditures*); Henry F. Pringle, "Weapons Win Wars," n.d., CMH, 2-3.7 AB.B, 187 (*eight million artillery and mortar shells*).

Prodigal wastage, always an American trait: memo, "Supply Discipline," ONB, July 23, 1944, Walter J. Muller papers, HIA, box 8; Henry F. Pringle, "Weapons Win Wars," n.d., CMH, 2-3.7 AB.B, 187 ("*extremely high*"); "Supply: Oversea Theaters of Operation," 1945, NARA RG 319, background files, 2-3.7 (*mine detectors*); Waddell, *United States Army Logistics*, 149 (*a hundred miles every hour*); Hastings, *Armageddon*, 23 (*22 million jerricans*); *LSA*, vol. 2, 203 (*7 million more*); Chandler, 2200 ("*it is now costing us*").

All this fell largely unforeseen: memo, Raymond G. Moses to ONB, Sept. 26, 1944, and draft memo to W. B. Smith, Nov. 7, 1944, Moses papers, MHI, box 1; Graham and Bidwell, *Coalitions, Politicians & Generals*, 259 (*crates of oranges*); OH, J. C. H. Lee, March 21, 1947, FCP, MHI (*regretted not playing bridge*); Frank A. Osmanski, "Critical Analysis of the Planning and Execution of the Logistic Support of the Normandy Invasion," Dec. 1949, Armed Forces Staff College, Osmanski papers, MHI, 29 (*ad hoc dumps*); minutes, Military Shipments Priority Meeting, Sept. 9, 1944, NARA RG 331, E 1, SHAEF SGS, box 54 ("*stretched to the limit*"); memo, Raymond G. Moses to ONB, Sept. 26, 1944, Moses papers, MHI, box 1 ("*For a period of about one month*").

COMZ improvised, with mixed results: "Pluto: Pipeline Under the Ocean," *AB*, no. 116 (2002): 2+ ("*Bambi*"); Moore, "Operation Pluto," *Proceedings* (June 1954): 647+; Freeman W. Burford, "The Inside Story of Oil in the European War," Nov. 25, 1946, NARA

RG 319, CMH background file, 2-.37 CB 6; Mason, ed., *The Atlantic War Remembered*, 417 ("*scandalous waste*").

A terrestrial innovation was the Red Ball Express: Henry F. Pringle, "Weapons Win Wars," n.d., CMH, 2-3.7 AB.B, 188; Andrew T. McNamara, "QM Activities of II Corps … and First Army Through Europe," 1955, chapter 46, PIR, MHI, 142 (*Cub planes*); *BP*, 691 (*300,000 gallons of gasoline*); "Red Ball," Feb. 3, 1945, NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #281, 1–3, 14, 16–18, 28–29, 40, 55, 56–57, 63–65 ("*steep hill*"); memoir, Robert P. Patterson, ts, 1947 (?), a.p., 273 ("*gas splashing inside*"); "Shipping Situation and Supply Requirements," Nov. 25, 1944, COM Z, G-4, CARL, N-6726 ("*deadlined*"); OH, Henry S. Aurand, 1974, William O. Morrison, SOOHP, MHI (*nine thousand were trucks*). At war's end, the U.S. Army had 464 truck companies in Europe, each typically with 48 trucks (Eudora Ramsay Richardson and Sherman Allan, "Quartermaster Supply in the ETO in WWII," vol. 1, 1947, QM School, Camp Lee, Va.).

Roads deteriorated in the autumn rains: Waddell, *United States Army Logistics*, 124–31; "Supply: Oversea Theaters of Operations," 1945, NARA RG 319, background files, 2-3.7 (*ruination of five thousand tires*); D'Este, *Patton: A Genius for War*, 649 (*Lee requested thirteen infantry battalions*); "Subsistence in the ETO," 1959, Robert M. Littlejohn papers, HIA (*shoot-to-kill authority*); Gropman, ed., *The Big "L,"* 389 (*400000 tons*); *LSA*, vol. 2, 140; OH, Henry S. Aurand, 1974, William O. Morrison, SOOHP, MHI ("*greatest killer of trucks*").

A single train could haul: Gropman, ed., *The Big "L,"* 389–90 (*almost five thousand miles of track*); *LSA*, vol. 1, 551 (*obliterated by years of Allied bombing*); "Supply and Maintenance on the European Continent," USFET General Board study no. 130, NARA RG 407, E 427, 97-USF5-0.3.0, 30–36; Waddell, *United States Army Logistics*, 118 (*creeping across bridges*); "Military Railway Service," USFET General Board study no. 123, NARA RG 407, E 427, 97-USF5-0.3.0 (*line to Paris* and *as far away as Persia*); H. H. Dunham, "U.S. Army Transportation in the ETO," 1946, CMH, 4-13.1 AA 29, 232 (*flagging with lighters*); "Activities and Organization of COMZ," U.S. Senate hearing, May 28, 1945, NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #89, 21–22 (*thirteen hundred muscular American engines*); memo, COMZ assistant G-5, Feb. 18, 1945, NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #494U (*eleven thousand miles*).

"*the number of divisions required to capture the number of ports*": Whipple, "Logistical Bottleneck," *IJ* (March 1948): 6+.

Fifty-four ports had been studied: R. W. Crawford, "Guns, Gas and Rations," SHAEF G-4, June 1945, NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #145; "American Port Plans, August to November 1944," n.d., NARA RG 319, background files, 2-37 CB 6 (*half eventually played a role*); *RR*, 575 (*one-third of all Allied supplies*); *LSA*, vol. 2, 71 (*Cherbourg tripled its expected cargo*); OH, Henry S. Aurand, 1974, William O. Morrison, SOOHP, MHI ("*Napoleon's hand*"); Whipple, "Logistical Bottleneck," *IJ* (March 1948): 6+ (*two hundred by mid-October*).

Clearly the solution was to be found in Antwerp: *LC*, 211; *LSA*, vol. 2, 52 ("*blood transfusion*"); John Connell, "Over Age in Grade," n.d., 11th Port Engineer Special Brigade Group, MHI, 99–100 ("*What a life!*").

Every Village a Fortress

A stubby C-47 transport plane: Margry, ed., *Operation Market-Garden Then and Now*, vol. 1, 27 (*B-58*); http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brussels_Airport.

There he found Eisenhower: Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Soldier, General of the Army, President-Elect, 1890–1952* , vol. 1, 348. Ambrose puts the meeting on Eisenhower's B-25 aircraft.

"*Well, they're nothing but balls*": OH, Miles Graham, Jan. 19, 1949, "Allied Strategy After Fall of Paris," R. W. W. "Chester" Wilmot, LHC, LH 15/15/48; Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Soldier, General of the Army, President-Elect, 1890–1952* , vol. 1, 348–49 (*Patton actually running the war*).

For a long hour they bickered: Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 489 (*capture the Ruhr with twenty divisions*); *TSC*, 255.

Eisenhower agreed that the Ruhr: OH, DDE, n.d., CJR, box 43, file 7 ("*What the hell?*").

"*Our fight must be with both hands*": *VW*, vol. 2, 22; *SLC*, 120–22.

"*Just when a really firm grip was needed*": BLM to Brooke, Sept. 10, 1944, AB papers, LHC, 6/2/27.

Regardless of American requirements: OH, Miles Graham, Jan. 19, 1949, "Allied Strategy After Fall of Paris," R. W. W. "Chester" Wilmot, LHC, LH 15/15/48 (*350 to 400 tons*); Hinsley, 542 (*Dieppe and Le Havre*); *VC*, 310 ("*one good Pas de Calais port*" and "*last priority*"); Second Army war diary, "The First 100 Days," Sept. 7, 1944, UK NA, WO 285/9; *VW*, vol. 2, 131–32 (*would not open until mid-October*), 15; *SLC*, 208; Hastings, *Armageddon*, 23 (*fourteen hundred three-ton British trucks*); Crosswell, *Beetle*, 707.

Another grim battlefield development: Hamilton, *Monty: Final Years of the Field-Marshal, 1944–1976*, 42 (*War Office cable*); Longmate, *Hitler's Rockets*, 164–74 (*Stavely Road* and "*flying gas mains*"); Collier, *The Defence of the United Kingdom*, 406; *AAFinWWII*, 542 (*refused to publicly acknowledge*).

The true culprit, the V-2 rocket: Collier, *The Defence of the United Kingdom*, 521; *Germany VII*, 438 (*fifty big train engines*). A 1960 movie based on Von Braun's life, *I Aim at the Stars*, inspired the proposed subtitle, "But Sometimes I Hit London." Mallon, "Rocket Man," review of Michael J. Neufeld, *Von Braun*, *New Yorker* (Oct. 22, 2007): 170+ (*young Prussian Junker*).

The rocket had long been expected: minutes, British chiefs of staff meeting, July 11, 1944, NARA RG 331, E 3, box 129; Hinsley, 421–23 (*Saturation bombing of Peenemünde*); *Germany VII*, 443 (*tendency to break up*); Howard, *British Intelligence in the Second World* War, vol. 5, *Strategic Deception*, 180–81 (*British government also considered evacuating*).

The initial volley had been fired: M. C. Helfers, "The Employment of V-Weapons by the Germans During World War II," 1954, OCMH, NARA RG 319, 2-3.7 AW, 72; Collier, *The Defence of the United Kingdom*, 408 (*outside Nijmegen*); King and Kutta, *Impact*, 245 ("*Will you please report"* and "*It must be towards Arnhem*"); OH, Miles Dempsey, June 4, 1946, R. W. W. "Chester" Wilmot papers, LHC, 15/15/30 (*favored a more easterly advance*).

"*This delay*," *he added*: *VW*, vol. 2, 22.

"*E. is spending a few days in bed*": diary, Kay Summersby, Sept. 11, 1944, DDE Lib, PP-pres, box 140.

"*Monty seems unimpressed*": desk calendar, DDE, Sept. 11–13, 1944, Barbara Wyden papers, DDE Lib, PP-pres, box 1.

"*He let himself go on subject of Monty*": Love and Major, eds., *The Year of D-Day*, 137.

At a moment when strategic harmony: OH, SLAM, 1973, George J. Stapleton, SOOHP, MHI, III, 2–3; *VW*, vol. 2, 351–52; msg, DDE to ONB, Sept. 15, 1944, ONB papers, MHI ("*There is no reason"*); *PP*, 552 ("'*clever son of a bitch'*"); OH, DDE, n.d., CJR, box 43, file 7, 17, 36–37 ("*psychopath*").

He also authorized Montgomery to communicate directly: Chandler, 2133–34; *VW*, vol. 2, 24 ("*Ike has given way*").

"*Montgomery suddenly became obsessed*": Chandler, 2144.

Just after six P.M. *on the warm, clear Monday*: After various units claimed to have been first into Germany, an Army historical investigation concluded that Holzinger and his patrol had earned the distinction. Emerson F. Hurley, "Study of the First Entry into Germany in World War II," n.d., NARA RG 407, E 427, 605-CAV-0.20; *SLC*, 3.

Up the slope for four hundred yards: "Unit History, 85th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron," 5th AD, n.d., and letter, W. W. Holzinger, Nov. 3, 1947, NARA RG 407, E 429, 95-USF 2-0.3.0; Pogue, *Pogue's War*, 264.

By midnight, other patrols from the 4th and 28th Infantry Divisions: Pogue, *Pogue's War*, 264; MacDonald, *The Battle of the Huertgen Forest*, 6 (*Three corps abreast*); memo, commanders' conference, First Canadian Army, Oct. 16, 1944, National Archives of Canada, RG 24, vol. 1054 2, file 215A21.016(9) ("*cuckoos*"); Heinz, *When We Were One*, 29, 258 ("*eating away at each other*"); *RR*, 223 (*spied French dragoons*); Robichon, *The Second D-Day*, 295–96; William K. Wyant, "Seventh Army History," n.d., NARA RG 319, background historical file, FRC 4.

From the North Sea to the Mediterranean: Greenfield, ed., *Command Decisions*, 345; *BP*, 701–2; Roskill, *White Ensign*, 390 (*evacuating southern Greece*); "Germany's War Effort and Its Failure," Oct. 8, 1945, U.K. chiefs of staff committee, Joint Intelligence Subcommittee, ANSCOL, NARA RG 334, E 315, 91 (*operational life of a U-boat commander*); *GS* V, 343–45; *SLC*, 14 (*114,000 officers and 3.6 million enlisted*).

"*I would like to place the Western front"*: Rundstedt also had presided over a kangaroo "court of honor" convened to expel from service officers implicated in the July 20 assassination plot. Barnett, ed., *Hitler's Generals*, 201.

From his new headquarters near Koblenz: *Germany VII*, 632–35 (*fighting strength in the west*); *VC*, 317–24 ("*roughly 1,700"*); interrogation, Erich Brandenberger, Sept. 1945, Third Army Intelligence Center, NARA RG 407, E 427, ML #978, 1–2, 14 (*two hundred postal detachments*); "Weaknesses in Germany's Capacity to Resist," JIC assessment, UK COS brief and action report, Sept. 27, 1944, NARA RG 331, E 3, SHAEF SGS, box 132 (*tanks and trucks to ammunition and uniforms*); *LC*, 33 (*created in late summer*); *SLC*, 15 (*Begun in 1936*).

The Siegfried Line: interrogation, Erich Brandenberger, Sept. 1945, Third Army Intelligence Center, NARA RG 407, E 427, ML #978, 11; *SLC*, 34–35 (*Fatherland had been made invincible*); "Combat Engineering," Aug. 1945, CE, historical report no. 10, CEOH, box X-30, 63 (*disguised as electrical substations*), 57; *LC*, 548–51 (*fields of fire*); G-2 analysis, XIX Corps, Sept. 14, 1944, Thomas L. Crystal papers, HIA (*fifteen big bunkers might be found*); "Breaching the Siegfried Line," Dec. 5, 1944, Seventh Army, special intelligence bulletin, NARA RG 200, E 4100 (UD), Garrison H. Davidson personal office file, box 1.

But years of neglect had ravaged the West Wall: interrogation, Erich Brandenberger, Sept. 1945, Third Army Intelligence Center, NARA RG 407, E 427, ML #978, 17–18; Lucian Heichler, "The Germans Facing V Corps, September 1944," May 1952, NARA RG 319, R-series, #37, 2–5 (*Farmers laid roadbeds*); OH, Gerhard Graf von Schwerin, ETHINT 18, Oct.–Nov. 1945, MHI, 34 (*tool sheds or storage bins*); Rudolf Freiherr von Gersdorff, "The Battle of Schmidt," Nov. 1945, FMS, #A-891, MHI (*hideouts for soldiers*); White, *Conquerors' Road*, 12–13 ("*more like sewage works*").

Hitler in mid-August ordered: *LC*, 548–51; Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 478 (*finding keys to locked doors*); *Germany VII*, 633 (*League of German Maidens*); Cooper, *The German Army, 1933–1945*, 517 (*plucked from depots*); Lucian Heichler, "The Germans Facing V Corps, September 1944," May 1952, NARA RG 319, R-series, #37, 5 (*Captured weapons from the Eastern Front*); Rudolf Christoph Freiherr von Gersdorff, ETHINT 53, Nov. 24, 1945, MHI, 1 (*large barrel of the MG-42*).

With characteristic agility, Rundstedt manned: *SLC*, 43; Henry P. Halsell, "Hürtgen Forest and Roer River Dams," n.d., CMH, 314.7, I-20 (*improvised with dismounted panzer crews*); Lucian Heichler, "The Germans Opposite XIX Corps," May 1953, OCMH, NARA RG 319, R-series, #21, 77 (*49th Infantry Division*); Cooper, *The German Army, 1933–1945*, 517 (*two Luftwaffe divisions*); *Germany VII*, 634–35 (*160,000 stragglers had been redirected to the front*).

"*holding of the position until annihliation*": John W. Mosenthal, "The Establishment of a Continuous Defensive Front by Army Group G," Nov. 1955, OCMH, NARA RG 319, R-series, #68, 11; Lucian Heichler, "The Germans Facing V Corps, September 1944," May 1952, NARA RG 319, R-series, #37, 30 ("*Every bunker, every block of houses*").

"*It is a monument to stupidity*": Semmes, *Portrait of Patton*, 223.

But the U.S. Army had little experience: Hogg, *The Biography of General George S. Patton*, 116; "Combat Engineering," Aug. 1945, CE, historical report no. 10, CEOH, box X-30, 65–66 (*single bunker atop a hill south of Aachen*).

Ordinary artillery barrages: *SLC*, 45 ("*dust off*"); "Breaching the Siegfried Line," XIX Corps, Oct. 2, 1944, CARL, N-7623, 9–15 (*Napalm*), 23–26 (*jeep-towed arc welder*); Kleber and Birdsell, *The Chemical Warfare Service*, 602–3; "Combat Engineering," Dec. 1945, CE, NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #547, 70 (*twenty-five to fifty pounds of explosives*), 66 (*made it hard for defenders to breathe*); memo, Albert H. Peyton to First Army CG, Oct. 20, 1944, NARA RG 407, ETO G-3 OR, box 9 (*large pillboxes required half a ton*).

As Rundstedt rushed defenders into the line: AAR, "Reconnaissance in a Tactical Air Command," 10th Photo Group, XIX Tactical Air Command, Ninth AF, 1945, CARL, N-9395, 29 (*200,000 aerial photos*); *LC*, 55; *SLC*, 37; "Mobility, Unused: Study Based on Lorraine Campaign," Oct. 1952, MHI, OCMH WWII Europe Interviews ("*a ripe plum*").

Hitler had other ideas: Doubler, *Closing with the Enemy*, 127 (*elaborate constellation of forts*).

The next morning, a battalion from the 5th Infantry Division: *LC*, 139–41, 145–46, 157 ("*hell hole*"); AAR, 2nd Bn, 11th Inf, n.d., NARA RG 407, ETO G-3 OR, box 11; John K. Rieth, "We Seek: Patton's Forward Observers," 2002, a.p., 101.

Patton would gain other bridgeheads: *LC*, 93–96; Rickard, *Patton at Bay*, 107, 160, 230–31; Ludewig, *Rückzug*, 22 ("*thrash about and bite"*); Ayer, *Before the Colors Fade*, 166 ("*I have studied the German*").

Farther north, First Army's prospects: *SLC*, 46–48, 56.

"*We all seemed for the moment*": Baker, *Ernest Hemingway*, 539–40.

On Friday, September 15, the division command post: AAR, "Penetration of Siegfried Line," 4th ID, n.d., CARL, N-12159.1; *SLC*, 52–53, 61–65.

On First Army's left flank, XIX Corps: *SLC*, 106, 111–15; MacDonald, *The Battle of the Huertgen Forest*, 58–59.

That left the last, best chance: *SLC*, 66, 29; OH, JLC, Jan. 21, 1954, CBM, NARA RG 319, OCMH background file, 2-3.7 CB 3 ("*the real route*"); *Blue Spaders*, 74 (*twin fortification belts*).

Collins now made a tactical choice: OH, JLC, 1972, Charles C. Sperow, SOOHP, MHI, 219; *Blue Spaders*, 76; Clay, *Blood and Sacrifice*, 213; Collins, *Lightning Joe*, 269, 279; Wheeler, *The Big Red One*, 329 (*Germans would abandon Aachen*).

The sudden appearance of VII Corps: Lucian Heichler, "The Germans Opposite VII Corps in Sept. 1944," Dec. 1952, CMH, CMH 2-3.7 EB, 12, 18–19.

Into this chaos: *SLC*, 71, 81; Gerhard Graf von Schwerin, ETHINT 18, Oct.–Nov. 1945, MHI, 44 ("*Santa Clauses*"); http://www.waffenhq.de/biographien/biographien/schwerin.html; Whiting, *The Home Front: Germany*, 176 ("*splendid battlefield commander*"); Fritz Krämer, ETHINT 24, Nov. 17, 1945, MHI, 1 ("*He was intelligent*").

"*I stopped the absurd evacuation*": Gerhard Graf von Schwerin, ETHINT 18, Oct.–Nov. 1945, MHI, 37–41.

A day passed, and then another: MacDonald, *The Battle of the Huertgen Forest*, 37; Reynolds, *How I Survived the Three First Wave Invasions* (*half-eaten meals*).

But the momentum had seeped out of Collins's attack: *SLC*, 86; Meyer A. Edwards, Jr., et al., "Armor in the Attack of a Fortified Position," May 1950, AS, Ft. K, NARA RG 337, 62–64 (*two-hundred-mile round-trip*); *Blue Spaders*, 77 (*Fifty rounds from a tank destroyer*). The official Army history contends that the 3rd Armored Division was authorized 232 tanks, but it was one of two "heavy" armored divisions actually authorized more than 300.

The dawning realization that the Americans intended: Clay, *Blood and Sacrifice*, 214 (*Wild Buffaloes*); *Stolberg: Penetrating the Westwall*, 19; *SLC*, 81–82 (*forcibly evacuated*); Lucian Heichler, "The Germans Opposite VII Corps in Sept. 1944," Dec. 1952, NARA RG 319, R-series, #38, 56; Gerhard Graf von Schwerin, ETHINT 18, Oct.–Nov. 1945, MHI, 48–53 ("*Fate*").

A German counterattack on Sunday: Wheeler, *The Big Red One*, 332; Lewis, ed., *The Mammoth Book of Eyewitness World War II*, 434 ("*like a huge torch*"); Heinz, *When We Were One*, 23–25 ("*a Last Greeting*").

After five days of fighting, Collins had gashed: *SLC*, 86; *Blue Spaders*, 84–85 (*meandering stone town*); Collins, *Lightning Joe*, 270; Stanhope B. Mason, "Reminiscences and Anecdotes of World War II," 1988, MRC FDM, 234 (*tacked blankets across holes*); "Aachen: Military Operations in Urban Terrain," 1999, 26th Infantry Regiment Association, 10.

Three German divisions soon sealed: Lucian Heichler, "The Germans Opposite VII Corps in Sept. 1944," Dec. 1952, CMH, CMH 2-3.7 EB, 83–84, 36 ("*Each and every house*"); *SLC*, 88 ("*the last bullet*").

A Market and a Garden

Since its founding in 1835: Ivan Sache and Jan Martens, "Presentation of Leopoldsburg," Apr. 14, 2006, http://www.crwflags.com/fotw/flags/be-vlilp.html.

Now the Germans were gone, again: memoir, J. S. W. Stone, Royal Engineers, LHC, folder 5, 70–71 (*painted wooden hives*); http://home.mweb.co.za/re/redcap/rmp.htm; Horrocks, *A Full Life*, 210; AAR, "Operation Market Garden," 21st AG, n.d., UK NA, AIR 37/1249, appendix D (*two thousand truckloads*).

On the radiant Sunday morning of September 17: C. D. Renfro, 101st AB, liaison to XXX Corps, "Operation Market," Oct. 10, 1944, NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, folder #226; Ryan, *A Bridge Too Far*, 146 ("*sniper's smocks*"); Horrocks, *Corps Commander*, 98–99 (*huge sketch map*).

At eleven A.M. *Lieutenant General Brian Horrocks*: Horrocks, *Corps Commander*, 98–99; Moorehead, *Eclipse*, 239 ("*ecclesiastical face*").

Horrocks was made for such moments: Keegan, ed., *Churchill's Generals*, 225–36; MMB, 238–39; Warner, *Horrocks*, 101–3, 110 (*Montgomery summoned him in August*); Baynes, *Urquhart of Arnhem*, 101 (*a tad frail*).

Eyes alight, graceful hands gliding: Urquhart, *Arnhem*, 184–85; C. D. Renfro, 101st AB, liaison to XXX Corps, "Operation Market," Oct. 10, 1944, NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, folder #226; AAR, Operation Market Garden, 21st AG, n.d., CARL, R-13333, 3 ("*dominate the country*"); Belchem, *All in the Day's March*, 224 (*V-2 rocket sites*); Verney, *The Guards Armoured Division*, 99 (*spearheaded by three armored divisions*); code names, NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, folder 226-A (HAMLET).

Linking these towns was a single narrow highway: *SLC*, 131; *GS* V, 527–28 (*Nine substantial bridges*); *SLC*, 131–32; www.rollintl.com/roll/rhine.htm ("*distributaries*"); Baedeker, *Belgium and Holland*, 400 (*retirement mecca*); Middlebrook, *Arnhem 1944*, 49 ("*exceedingly healthy atmosphere*").

Horrocks paused, glancing at his notes: AAR, "Operations in Holland," First Allied Airborne Army, Dec. 1944, ANSCOL, NARA RG 334, E 315, Act R A-104, box 62, 19; OH, Brian Urquhart, Jan. 24, 1967, CJR, box 108, folder 6 ("*carpet of airborne troops*").

As this unfolded, the land assault: *SLC*, 133–34; Horrocks, *Corps Commander*, 98–99 ("*absolutely vital*").

"*the enemy has by now suffered*": weekly intelligence summary no. 26, SHAEF, Sept. 16, 1944, JMG, MHI, box 15.

German strength facing the 100,000-man XXX Corps: AAR, Operation Market Garden, 21st AG, n.d., CARL, R-13333, 36; Fitzgerald, *History of the Irish Guards in the Second World War*, 486 ("*easier for a rich man*").

Irish Guards officers looked especially pensive: Horrocks, *Corps Commander*, 100.

Tanks trundled forward, slowly: ibid., 209–10.

"*What do you think of the plan?*": C. D. Renfro, 101st AB, liaison to XXX Corps, "Operation Market," Oct. 10, 1944, NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, folder #226.

Horrocks was in fact fretful: Badsey, *Arnhem 1944*, 11–12; Keegan, ed., *Churchill's Generals*, 236–38 ("*I shan't invalid you*"); Horrocks, *A Full Life*, 210 (*no attack he had launched on a Sunday*).

From a nearby radio came word: Horrocks, *Corps Commander*, 100–101.

Many others invested in MARKET GARDEN: Chandler, 1947 (*Under relentless pressure*); office diary, First Allied Airborne Army, Sept. 10–17, 1944, Floyd Lavinius Parks papers, MHI, box 2 (*less than a week*); Greenfield, ed., *Command Decisions*, 334 (*created at War Department insistence*); Brereton, *The Brereton Diaries*, 343 (*eighteen operational plans*); Baynes, *Urquhart of Arnhem*, 76 (WILD OATS); Lewin, *Montgomery as Military Commander*, 338 ("*cowpats*").

Some commanders worried about MARKET'S *dispersal*: corr, A. C. McAuliffe to A. C. Smith, Feb. 8, 1954, NARA RG 319, OCMH, 2-3.7 CB3; Willmott, *The Great Crusade*, 361–63; Hamilton, *Monty: Final Years of the Field-Marshal, 1944–1976*, 22–24; Weigley, *Eisenhower's Lieutenants*, 295; OH, ONB, 1974–75, Charles Hanson, MHI, V-58-61 ("*foolhardy*"); Bradley Commentaries, CBH, MHI, boxes 41–42 ("*Flabbergasted*"); Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 402 ("*astonishing faculty*").

Personalities added fat to the fire: Blair, *Ridgway's Paratroopers*, 181; MMB, 61–62; Brereton, *The Brereton Diaries*, 342 ("*Mystify, mislead*"), 308–9; Bradley Commentaries, CBH, MHI, boxes 41–42 ("*not sincere nor energetic*"); Blair, *Ridgway's Paratroopers*, 299 ("*Thank goodness*"); Taylor, *General Maxwell Taylor*, 97.

If Brereton's interactions with his fellow Americans: Blair, *Ridgway's Paratroopers*, 181 ("*stupid ass*"); Badsey, *Arnhem 1944*, 36 (*false uhlan front*); OH, Eddie Newbury, Browning personal secretary, n.d., CJR, box 108, folder 6 (*kicking over the furniture*); Hastings, *Armageddon*, 36 ("*popinjay*"); diary, July 2, 1944, CBH, MHI, box 4 ("*too deliberate a smile*"); MMB, 66 (*high hurdles*). Hitchcock later directed another movie based on a du Maurier short story, *The Birds* (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daphne_du_Maurier).

Browning so loathed Brereton: Brereton, *The Brereton Diaries*, 337–38; Badsey, *Arnhem 1944*, 12.

"*enemy appreciation was very weak*": OH, E. T. Williams, May 1947, FCP, MHI.

The road bridge over the Neder Rijn: Margry, ed., *Operation Market-Garden Then and Now*, vol. 1, 27; Hinsley, 544 (*radio decrypt*).

"*But the Germans, how about the Germans*": Gavin, *On to Berlin*, 150. Other accounts put this comment a bit earlier, during planning for the stillborn Operation COMET. See http://www.pegasusarchive.org/arnhem/stanislaw_sosabowski.htm.

someone "*with a vivid imagination*": Sosabowski, *Freely I Served*, 140; Middlebrook, *Arnhem 1944*, 8 ("*fighting-the-Germans bit*"). Sosabowski's Polish rank had no direct Anglo-American equivalent, and is variously translated as either brigadier or major general (David T. Zabecki, note to author, May 9, 2012).

Guessing which Germans would be fought: Hinsley, 544; *TSC*, 282–83 ("*low category*"), 142; Lucian Heichler, "Holland, Allied Invasion from the Sky," Oct. 1953, NARA RG 319, R-series, #5, 16 (*lacked field kitchens*); Margry, ed., *Operation Market-Garden Then and Now*, vol. 1, 79 (*II SS Panzer Corps*); Zetterling, *Normandy 1944*, 336–39, 344–47 (*nine thousand casualties*); Bennett, *Ultra in the West*, 151–53 (*120 tanks*).

Montgomery's senior staff officers almost to a man: Crosswell, *Beetle*, 717–18; Powell, *The Devil's Birthday*, 42–43 (*Smith flew to Brussels*); *SLC*, 122. Biographer Crosswell believes Smith never physically traveled to Montgomery's headquarters (*Beetle*, 717).

"*Montgomery ridiculed the idea*": OH, W. B. Smith and Pink Bull, Sept. 14, 1945, OCMH WWII Europe Interviews, MHI; OH, W. B. Smith, Apr. 18, 1949, SLAM, NARA RG 319, OCMH, 2-3.7 ("*waved my objections*").

Montgomery's insouciance was understandable: Ryan, *A Bridge Too Far*, 144 ("*weak, demoralized, and likely to collapse*"); Saunders, *The Red Beret*, 212–13 (*no larger than a brigade*); Hinsley, 543; *SLC*, 121–22; OH, Brian Urquhart, Jan. 24, 1967, CJR, box 108, folder 6; *VW*, vol. 1, 52 (*Dutch underground*); Middlebrook, *Arnhem 1944*, 56; Margry, ed., *Operation Market-Garden Then and Now*, vol. 1, 79; Horrocks, *Corps Commander*, 93; Ralph Bennett, "Ultra and Some Command Decisions," in Laqueur, ed., *The Second World War*, 232. Bennett reports that Browning was included on the Ultra distribution list ("*tanks at Arnhem*").

Boy Browning declared himself ready: memo, G-3, 82nd Airborne, Oct. 23, 1945 [*sic*], JMG papers, CJR, box 100, folder 3; *SLC*, 137–39; Hills, *Phantom Was There*, 251 ("*That means business*"); Saunders, *The Red Beret*, 216 (*British sergeant strutted*).

"*Emplane!*": memoir, Dwayne Burns, 508th PIR, n.d., NWWIIM; Ryan, *A Bridge Too Far*, 173 (*more than twenty thousand troops*); Middlebrook, *Arnhem 1944*, 83–85 ("*floated up and down*").

The first British pathfinders jumped: McNally, *As Ever, John*, 53 ("*plowing up dirt*"); Kershaw, "*It Never Snows in September*," 66 (*snowflakes*); *SLC*, 137–39 (*within eighty minutes*); Middlebrook, *Arnhem 1944*, 112 ("*Jingle Bells*").

That this welcoming chorus congregated: AAR, "Airborne Division Report on Operation Market," UK 1st Airborne Division, Jan. 10, 1945, CARL, N-5647, 43; *Airborne Forces*, 174; John C. Warren, "Airborne Operations in World War II, European Theater," 1956, AFHRA, historical study no. 97, 149; Murray and Millett, *A War to Be Won*, 441; Urquhart, *Arnhem*, 6–7; Middlebrook, *Arnhem 1944*, 54–55;

The second complication was evident: MARKET troop carrier commanders argued that the shorter days of mid-September made two missions more difficult to squeeze in (John C. Warren, "Airborne Operations in World War II, European Theater," 1956, AFHRA, historical study no. 97, 150).

Pleas by airborne commanders and by an emissary: Powell, *The Devil's Birthday*, 33–34; Baynes, *Urquhart of Arnhem*, 92; *SLC*, 131–32 (*up to four days*).

The day went well enough for the Yanks: "Kinnard's Operation in Holland," 1st Bn, 501st PIR, 1946, Battalion and Small Unit Study

No. 1, ETOUSA, history section, CJR, box 100, folder 5; Simpson, *Selected Prose*, 129 ("*laid there to die*").

Nine road and rail bridges stood: "Eindhoven," 506th PIR, n.d., NARA RG 407, E 427A, CI, folder #226; OH, Lynn Compton, 506th PIR, n.d., NARA RG 407, E 427, HI; John C. Warren, "Airborne Operations in World War II, European Theater," 1956, AFHRA, historical study no. 97, 105 (*sprint south and seize Eindhoven*).

Twenty miles north, 7,300 troops: A. D. Bestebreurtje, "The Airborne Operation in Netherlands in Fall 1944," *De Militaire Spectator*, English trans. from Dutch, Jan. 1946, CJR, box 100, folder 4; *SLC*, 159 (*All but one of 482 planes*); Gavin, *On to Berlin*, 161; corr, JMG to CJR, Nov. 16, 1966, and to A. D. Bestebreurtje, July 9, 1973, JMG papers, CJR, box 100, folders 4 and 9.

With the ascension of Matthew Ridgway: Muir, ed., *The Human Tradition in the World War II Era*, 178; Nordyke, *All American All the Way*, 412 (*youngest major general*); D'Este, "Raw Courage," *World War II* (July–Aug. 2011): 30+.

adopted as a toddler: memoir, "Beyond the Stars," ts, 1983, James M. Gavin Irrecovable Trust, JMG, MHI, box 2, 3, 10, 21–27 (*invoked the Holy Family*), 410–11; Booth and Spencer, *Paratrooper*, 26–27 (*soaped miners' beards*), 42–43 (*He lied about his age*); West Point application, 1925, JMG, MHI, box 9 (*filling station*); Fauntleroy, *The General and His Daughter*, 124 (*Book-of-the-Month Club*); "Generalship," JMG, MHI, box 10; OH, JMG, 1975, Donald G. Andrews and Charles H. Ferguson, SOOHP, MHI, 23 ("*two o'clock in the morning*"); Nordyke, *All American All the Way*, 412 ("*charm of manner*").

After combat jumps into Sicily: Fauntleroy, *The General and His Daughter*, 105 ("*the scuffle*"); Gavin, *On to Berlin*, 152 ("*bank account*"); "Personal Diary," Sept. 14, 1944, JMG, MHI, box 10 ("*looks very rough*").

Eleven bridges could be found in the 82nd sector: Field Order No. 11, 82nd AB Div, Sept. 13, 1944, "bridge data" annex, CARL; John S. Thompson, "The Holland Jump," 1944, CJR, box 101, folder 9 (*shooting up two truckloads*); AAR, Reuben H. Tucker, 504th PIR, n.d., and AAR, 2nd Bn, 504th PIR, n.d., NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, folder #171 (*ripped out boxes of dynamite*); signage, Grave bridge, author visit, May 2009 ("*Bridge number eleven*").

Bridge eleven and all its sisters: memo, JMG to Office of the Theater Historian, July 25, 1945, NARA RG 407, E 427-A, folder 171; memo, G-3, 82nd Airborne, Oct. 23, 1945, CJR, box 100, folder 3 ("*capture and retention*"); *SLC*, 159 (*eight 75mm howitzers*); Ryan, *A Bridge Too Far*, 221–22 (*seven pieces*).

"*Everything is going as planned*": corr, JMG to A. Bestebreurtje, July 9, 1973, CJR, box 100, folder 9; OH, JMG, Jan. 20, 1967, CJR, box 101, folder 10.

So too had the Germans: Kershaw, "*It Never Snows in September*," 68 ("*Everyone out*"); Ryan, *A Bridge Too Far*, 199 (*underwear spilling*); Hastings, *Armageddon*, 41; *SLC*, 140.

Vengeful Dutchmen ripped the rank badges: Margry, ed., *Operation Market-Garden Then and Now*, vol. 1, 299; photo, Kershaw, "*It Never Snows in September*," 95.

Not much else went right: Urquhart, *Arnhem*, 40–41; Kershaw, "*It Never Snows in September*," 304–5 (*fire engines*); Middlebrook, *Arnhem 1944*, 117–19.

Ignoring warnings of dangers ahead: Urquhart, *Arnhem*, 64–66; Baynes, *Urquhart of Arnhem*, 108–11; Ryan, *A Bridge Too Far*, 298 ("*idiotic, ridiculous*").

A single British parachute battalion: Sims, *Arnhem Spearhead*, 38 ("*snogging*"); Frost, *A Drop Too Many*, 210–11 (*rail bridge blew up*); Middlebrook, *Arnhem 1944*, 147–48, 152–58; Kershaw, "*It Never Snows in September*," 99 (*trucks blazing on the ramp*).

A brutal deadlock had begun: *VW*, vol. 2, 51; Middlebrook, *Arnhem 1944*, 292–93 (*only 740*); Saunders, *The Red Beret*, 225–26 (*lashed into the tree branches*); Frost, *A Drop Too Many*, 204 (*golf clubs*).

That would not happen. At precisely two P.M.: Fitzgerald, *History of the Irish Guards in the Second World War*, 489–90; AAR, Operation Market Garden, 21st AG, n.d., CARL, R-13333, 37 (*Typhoons swooped in*).

"*Driver, advance!*": Verney, *The Guards Armoured Division*, 99–101.

The artillery barrage now rolled: AAR, 2nd Bn, Irish Guards, UK NA, WO 171/1256; Rosse and Hill, *The Story of the Guards Armoured Division*, 127 ("*Advance going well*").

No sooner had the hand-rubbers on the roof: Horrocks, *A Full Life*, 211–12; Rosse and Hill, *The Story of the Guards Armoured Division*, 127–28 ("*burning hulks*"); Verney, *The Guards Armoured Division*, 101–3; Hastings, *Armageddon*, 55 (*tanker boots*).

The German defenders soon were identified: AAR, Operation Market Garden, 21st AG, n.d., CARL, R-13333, 37 ("*complete surprise*"); Rosse and Hill, *The Story of the Guards Armoured Division*, 129 (*6th Parachute Regiment*); Ryan, *A Bridge Too Far*, 230 ("*indignant surprise*"); Fitzgerald, *History of the Irish Guards in the Second World War*, 492–93 ("*ugly mood*"); OH, Giles A. M. Vandeleur, Irish Guards, Aug. 10, 1967, CJR, box 102, folder 17; Margry, ed., *Operation Market-Garden Then and Now*, vol. 1,

216–17, 226; AAR, 2nd Bn, Irish Guards, UK NA, WO 171/1256.

For seven miles from the Dutch border: Bredin, *Three Assault Landings*, 126; AAR, Operation Market Garden, 21st AG, n.d., CARL, R-13333, 89 (*wider than thirty feet*); "Preliminary Tactical Study of the Terrain," XVIII Airborne Corps, Sept. 11, 1944, CARL ("*impracticable to impossible*"); *SLC*, 148–49; Verney, *The Guards Armoured Division*, 101–3 (*only fifteen dead*); Margry, ed., *Operation Market-Garden Then and Now*, vol. 1, 227.

"*Things are going very well indeed*": office diary, Sept. 17–18, 1944, First Allied Airborne Army, Floyd Lavinius Parks papers, MHI, box 2.

Eindhoven was home: *Baedeker's Netherlands*, 178; www.hansvogels.nl/eindhovenENG/violet2en.htm; www.frits.philips.com/en/darkcloud.html; Crouch, "Frederik Philips Dies at 100; Businessman Saved Dutch Jews," *NYT*, Dec. 7, 2005; Teulings, "Structure and Logic of Industrial Development: Philips and Electronics Industry," *Social Scientist* 9, no. 4 (Nov. 1979): 3+; http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philips.

Now this company town of thatched roofs: Moorehead, *Eclipse*, 202–3; "Eindhoven," 506th PIR, n.d., NARA RG 407, E 427A, CI, folder #226 (*all bridges intact*); *SLC*, 150 ("*reek with hate*").

Not until dusk did XXX Corps arrive: AAR, 3rd Bn, Irish Guards, Sept. 18, 1944, UK NA, WO 171/1257; AAR, Operation Market Garden, 21st AG, n.d., CARL, R-13333, 39–42 (*stiffened with Panther tanks*); Powell, *The Devil's Birthday*, 113 (*grounded the Typhoons*); Verney, *The Guards Armoured Division*, 103; Forbes, *The Grenadier Guards in the War of 1939–1945*, vol. 1, 122 ("*Every time the advance*"); *SLC*, 150.

Reinforcements from England also arrived: "327th RCT at Zon," 327th PIR, n.d., NARA RG 407, E 427A, CI, folder #226-A; H. J. Jablonsky, "Combat Lessons of 82nd Airborne Division," Observers' Board, WD, Dec. 9, 1944, CARL, 5; *SLC*, 167; Ryan, *A Bridge Too Far*, 311–16 (*four thousand aircraft*); AAR, "Air Resupply and Resupply by B-24 Aircraft," Oct. 29, 1944, 2nd Bombardment Division, CARL, 1–7 (*stripped of their ball turrets*); John C. Warren, "Airborne Operations in World War II, European Theater," 1956, AFHRA, historical study no. 97, 124.

The 101st found more unexpected trouble: "Combat Diary of Edward McCosh Elliott, 1944," 2nd Bn, Glasgow Highlanders, IWM, 99/61/1, VIII-12; "A Historical Study of Some World War II Airborne Operations," [1951?], WSEG Staff Study No. 3, CARL, N-17309.1; Ryan, *A Bridge Too Far*, 308–09 (*Fifteenth Army troops*).

Among seven wounded GIs: Nappi, "War Hero Enriches Soul History," (Spokane, Wash.) *Spokesman-Review*, Aug. 14, 2004, www.spokesmanreview.com/tools/story_pf.asp?ID=20967*; Rapport and Northwood, *Rendezvous with Destiny*, 287–99; Marshall, *Battle at Best*, 10–36; Medal of Honor citation, http://www.homeofheroes.com/moh/citations_1940_wwii/mann.html.

Nearly out of ammunition: Kershaw, "*It Never Snows in September*," 144; *SLC*, 152 (*three hundred enemy corpses*); "Battalion and Small Unit Study No. 6," Oct. 1944, NARA 498, ETO HD, UD 602, box 5, 35–36 (*shot by their own comrades*); Marshall, *Battle at Best*, 41.

"*Dutch report Germans winning*": *SLC*, 170.

"*grossly untidy situation*": Powell, *The Devil's Birthday*, 110.

In a shot-torn town: Ryan, *A Bridge Too Far*, 282 (*bakeries*), 218 (*head to toe like sandbags*), 232–33 ("*gone awry*"); Middlebrook, *Arnhem 1944*, 200–202, 209, 281; Saunders, *The Red Beret*, 232–34 ("*little bayonet rushes*"); *Airborne Forces*, 167; *SLC*, 172–73 (*Balky radios*); Baynes, *Urquhart of Arnhem*, 111 (*would not rejoin his headquarters*); Powell, *The Devil's Birthday*, 130 (*over half of the British soldiers*).

Nothing was right except the courage: Ryan, *A Bridge Too Far*, 344–45; Sims, *Arnhem Spearhead*, 72 (*cherry brandy*); Mackay, "The Battle of Arnhem Bridge," *Royal Engineer Journal* (Dec. 1954): 305ff. (*Benzedrine* and "*Great joy all round*"); Kershaw, "*It Never Snows in September*," 177 (*perimeter of ten buildings*); Arthur, *Forgotten Voices of World War II*, 359 (*vases were filled with water*); Saunders, *The Red Beret*, 239 (*rolled strips of wallpaper*); Middlebrook, *Arnhem 1944*, 292–95; Margry, ed., *Operation Market-Garden Then and Now*, vol. 2, 465 (*Mercedes trucks*); "Arnhem," *AB*, no. 2 (1973): 1ff.

Germans on the south bank of the Neder Rijn: Frost, *A Drop Too Many*, 223–25; Kershaw, "*It Never Snows in September*," 177–78 ("*skin peeling*"); Sims, *Arnhem Spearhead*, 74 ("*shake itself like a dog*").

"*Arnhem was burning*": Arthur, *Forgotten Voices of World War II*, 359 ("*metallic daylight*"), 354 ("*Nobody is in such dire need*"); Saunders, *The Red Beret*, 236–37 ("*never saw anything more beautiful*"); Mackay, "The Battle of Arnhem Bridge," *Royal Engineer Journal* (Dec. 1954): 305ff. (*Despite a BBC report*); Middlebrook, *Arnhem 1944*, 312 ("*pretty desperate thing*"); Kershaw, "*It Never Snows in September*," 216–17 (*tossed from upper windows*).

"*a sea of flame*": Middlebrook, *Arnhem 1944*, 307.

"*Our building is on fire*": Thompson, *The Imperial War Museum Book of Victory in Europe*, 167–68.

"Deutschland, Deutschland": OH, Joseph Enthammer, Arnhem History Museum, John Frost Bridge, author visit, May 2009.

Both sides agreed to a two-hour cease-fire: Thompson, *The Imperial War Museum Book of Victory in Europe*, 167–68. ("*British or American?*"), 169 (*offered brandy, chocolate*); Sims, *Arnhem Spearhead*, 85 ("*The Last Stand*"), 88 ("*grotesque paddles*"); Kershaw, "*It Never Snows in September*," 125–26 ("*harder battle than any*"); Frost, *Nearly There*, 80–81; Frost, *A Drop Too Many*, 233 ("*kind, chivalrous*"); exhibit on Dr. Jan Zwolle, Arnhem History Museum, John Frost Bridge, author visit, May 2009 (*put before a firing squad*).

Eighty-one paratroopers had been killed: Middlebrook, *Arnhem 1944*, 321.

"*God save the king*": Ryan, *A Bridge Too Far*, 430.

The Arrow That Flieth by Day

At 4:30 P.M. on Tuesday, September 19: OH, JMG, Jan. 20, 1967, CJR, box 101, folder 10, 1–3 (*curb*); Gavin, *On to Berlin*, 170–71.

Afternoon shadows stretched: Bates and Fuller, *America's Weather Warriors*, 99–100 (*weather had deteriorated*); John C. Warren, "Airborne Operations in World War II, European Theater," 1956, AFHRA, historical study no. 97, 129–33; *SLC*, 154.

Of five major objectives: "A Historical Study of Some World War II Airborne Operations," [1951?], WSEG Staff Study No. 3, CARL, N-17309.1, 22; AAR, JMG, July 25, 1945, Office of Theater Historian, NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, folder #171; Margry, ed., *Operation Market-Garden Then and Now*, vol. 1, 164; *SLC*, 163–66 (*muddled firefight in the dark*); Nordyke, *All American All the Way*, 457 (*10th SS Panzer soldiers*); Baedeker, *Belgium and Holland*, 404; *Baedeker's Netherlands*, 288 (*falcons*).

Nor had the belated arrival of XXX Corps: *VW*, vol. 2, 37; Forbes, *The Grenadier Guards in the War of 1939–1945*, vol. 1, 129–33; Margry, ed., *Operation Market-Garden Then and Now*, vol. 2, 349, 360–63; AAR, "The Capture of Nijmegen Bridge," XXX Corps, UK NA, WO 205/1125. No Dutchman explained why the detonators would be placed on the wrong side of the bridges to be destroyed (Fitzgerald, *History of the Irish Guards in the Second World War*, 499–500).

Enemy commanders were so confident of holding the bridges: Badsey, *Arnhem 1944*, 43; Forbes, *The Grenadier Guards in the War of 1939–1945*, vol. 1, 128 (*bowled thermite grenades*).

Joining Gavin along the Malden curb: Tucker biographical data, CJR, box 103, folder 23; Chatterton, *The Wings of Pegasus*, 178 ("*air of nonchalance*"); Powell, *The Devil's Birthday*, 118 (*arrived in a nearby cabbage patch*); OH, Eddie Newbury, Browning personal secretary, n.d., CJR, box 108, folder 6 (*Twirling his mustache*); Margry, ed., *Operation Market-Garden Then and Now*, vol. 2, 344 (*airborne smock*); office diary, First Allied Airborne Army, Sept. 19, 1944, Floyd Lavinius Parks papers, MHI, box 2 ("*extremely pleased*"); Badsey, *Arnhem 1944*, 60 (*ink jar*).

Gavin quickly described the predicament: Kershaw, "*It Never Snows in September*," 193; *SLC*, 175; Gavin, *On to Berlin*, 175, 163 ("*tough and confident*"); Rosse and Hill, *The Story of the Guards Armoured Division*, 134–35 (*riverfront bandstand*); Wills, *Put on Your Boots and Parachutes!*, 141–43 (*on foot and by bicycle*); Otis L. Sampson, "My Last Combat Jump," n.d., Co E, 505th PIR, JMG, MHI, box 15 (*wrapping themselves in drapes*); corr, JMG to CJR, Oct. 2, 1973, and JMG to M. C. Hustinx, March 8, 1947, CJR, box 101, folders 9 & 10 (*six hundred Dutch resistance fighters*); Powell, *The Devil's Birthday*, 118 (*Browning's radios*).

Colonel Tucker, whose helmet brim: Chatterton, *The Wings of Pegasus*, 178 ("*Every time he did*"); Gavin, *On to Berlin*, 173 (*attack the German rear*).

Browning and Adair said little: corr, JMG to CJR, Oct. 2, 1973, CJR, box 101, folder 9 (*Horrocks was skeptical)*; *DOB*, 347 (*Rapido*); Gavin, *On to Berlin*, 170–71 ("*never try to fight an entire corps*").

Two hours later, as dusk sifted: Powell, *The Devil's Birthday*, 135; *SLC*, 153 (*only large, long-range air strike*); Bredin, *Three Assault Landings*, 126–28 (*Dutch flags abruptly vanished*); Margry, ed., *Operation Market-Garden Then and Now*, vol. 2, 395–97 ("*All smiles stopped*").

No enemy tanks appeared: Powell, *The Devil's Birthday*, 135; Brereton, *The Brereton Diaries*, 349–50 ("*flat on our stomachs*"); Booth and Spencer, *Paratrooper*, 228 ("*Great fires were burning*").

"*A blind act of malice*": Margry, ed., *Operation Market-Garden Then and Now*, vol. 2, 395–401.

The boats were late arriving: Horrocks, *Corps Commander*, 112 ("*For God's sake, try!*"); OH, Giles A. M. Vandeleur, Irish Guards, Aug. 10, 1967, CJR, box 102, folder 17 (*there were twenty-six*); Rosse and Hill, *The Story of the Guards Armoured Division*, 137 ("*suitable for the quieter rivers*"); Ryan, *A Bridge Too Far*, 406–8 (*two paddles*); corr, Henry B. Keep to mother, Nov. 20, 1944, JMG, MHI, box 15 ("*Daddy's tin ducking boat*").

As a Royal Engineer major gave rudimentary instructions: OH, Robert M. Tallon, March 6, 1968, CJR, box 103, folder 20 ("*Head them upriver*"); Nordyke, *More Than Courage*, 225 (*pork chops*); AAR, Reuben H. Tucker, 504th PIR, n.d., and AAR, 2nd Bn, 504th PIR, n.d., NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, folder #171; OH, Giles A. M. Vandeleur, Irish Guards, Aug. 10, 1967, CJR, box 102,

folder 17 (*milky smoke screen*); AAR, 3rd Bn, 504th PIR, n.d., NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, folder #171 (*Four hundred grunting men*).

Instantly German fire from three directions : AAR, 3rd Bn, 504th PIR, n.d., NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, folder #171 (“*mackerel on the feed*”); Ryan, *A Bridge Too Far*, 406–8; *SLC*, 180; OH, Robert M. Tallon, March 6, 1968, CJR, box 103, folder 20 (*direct hit from a mortar round*); Burriss, *Strike and Hold*, 113–15 (*engineer shot through the head*), 116–17 (“*Thy will be done*”); Nordyke, *More Than Courage*, 234 (“*his skull dropped*”).

“*It was a horrible, horrible sight*”: OH, Giles A. M. Vandeleur, Irish Guards, Aug. 10, 1967, CJR, box 102, folder 17.

The roar of gunfire and ripping canvas: Nordyke, *More Than Courage*, 237, 256; Reuben H. Tucker, ts, n.d., CJR, box 103, folder 23 (“*look at ’em*”).

Half made the far shore: *SLC*, 181; AAR, 3rd Bn, 504th PIR, n.d., NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, folder #171 (*galley slaves*).

“*God help anyone in front of us*”: Nordyke, *More Than Courage*, 240.

“*jack-in-the-box shooting*”: OH, Theodore Finkbeiner, Jr., March 4, 1968, CJR, box 102, folder 24; *SLC*, 181.

One company slaughtered the enemy garrison at Hof: AAR, “The Capture of Nijmegen Bridge,” XXX Corps, UK NA, WO 205/1125; Powell, *The Devil’s Birthday*, 160; corr, Henry B. Keep to mother, Nov. 20, 1944, JMG, MHI, box 15 (“*driven to a fever pitch*”).

Sensing that the day had turned: AAR, Co. A, 1st Bn, 504th PIR, n.d., NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, folder #171 (*yellow recognition flags*); Fitzgerald, *History of the Irish Guards in the Second World War*, 504 (*high in the girders*); corr, Henry B. Keep to mother, Nov. 20, 1944, JMG, MHI, box 15 (“*gargoyles*”); corr, Virgil F. Carmichael, Oct. 13, 1967, CJR, box 102, file 16 (*shot trying to surrender*); Nordyke, *More Than Courage*, 260 (“*Old German men grab*”); Kershaw, “*It Never Snows in September*,” 211–12 (“*throwing our wounded from the bridge*”); *SLC*, 183 (*Two hundred and sixty-seven enemy bodies*).

Paratroopers darting through river grass: Nordyke, *More Than Courage*, 263 (“*Roman candle balls*”); Forbes, *The Grenadier Guards in the War of 1939–1945*, vol. 1, 137–38 (*skidded sideways*); AAR, “The Capture of Nijmegen Bridge,” XXX Corps, UK NA, WO 205/1125 (*detonators lashed to a catwalk*).

“*The most gallant attack*”: Horrocks, *Corps Commander*, 112; *SLC*, 183; Kershaw, “*It Never Snows in September*,” 211–12 (“*blow up the bridge*”); Nordyke, *More Than Courage*, 264 (“*They’re over the Waal*”).

Montgomery monitored the battle: Hamilton, *Monty: The Final Years of the Field-Marshal, 1944–1976*, 73, 76, 87–89.

“*Things are going to work out alright*”: msg, BLM to DDE, Sept. 20, 1944, DDE Lib, PP-pres, box 83.

“*I regard general situation on rivers*”: Powell, *The Devil’s Birthday*, 184.

“*all was not well*”: Randal, *A Short History of 30 Corps in the European Campaign*, 35.

“*General, you’d better get the hell back here*”: OH, JMG, 1975, Donald G. Andrews and Charles H. Ferguson, SOOHP, MHI, JMG papers, box 1.

Racing to his command post: corr, JMG to MBR, Jan. 27, 1973, CJR, box 102, folder 6; Gavin, *On to Berlin*, 176–77.

But troubles in the Anglo-American rear: *SLC*, 187; “A Historical Study of Some World War II Airborne Operations,” [1951?], WSEG Staff Study No. 3, CARL, N-17309.1 (*another 85,000 Germans*); John C. Warren, “Airborne Operations in World War II, European Theater,” 1956, AFHRA, historical study no. 97, 150; Margry, ed., *Operation Market-Garden Then and Now*, vol. 2, 569.

That same morning, Hell’s Highway: Ryan, *A Bridge Too Far*, 476–77; Horrocks, *A Full Life*, 228 (“*blackest moment*”); *SLC*, 189–92; Kershaw, “*It Never Snows in September*,” 283–87 (*destroy fifty vehicles*).

The new bridgehead over the Waal: *SLC*, 184–86; Crosswell, *Beetle: The Life of General Walter Bedell Smith*, 720 (*supplies promised by SHAEF*); OH, JMG, 1975, Donald G. Andrews and Charles H. Ferguson, SOOHP, MHI, JMG papers, box 1 (“*Why die now?*”); corr, JMG to MBR, Jan. 27, 1973, CJR, box 102, folder 6 (*found Colonel Tucker in a farmhouse*); Powell, *The Devil’s Birthday*, 162–63 (“*What in the hell are they doing?*”).

At 1:30 P.M. on Thursday: AAR, 3rd Battalion, Irish Guards, UK NA, WO 171/1257 (*captured German map*); *SLC*, 185 (*waited in ambush*); Fitzgerald, *History of the Irish Guards in the Second World War*, 508–9 (“*head to tail in silhouette*”); Ellis, *Welsh Guards at War*, 229 (“*these sad flat lands*”); Margry, ed., *Operation Market-Garden Then and Now*, vol. 2, 576–77 (“*not going to get a yard*”).

“*But farther they could not go*”: Forbes, *The Grenadier Guards in the War of 1939–1945*, vol. 1, 141; T. G. Lindsay, “Operation Overlord Plus,” n.d., LHC, 43–44 (*plover and pheasant*).

The British survivors at Arnhem were now pinched: Urquhart, *Arnhem*, 105–7, 131; Saunders, *The Red Beret*, 242–43 (“*I used to*

watch an apple tree").

Between mortar barrages, called "hate" by the British: Powell, *The Devil's Birthday*, 208 ("*In the Mood*"); *By Air to Battle*, 124–25 (*notched their rifle butts*); Kershaw, "*It Never Snows in September*," 240 ("*room to room*"); Middlebrook, *Arnhem 1944*, 344–46 ("*You have no idea*"); Baynes, *Urquhart of Arnhem*, 147 (*kept the 9th SS Panzer at bay*).

Of nearly 9,000 British soldiers inserted: Middlebrook, *Arnhem 1944*, 39, 339, 398–400. Urquhart cited eighty-four supply planes lost (AAR, "Airborne Division Report on Operation Market," 1st Airborne Division, Jan. 10, 1945, CARL, N-5647, 34).

"*Thou shalt not be afraid*": *By Air to Battle*, 125; http://www.pegasusarchive.org/arnhem/jimmy_cleminson.htm.

"*Our casualties heavy*": Urquhart, *Arnhem*, 132.

Relief came, though far too little: Sosabowski, *Freely I Served*, 152, 156, 164; John C. Warren, "Airborne Operations in World War II, European Theater," 1956, AFHRA, historical study no. 97, 138–39 (*forced many befuddled pilots*); Middlebrook, *Arnhem 1944*, 410–11, 341–43 (*narrowing Urquhart's river frontage*); *SLC*, 186–86; Margry, ed., *Operation Market-Garden Then and Now*, vol. 2, 588–89.

A night passed, then another: Chmielewska-Szymańska, *Życie i działalność Stanisława Sosabowskiego*, 144–45; Sosabowski, *Najkrótszą Drogą*, 247; Peszke, "The Polish Parachute Brigade in World War II," *Military Affairs* (Oct. 1984): 188ff.

A battalion from the Dorsetshire Regiment: "Pegasus and the Wyvern," *Royal Engineers Journal* (March 1946): 22ff.; *SLC*, 196–97; Powell, *The Devil's Birthday*, 215 ("*quite useless*"); Swiecicki, *With the Red Devils at Arnhem*, 82 ("*Everything would seem to point*").

When the end came, it came quickly: Horrocks, *A Full Life*, 230–32; Urquhart, *Arnhem*, 170–77 (*trundled the lightly injured*); Badsey, *Arnhem 1944*, 76 (*medical truces*).

"*The night was made for clandestine exits*": Powell, *The Devil's Birthday*, 221; author visit, May 24, 2009; Badsey, *Arnhem 1944*, 83 (*shuffled through the mud flats*); Urquhart, *Arnhem*, 170–77 ("*Let's be having you*"); *By Air to Battle*, 130 (*Cointreau and mugs of tea*); Margry, ed., *Operation Market-Garden Then and Now*, vol. 2, 684.

Dawn caught the division: "Pegasus and the Wyvern," *Royal Engineers Journal* (March 1946): 22+; Tucholski, *Spadochronowa opowieść, czyli o żołnierzach gen. Sosabowskiego i cichociemnych*, 72–73 (*flailed for the southern bank*); Waddy, *A Tour of the Arnhem Battlefields*, 177 (*only four of twenty-five aboard*).

Urquhart was among those: Urquhart, *Arnhem*, 179–80.

"*You did all you could*": Baynes, *Urquhart of Arnhem*, 151. Historian Max Hastings concluded that Browning "displayed shameful incompetence and merited dismissal with ignominy" (*Inferno*, 561).

In the small hours of Friday, September 29: "Germans Use Expert Swimmers to Mine Dutch Bridges," *Military Intelligence Service*, no. 25, Jan. 1945, NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #494L, 61+; Margry, ed., *Operation Market-Garden Then and Now*, vol. 2, 706–7 (*air cylinders*); "Forced Crossing of the Rhine, 1945," Aug. 1945, CE, Historical Report No. 20, CEOH, box X-32, folder 20, 14; Randal, *A Short History of 30 Corps in the European Campaign*, 38.

This rude gesture hardly dampened: Powell, *The Devil's Birthday*, 232 ("*decided victory*"); Brereton, *The Brereton Diaries*, 360–61 ("*brilliant success*"); Hart-Davis, ed., *King's Counsellor*, 258 ("*well pleased with the gross result*"); AAR, Operation Market Garden, 21st AG, n.d., CARL, R-13333, 115 ("*90 percent successful*"); Orange, *Tedder: Quietly in Command*, 279 ("*one jumps off a cliff*"); OH, F.A.M. Browning, Feb. 1955, NARA RG 319, *SLC* background papers, 2-3.7 CB 3 ("*Who was to tell*"); *SLC*, 198 ("*We have no regrets*").

Brave words from a division commander: Middlebrook, *Arnhem 1944*, 445; *SLC*, 200 (*losses in* MARKET *approached 12,000*); *VW*, vol. 2, 54 (*in 17,000 air sorties*); Ryan, *A Bridge Too Far*, 523; Kershaw, "*It Never Snows in September*," 311 (*total German losses*); *De Slag Om Arnhem*, 24 (*went on finding skeletons*). A recent German study puts Model's losses around Arnhem alone at 3,300 (Ludewig, *Rückzug*, 278).

Even decided victories and brilliant successes: AAR, Operation Market Garden, 21st AG, n.d., CARL, R-13333, 115 (*Montgomery blamed the weather*); AAR, "Operations in Holland," First Allied Airborne Army, Dec. 1944, NARA RG 334, E 315, ANSCOL, Act R A-104, box 62; Brereton, *The Brereton Diaries*, 360–61.

Browning blamed Sosabowski: In 2006, Queen Beatrix awarded the Bronze Lion to Sosabowski, who died in 1967 (Dreel ferry signage, author visit, May 24, 2009. www.ww2awards.com/person/34944).

"*too busy fighting Eisenhower*": Baynes, *Urquhart of Arnhem*, 160, 167 ("*a bit more constructive criticism*").

"*a single controlling mind*": ibid., 159.

Horrocks at least had the grace: Horrocks, *A Full Life*, 231; Keegan, ed., *Churchill's Generals*, 236–38 (*had failed to keep a senior Dutch officer*).

Several hundred fugitive Allied troops: brochure, "Airborne Museum 'Hartenstein,'" Oosterbeek, author visit, May 2009, 12–13; Badsey, *Arnhem 1944*, 83–85; Middlebrook, *Arnhem 1944*, 439 (*more than six thousand others*); Hastings, *Armageddon*, 56 ("*Green grow the rushes*"); Arthur, *Forgotten Voices of World War II*, 364 ("*show these bastards*").

The Dutch too would tramp away: "Freedom Trail Arnhem," n.d., city of Arnhem, author visit, May 24, 2009; Powell, *The Devil's Birthday*, 229 (*plundered the city* and *eating dogs and tulip bulbs*); Saunders, *The Red Beret*, 262 (*execution of fifty resistance members*); *VW*, vol. 2, 416–17 (*rail strike*); Nijmegen signage, author visit, May 22, 2009 (*five thousand buildings*); Hitchcock, *The Bitter Road to Freedom*, 122 (*sixteen thousand died of starvation*); Urquhart, *A Life in Peace and War*, 75 ("*can never again afford*").

21st Army Group had nearly doubled the perimeter: *SLC*, 204–5.

That task would entangle most of Second Army: Rapport and Northwood, *Rendezvous with Destiny*, 381 (*oxtail soup*); Arthur, *Forgotten Voices of World War II* , 368 (*empty oil drums*); Fauntleroy, *The General and His Daughter*, 134–35 ("*I'd be mortified*"); *SLC*, 206 (*another 3,600 casualties*); corr, JMG to MBR, Oct. 3, 1944, MBR papers, MHI, box 21 ("*much more vicious*"); T. G. Lindsay, "Operation Overlord Plus," n.d., LHC, 54–55 (*which they stalked on ice skates*).

"*an epic cock-up*": Arthur, *Forgotten Voices of World War II*, 346–47.

Eisenhower offered Montgomery a fistful: corr, DDE to BLM, Oct. 11, 1944, DDE Lib, PP-pres, box 83.

Montgomery shifted his command post: Biographer Nigel Hamilton considered MARKET GARDEN to be "Monty's worst mistake of the war" (*Monty: Final Years of the Field-Marshal, 1944–1976*, 56, 97, 115).

"*will not affect operations eastward*": Fraser, *And We Shall Shock Them*, 348.

"*the last occasion of the war*": Hastings, *Armageddon*, 60–61.

"*The opening of the port*": BLM, M-527, Sept. 27, 1944, National Archives of Canada, RG 24, vol. 1054 2, file 215A21.016(9).

"*There was a change of mood after Arnhem*": Hastings, *Armageddon*, 141.

"*The picture is not very good*": diary, Sept. 24, 1944, Raymond G. Moses papers, MHI, box 1.

"*I am not looking forward to the winter*": Fauntleroy, *The General and His Daughter*, 57.

CHAPTER 6: THE IMPLICATED WOODS

Charlemagne's Tomb

For the most loyal Germans: "Concise Guide to Aachen Cathedral," n.d., Europäische Stiftung für den Aachener Dom, www.aachendom.de; "Aachen at a Glance," Aachen Tourist Service, author visit, Sept. 25–27, 2009.

It was said that the fearless burghers: Friedrich, *The Fire*, 116–17, 246–47.

Now smoke rose from Aachen again: *SLC*, 252 (*First Army had narrowed its front*), 281–84 (*eighteen thousand German troops*); "Aachen: Military Operations in Urban Terrain," 26th Infantry Regiment Association, 49 (*Seventy-four American gun batteries*); Middleton, *Our Share of Night*, 345 ("*gray and brown mass*").

To help VII Corps complete Aachen's encirclement: "Breaching the Siegfried Line," XIX Corps, Oct. 2, 1944, Charles H. Corlett papers, MHI, box 1, 9–15 (*Napalm fizzled*); *SLC*, 260–61, 279–80 ("*We have a hole*"), 294 ("*job is finished*").

Hobbs was dead wrong: "German Reaction to XIX Corps Breakthrough Siegfried Line, 2–16 Oct., 1944," n.d., NARA RG 407, ML, box 24130; *SLC*, 287 (*huge white cross*); "Battle of Aachen, 18th Infantry Regiment," n.d., NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI (*gobbled down the breakfast*).

Field Marshal Rundstedt warned Berlin: *SLC*, 299n; Wheeler, *The Big Red One*, 337 (*hardly a mile separated*); "The Fall of Aachen," n.d., Stanhope Mason papers, MRC FDM, 1994.126 ("*no middle course*").

Lest the Germans miss the message: "The Fall of Aachen," n.d., Stanhope Mason papers, MRC FDM, 1994.126; "Aachen: Military Operations in Urban Terrain," 26th Infantry Regiment Association, 17–18.

Aachen's dismemberment began in earnest: "Aachen: Military Operations in Urban Terrain," 26th Infantry Regiment Association, 17–18; Daniel, "The Capture of Aachen," lecture, CO, 2nd Bn, 26th Inf, n.d., Quantico, Va., 8–11 (*tossed one thousand grenades*).

They found a "sterile sea of rubble": *SLC*, 308, 289; Daniel, "The Capture of Aachen," lecture, CO, 2nd Bn, 26th Inf, n.d., Quantico, Va., 5 ("*Knock 'em all down!*").

Street by street, building by building: "Aachen: Military Operations in Urban Terrain," 26th Infantry Regiment Association, 29–30; "Battle Experiences," Apr. 15, 1945, NARA RG 407, ML #248, box 24148 (*perforated each building*); Beck, 384 (*beehive charges*); Wheeler, *The Big Red One*, 339 (*bulldozers piled rubble*); "Battle Experiences, Twelfth Army Group," Dec. 5, 1944, NARA RG 337, AGF OR, no. 173 (*No. 2 green bean can*).

Three captured German streetcars: "1106th Engineer Group South of Aachen," n.d., Stanhope Mason papers, MRC FDM, 1994.126; "Aachen: Military Operations in Urban Terrain," 26th Infantry Regiment Association, 6; Daniel, "The Capture of Aachen," lecture, CO, 2nd Bn, 26th Inf, n.d., Quantico, Va., 15–16 ("*Surrender or get fried*"); "1st Division World War II Combat Achievements Report," chapter XXV, "Aachen," 2nd Bn, 26th Inf, Oct. 14, 1944, MRC FDM; Stanhope B. Mason, "Reminiscences and Anecdotes of World War II," 1988, MRC FDM, 1994.126, 226 (*collect mattresses*).

Another lethal legacy from the Italian campaign: Mayo, *The Ordnance Department*, 301 (*capable of keeping pace*); author visit, Sept. 25–27, 2009; "Clearing the Area South of the Railroad Tracks," n.d., Stanhope Mason papers, MRC FDM, 1994.126 (*seven rounds down Hindenburgstrasse*).

Across the city the Americans crept: Middleton, *Our Share of Night*, 349, 354 ("*fucking bastards*").

As the house-to-house ruination proceeded: "1st Division World War II Combat Achievements Report," chapter XXV, "Aachen," 2nd Bn, 26th Inf, Oct. 8–9, 1944, MRC FDM; Marshall, ed., *Proud Americans*, 224 (*Not even a radio antenna*); *SLC*, 302 ("*have to close that gap*").

Hodges also castigated the XIX Corps commander: Farrington, ed., *Cowboy Pete*, 9, 13, 21, 103.

"*Every hour seems interminable*": Kingseed, *From Omaha Beach to Dawson's Ridge*, 209–10.

"*I've calloused my emotions*": corr, Joseph T. Dawson to sister, Sept. 19, 1944, MRC FDM, 1991.65.

"*His face is bony*": Heinz, *When We Were One*, 39 ("*large ears*"), 20 ("*Just move the ones*").

Bruno and the Swinging Tigers: Alosi, *War Birds*, 91.

"*We could hear them singing*": Wheeler, *The Big Red One*, 340.

By ten A.M. *several Tigers had churned uphill*: "Attack on G and I Companies," 16th Infantry, NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI; Clay, *Blood and Sacrifice*, 216.

"*Situation very critical*": Kingseed, *From Omaha Beach to Dawson's Ridge*, 212–15; Heinz, *When We Were One*, 49 ("*thrown against the door*" and *Judy Garland sang*); Clay, *Blood and Sacrifice*, 216 (*P-47 fighters*).

"*Much moaning and groaning*": "Attack on G and I Companies of the 16th Infantry Regiment," n.d., Stanhope Mason papers, MRC FDM, 1994.126.

"*If higher authority decides*": OH, James K. Woolnough, 1971, W. D. Macmillan and William M. Stevenson, SOOHP, MHI, 18.

As the enemy attacks grew feebler: "Attack on G and I Companies of the 16th Infantry Regiment," n.d., Stanhope Mason papers, MRC FDM, 1994.126; Heinz, *When We Were One*, 223, 41–42 ("*He doesn't know why*").

At 4:15 P.M. *on Monday, October 16*: *SLC*, 306; Marshall, ed., *Proud Americans*, 241 (*sixty-three of ninety panzers*).

The tally for G Company: Kingseed, *From Omaha Beach to Dawson's Ridge*, 219–20 ("*somewhat shattered*"); Heinz, *When We Were One*, 223 ("*We died right here*").

In keeping with the Führer's wishes: "Aachen: Military Operations in Urban Terrain," 26th Infantry Regiment Association, 40 ("*We shall fight*"); "Clearing Area South of the Rail Road Tracks," 26th Inf, n.d., and blueprint, map, Palast Hotel, "Aachener Quellenhof," NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI; *Register of Graduates*, U.S. Military Academy, class of 1938 (*John T. Corley*).

At seven A.M., *as mortars pummeled*: "1st Division World War II Combat Achievements Report," chapter XXVI, "Farwick Park, Aachen," 3rd Bn, 26th Inf, Oct. 14, 1944, MRC FDM; "Clearing Area South of the Rail Road Tracks," 26th Inf, n.d., NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI (*exchange of grenades*); Robert G. Botsford, "The City of Aachen," in Stanhope B. Mason, "Reminiscences and Anecdotes of World War II," 1988, MRC FDM, 1994.126 (*hunting-scene oils*); *SLC*, 316 (*ten thousand marks*).

The colonel instead had packed his bags: *SLC*, 316; Whitehead, "*Beachhead Don*," 273–74 ("*They marched smartly*"); "Aachen: Military Operations in Urban Terrain," 26th Infantry Regiment Association, 42 ("*do it in our hearts*"); Knickerbocker et al., *Danger Forward*, 266 ("*I don't believe in miracles*").

Nearly twelve thousand Germans had been captured: *SLC*, 317–18; Wheeler, *The Big Red One*, 342.

"*These bitter tragic months*": Wheeler, *The Big Red One*, 342–43. Promoted to major, Dawson would return to Europe to work with the OSS. An oil industry geologist after the war, he died in 1998.

Also sent home was General Corlett: corr, ONB to DDE, Oct. 19, 1944, Charles H. Corlett papers, MHI, box 1 (*failing health*); Farrington, ed., *Cowboy Pete*, 104–5 ("*plain heartbreak*"); OH, George I. Forsythe, 1974, Frank L. Henry, SOOHP, MHI, 212 ("*sasses the army commander*"); Berlin, *U.S. Army World War II Corps Commanders*, 6 (*Oklahoma National Guard soldier*); http://digital.library.okstate.edu/encyclopedia/entries/M/MC033.html.

No one would take the waters in Aachen: Robert G. Botsford, "The City of Aachen," in Stanhope B. Mason, "Reminiscences and Anecdotes of World War II," 1988, MRC FDM, 1994.126 ("*none of the grace*"); Carpenter, *No Woman's World*, 165 ("*dead as yesterday*" and "*the dead from my house*"); Heinz, *When We Were One*, 226 (*83 percent*); *Reporting World War II*, vol. 2, 546–47 ("*These ruins*").

A plump, sooty man wandering the streets: Whiting, *The Home Front: Germany*, 178–79 ("Gebt mir fünf Jahre"); Robert G. Botsford, "The City of Aachen," in Stanhope B. Mason, "Reminiscences and Anecdotes of World War II," 1988, MRC FDM, 1994.126 (*graveyard uprooted*); Edsel, *The Monuments Men*, 142–44 (*formed a fire brigade*).

"*We can force the Boche to their knees*": corr, JLC to M. S. Eddy, Oct. 24, 1944, JLC papers, DDE Lib, box 3, 201 file; "U.S. Military Government in Germany: Operations During the Rhineland Campaign," 1950, CMH, 8-3.1 DA5, 34–35, 138; Whiting, *The Home Front: Germany*, 178–79 (*curfew was imposed*); Alosi, *War Birds*, 134 ("*clipping details*"); "Pigeon Report," AFHQ G-2 to SHAEF G-2, March 12, 1945, NARA RG 331, SGS, Entry 15, box 112 ("*falconry unit*").

"*We come as conquerers*": "U.S. Military Government in Germany: Operations During the Rhineland Campaign," 1950, CMH, 8-3.1 DA5, 34–39, 55a, 57, 105–6; *TSC*, 356–57 ("*not as oppressors*").

An Army study also concluded: Lerner, *Psychological Warfare Against Nazi Germany*, 276–79.

"*first German city to be taken*": Knickerbocker et al., *Danger Forward*, 402.

"Do Not Let Us Pretend We Are All Right"

The autumnal struggles at Arnhem and Aachen: ALH, 142; Cundiff, *45th Infantry CP*, 207 ("*We have them licked*"); Royce L. Thompson, "Proposed CCS Directive to Eisenhower to End ETO War in 1944," Jan. 19, 1950, Historical Section, CMH, 2-3.7 AE.P-9 ("*playing everything for a conclusion*"); OH, W. B. Smith, Sept. 14, 1945, OCMH WWII Europe Interviews, MHI (*fight in the Pacific*).

"*We have facing us now*": Chandler, 2208.

"*Most people that write to me*": ibid., 2288.

Eisenhower now commanded fifty-eight divisions: *SLC*, 378, 388, 390; Chandler, 2168 ("*in a bad state*"); *TSC*, 296 (*insufficient means to support them*); *LSA*, vol. 2, 13 (*no more than twenty divisions*).

To further explain his plight: Chandler, 2281–85; "G-4 History," n.d., NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #553A-C, 82; Cooper, *Death Traps*, 239 (*enemy depot in Liège*).

The most desperate need was for ammunition: Chandler, 2281 (*two tons every minute*), 2311n; "Ammunition Supply for Field Artillery," n.d., USFET General Board study no. 58, NARA RG 407, E 427, 97-USF-0.3.0, 8–9 (*incessant rationing*), 24–27 ("*complete collapse*"); *LSA*, vol. 2, 247–48, 255–56 (*Patton wanted sixty*); Waddell, *United States Army Logistics*, 45 ("*silence policy*").

The shortfall partly reflected an inability: *LSA*, vol. 2, 269, 274, 255–56 (*largely on the defensive*); "Ammunition Supply and Operations, European Campaign," USFET General Board study no. 100, NARA RG 407, E 427, 97USF-0.3.0 (*25,000 man-hours*); Eiler, *Mobilizing America*, 410 ("*Firepower for Eisenhower*").

One senior American general believed: "Ammunition Supply for Field Artillery," n.d., USFET General Board study no 58, NARA RG 407, E 427, 97-USF-0.3.0, 28–29 ("*saved many lives*"); corr, Brig. Gen. John H. Hinds to Maj. Gen. Orlando Ward, July 6, 1951, NARA RG 319, E 97, background papers, *LSA*, vol. 1, box 6 (*thousands of tons were stacked*); Charles K. MacDermut and Adolph P. Gratiot, "History of G-4 Com Z ETO," 1946, CMH, 8-3.4 AA, 86–87 (*actual number was less than 100*); "G-4 History," n.d., NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #553A-C, 56, 87–88 (*246 cargo vessels*); *LSA*, vol. 2, 128 (*floating warehouses*).

The War Department, trying to supply a global war: Charles K. MacDermut and Adolph P. Gratiot, "History of G-4 Com Z ETO," 1946, CMH, 8-3.4 AA, 87–89 ("*no further commodity-loaded ships*"); "G-4 History," n.d., NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #553A-C, 92 (*Bronze Stars*).

If only Antwerp were free: corr, BLM to H. Crerar, Sept. 13, 1944, M-523, National Archives of Canada, RG 24, vol. 1054 2, file 215A21.016(9) ("*We have captured a port*"); minutes, Sept. 22, 1944, conference, SHAEF forward war room, 2:30 P.M., Arthur S. Nevins papers, MHI ("*indispensable prerequisite*" and "*matter of urgency*"); Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 534 (*sent his chief of staff*); Chandler, 2202 ("*terribly anxious*"), 2212 ("*must retain as first mission*"); Crosswell, *Beetle*, 726.

Montgomery had assigned clearing the Scheldt: *VW*, vol. 2, 59–67, 70–71, 104–7, 116; *SLC*, 220–21.

"*We need this place more than we need FDR*": corr, Sept. 23, 1944, Everett S. Hughes papers, LOC MS Div, box II:3, folder 4.

Dempsey's Second Army continued to look beyond the Rhine: Love and Major, eds., *The Year of D-Day*, 152n; Danchev, 600 ("*Antwerp must be captured*"); Callahan, *Churchill & His Generals*, 220 ("*I was wrong*").

But in October 1944, the field marshal displayed: ONB to C. Hodges, Sept. 23, 1944, "Memoranda for Record," 12th Army Group, NARA RG 407, ML #205, box 24143 (*Ramsay warned that to clear the Scheldt*); Chalmers, *Full Cycle*, 251 ("*not taking this operation seriously*"); Love and Major, eds., *The Year of D-Day*, 151 ("*I let fly*"); corr, BLM to DDE, Oct. 9, 1944, DDE Lib PP-pres, box 83 ("*he makes wild statements*"). Eisenhower denied getting "wild statements" from Ramsay (Chandler, 2216).

"*I can not agree that our concepts*": *TSC*, 293.

Unchastened by the destruction: Pogue, *George C. Marshall*, 475 ("*overwhelming egotism*").

"*Our advance into Germany may be delayed*": *LSA*, vol. 2, 107; Chandler, 2215n (*high winds that very day*).

"*This reemphasizes the supreme importance*": Chandler, 2215.

Montgomery would assert: *VW*, vol. 2, 95 ("*hardly justified*"); corr, BLM to DDE, Oct. 9, 1944, DDE Lib PP-pres, box 83 ("*You can rely on me*"); corr, BLM to Canadian First Army, M-530, Oct. 9, 1944, National Archives of Canada, RG 24, vol. 1054 2, file 215A21.016(9) ("*port will take priority*"); *SLC*, 220; *VW*, vol. 2, 85.

"*Nothing that I may ever say or write*": Chandler, 2216.

"*It may be that political and national considerations*": *VW*, vol. 2, 85–88.

"*The questions you raise are serious ones*": Chandler, 2221–24.

The threat could hardly be misconstrued: *VW*, vol. 2, 92, 103, 109.

"*You will hear* no *more*": corr, BLM to DDE, Oct. 16, 1944, DDE Lib PP-pres, box 83.

a newer model from Detroit was somewhere: Chandler, 2265.

With Kay Summersby behind the wheel: Summersby, *Eisenhower Was My Boss*, 191; Chandler, vol. 5, chronology, Oct. 13–14, 1944; Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 432–33 ("*I must have shot a dozen*").

Bidding farewell to king and comrades: Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 433.

"*has not visibly aged*": Eisenhower, *Eisenhower at War, 1943–1945* , 489; Chandler, vol. 5, chronology, Oct. 14, 1942, and Oct. 14, 1943.

Yet even Time*'s omniscience*: John P. Roche, "Eisenhower Redux," *NYT Book Review*, June 28, 1981 ("*calculating quality*"); Larrabee, *Commander in Chief*, 419 ("*veiled man*"); Wilson, ed., *D-Day 1944*, 212 ("*far more complicated*").

He would never be a Great Captain: Ambrose, *The Supreme Commander*, 610 (*Cannae*), 338 ("*chairman of the board*"); D'Este, *Eisenhower: A Soldier's Life*, 467 (*exceptional political instincts*); Kingston McCloughry, *Direction of War*, 168 ("*genius of getting along*").

He was by temperament a reconciler: Graham and Bidwell, *Coalitions, Politicians & Generals*, 193; *VW*, vol. 2, 92; Kingston McCloughry, *Direction of War*, 168 ("*shrewd without being subtle*").

"*no one knew better than he*": Churchill, *Triumph and Tragedy*, 31; *DOB*, 50 ("*solve problems through reasoning*").

"*We've now been apart*": Eisenhower, *Mrs. Ike*, 226.

The miles slid past, and with them the day: Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 432 (*steam-heated stone buildings*); OH, William H. Simpson, 1971, Thomas R. Stone, SOOHP, MHI; OH, James E. Moore, 1984, Larry F. Paul, SOOHP, MHI, 111; "Brief Historical Survey of the War Years in Luxembourg," National Museum of Military History, http://www.luxembourg.co.uk/NMMH/waryears.html* (*germanized*); David Lardner, "Letter from Luxembourg," in *The New Yorker Book of War Pieces*, 399–401 (*and conscripted ten thousand*). Lardner was killed in Aachen a week after writing this article.

Bradley's office on the Place de Metz: MacDonald, *A Time for Trumpets*, 71; author visit, June 4, 2009; *A Walk Through Luxembourg*, tourist booklet, n.d., 2–3, 24, 29.

Here in the dining room: Summersby, *Eisenhower Was My Boss*, 191; Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 433.

The Belgian town of Spa: Baedeker, *Belgium and Holland,* 249–53; *PP*, 632–33 (*Hindenburg concluded*); Keegan, *The First World War*, 417–19 (*fantasize about unleashing the army*).

Now GIs hauled the roulette wheels: Andrew T. McNamara, "QM Activities of II Corps Through Algeria, Tunisia & Sicily and First Army Through Europe," 1955, PIR, MHI, 149; Benjamin A. Dickson, "G-2 Journal: Algiers to the Elbe," MHI, 171 (*triple bunks*); Knickerbocker et al., *Danger Forward*, 333 ("*take the 'hit' out*"); William A. Carter, "Carter's War," 1983, CEOH, box V, 14, XI, 25 (*eleven drinking water sources*), 27 (*grand ballroom with mirrors*); Marshall, ed., *Proud Americans*, 258 (*horsemeat*); OH, Charles G. Patterson, First Army AA officer, 1973, G. Patrick Murray, SOOHP, MHI, 118 (*monthly consignment*); Sylvan, 155 (*hilltop mansion*), 154 (*clatter of a V-1*); *Medicine Under Canvas*, 138 (Gaslight *and* A Guy Named Joe); Middleton, *Our Share of Night*, 344 ("*song had been taken prisoner*");

Lieutenant General Courtney H. Hodges moved: Wishnevsky, *Courtney Hicks Hodges*, 10–13 ("*#10 Blue*"); MacDonald, *A Time for Trumpets*, 188 ("*pessimistic*"); Sylvan, 119 ("*a little too sad*").

A crack shot and big-game hunter: "Precise Puncher," *Time* (Oct. 16, 1944): cover story; OH, Mildred Lee Hodges (widow), 1973, G. Patrick Murray, SOOHP, MHI, 12 ("*sissy*"), 40 (*dash of bitters*); OH, Charles G. Patterson, First Army antiaircraft officer, 1973, G. Patrick Murray, SOOHP, MHI, 18; Miller, *Ike the Soldier*, 705 ("*I wish everybody*"); corr, Walter E. Lauer, CG, 99th ID, May 8, 1963, MHI, Maurice Delaval collection, box 13 ("*Unexcitable. A killer*"); Wishnevsky, *Courtney Hicks Hodges*, 187–88 ("*a Georgia farmer*"), 52 ("*sir*"); OH, ONB, [1966?], Kitty Buhler, MHI, 45–47 ("*very dignified*").

First Army was the largest American fighting force: Beetle Smith called him "the weakest commander we had" (OH, W. B. Smith, May 8, 1947, FCP, MHI).

Capable enough during the pursuit: Hogan, *A Command Post at War*, 288–90 (*illness, fatigue*); corr, David T. Griggs, advisor to secretary of war, Feb. 22, 1945, to Edward L. Bowles, AFHRA, 519.161-7 ("*a little confused*"); *SLC*, 619–20 ("*lacking in vigor*" and "*pretty slow*"), 21–22 (*platoon dispositions*); *LSA*, vol. 2, 349 ("*least disposed to make any attempt*"); Bolger, "Zero Defects: Command Climate in First U.S. Army, 1944–1945," *Military Review* (May 1991): 61+ (*rarely left Spa* and "*refused to discuss orders*"); Sylvan, 144 (*Hobbs never laid eyes on him*), 76 ("*quicker to keep smashing ahead*").

Peevish and insulated: Hogan, *A Command Post at War*, 184–85, 288–89.

Of thirteen corps and division commanders relieved: The initial First Army firings were of course under Bradley before he relinquished command to Hodges. Bolger, "Zero Defects: Command Climate in First U.S. Army, 1944–1945," *Military Review* (May 1991): 61+.

"*like a mendicant*": Pogue, *Pogue's War*, 111–12.

"*Aggressive, touchy, and high-strung*": Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 180 ("*Critical, unforgiving*"); Bradley Commentaries, CBH papers, MHI.

Three rivalrous figures: Hogan, *A Command Post at War*, 28 ("*Captain Bligh*"), 32 (*Tubby*); Bradley Commentaries, CBH papers, MHI; Benjamin A. Dickson, "G-2 Journal: Algiers to the Elbe," MHI, 150, 197 (*Iago*); Baldwin, *Battles Lost and Won*, 497; Dickson obituary, *Assembly*, Sept. 1978.

"*slightly angry bafflement*": Baldwin, *Battles Lost and Won*, 318.

"*The enemy has continued to reinforce*": Chandler, 2257–59.

Canadian First Army troops had captured Breskens: The Breskens Pocket dissolved on Nov. 3. The British I Corps under the Canadian army included a British infantry division, the U.S. 104th Infantry Division (as of Oct. 23), and Polish and Canadian armored divisions. *VW*, vol. 2, 107, 111–13; *SLC*, 215–29.

"*three general phases*": Chandler, 2257–59.

First Army's capture of Aachen: "Approach to and Crossing of the Rhine, 18 Oct. 1944," 12th Army Group, G-3, NARA RG 407, ML, box 24143; OH, "Hürtgen Forest," 28th ID, Nov. 1944, NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, folders #74–77 (*the most promising frontage*).

Four compact woodland tracts formed the Hürtgen: Rush, *Hell in Hürtgen Forest*, 17; Pogue, *Pogue's War*, 272 (*regulated logging*); Heinz, *When We Were One*, 141 ("*picture forest*"); Currey, *Follow Me and Die*, 108 ("*worst place of any*").

The Hürtgenwald *had been fortified*: Rush, *Hell in Hürtgen Forest*, 19; McManus, *The Deadly Brotherhood*, 62 (*sowed mines*); Weigley, *Eisenhower's Lieutenants*, 366 (*four days to move a mile*); *SLC*, 337–40 (*4,500 casualties*); Pogue, *Pogue's War*, 272 ("*Battle of the Wilderness*").

Nearly half of the 6,500 German defenders: Lucian Heichler, "The First Battle of the Hürtgen Forest," March 1954, OCMH, NARA RG 319, R-series #42, 10–17 ("*family-fathers*"); *SLC*, 335–40, 333–34 ("*extensive, thick, and nearly trackless*"); Mack Morriss, "War

in the Huertgen Forest," *Yank*, Jan. 5, 1945, in *Reporting World War II*, vol. 2, 562–63 ("*ointment box*").

That underestimated American obstinacy: author visit, Sept. 26, 2009; *SLC*, 323–24 (*Argonne Forest*); Weigley, *Eisenhower's Lieutenants*, 365 ("*to make the Hürtgen a menace*").

No consideration was given to bypassing: OH, T. C. Thorson, Sept. 12, 1956, and R. F. Akers, June 11, 1956, CBM, NARA RG 319, OCMH, 2-3.7; Hogan, *A Command Post at War*, 182; MacDonald, *The Battle of the Huertgen Forest*, 88; OH, JLC, Jan. 25, 1954, CBM, NARA RG 319, OCMH, 2-3.7 ("*would not question Courtney*").

"*We* had *to go into the forest*": OH, JLC, Jan. 25, 1954, CBM, NARA RG 319, OCMH, 2-3.7; OH, "Conversations with General J. Lawton Collins," May 17, 1983, Gary Wade, ed., CSI, report no. 5, CARL ("*they could have hit my flank*").

Seven dams built for flood control: Together the two main reservoirs had a capacity of 123,000 acre-feet (*SLC*, 325).

"*great destructive flood waters*": Miller, *A Dark and Bloody Ground*, 32; Collins, *Lightning Joe*, 273 (*nor were the dams mentioned in tactical plans*); OH, "Conversations with General J. Lawton Collins," May 17, 1983, Gary Wade, ed., CSI, report no. 5, CARL ("*intelligence failure*").

By late October, as First Army coiled: *SLC*, 327 (*Düren's church bells*), 342; Benjamin A. Dickson, "G-2 Journal: Algiers to the Elbe," MHI, 190; Hogan, *A Command Post at War*, 181; Edgar Holton, former XIX Corps G-2 lieutenant, e-mails to author, June 30, July 23, Aug. 3, 2011 (*Inside an Aachen safe*); XIX Corps history, July 1945, NARA RG 407, E 427, ML #2220, 21–23 (*a hundred million metric tons of water*); memo, W. Simpson to C. Hodges, Nov. 5, 1944, NARA RG 407, E 427, ML #1024 ("*capabilities*"); English, *Patton's Peers*, 119 (*flanking attack toward Schmidt*).

"*a kind of torpor*": OH, T. C. Thorson, Sept. 12, 1956, CBM, NARA RG 319, OCMH, 2-3.7.

"*present plans of this army*": Hogan, *A Command Post at War*, 181; Weigley, *Eisenhower's Lieutenants*, 434–45 (*replenished*).

Bradley would later claim: Bradley Commentaries, CBH papers, MHI; Bradley and Blair, *A General's Life*, 341; Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 442.

Not until November 7 did Hodges order: Hogan, *A Command Post at War*, 181; war diary, Dec. 4, 1944, ONB papers, MHI ("*must control Roer dam*").

"*Damn the dams*": OH, T. C. Thorson, Sept. 12, 1956, CBM, NARA RG 319, OCMH, 2-3.7.

Attacking the worst place of any: OH, "Hürtgen Forest," 28th ID, Nov. 1944, NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, folders #74–77; Heinz, *When We Were One*, 239, 244–46 ("*save everybody a lot of trouble*").

In late October the Bloody Bucketeers: Currey, *Follow Me and Die*, 28, 87 (*Sterno blocks*); Mack Morriss, "War in the Huertgen Forest," *Yank*, Jan. 5, 1945, in *Reporting World War II*, vol. 2, 562–63 (*No. 8 wire*); Will Thornton, "World War II 'M' Co. History as Told by the Survivors," n.d., a.p. ("*His clothing and tire chains*"); Boesch, *Road to Huertgen*, 162 (*stripping footwear*).

Foul weather, supply shortages, and the slow arrival: Hogan, *A Command Post at War*, 184–85; Margry, "Battle of the Hürtgen Forest," *AB*, no. 171 (1991): 1+ (*two-story* Gasthaus); author visit, Sept. 26, 2009; Sylvan, 161 ("*fine fettle*").

In fact, it was badly flawed: *SLC*, 346–47; OH, "Hürtgen Forest," 28th ID, Nov. 1944, NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, folders #74–77; Carey A. Clark et al., "Armor in the Hürtgen Forest," May 1949, AS, Ft. K, 36; Miller, *Division Commander*, 117 ("*gambler's chance*"); Carpenter, *No Woman's World*, 191 ("*Dismount and fight*").

At nine A.M. on November 2: MacDonald and Mathews, *Three Battles*, 259; Ent, ed., *The First Century*, 170–72 ("*singly, in groups*").

The attack hardly began better for the 109th: Paul Brückner, "The Battle in the Hürtgen Forest," n.d., a.p. I am grateful to Maj. Gen. (ret.) David Zabecki for his insights about the battle and for various documents, including this one.

The 109th had advanced barely three hundred yards: MacDonald and Mathews, *Three Battles*, 272; *SLC*, 349–50.

Against such odds, and to the surprise: MacDonald and Mathews, *Three Battles*, 259–63; *SLC*, 349; Carey A. Clark et al., "Armor in the Hürtgen Forest," May 1949, AS, Ft. K, 36–39 (*wrecked five Shermans*); corr, Edwin M. Burnett to 12th AG, Nov. 6, 1944, NARA RG 498, G-3 OR, box 1 (*burrowed into the northeast nose*).

At dawn on Friday, November 3: author visit, Hürtgen Forest, Sept. 26, 2009; Currey, *Follow Me and Die*, 113–14 (*astonished garrison at Schmidt*).

"*extremely satisfied*": Sylvan, 163; *SLC*, 352 ("*little Napoleon*").

The bad news from Schmidt: General Freiherr von Gersdorff, "The Battle of Schmidt," Nov. 1945, FMS, #A-891 and A-892, MHI.

Model ordered the corps commander: 116th Panzer Division memorial and cemetery, Vossenack, author visit, Sept. 26, 2009; Henry

P. Halsell, "Hürtgen Forest and Roer River Dams," n.d., CMH, 314.7, I-22; General Freiherr von Gersdorff, "The Battle of Schmidt," Nov. 1945, FMS, #A-891 and A-892, MHI.

Three isolated American rifle companies: Miller, *A Dark and Bloody Ground*, 64–65, 77; MacDonald and Mathews, *Three Battles*, 290–91 (*scattered sixty antitank mines*); AAR, 28th ID, n.d., a.p. from David Zabecki; Bradbeer, "General Cota and the Battle of the Hürtgen Forest," *Army History* (spring 2010): 18+ (*Cota remained in Rott*).

Just before sunrise on Saturday, November 4: "Combat Experiences," 28th ID hq, March 9, 1945, NARA RG 498, G-3 observers' reports, box 2.

At 8:30 an American platoon: OH, Jack W. Walker, Co L, 112th Inf, Nov. 1944, NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, 28th ID, folders 74–77; Currey, *Follow Me and Die*, 129–34 ("*ragged, scattered, disorganized*"); SLC, 360–61; MacDonald and Mathews, *Three Battles*, 297–300.

stampeded in the wrong direction: The division history estimates that only 67 of the 200 survived (Ent, ed., *The First Century*, 17).

The fight for the Hürtgen had taken a turn: author visit, Bergstein, Sept. 26, 2009; e-mail, David T. Zabecki to author, Sept. 22, 2009 (*slow to realize*).

Confusion soon turned to chaos: *SLC*, 359–60; MacDonald and Mathews, *Three Battles*, 288, 310 (*nine feet*); Carey A. Clark et al., "Armor in the Hürtgen Forest," May 1949, AS, Ft. K, 61 (*unhitched and manhandled*).

In Rott, Cota's perplexity: AAR, 893rd TD Bn, Nov. 18, 1944, Nov. 1944, NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, 28th ID, folders 74–77; Miller, *A Dark and Bloody Ground*, 73; *SLC*, 359–60 ("*warm-hearted affection*"); MacDonald and Mathews, *Three Battles*, 313.

A fretful General Gerow: Miller, *Division Commander*, 122–24; OH, JLC, 1973, G. Patrick Murray, SOOHP, MHI ("*tougher than I had ever heard*"); Currey, *Follow Me and Die*, 155 ("*Roll on*").

Had the generals seen the battlefield clearly: *SLC*, 360–63; OH, "Hürtgen Forest," 28th ID, Nov. 1944, NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, folders #74–77 ("*artesian wells*"); MacDonald and Mathews, *Three Battles*, 335 (*shifting guns hole by hole by hole*).

A relief battalion from the 110th Infantry: OH, Anthony R. Seymour, Warren G. Holmes, John Hayducok, 110th Inf, n.d., NARA RG 407, E 427, HI ("*just like cattle*").

Soldiers in the claustrophobic forest: Linderman, *The World Within War*, 29 (*cigarettes*), 16 ("*So this is combat*"); Cowdrey, *Fighting for Life*, 260 ("*wet liver*"); memoir, Robert D. Georgen, n.d., 2nd Bn, 110th Inf, NWWIIM (*snipers were aiming*).

"*Pushing, shoving, throwing away equipment*": Miller, *A Dark and Bloody Ground*, 79; Currey, *Follow Me and Die*, 165 ("*saddest sight*").

Officers managed to rally: memoir, Thomas E. Wilkins, Co. C, 146th Engineers, n.d., CEOH, box X-37A (*hip boots*); Miller, *A Dark and Bloody Ground*, 79–82 (*Rubble Pile*); Ent, ed., *The First Century*, 172 ("*destroyed as a fighting unit*").

"*The 28th Division situation*": Sylvan, 167; OH, Richard W. Ripple, CO, 707th Tank Bn, Nov. 14, 1944, NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, folders #74–77; Currey, *Follow Me and Die*, 183–86; *SLC*, 362–65; MacDonald and Mathews, *Three Battles*, 378 (*dogtags*).

Reeling from lack of sleep: At one point in the ordeal, Cota reportedly fainted (Miller, *Division Commander*, 128–29).

"*All we seem to be doing is losing ground*": Bradbeer, "General Cota and the Battle of the Hürtgen Forest," *Army History* (spring 2010): 18+; OH, Richard W. Ripple, CO, 707th Tank Bn, Nov. 14, 1944, NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, folders #74–77 (*battered last-stand redoubt*); OH, George R. Sedberry, Jr., Co C, 112th Inf, n.d., NARA RG 407, E 427, HI (*litters from tree limbs*); OH, G. M. Nelson, CO, 112th Inf, Nov. 13, 1944, NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, folders #74–77 (*threw away his compass*); OH, 20th Engineer Combat Bn, Nov. 1944, NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, folders #74–77 (*abandoned two tons of TNT*).

Come nightfall, American artillery smothered: MacDonald and Mathews, *Three Battles*, 380; OH, G. M. Nelson, CO, 112th Inf, Nov. 13, 1944, NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, folders #74–77 (*walking into a lake*).

"*Like blind cattle the men thrashed*": *SLC*, 371.

The dead accumulated in stiff piles: Babcock, *War Stories*, 275.

Eisenhower and Bradley had driven to Rott: Sylvan, 167–68; Bradbeer, "General Cota and the Battle of the Hürtgen Forest," *Army History* (spring 2010): 18+ ("*bloody nose*").

"*I've condemned a whole regiment*": Carpenter, *No Woman's World*, 181.

Survivors from the Kall: AAR, Albert L. Berndt, 112th Inf surgeon, Nov. 10, 1944, NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, folders #74–77; Miller, *A Dark and Bloody Ground*, 89 (*soldierly airs*); Carpenter, *No Woman's World*, 232 ("*Chow all right, son?*").

On Thursday, November 9: Bradbeer, "General Cota and the Battle of the Hürtgen Forest," *Army History* (spring 2010): 18+.

The weeklong battle had been among the costliest: Losses included those in units attached to the 28th Division (*SLC*, 374). Division casualties included 750 cases of trench foot (OH, "Hürtgen Forest," 28th ID, Nov. 1944, NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, folders #74–77).

The Bloody Bucket was bloodier than ever: *SLC*, 372 (*reduced to 57 men*); Bradbeer, "General Cota and the Battle of the Hürtgen Forest," *Army History* (spring 2010): 18+ (*from 2,200 to 300*); Ent, ed., *The First Century*, 172 ("*accomplished very little*"); memo, N. Cota, Nov. 29, 1944, in AAR, 28th ID, n.d., a.p., from David Zabecki ("*Salute, March, Shoot, Obey*").

German losses for the week: MacDonald, *The Battle of the Huertgen Forest*, 120 (*about three thousand*); corr, Hans-Helmut Jansen to parents, Dec. 5, 1944, trans. David Zabecki, a.p. ("*We squat in an airless cellar*"); Ivan "Cy" H. Peterman, "As I Saw It," in Knickerbocker et al., *Danger Forward*, 304 ("*South of the Border*"); Miller, *A Dark and Bloody Ground*, 60 ("*days were so terrible*").

In less than three months, six U.S. Army infantry divisions: *SLC*, 437–38, 492; Charles B. MacDonald, introduction to Boesch, *Road to Huertgen*.

All told, 120,000 soldiers: MacDonald, *The Battle of the Huertgen Forest*, 195.

"*the most ineptly fought series of battles*": quoted in Hastings, *Armageddon*, 193; 183rd Volksgrenadier Div, n.d., in "Tactical Lessons," First Army, Aug. 1944–Feb. 1945, 5A, USAREUR staff ride, Hürtgen Forest, Dec. 5–8, 2001 ("*completely unfit*").

"*He went on and on*": Hogan, *A Command Post at War*, 186; Sylvan, 184 (*individual cake*).

"*We thought woods were wise*": Schrijvers, *The Crash of Ruin*, 6.

"*not so much an area*": Henry P. Halsell, "Hürtgen Forest and the Roer River Dams," n.d., CMH, 314.7, I-32.

Fighter-bombers incinerated recalcitrant towns: Sylvan, 189; Boesch, *Road to Huertgen*, 142 ("C'est la *bloody goddam* guerre"); Towne, *Doctor Danger Forward*, 150 (*cache of ears*); Baker, *Ernest Hemingway*, 555 (*seared by white phosphorus*); McManus, *The Deadly Brotherhood*, 253 ("*my personal Valley*").

From his fieldstone house near Vicht: Heinz, *When We Were One*, 243–46 ("*bulk bigger*"); Baker, *Ernest Hemingway*, 556; Reynolds, *Hemingway: The Final Years*, 113–25; Carpenter, *No Woman's World*, 240 ("*fornicatin' beasts*"); William P. Shaw, "Fellowship of Dust: The WWII Journey of Sgt. Frank Shaw," n.d., NWWIIM, 70 (King Lear).

"*I see you everywhere*": Frank Maddalena was declared killed in action a year later (Litoff and Smith, eds., *Since You Went Away*, 247–48).

Chapter 7: The Flutter Of Wings

A Town Too Small for the Tragedy

A stately procession of nineteen cargo ships: British Pathé newsreel, 1944, http://www.britishpathe.com/record.php?id=23525.

Seamen and anxious war correspondents: Correspondents sailed with the port headquarters on the U.S.S. *James B. Weaver* (*LSA*, vol. 2, 110).

Three small coasters had made the run: *VW*, vol. 2, 127; Rawling, *Cinderella Operation*, 147–48; *VC*, 422–24.

COMZ three days earlier had warned: "Shipping Situation and Supply Requirements," COM Z, G-4, Nov. 25, 1944, CARL, N-6726.

A protocol oversight had excluded: *VC*, 422–24 (*snub*). Roughly half of those Canadian First Army casualties were Canadian nationals, with the balance divided among British, Polish, Czech, French, and American units (*SLC*, 229; *VW*, vol. 2, 127–28).

The protracted "struggle in the polders": *VC*, vol. 3, 386; *SLC*, 221 (*flamethrowers*); Thompson, *Men Under Fire*, 17 (*windmill to windmill*); Reed, "Assault on Walcheren," AB, no. 36 (1982): 1+ (*bombardment of ancient Dutch dikes*); Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 545–46; Chalmers, *Full Cycle*, 256 ("*Good morning!*"); Woodward, *Ramsay at War*, 192–93 (*rousted from his bed*); Roskill, *White Ensign*, 397; *VW*, vol. 2, 115–23 (*last two thousand*); Rawling, *Cinderella Operation*, 147–48 (*at noon*).

With enemy shore guns finally silenced: Rawling, *Cinderella Operation*, 147–48; Moulton, *Battle for Antwerp*, 181–82 (*white chevron* and *nine explosions*); Thompson, *Men Under Fire*, 21 (*feeling their way*); Roskill, *White Ensign*, 153 (*Two hundred and sixty-seven mines*).

Twenty more ships arrived: *LSA*, vol. 2, 110; "G-4 History," ETOUSA, n.d., NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #553A-C, 99. (*23,000 tons*); Edwin T. Bowden, "Quartermaster Operations at the Port of Antwerp," n.d., chapter 22, PIR, MHI, 9; "American Port Plans, August to November 1944," n.d., NARA RG 319, *LSA* background papers, 2-3.7 CB 7, 65–66 (*Six thousand civilian*

stevedores); Eudora Ramsay Richardson and Sherman Allan, "Quartermaster Supply in the ETO in WWII," vol. 1, QM School, Ft. Lee, Va., 1947 (*densest rail network*); *LSA*, vol. 2, 111 (*85,000 tons of matériel*); "Clothing and Footwear," chapter 56, PIR, 1959, Robert M. Littlejohn papers, HIA (*depots in Lille, Mons*); "Development of Antwerp," ETOUSA, 1944, NARA RG 498 ETO HD, admin file #244, 15–16 (*ammunition ships*).

Explosions had already become all too commonplace: King and Kutta, *Impact*, 274. Various accounts give different dates for the initial V-weapon attacks in Antwerp. See *VW*, vol. 2, 149.

Both V-1s and V-2s struck on October 13: *SLC*, 229 ("*Something beastly*"); Rely, "Antwerp 'City of Sudden Death,'" *AB*, no. 57 (1987) 43+ (*women's handbags*).

Barely above sea level: King and Kutta, *Impact*, 279–81 ("*city of sudden death*"); "Development of Antwerp," ETOUSA, 1944, NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #244, 17 (*tent encampments*); Antrobus, "V-2 in Antwerp," *Yank*, May 4, 1945, 6+ ("*unwanted smell*"); Thompson, *The Imperial War Museum Book of Victory in Europe*, 195 ("*cast continued singing*").

Hitler had long recognized: M. C. Helfers, "The Employment of V-Weapons by the Germans During World War II," OCMH, 1954, NARA RG 319, 2-3.7 AW, box 28, 75; Rely, "Antwerp 'City of Sudden Death,'" *AB*, no. 57 (1987): 43+ (*over the course of six months*). The German official history states that of 3,170 V-2s launched, 1,610 were aimed at Antwerp (*Germany VII*, 444).

Sixty-seven thousand buildings in greater Antwerp: "5th Major Port: A Story of Three Years Overseas," U.S. Army Transportation Corps, 1945, MHI, 68–71; *TSC*, 332 (*two-thirds of all houses*); *VW*, vol. 2, 149–50, 235 (*port operations to remain largely unimpaired*); "The Story of Antwerp," 50th AAA Bde, 1945, NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #244A (*22,000 antiaircraft artillerymen*); film, "Defense of Antwerp Against the V-1," 1947, http://www.archive.org/details/gov.dod.dimoc.20375; Rely, "Antwerp 'City of Sudden Death,'" *AB*, no. 57 (1987): 43+ (*new gun barrels and ammunition*).

German V-1 crews in December: "The Story of Antwerp," 50th AAA Bde, 1945, NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #244A; "Tactical Employment of Antiaircraft Artillery Units," USFET General Board study no. 38, n.d., NARA RG 407, E 427, AGWWII Operations Reports, 97-USF5-0.30, 40–41 ("*characteristic roar*"); M. C. Helfers, "The Employment of V-Weapons by the Germans During World War II," 1954, OCMH, NARA RG 319, 2-3.7 AW, box 28, 131 (*within eight miles of central Antwerp*).

"*The angel of death*": Roberts, *Masters and Commanders*, 537.

Nearly all twelve hundred seats were filled: "Ciné Rex: 1935–1993," http://users.telenet.be/rudolf.bosschaerts/rex1e.html (*only German films were screened*); Huntington, "Lights. Camera. War!" *America in World War II* (June 2008): 34+ (*thirteen hundred films*).

At 3:20 P.M., just after Gary Cooper: Rely, "Antwerp 'City of Sudden Death,'" *AB*, no. 57 (1987): 43+.

Recovery teams ultimately retrieved: "The Antwerp Story," in "Stories of Transportation," vol. 1, Frank S. Ross papers, HIA, box 20, 407; *SLC*, 230 (*two hundred servicemen*); "Antwerp, 'City of Sudden Death,'" http://www.v2rocket.com/start/chapters/antwerp.html (*city zoo became a morgue*); Antrobus, "V-2 in Antwerp," *Yank*, May 4, 1945, 6+ (*decontamination squads*).

"Faith in a Friendly Universe"

Despite the travails of the Hürtgen Forest: Sylvan, 175 ("*last big offensive*"); Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 438–41; Bradley and Blair, *A General's Life*, 342–43.

Just past the meridian on November 16: AAR, "Operation Q," IX Tactical Air Command, n.d., Courtney H. Hodges papers, DDE Lib, box 7 ("*I feel very good*"); Heinz, *When We Were One*, 58 ("*yellow blossoms*"), 59 ("*no expression at all*"); Harmon, *Combat Commander*, 219 (*orange sheets*); memo, William L. Blanton, XIII Corps, n.d., NARA RG 407, ETO G-3 OR (*800 million candlepower*).

The entrenched enemy quickly stiffened: *SLC*, 420–24, 492, 505 (*hot food and burning candles*), 416–18 ("*house-by-house killing match*"); "Further Technical Notes on German Minefields," March 7, 1945, UK War Office, NARA RG 407, ML #225, appendix J (*dozen types of mine*). First Division casualties included those of the attached 47th Infantry.

Thirty days hath November: *SLC*, 518; "Weather Conditions in the ETO on D-Day and in Nov. 1944," HQ, Air Weather Service, Sept. 1946, NARA RG 319, *CCA* background historical files, box 164 (*triple the monthly average*).

"*Men were forced to discard their overcoats*": *SLC*, 446, 457, 518; Schrijvers, *The Crash of Ruin*, 16 (*condoms*); *LSA*, vol. 2, 492 ("*duck bills*").

This was "thee or me" combat: Rosengarten, "With Ultra from Omaha Beach to Weimar, Germany," *Military Affairs* (Oct. 1978): 127+; Nickell, *Red Devil*, 79 ("*They say cleanliness*"), 84–85 ("*With every heartbeat*"); Capa, *Slightly Out of Focus*, 203 ("'*You ain't goin' back*'"); Babcock, *Taught to Kill*, 123 ("*pissing your pants*"); Linderman, *The World Within War*, 306 ("*One forgets so much*"), 311 (Snow White).

"*My heart and soul have been torn*": Sorley, *Thunderbolt*, 62.

"*War happens inside a man*": Sevareid, *Not So Wild a Dream*, 495.

Among the empty chairs: AAR, Cannon Company, 16th Inf, and "Jack's Letters," Nov. 6, Dec. 8, Dec. 10, 1944, a.p., compiled by Rick Perry.

As fresh reserves came forward: "Graves Registrations Service," NARA RG 407, E 427, USFET General Board study no. 107; Ross, 219, 688 (*Great pains were taken*).

For the living, small pleasures: diary, Harold S. Frum, Nov. 11, 1944, "The Soldier Must Write," 1984, GCM Lib ("*90 percent boredom*"); Nickell, *Red Devil*, 80 (*burrows ten feet square*); Tapert, ed., *Lines of Battle*, 214–15 ("*war stands aside*"); corr, T. R. Bruskin to wife, Dec. 5, 1944, a.p. ("*pulling the chain*").

"*I've learned what it means*": McNally, *As Ever, John*, 52.

"*I can see now*": Blunt, *Foot Soldier*, V-mail photo, 154.

Operation QUEEN sputtered and stalled: *SLC*, 578, 593, 616–17. *SHAEF in October had set quotas*. The highest awards required authorization from higher headquarters ("Awards and Decorations," USFET General Board study no. 10, n.d., NARA RG 407, E 427, AG WWII operations reports, 97-USF-0.3.0).

The Roer, already in spate from daily rain: *SLC*, 598 (*nearly two thousand tons*), 581, 594; Weigley, *Eisenhower's Lieutenants*, 434–35; AAR, 12th AG, vol. 14, publicity and psychological warfare, NARA RG 331, E-200A, SHAEF records, box 267, 82–83 (*censors banned all reference*).

Certainly the enemy had been badly hurt: *SLC*, 412–14, 583 (*even a hundred men*), 594, 457 ("*numerous frostbites*").

"*It is entirely possible*": Crosswell, *Beetle*, 798.

Winter always seemed to catch: Bynell, "Logistical Planning and Operations—Europe," lecture, March 16, 1945, NARA RG 334, E 315, ANSCOL, box 207, 13 (*Arctic clothing tested at Anzio*); *LSA*, vol. 2, 222–24 ("*serious fighting*" and "*precautionary measure*"); "Report of Observers, ETO, 11 March–21 Apr 1945," Apr. 27, 1945, NARA RG 337, AGF OR #371; Cosmas and Cowdrey, *Medical Service in the European Theater of Operations*, 490 ("*Don't you know*").

"*General, the weather is getting cold*": Robert M. Littlejohn, "Ports and Transportation," n.d., chapter 27, PIR, MHI, 9; Andrew T. McNamara, "QM Activities of II Corps … and First Army Through Europe," 1955, chapter 46, PIR, MHI, 147–48 (*delays in opening Antwerp*); *LSA*, vol. 2, 224–26 (*850,000 heavy overcoats*); "Jack's Letters," Feb. 4, 1945, a.p. ("*We can't fight a winter war*").

"*front-line troops fought*": *LSA*, vol. 2, 227.

Far less than half of the requested underwear: Ross, 599, 571 (*shrinking size 12 pairs*); Robert M. Littlejohn, "Helpful Hints to Would-Be Quartermaster Generals," 1945, PIR, MHI, 3 ("*wool is essential to combat*"); Erna Risch and Thomas M. Pitkin, "Clothing the Soldier in World War II," 1946, CMH, 4-10.2 AA 16, 244–51 (*seven million new pairs*).

The Army listed seventy different articles: *LSA*, vol. 2, 233; Morris M. Bryan, "Quartermaster Planning," n.d., chapter 45, PIR, MHI ("*jacket, field, M-43*"); Andrus et al., eds., *Advances in Military Medicine*, vol. 2, 499–500 (*the "Clo*"); "Blankets," NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #500.

The Army was said to believe that every GI: Sherry, *In the Shadow of War*, 94; "Trench Foot," n.d., NARA RG 407, E 427, AG WWII operations reports, 97-USF5-0.3.0, no. 94, 4–5 ("*none of which*"); "Clothing and Footwear," chapter 56, PIR, 1959, Robert M. Littlejohn papers, HIA ("*nothing but a sponge*"); Ross, 602–3 (*none larger than size 11*); Harold M. Florsheim, "Quartermaster Supply," n.d., chapter 40, PIR, MHI, 27–28; Lawrence B. Sheppard, "Supply of Footwear and Socks in the European Theater," 1945, chapter 31, PIR, MHI; *LSA*, vol. 2, 228–29; Cosmas and Cowdrey, *Medical Service in the European Theater of Operations*, 492–93.

The first case of trench foot: "Notes Taken at Trench Foot Conference," Jan. 24, 1945, Office of the Chief Surgeon, Paris, Paul R. Hawley papers, MHI, 1–6; Chandler, 2320 ("*We are making some progress*"); Cosmas and Cowdrey, *Medical Service in the European Theater of Operations*, 494; Cowdrey, *Fighting for Life*, 267; corr, D. G. Gilbert to JT, Jan. 28, 1959, JT, LOC, box 38 (*one-quarter of all hospital admissions*); Ellis, *On the Front Lines*, 187 ("*long lines of cots*").

Almost nothing had been learned: The official report on trench foot in Italy, completed in Jan. 1944, took a year to reach the ETO (Cosmas and Cowdrey, *Medical Service in the European Theater of Operations*, 489).

Nor had the Americans learned from the British: "Notes Taken at Trench Foot Conference," Jan. 24, 1945, Office of the Chief Surgeon, Paris, Paul R. Hawley papers, MHI, 6; "German Training on Proper Use of Winter Clothing," July 21, 1945, NARA RG 337, AGF OR #559; monograph, "Cold Weather Injuries," n.d., NWWIIM.

Many GIs were told to lace their boots tighter: Cosmas and Cowdrey, *Medical Service in the European Theater of Operations*, 490,

496; corr, W. H. Simpson to A. C. Gillem, Jr., Nov. 25, 1944, Alvan Cullom Gillem, Jr., papers, MHI, box 6 (*could lose a thousand men*); *LSA*, vol. 2, 229; "Trench Foot," n.d., NARA RG 407, E 427, 97-USF5-0.30, USFET General Board study no. 94, 1–5 (*Purple Heart*); Cowdrey, *Fighting for Life*, 267; "Trench Foot," XV Corps, Dec. 28, 1944, NARA RG 498, G-3 OR, box 10, 1–2.

As every buck private knew: Sylvan, 172 ("*1 in 1,000*"); diary, Harold S. Frum, Oct. 21, 1944, "The Soldier Must Write," 1984, GCM Lib ("*never realized its omnipresence"*); Miller, *Ike the Soldier*, 705 ("*trench body"*); monograph, "Cold Weather Injuries," n.d., NWWIIM (*wedging newspaper*); OH, John Cappell, 8th Inf, 4th ID, NWWIIM (*sleeping platforms*); Cosmas and Cowdrey, *Medical Service in the European Theater of Operations*, 492–93 (*making their own footwear*); diary, Manton Eddy, Nov. 15, 1944, FCP, MHI ("*one dead Kraut*").

The soldiers' misery contributed to a spike: *DOB*, 508–9; Sherry, *In the Shadow of War*, 96 ("*ghosted*"); "The Execution of Eddie Slovik," *AB*, no. 32 (1981): 28+ ("*Each moment of combat*").

Those evacuated from the front: Ewing, *29 Let's Go!*, 88 ("*going back to the kitchen*"); "SHAEF Censorship Guidance," No. 11, May 4, 1944, NARA RG 331, E 1, SGS, box 4; Reister, ed., *Medical Statistics in World War II*, 43 (*929,000 men*); Cosmas and Cowdrey, *Medical Service in the European Theater of Operations*, 385–86 (*one in four admissions*); extract, censorship report, Sept. 1944, NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file ("*I can't take much more*").

In contrast to the Army's nonchalance: Copp and McAndrew, *Battle Exhaustion*, 110, 126; "Study of AGF Battle Casualties," AGF G-3, Sept. 25, 1946, NARA RG 337, E 16A, admin div subject file, box 48, 2–3; Cawthon, *Other Clay*, 100 ("*Blue 88s*"); Cosmas and Cowdrey, *Medical Service in the European Theater of Operations*, 385–87 (*ninety returned to duty*); "Combat Fatigue," n.d., NARA RG 407, E 427, 97-USF5-0.30, USFET General Board study no. 91, 1–4; *DOB*, 509.

competent treatment and all the Blue 88s: Rush, *Hell in Hürtgen Forest*, 309 ("*Between the physical fear*"); Copp and McAndrew, *Battle Exhaustion*, 144 ("*The only way one could get out*"); Fussell, *Doing Battle*, 31 ("*after five months*"); Linderman, *The World Within War*, 356–57 ("*I'm not badly injured"*); "Study of AGF Battle Casualties," AGF G-3, Sept. 25, 1946, NARA RG 337, E 16A, admin div subject file, box 48, 3 (*200 to 240 days*). Ten combat days typically equaled seventeen calendar days.

"*Morale is a darkling plain*": Martin R. R. Goldman, "Morale in the AAF in World War II," 1953, AFHRA, historical study no. 78, 4.

The Army's surgeon general recommended : Palmer et al., *The Procurement and Training of Ground Combat Troops* , 231–32; "The Execution of Eddie Slovik," *AB*, no. 32 (1981): 28+. ("*Under present policy*"); "Military History of the Second World War: The Corps of Chaplains," 1946, CMH, 4-3 AA, 86 ("*faith in a friendly universe*").

George Patton had encamped in a villa: Codman, *Drive*, 202–3; Hirshson, *General Patton: A Soldier's Life*, 553 ("*impossible bric-a-brac*"); John K. Rieth, "We Seek: Patton's Forward Observers," 2002, a.p., 101 (*German rail guns*); *PP*, 566; diary, Oct. 24, 1944, Hobart Gay papers, MHI, box 2, 539 (*broke the windows*).

Patton swanned about Lorraine: D'Este, *Patton: A Genius for War*, 655, 691, 689; Hirshson, *General Patton: A Soldier's Life*, 521 (*$250,000 offer*); diary, Oct. 28 and 29, 1944, GSP, LOC MS Div, box 3, folder 8; Blumenson, *Patton: The Man Behind the Legend, 1885–1945*, 241; *PP*, 557–58 ("*May God rot his guts*").

"*How long, O Lord*": Codman, *Drive*, 202–3.

"*Send me a couple of bottles*": *PP*, 567, 570.

Because of the West Wall's eastward bow : Allen, *Lucky Forward*, 113 (*removal of XV Corps*); *LC*, 302–3; Wellard, *The Man in a Helmet*, 169 (*scores of manure-stacked Lorraine villages*).

Patton claimed that Metz had not fallen: *PP*, 576 (*Germans had taken it*); Hirshson, *General Patton: A Soldier's Life*, 544 (*Vauban told Louis XIV*); John P. Ludwikosky et al., "735th Tank Battalion in the Reduction of Metz," May 1950, AS, Ft. K, NARA RG 337, 6–7 (*forty-three forts*); Rickard, *Patton at Bay*, 123 (*modern works faced west*); Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 427 ("*blood the new divisions*"); Bradley Commentaries, CBH, MHI, box 42 ("*Leave it alone*"); OH, ONB, Dec. 1974–Oct. 1975, Charles Hanson, MHI, VI, 47 ("*too many casualties*"); *PP*, 566 ("*more daring*").

Daring had thus far gained nought: Doubler, *Closing with the Enemy*, 130 ("*most formidable*"); Meyer A. Edwards, Jr., et al., "Armor in the Attack of a Fortified Position," May 1950, AS, Ft. K, NARA RG 337, 88–91 (" *100 old men and boys*"); *LC*, 264–66 (*walls seven feet thick*); Wellard, *The Man in a Helmet*, 173–74 ("*medieval fortress*"); diary, Oct. 4, 1944, Hobart Gay papers, MHI, box 2, 522 ("*could not allow an attack*").

It failed anyway: Patton, *The Pattons*, 268 ("*or not come back*"); *LC*, 270–75 (*first substantial reverse*); Wellard, *The Man in a Helmet*, 174 (*bad news out of the papers*); Tapert, ed., *Lines of Battle*, 189–90 ("*Those low bastards*").

"*Had a bad case of short breath*": *PP*, 568–69.

"*tired, aged appearance*": Wellard, *The Man in a Helmet*, 185; *PP*, 568–70 (*pleaded for a postponement*).

He woke at three A.M. *on Wednesday, November 8*: PP, 571; *LC*, 317–19.

Bradley phoned at 7:45: Codman, *Drive*, 213 (“*almost sorry*” and “*relaxed and talkative*”); *PP*, 571.

Doolittle’s air fleets on Thursday: Robert W. Ackerman, “The Employment of Strategic Bombers in a Tactical Role,” 1954, AFHRA, study no. 88, 86–88; “The Effectiveness of Third Phase Tactical Air Operations in the European Theater,” AAF Evaluation Board, Aug. 1945, 4, 162–65; *LC*, 425.

The infantry soldiered on, resupplied: AAR, 95th ID, Nov. 1944, AGF OR, CARL, N-6741; Raines, *Eyes of* Artillery, 227; AAR, 1st Bn, 358th Inf, Nov. 1944, http://www.worldhistorycompass.com/peragimus/358journal.html (*scampered across the roof*); Colby, *War from the Ground Up*, 308 (“*This fort is ours*”); Braim, *The Will to Win*, 108–11.

Almost half a mile wide, the Moselle: Rickard, *Patton at Bay*, 177–79; Nickell, *Red Devil*, 91 (“*The air seemed filled*”).

“*Groans, suffering, and pain*”: Knight, *Would You Remember This?*, 128–29.

“*bolts, washers,* [and] *bushings*”: Cowdrey, *Fighting for Life*, 262–63.

“*getting up where the dead were still warm*”: *PP*, 573–74.

On November 14, nearly a week: *LC*, 408–9, 417 (“Halb-soldaten”); Codman, *Drive*, 213–14 (“*very jolly*”).

“*If we win now*”: *PP*, 575.

Hitler had twice rebuffed Rundstedt’s suggestion: *LC*, 418–32.

At 10:30 A.M. *on November 19*: Rickard, *Patton at Bay*, 193; *LC*, 447.

Patton drove into Metz: Farago, *Patton: Ordeal and Triumph*, 643; *PP*, 581 (“*I will be hard to live with*”), 577–78 (“*When I am dealing with vipers*”); Wellard, *The Man in a Helmet*, 181–82 (*personally interrogated*).

An honor guard played: diary, Nov. 23, 1944, Hobart Gay papers, MHI, box 2, 580; Mansoor, *The GI Offensive in Europe*, 206 (“*one of the epic river crossings*”); Nickell, *Red Devil*, 111 (*French soldiers*).

Little mention was made of the outlying forts: John P. Ludwikosky et al., “735th Tank Battalion in the Reduction of Metz,” May 1950, AS, Ft. K, NARA RG 337, 54–55 (*French white phosphorus*); *LC*, 448–49.

“*Patton’s bloodiest and least successful campaign*”: D’Este, *Patton: A Genius for War*, 666–69; “Mobility, Unused: Study Based on the Lorraine Campaign,” Oct. 1952, OCMH WWII Europe Interviews, MHI, 5–7 (*forfeited the single greatest advantage*).

“*this nasty country where it rains*”: *PP*, 588–89.

“*Chaplain, how much praying*”: James H. O’Neill, “The True Story of the Patton Prayer,” n.d., chap. 25, PIR, MHI; *PP*, 591 (“*certainly rained less*”).

To the Land of Doom

Far above the killing fields: *AAFinWWII*, 280; Miller, *Masters of the Air*, 278 (“*murder business*”); Westermann, *Flak*, 1 (*well over one million tons*); *DOB*, 495–97.

Terrible aircraft losses in the first three months: Jean H. Dubuque and Robert F. Gleckner, “The Development of the Heavy Bomber, 1918–1944,” 1951, AFHRA, historical study no. 6, 114–20 (*eight hundred U.S. heavies shot down*); Bernard Boyland, “Development of the Long-Range Escort Fighter,” 1955, AFHRA, historical study no. 136, 242–45, 147–61; Kennedy, “History from the Middle: The Case of the Second World War,” *JMH* (Jan. 2010): 35+; *AAFinWWII*, 287–88, 303 (*another nine hundred bombers went down*); Hastings, *Armageddon*, 301 (*Luftwaffe now was in a death spiral*), 310 (“*Each time I close the canopy*”); Muller, “Losing Air Superiority: A Case Study from the Second World War,” *Air & Space Power Journal* (winter 2003): 55+; Ehlers, *Targeting the Reich*, 319 (*less than thirty flying hours*).

Of necessity, antiaircraft flak: Westermann, *Flak*, 278, 295 (*1.2 million Germans*); Friedrich, *The Fire*, 40 (*any plane within two hundred meters*); Davis, *Bombing the European Axis Powers*, 594 (*sixteen thousand 88mm shells*); Ferguson, *All’s Fair*, 162 (“*evil, hypnotic fascination*”); Davis, *Carl A. Spaatz and the Air War in Europe*, 439 (*Heavier German guns*).

British bombers, flying mostly at night: Sebald, *On the Natural History of Destruction*, 21 (“*wall of light*”); Friedrich, *The Fire*, 42 (“*moving vertex*”); “An Evaluation of German Capabilities in 1945,” USSAFE, Jan. 19, 1945, Frederick L. Anderson papers, HIA, box 80, folder 7 (*electronic jammers*); “Signal Service in ETOUSA,” n.d., NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #299, 24 (*effective jamming meant that 25 percent*).

“*Six miles from earth*”: Randall Jarrell, “The Death of the Ball Turret Gunner,” in Stallworthy, ed., *The Oxford Book of War Poetry*, 277.

Air supremacy provided an invaluable advantage: Millett and Murray, *Military Effectiveness*, vol. 3, *The Second World War*, 64 (*eighty thousand lives*); Crane, *Bombs, Cities & Civilians*, 51 (*battle casualty rates for every 1,000 bomber crewmen*); Linderman, *The World Within War*, 39 (*barely one in four*); “Study of AGF Battle Casualties,” HQ, AGF G-3, Sept. 25, 1946, NARA RG 337, E 16A, admin div subject file, box 48, 4; Cowdrey, *Fighting for Life*, 233, 237. Some crews permitted to go home after fulfilling the lower quota were ordered back to Europe when the number increased (Davis, *Carl A. Spaatz and the Air War in Europe*, 439, 446).

Perhaps less lethal, but hardly less stressful: Tripp, *The Eighth Passenger*, 4–5; Davis, *Bombing the European Axis Powers*, 583–88 (*two of every five fliers did not live*).

The simplest missions could be fatal: memo, “Bomber Crash at Freckleton,” Office of the Chaplain, USSAFE, Aug. 29, 1944, Carl A. Spaatz papers, LOC MS Div, diary, box 18; Russell Brown and Nick Wotherspoon, “The Freckleton Disaster,” 2007, http://web.ukonline.col.uk/lait/site/B-24%2042-50291.htm*; “Freckleton Air Disaster of 1944,” BBC News, Aug. 7, 2009, http://news.bbc.co.uk/local/lancashire/hi/people_and_places/history/newsid_8189000/8189386.stm; “Plane Kills 35 Infants in School,” *Daily Telegraph*, Aug. 24, 1944, 3; “Crashing Bomber Wipes Out Nearly All a Village’s 4 to 6 Children,” *Daily Express*, Aug. 24, 1944, 3.

High though the war’s cost in men and machines: Arnold, *Global Missions*, 530 (*cut by over 70 percent*); corr, H. H. Arnold to C. A. Spaatz, Aug. 14, 1944, Carl A. Spaatz papers, LOC MS Div, personal diaries, box 15 (“*incipient weaknesses*”); *AAFinWWII*, 306 (*rest-and-recuperation program*); corr, 319th Bombardment Group, 438th Bombardment Squadron, n.d., NARA RG 492, MTOUSA, office of the surgeon, 1944, 290/54/33/2 (“*he spills food at the table*”); Brendan Gill, “Young Man Behind Plexiglass,” *New Yorker*, Aug. 12, 1944, in *Reporting World War II*, vol. 2, 474–84 (“*God, you gotta*”).

In the airman’s world, those afflicted: Crane, *Bombs, Cities & Civilians*, 54 (“*clanks*”); Tripp, *The Eighth Passenger*, 70, 34, 197 (“*dead men flying*”); Stiles, *Serenade to the Big Bird*, 159 (“*giving birth*”); Andrus et al., eds., *Advances in Military Medicine*, vol. 2, 502–3; Jean H. Dubuque and Robert F. Gleckner, “The Development of the Heavy Bomber, 1918–1944,” 1951, AFHRA, historical

study no. 6, 111–13; Fisher, *Legacy of Heroes*, 16 (*tattooed them red*).

a B-17 pilot sat in the five-foot cube: Stiles, *Serenade to the Big Bird*, 133 ("*oxygen mask*" and "*dead things*"); Miller, *Masters of the Air*, 316 ("*Land of Doom*"); Crane, *Bombs, Cities & Civilians*, 54 ("*I would not grieve*").

How best to destroy the Land of Doom: "Target Priorities of the Eighth Air Force," May 15, 1945, Carl A. Spaatz papers, LOC MS Div, box 326, folder VIII A.F., 20 ("*progressive destruction*"); Earle, "Selection of Strategic Bombing Targets," lecture, Apr. 23, 1946, NARA RG 334, E 315, ANSCOL, box 235, 4–12 ("*instructive hints*").

But Germany did have an Achilles heel: Overy, *Why the Allies Won*, 228–31 (*whereas the Axis share was 3 percent*); "German Petroleum Situation," OSS, R&A no. 2340, July 13, 1944, NARA RG 334, E 315, ANSCOL, box 919, 3 (*Soviet oil fields* and "*rapid and drastic effects*"); Rostow, *Concept and Controversy*, 45–47 (*wood-burning engines*); Hinsley et al., *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, vol. 3, part 2, 57–58 (*British intelligence by late May*); Hinsley, 580 ("*Germany's problem*").

No one believed that more: Carver, ed., *The War Lords*, 568–69 (*Taciturn and unpretentious*); Middleton, "Boss of the Heavyweights," *Saturday Evening Post* (May 20, 1944), 18+ (*fishing and cribbage*); James, *A Time for Giants*, 98–100 (*aviation pioneer*); MMB, 518; "The Man Who Paved the Way," *Time* (June 12, 1944): 23+ ("*finest poker table*"); Davis, *Carl A. Spaatz and the Air War in Europe*, 552 (*inside straight*); *Three Years*, 629 (*played with a kitten*); Miller, *Masters of the Air*, 290 (*mid-May attack by nine hundred bombers*).

No sooner had OVERLORD *forces come ashore*: "Target Priorities of the Eighth Air Force," May 15, 1945, Carl A. Spaatz papers, LOC MS Div, box 326, folder VIII A.F., 22; Hinsley et al., *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, vol. 3, part 2, 58.

That estimate was too rosy: *TSC*, 308; *AAFinWWII* (*only three were at full production*).

Not everyone subscribed to the oil strategy: *VW*, vol. 2, 150–51 (*But Bomber Command resisted the edict*); *Germany VII*, 367 (*Lübeck and Rostock*); *Germany IX*, 385 (*firestorm that incinerated Hamburg*); Friedrich, *The Fire*, 9 ("*fire-raising*"), 16–17 (*eighty million incendiary sticks*), 167 ("*the atmosphere of another planet*").

Air Chief Marshal Arthur T. Harris, the Bomber Command chief: Biddle, *Rhetoric and Reality in Air Warfare*, 229–32 ("*between 40 percent and 50 percent*"); Davies, *No Simple Victory*, 69 ("*like pulling teeth*"); *Germany IX*, 387 (*lime pits*).

"*no grounds for supposing*": Hinsley, 582–83.

"*internal collapse certainly will not be brought about*": Hinsley et al., *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, vol. 3, part 2, 304.

Harris believed otherwise: Tripp, *The Eighth Passenger*, 18; Hastings, *Armageddon*, 304–5 ("*a certain coarseness*"); Grayling, *Among the Dead Cities*, 192 ("*tiger with no mercy*"); Zuckerman, *From Apes to Warlords*, 218; Hastings, *Bomber Command*, 278–79 (*ulcers*), 282–83 ("*I'm sick of these raids*"); Probert, *Bomber Harris*, 154–58 (*black Bentley*).

"*He had a tendency to confuse advice*": Webster and Frankland, *The Strategic Air Offensive Against Germany*, vol. 3, part 5, 80.

Harris believed that bombers: Biddle, *Rhetoric and Reality in Air Warfare*, 249 ("*If the Germans were asked*"); Davis, *Bombing the European Axis Powers*, 566 (*more than half of Bomber Command's payloads*); Hastings, *Bomber Command*, 282–84 (*The Hole*), 386–87 ("*If I knew you*"); Webster and Frankland, *The Strategic Air Offensive Against Germany*, vol. 3, 44 ("*in order to destroy anything*"), 82 ("*virtually destroyed*"); Probert, *Bomber Harris*, 309 ("*city programme*").

Harris's resolve to crack the enemy's will: Probert, *Bomber Harris*, 336 ("*proved to be totally unsound*"); Miller, *Masters of the Air*, 473 ("*bombing seriously depressed*"); *Germany IX*, 458 (*two thousand Allied aircraft*); Randall Jarrell, "Losses," http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/losses/.

While British Bomber Command believed in leveling: Earle, "Selection of Strategic Bombing Targets," lecture, Apr. 23, 1946, NARA RG 334, E 315, ANSCOL, box 235, 18; Hugh Odishaw, "Radar Bombing in the Eighth Air Force," 1946, Carl A. Spaatz papers, LOC MS Div, box 80, 88, 93, 94–97 (*as few as one out of ten bombs*); Davis, *Carl A. Spaatz and the Air War in Europe*, 504 (*one sortie of seven*); Crane, *Bombs, Cities & Civilians*, 63–67 ("*not a literal sense*"); Biddle, *Rhetoric and Reality in Air Warfare*, 243–45, 258 (*frequent diversions*), 280 (*Such attacks on transportation targets*); Schaffer, "American Military Ethics in World War II: The Bombing of German Civilians," *Journal of American History* (Sept. 1980): 318+ ("*The way to stop the killing*"); Davis, *Bombing the European Axis Powers*, 574 (*20 percent of its payloads*).

The Americans were no less intent: Miller, *Masters of the Air*, 455; Kleber and Birdsell, *The Chemical Warfare Service*, 622 (*M-76 Block Burner*), 614 ("*as much death and destruction*").

Air Chief Marshal Harris never believed: Biddle, *Rhetoric and Reality in Air Warfare*, 252 ("*I am not only not a convert*"); Davis, *Bombing the European Axis Powers*, 569 (*oil targets in August and September*), 570 (*flew more than twice as many missions as Eighth Air Force*); Ehlers, *Targeting the Reich*, 287–88 (*British attacked to greater effect*); *AAFinWWII*, 795 (*faulty fuzes*).

The inclement fall weather gave Germany: Hinsley et al., *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, vol. 3, part 2, 58; *AAFinWWII*, 283–87, 641 (*350,000 workers*); Westermann, *Flak*, 263–64; Doolittle, *I Could Never Be So Lucky Again*, 433 (*most heavily defended*).

But the die had been cast: Ehlers, *Targeting the Reich*, 266, 279 (*1,200 gallons of gasoline* and *oxen*); Willmott, *The Great Crusade*, 418–19 (*had dropped to a quarter of the May level*); Westermann, *Flak*, 270; Weigley, *The American Way of War*, 356–57; Miller, *Masters of the Air*, 312–14 (*synthetic rubber*).

No industrial disparity: Zetterling, *Normandy 1944*, 47; Weigley, *The American Way of War*, 356–57 (*decline to 12 percent*). Air commanders at the end of the war put German motor and aviation production at 2 percent of the earlier peak. "Joint Statement on Strategic Bombing by Air Ministry and U.S. Strategic Air Forces in Europe," Apr. 30, 1945, UK NA, AIR 2/5737, 4.

"*They are sowing the wind*": Daglish, *Operation Goodwood*, 96; Sebald, *On the Natural History of Destruction*, 3–4 (*131 German cities and towns*); *Germany IX*, 475–76 (*400,000 dead*).

For those on the ground, the ordeal: Hastings, *Armageddon*, 328; *Germany IX*, 390 ("*People alongside us*"); Friedrich, *The Fire*, 363 (*phosphorescent paint*).

Three thousand municipal air raid shelters: Foedrowitz, "Air Raid Shelters in Hannover," *AB*, no. 124 (2004): 2+; *Germany IX*, 391 ("*filth and disorder*"); Whiting, *The Home Front: Germany*, 144–45 (*opening their mouths*); Friedrich, *The Fire*, 356 ("*Children with scarlet fever*").

"*In Cologne life is no longer possible*": Friedrich, *The Fire*, 258, 45.

The iron and steel center of Duisburg: Webster and Frankland, *The Strategic Air Offensive Against Germany*, vol. 3, *Victory*, part 5, 66; Friedrich, *The Fire*, 201 ("*The night had done its work*"), 176–77, 294–95 (*carbon monoxide*); *Germany IX*, 461 (*Heilbronn*), 462 ("*a hideous sight*"); Whiting, *The Home Front: Germany*, 140 ("*Politeness Week*").

Even from the Dutch coast: Sebald, *On the Natural History of Destruction*, 22–23; Friedrich, *The Fire*, 382 (*210 Reichmarks*); Steinhoff et al., *Voices from the Third Reich*, 488 ("*blue faces*"); Wilhelm von Grolmann, "The Collapse of the German Reich as Seen from Leipzig," n.d., FMS, #B-478, MHI, 14–15 (*fortified with alcohol*); corr, "Annemarie," Dec. 29, 1944, Norman D. King papers, HIA, box 1 ("*Do you still remember*"). Friedrich Schiller's "The Song of the Bell" was published in 1798.

On and on it went, high explosives: Sebald, *On the Natural History of Destruction*, 22–29 (*Deranged mothers*); Friedrich, *The Fire*, 213 ("*The heat was so great*"), 447 ("*a man dragging a sack*"); Hastings, *Bomber Command*, 361–78.

"*The destruction will go on*": Lubrich, ed., *Travels in the Third Reich, 1933–1945*, 299.

"Providence Decrees and We Must Obey"

After advancing nearly four hundred miles: Yeide and Stout, *First to the Rhine*, 227; *RR*, 335 (*Nine weak enemy divisions*); "A History of the Headquarters Sixth Army Group," vol. 1, NARA RG 331, E 242A, box 157, from James Scott Wheeler (*nearly half a million men*); William K. Wyant, "Seventh Army History," n.d., NARA RG 319, *RR* background files, FRC 4 ("*first crossing of the Vosges*").

Few could feel optimistic: *RR*, 240–42, 245, 291–93 ("*mental and physical lethargy*"); Steidl, *Lost Battalions*, 121–22 ("*Mountains, woods, and rain*").

The season had been marked by straggling: *RR*, 291–93 ("*inept*"); Taggart, ed., *History of the Third Infantry Division*, 257; Pete T. Heffner, Jr., "Lessons Learned in the Vosges Mountains Campaign," Dec. 12, 1944, NARA RG 407, ETO G-3 OR, box 3 (*bear traps*); Aron, *France Reborn*, 445 (*first snow*); *The Seventh United States Army in France and Germany*, vol. 1, 323 (*emergency shipments*); "The Invasion of Southern France, Operation DRAGOON," ETOUSA, G-4, 1944, NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #314 (*Six hundred thousand men*); Gilland, "Logistical Support for the Combat Zone," lecture, 1948, Engineer Officers Advance Course, NARA RG 319, *LSA* background file, 2-3.7 CB 6 (*various miscalculations*); Coles and Weinberg, *Civil Affairs*, 752 (*20 percent of the cargo*); "Supply and Maintenance on the European Continent," NARA RG 407, E 427, USFET General Board study no. 130, 97-USF5-0.30, 50–54 (*shortages of food, ammunition, and fuel*).

"*Dear Family*": Wandrey, *Bedpan Commando*, 141, 144, 190.

The season also had been marked: diary, Oct. 29, 1944, John E. Dahlquist papers, MHI, box 3; Steidl, *Lost Battalions*, 140–41.

Killed the same week: corr, Frank McCarthy to Julia Littell Patch, Oct. 22, 1944, GCM Lib, box 78, folder 50; Wyant, *Sandy Patch*, 149–51 ("*So long, son*"); obit, Alexander McC. Patch, Jr., *Assembly*, July 1946, 12 ("*cold and wet and hungry*").

"*I've been dreading my first letter*": corr, A. M. Patch to Julia, Nov. 6, 10, 14, 1944, Alexander M. Patch, Jr., papers, USMA Arch, box 1.

"*I cannot and must not allow*": Wyant, *Sandy Patch*, 149–50.

"*the psychological effect on Patch*": "Allied Biographies," USAREUR staff ride, May 2009, compiled by Layne Van Arsdale.

"*It is almost beyond comprehension*": Steidl, *Lost Battalions*, 92–95.

The town of Baccarat had been liberated: Maule, *Out of the Sand*, 242; corr, John E. Dahlquist to Ruth, Nov. 2 and 5, 1944, Dahlquist papers, MHI ("*Rain has started again*").

Perpetual friction with the French: De Lattre de Tassigny, *The History of the French First Army*, 167–71 ("*Our African soldiers*"), 179; OH, Albert Kenner, SHAEF chief medical officer, May 27, 1948, FCP, MHI (*susceptible to trench foot*); AAR, "Supply of Petroleum Products in Southern France," June 1945, CARL, N-15081, 3 (*wooden shoes*); Porch, *The Path to Victory*, 565, 591–92, 601–4 (blanchiment); Yeide and Stout, *First to the Rhine*, 179–83 (*137,000 maquis*).

Base 901, the French supply organization: Vigneras, *Rearming the French*, 187–88, 270 (*$6.67 per day*); "The Service Forces in Southern France," n.d., NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file 314, 13-14 (*crushed oats*).

Franco-American frictions intensified: Vigneras, *Rearming the French*, 325–26; Ross, 122, 205 ("*forced to withdraw*"); Seventh Army war diary, Oct. 1, 1944, MHI, 277–78 (*received less than a third*); De Lattre de Tassigny, *The History of the French First Army*, 162 ("*asphyxiation of the front line*").

U.S. quartermasters bitterly denied: The U.S. quartermaster official history contends that the French First Army received twice as much clothing and equipment as Seventh Army (Ross, 205).

countered that reckless French troops had ruined three thousand : memo, "Housing Tentage Used by French in N. Africa," Nov. 17, 1944, NARA RG 331, E 34, SHAEF, box 60; diary, JLD, Oct. 8, 1944, MHI, original in YCHT ("*He goes into these tirades*"); Pogue, *George C. Marshall*, 476 ("*You celebrated*").

"*It was our duty*": De Lattre de Tassigny, *The History of the French First Army*, 162.

Now Truscott was gone: Truscott, *Command Missions*, 446; OH, Theodore J. Conway, 1978, Robert F. Ensslin, SOOHP, MHI, III-26 (*tears streamed*).

With Truscott's departure, the dominant figure : Markey, *Jake: The General from West York Avenue* , 16 (*grandson of a blacksmith*); Martin Weil, "Gen. Jacob Devers Dies; Leader in World War II," *WP*, Oct. 1979 (*classmate of Patton's* and *five hundred more senior colonels*); Colley, *Decision at Strasbourg*, 10 ("*exceedingly earnest youth*"), 155 ("*I made a lot of mistakes today*"); Franklin L. Gurley, "The Relationship Between Jean de Lattre de Tassigny and Jacob L. Devers," March 26, 1994, Sorbonne, NARA RG 319, *RR* background files, FRC 4; MMB, 129–30.

Capable and decisive, he had a knack: "Battlebook," USAREUR Senior Leader Staff Ride, Alsace, May 2009; OH, Field Marshal Harold Alexander, Jan. 10-15, 1949, SM, CMH, Geographic Files ("*a boy who hasn't grown up*"); *DOB*, 506 (*detested each other*); diary, GSP, Feb. 29, 1944, LOC MS Div, box 3, folder 5 (" *very small caliber*"); notes, Daniel Noce, Dec. 4, 1944, NARA RG 319, *RR* background papers, FRC 5 ("*Devers talks too much*"); Bradley and Blair, *A General's Life*, 210 ("*overly garrulous*").

"*Ike hates him*": *PP*, 552.

The supreme commander evidently nursed old resentments: msg, DDE to JLD, Jan. 16, 1944, and JLD to DDE, Jan. 18, 1944, "Eyes Only, General Devers, Incoming," NARA RG 492, MTOUSA, SGS, box 135; Colley, *Decision at Strasbourg*, 86; diary, Kay Summersby, Oct. 20, 1944, DDE Lib, PP-pres, box 140 ("*talks a lot*"); corr, DDE to GCM, July 12, 1944, GCM Lib, box 67, folder 10 ("*I have nothing in the world*"). Eisenhower had advised Marshall that "Devers would be a good bet" to command an army group in southern France. DDE to GCM, July 15, 1944, NARA RG 165, E 422, WD, operations division, history unit, box 55.

"*Enthusiastic but often inaccurate*": Chandler, 2466–69.

Eisenhower sold Devers short: OH, Ira C. Eaker, Aug. 1, 1975, Thomas E. Griess, JLD, YCHT, box 81 (" *ablest commander I saw*"); diary, JLD, Nov. 7 and 18, 1944, MHI ("*very difficult man to handle*" and "*inspirational leader*"); Franklin L. Gurley, "The Relationship Between Jean de Lattre de Tassigny and Jacob L. Devers," March 26, 1994, Sorbonne, NARA RG 319, *RR* background files, FRC 4 ("*never did learn to pronounce*"); OH, JLD, 1968, Thomas E. Griess, YCHT, box 110, 20 ("*gesture and the smile*").

"*the same fine character as always*": diary, JLD, Nov. 5, 1944, MHI.

"*the undercutting that goes on"*: corr, JLD to wife, Sept. 23, 1944, NARA RG 319, *RR* background papers, FRC 5; OH, Reuben Jenkins, Oct. 14, 1970, JLD, YCHT, box 94, 18–20 ("*lonely as the devil*").

SHAEF's orders called for 6th Army Group: *RR*, 351–53.

Devers had grander ambitions: *The Seventh United States Army in France and Germany*, vol. 2, 402; *RR*, 352–53; OH, JLD, Aug. 1971, Thomas E. Griess, YCHT, 16. ("*Don't get stuck*").

De Lattre made the first move: De Lattre de Tassigny, *The History of the French First Army*, 225–30; John W. Price, "Forcing the

Belfort Gap," n.d., NARA RG 319, *RR* background files, FRC 5 (*Various deceptions*); *RR*, 414–18; author visit, Belfort, May 2009.

By Thursday, French tanks were "decisive everywhere": De Lattre de Tassigny, *The History of the French First Army*, 233–36; *RR*, 410.

Having forsaken a substantial wedge: Friedrich-Wilhelm von Mellenthin, Army Group G chief of staff, ts, March 1946, FMS #A-999, MHI, 79; Seaman, "Reduction of the Colmar Pocket," *Military Review* (Oct. 1951): 37+ (*Confusion in the French ranks*); De Lattre de Tassigny, *The History of the French First Army*, 253–62 (*German* Feldpost *workers*); *RR*, 431 (*a spent force*).

Hope for a decisive breakthrough: Seventh Army war diary, Nov. 20, 1944, MHI, 393; Robb, *The Discovery of France*, 227 ("*one of the masterpieces of man*"); Bonn, *When the Odds Were Even*, 111–16 ("*ersatz morale*").

On November 19, the weight of metal: OH, 79th ID, Saverne Gap, n.d., NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, folder 156; *RR*, 368–71 (*44th Division rambled for nine miles*) ; *The Seventh United States Army in France and Germany*, vol. 2, 411 (*broke through to Sarrebourg*); Aron, *France Reborn*, 440–41 (*French policemen pulled on uniforms*); diary, JLD, Nov. 20, 1944, MHI ("*as hard as I have ever seen it rain*").

Into the breach pried open: Porch, *The Path to Victory*, 538 ("*We swear*"); Maule, *Out of the Sand*, 249 ("*Beat the devil*").

"*The brave horses were galloping*": "Capture of Strasbourg," French 2nd AD, Jan. 28, 1945, NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, folder #247.

Tout au contraire: De Gaulle, *The Complete War Memoirs of Charles de Gaulle*, 824 (*five columns*); Colley, *Decision at Strasbourg*, 123–24 ("*We went roaring*" and "*sent windowpanes tinkling*"); *The Seventh United States Army in France and Germany*, vol. 2, 413–16 (*Sixteen strongholds*); Yeide and Stout, *First to the Rhine*, 243–44 (*tanks spilled into downtown Strasbourg*).

As rain drummed off his kepi: Maule, *Out of the Sand*, 252–54; "Capture of Strasbourg," French 2nd AD, Jan. 28, 1945, NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, folder #247; Susan Bernstein, "Goethe's Architectonic *Bildung* and Buildings in Classical Weimar," 2000, Johns Hopkins University Press, http://www2.winchester.ac.uk/edstudies/courses/level%20two%20sem%20two/114.5bernstein.html ("*tree of God*"); Porch, *The Path to Victory*, 606 ("*Now we can die*").

A captured German engineer was persuaded: Charles V. von Lüttichau, "The Fall of Strasbourg and the Birth of the Colmar Pocket," n.d., NARA RG 319, OCMH, R-series, #129, 2–3, 13–14; *RR*, 380–81; AAR, XV Corps, Jan. 23, 1945, Wade H. Haislip papers, MHI, box 2; "Capture of Strasbourg," French 2nd AD, Jan. 28, 1945, NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, folder #247 ("*solid artillery argument*").

"*Lots of dead civilians*": diary, Nov. 25, 1944, Kingsley Andersson papers, HIA, box 1; "Capture of Strasbourg," French 2nd AD, Jan. 28, 1945, NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, folder #247 ("*One by one*").

Strasbourg's emancipation: "Natzweiler-Struthof," USHMM, http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007260. British troops had overrun the Breendonk internment camp near Antwerp in September (http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005423).

Built in 1941, Natzweiler had housed: Turner and Jackson, *Destination Berchtesgaden*, 97 (*socially unfit*); Yurka N. Galitzine, "Investigation Report on the Life in a German Extermination Camp (KZ Natzweiler)," n.d., C. D. Jackson papers, DDE Lib, box 2 (*sweets and cakes* and *urn of ashes*); J. M. Barnes, Royal Army Medical Corps, "Report on a Third Visit to France," Feb. 1945, Boris T. Pash papers, HIA, box 2, folder 1; Evans, *The Third Reich at War*, 607 (*mustard gas*).

The second discovery was no less portentous: corr, J. R. Oppenheimer and Luis Alvarez to Robert Furman, June 5, 1944, Boris T. Pash papers, HIA, box 3, folder 2; memo, S. A. Goudsmit, "Strassburg [*sic*] Intelligence on German Nuclear Physics," Dec. 17, 1944, and "Progress Report #8—Strasbourg Operation, ALSOS Mission," Dec. 7, 1944, Boris T. Pash papers, HIA, box 2, folders 1 and 3; Pash, *The Alsos Mission*, 155–57; Groves, *Now It Can Be Told*, 212–23.

"*most complete, dependable and factual information*": memo, L. R. Groves to Maj. Gen. Clayton Bissell, March 16, 1945, George Bryan Conrad papers, USMA Archives; memo, S. A. Goudsmit, "Strassburg [*sic*] Intelligence on German Nuclear Physics," Dec. 17, 1944, Boris T. Pash papers, HIA, box 2, folder 1 ("*two slide rules*"); "Alsos Mission History," n.d., and "Report by the Scientific Chief of the ALSOS Mission," n.d., Boris T. Pash papers, HIA, box 2, folder 8; Pash, *The Alsos Mission*, 159 ("*the Nazis had not progressed*").

Leclerc and his lieutenants bivouacked: "Capture of Strasbourg," French 2nd AD, Jan. 28, 1945, NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, folder #247 ("*its pretentious design*"); Gray, *The Warriors*, 4–5 (*switched their storefront signage*); Aron, *France Reborn*, 437–38 (*deported to Germany*). The French refused to print 6th Army Group guarantees of the Geneva Conventions, forcing Seventh Army to put up its own posters to that effect (Seventh Army war diary, Dec. 6–10, 1944, MHI, 426–35).

"*There is no question that the French hate*": Gray, *The Warriors*, 200.

A ceremony near the cathedral: "Capture of Strasbourg," French 2nd AD, Jan. 28, 1945, NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, folder #247;

Franklin Louis Gurley, "Policy Versus Strategy: The Defense of Strasbourg in Dec. 1944," 1992, NARA RG 319, *RR* background files, FRC 5 ("*never give it back*").

For nearly three months Seventh Army: Seventh Army war diary, Sept. 26, 1944, MHI, 266.

Eight hundred outboard-motor operators: "The Crossing of the Rhine," 1945, CEOH, box X-25, folder 2; Seventh Army war diary, Sept. 19, Nov. 7, and Nov. 18, 1944, MHI, 256, 356, 380; corr, Garrison H. Davidson to Hal C. Pattison, CMH, July 23, 1988, NARA RG 319, *RR* background files, FRC 4 (*SHAEF rejected a proposal*).

Even if the bridge from Strasbourg to Kehl: *The Seventh United States Army in France and Germany*, vol. 2, 419; OH, Reuben Jenkins, Oct. 14, 1970, Thomas E. Griess, JLD, YCHT, box 94, 29–30 (*Patrols found few defenders*); *RR*, 439; Colley, *Decision at Strasbourg*, 150; corr, Garrison H. Davidson, Apr. 21, 1953, CEOH, box X-25 (*On Thanksgiving night, Patch's engineers*).

Eisenhower knew almost nothing: diary, JLD, Nov. 24, 1944, MHI; Colley, *Decision at Strasbourg*, 135–36 ("*happy and boyish*" and "*impassive Alsatian faces*"); http://www2.lib.virginia.edu/exhibits/lewis_clark/exploring/ch1-1.html (*the name "America"*); Steidl, *Lost Battalions*, 126 (*St.-Dié's textile mills*); Turner and Jackson, *Destination Berchtesgaden*, 92 (*grenades and dynamite*); Marshall, *A Ramble Through My War*, 168 ("*wanton destruction*").

A final forty-mile drive: Colley, *Decision at Strasbourg*, 135–36; *RR*, 439–40 (*Heritage Hotel*).

The supreme commander wasted no time: memo, ONB to G-3, 12th AG, Nov. 26, 1944, NARA RG 319, *RR* background files, FRC 5 (*Bradley agreed that the transfer*); *RR*, 439–40.

"*He's in the mud*": Colley, *Decision at Strasbourg*, 136–38.

New reports of a German counterattack: *RR*, 382–86; Weigley, *Eisenhower's Lieutenants*, 407 (*only massed artillery*); corr, Robert R. Smith, CMH, to Thomas E. Griess, USMA, Nov. 28, 1978, NARA RG 319, *RR* background files, FRC 4 ("*helluva way to get to Berlin*").

"*Ike, I'm on the Haguenau*": The river at Haguenau is in fact named the Moder, a tributary of the Rhine.

"*I've got everything in the woods*": Colley, *Decision at Strasbourg*, 136–38; *RR*, 439–42; corr, Hal. C. Pattison, CMH, to Garrison H. Davidson, Aug. 1, 1968, NARA RG 319, *RR* background files, FRC 4 (*Patton's army should be shifted*).

Devers grew shrill: *RR*, 439–42, 575; Colley, *Decision at Strasbourg*, 136–38 (*likened it to Patton's effort in August 1943*); *DOB*, 162–64 (*a misbegotten analogy*).

Eisenhower remained immovable: corr, Robert R. Smith, CMH, to Thomas E. Griess, USMA, Nov. 28, 1978, NARA RG 319, *RR* background files, FRC 4; *Three Years*, 702–5 (*no "definitely decisive area"*); *RR*, 439–42 ("*mad as hell*").

The trio of generals retired for a few hours' sleep: Seventh Army war diary, MHI, 400–403; *LC*, 520–21 ("*offers the best chance*").

"*The decision not to cross the Rhine*": diary, JLD, Nov. 24 and 26, 1944, MHI.

Even the Army official history: *RR*, 563 ("*difficult to understand*"), 445 ("'*strategy' of firepower and attrition"*); Mansoor, *The GI Offensive in Europe*, 207 (*neither a coherent strategic goal*); corr, Robert R. Smith, CMH, to Thomas E. Griess, USMA, Nov. 28, 1978, NARA RG 319, *RR* background files, FRC 4 ("*misusing 6th Army Group"*); Friedrich-Wilhelm von Mellenthin, Army Group G chief of staff, ts, March 1946, FMS #A-999, MHI, 100–112 (*gave the Germans a respite*).

Surely the supreme commander's personal distaste: corr, Thomas E. Griess, USMA, to Robert R. Smith, CMH, Dec. 19, 1978, NARA RG 319, *RR* background files, FRC 4; OH, Reuben Jenkins, Oct. 14, 1970, Thomas E. Griess, JLD, YCHT, box 94, 35–36 (*played favorites with Bradley*); *RR*, 439–40 ("*member of the same team*"); Colley, *Decision at Strasbourg*, 178, 154 ("*bring the war to a quicker end*"); diary, JLD, Dec. 19, 1944, MHI ("*The tragedy to my mind*").

Yet Devers made errors of his own: *RR*, 433, 437; Charles V. von Lüttichau, "The Fall of Strasbourg and the Birth of the Colmar Pocket, n.d., NARA RG 319, OCMH, R-series, #129, 24–26 ("*out of the question*"); diary, JLD, Dec. 2, 1944, MHI ("*It is hoped that the French Army*").

"*with the help of darkness and fog*": De Lattre de Tassigny, *The History of the French First Army*, 291; memo, Reuben E. Jenkins to JLD, Feb. 24, 1947, Jenkins papers, MHI, box 1, 8 (*only a few thousand more troops*), 6 ("*confusion*").

Still more disheartening: Clayton, *Three Marshals of France*, 60–61; Mitchell, *Hitler's Mountain*, 124 ("*I will not serve*"); Porch, *The Path to Victory*, 588 (*his antebellum name*); diary, JLD, Dec. 6, 1944, MHI ("*Having a great deal of trouble"*); Maule, *Out of the Sand*, 260–62 ("*the only failure in command"*); John Hixson and Benjamin Franklin Cooling, "Combined Operations in Peace and War," 1982, MHI, 190–92 (*Even when reinforced*); OH, Russell L. Vittrup, 1989, Henry E. Fitzgerald, 1989, SOOHP, MHI, 124 ("*consternation and ill-feeling*").

Seventh Army engineers trucked their storm boats: Colley, *Decision at Strasbourg*, 144; Taggart, ed., *History of the Third Infantry*

Division, 278 (*dropped the Kehl bridge*); Yeide and Stout, *First to the Rhine*, 254 (*keep the pocket victualed*); Peter T. Heffner, Jr., VI Corps, Dec. 29, 1944, G-3 OR, NARA RG 498, box 3 (*Loudspeaker broadcasts*).

"*SHAEF treats us as bastard children*": corr, T. R. Bruskin to wife, Apr. 15, 1945, a.p.

CHAPTER 8: A WINTER SHADOW

"We Are All So Human That It Is Pitiful"

Nine million Allied propaganda leaflets: "The Psychological Warfare Division," 1945, CMH, 8-3.6 BA, 45–48; Robert H. Garey, "Leaflet Operations in the Western European Theater," SHAEF, July 1945, C. D. Jackson papers, DDE Lib, box 9, 1, 19, 25 (*one thousand tons*); Lerner, *Psychological Warfare Against Nazi Germany*, 239–40.

In the early days of this "*nickeling*": "The Psychological Warfare Division," 1945, CMH, 8-3.6 BA, 47; Harris G. Warren, "Special Operations: AAF Aid to European Resistance Movements," 1947, AFHRA, historical study no. 121, 44–45 (*as far afield as Italy*); "Psychological Warfare in the ETO," n.d., USFET General Board study no. 131, NARA RG 407, E 427, 97-USF5-0.30, 32–33 (*T-1 Monroe Leaflet Bomb*); Robert H. Garey, "Leaflet Operations in the Western European Theater," SHAEF, July 1945, C. D. Jackson papers, DDE Lib, box 9, 25 (*A single B*-24). Invented by a bomb squadron armament officer, the munition technically was known as "Bomb, Propaganda, T-1."

Psychological warfare teams studied: *TSC*, 344; "Psychological Warfare in the ETO," n.d., USFET General Board study no. 131, NARA RG 407, E 427, 97-USF5-0.30, 8 ("*best fed Army*"), 43 ("*hog calling*"); "The Psychological Warfare Division," 1945, CMH, 8-3.6 BA, 39–42 (Voice of SHAEF). Radio Luxembourg often broadcast damage reports as if they came from a clandestine German station in the Rhineland (AAR, 12th AG, vol. 14, NARA RG 331, E-200A, SHAEF, box 268, 187–91).

Millions of time-fuze incendiaries: "The Psychological Warfare Division," 1945, CMH, 8-3.6 BA, 53; OSS, "Simple Sabotage Field Manual," Field Manual No. 3, Jan. 1944, 5, 11–14 ("*Try to commit acts*").

Still Germany fought on: Murphy, *Diplomat Among Warriors*, 240 (*unconditional surrender*); memo, Wallace Carroll, Office of War Information, Mar. 25, 1944, Wallace Carroll papers, LOC MS Div, box 1, folder: day files Mar. 1944, 1 (" *nothing to lose*"); Matloff, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1943–1944*, 529 ("*phrase coined at a conference*"), 431 ("*I want at all costs*"); *TSC*, 354–55 ("*a lawless conspiracy*").

Eventual Allied victory: McCreedy, "Planning the Peace: Operation Eclipse and the Occupation of Germany," *JMH* (July 2001): 713+ (*seventy-two studies*); Pogue, *George C. Marshall: Organizer of Victory*, 466 (*four in five Americans supported*); Ziemke, *The U.S. Army in the Occupation of Germany, 1944–1946*, 86–90 (*War Department's top linguist*).

The victorious Red Army: Mosely, "The Occupation of Germany," *Foreign Affairs* (July 1950): 580+.

"*The defeat of Germany will leave Russia*": Matloff, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1943–1944*, 523–24.

Winston Churchill also perceived: Kimball, *Forged in War*, 286; Reynolds, *In Command of History*, 460–63 ("*naughty document*"). One prominent historian believes Stalin's confirmational tick mark was intended for Romania only, and that in fact he wanted a 90 percent share in Bulgaria rather than Churchill's proposed 75 percent (Plokhy, *Yalta*, 147).

Although the "*percentages agreement*": Hastings, *Winston's War*, 415–19; Jenkins, *Churchill: A Biography*, 759–61.

That fall, a separate controversy: Kimball, *Forged in War*, 275 ("*two Jeffersonian gentlemen farmers*"), 276 ("*unnatural, unchristian*"); Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932–1945*, 474 ("*re-creation of an agricultural state*"). Churchill's change of heart may also have been encouraged by a U.S. agreement to continue providing American aid to Britain after the war (Stoler, *Allies in War*, 170).

"*They brought it on themselves*": Moran, *Churchill: Taken from the Diaries of Lord Moran*, 190–91.

Others in the Anglo-American braintrust: ibid., 193 ("*flew into a rage*"); Grayling, *Among the Dead Cities*, 161 ("*blind vengeance*"); Stimson and Bundy, *On Active Service in Peace and War*, 569–71 ("*general evils*"); Weinberg, *A World at Arms*, 796–97; Pogue, *George C. Marshall: Organizer of Victory*, 467 (*proposal to summarily shoot*).

"*The papers have taken it up*": Stimson and Bundy, *On Active Service in Peace and War*, 580–81; Ziemke, *The U.S. Army in the Occupation of Germany*, 101–05.

"*a ruined no-man's land*": Collier, *The Freedom Road, 1944–45*, 189.

"*A policy which condones or favors chaos*": *VW*, vol. 2, 147.

"*Henry Morgenthau pulled a boner*": Stimson and Bundy, *On Active Service in Peace and War*, 580–81; *TSC*, 342 ("*inspired by the Jews*").

This contretemps cooled Roosevelt's enthusiasm: Murphy, *Diplomat Among Warriors*, 228 ("*I dislike making detailed plans*"); *TSC*, 342–43 (*would not be enslaved*), 351; Mosely, "Dismemberment of Germany," *Foreign Affairs* (Apr. 1950): 487+ (*seven disparate states*); Mosely, "The Occupation of Germany," *Foreign Affairs* (July 1950): 580+ (*three occupation zones*); ALH, I-178–79; Weinberg, *A World at Arms*, 792–95.

No formal ratification of this plan: Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Soldier, General of the Army, President-Elect, 1890–1952* , vol. 1, 280 (*single Allied commander*); Chandler, 1873 ("*eastern portion of Germany*"); Murphy, *Diplomat Among Warriors*, 231–32 ("*not having any faith*").

"*Something 'big' will come out of this war*": Brower, ed., *World War II in Europe: The Final Year*, 22.

Montgomery's promise to Eisenhower: Bryant, *Triumph in the West*, 252 ("*He has never commanded anything*"), 254 ("*You have always told me*"); Hastings, *Armageddon*, 153 ("*feeling of optimism*"); Crosswell, *Beetle*, 778 ("*Eisenhower is quite useless*").

On Tuesday afternoon, November 28: *VW*, vol. 2 167–68; Bryant, *Triumph in the West*, 258–59 ("*We talked for three hours*").

"*Ike does* not *agree*": Howarth, ed., *Monty at Close Quarters*, 16.

"*He thinks Bradley has failed him*": Bryant, *Triumph in the West*, 258–59.

"*We have achieved none of this*": msg, BLM to DDE, Nov. 30, 1944, DDE Lib, PP-pres, box 83; Chandler, 2325.

On Friday, December 1: Sylvan, 197 (*hives*); Bradley and Blair, *A General's Life*, 346 ("*as angry as I had ever seen him*").

"*There are certain things in your letter*": Chandler, 2323–25.

"*such canalized egotism*": Hart-Davis, ed., *King's Counsellor*, 265, 311 ("*mental unstability*").

"*He had no competence in the fine art*": Ambrose, *The Supreme Commander*, 512.

A British official who watched Montgomery: Hamilton, *Monty: Final Years of the Field-Marshal, 1944–1976*, 117 ("*like a little bird*"); Danchev, 620 ("*goes on harping*").

But others in the highest British circles: Churchill, *Triumph and Tragedy*, 267 ("*We have of course sustained*"); *VW*, vol. 2, 167 ("*We have definitely failed*"); *TSC*, 315 ("*a decisive break*"); Love and Major, eds., *The Year of D-Day*, xliii ("*no prospect of Ike*").

Some of Montgomery's partisans were more savage: Danchev, 625, 628.

The fairways at Reims: Sixsmith, *Eisenhower as Military Commander*, 178 (*never swung a golf club*); Danchev, 627–30 ("*Eisenhower completely fails*").

At Montgomery's request, another high-command conclave: Baedeker, *Belgium and Holland*, 239–40; http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maastricht; www.fortified-places.com/sieges/maastricht1673.html.

Eisenhower and Tedder spent Wednesday: Bradley and Blair, *A General's Life*, 347; Chandler, vol. 5, chronology, 175; Signal Corps footage, http://www.criticalpast.com/video/65675070150_General-Eisenhower_Omar-Bradley_Bernard-Montgomery_World-War-II (*smartly tailored*); "Extracts from report of Maj. Gen. K. W. D. Strong," Nov. 29, 1944, BLM corr, DDE Lib, PP-pres, box 83 (*twenty German divisions a month*); Hastings, *Armageddon*, 140 (*less than ten miles*), 148.

"*The master plan*": "Notes of Meeting at Maastricht on 7.12.1944," Tedder notes, Sidney H. Negrotto papers, MHI, box 4; copy in Harold R. Bull papers, DDE Lib, box 2. *VW*, vol. 2, 167–68.

Round and round they went: Bradley and Blair, *A General's Life*, 347 ("*tedious affair*"); Ambrose, *The Supreme Commander*, 610.

"*The meeting was affable*": corr, D/SAC to CAS, Nov. 7, 1944, NARA RG 319, *SC* background files, 2-3.7 CB 8 ("*Another balls up*").

"*I personally regard the whole thing*": Bryant, *Triumph in the West*, 264–65; Hamilton, *Monty: Final Years of the Field-Marshal, 1944–1976*, 163.

Bradley a few days later wrote: Hamilton, *Monty: Final Years of the Field-Marshal, 1944–1976*, 163 ("*He refused to admit*"); D'Este, *Eisenhower: A Soldier's Life*, 635 ("*an indication that I had failed*"); corr, Everett S. Hughes to wife, Dec. 1, 1944, Hughes papers, LOC MS Div, box II:3, folder 4 ("*We are all so human*").

Staking Everything on One Card

An iron sky roofed the gray-green Taunus Hills: Alfred Jodl, ETHINT 51, July 31, 1945, MHI, 24.

To the unschooled eye: Kappes, "Hitler's Ultra-Secret Adlerhorst," 2003, http://www.militaryhistoryonline.com/wwii/articles/adlerhorst.aspx (*Interior furnishings*); White, *Conquerors' Road* , 54–57 (*heavy*

metal doors and peepholes); Raiber, "The Führerhauptquartiere," *AB*, no. 19 (1977): 1+ (*Artificial trees*); "Kransberg-die Perle in Taunus," www.kransberg.com (*centuries of neglect*).

Hitler shuffled into his private chalet: Bullock, *Hitler: A Study in Tyranny*, 762; Percy Ernst Schramm, "The Preparations for the German Offensive in the Ardennes," in Parker, ed., *The Battle of the Bulge: The German View*, 121–22 (*vocal cords*); Günther Blumentritt, "Battle of the Bulge," part 1, n.d., PIR, MHI, 6 ("*He seemed near collapse*"); Overy, *Why the Allies Won*, 274–75 ("*will-o'-the-wisp*"); *Germany VII*, 680 ("*everything on one card*").

Even a delusional megalomaniac: Greenfield, ed., *Command Decisions*, 345.

German war production: *Ardennes*, 4–5 (*118,000 military trucks*), 8 (*holidays abolished*); Charles V. P. von Lüttichau, "The Ardennes Offensive: Germany's Situation in the Fall of 1944," OCMH, 1953, part II, NARA RG 319, R-series, #25, box 6, 44, 52, 59, 62, 67, 69 [copy also in CMH, 2-3.7]; Tooze, *The Wages of Destruction*, 595 ("*Heroes of National Socialist Labor*"), 603, 629 (*vitamins*); Hitchcock, *The Bitter Road to Freedom*, 249 (*Seven million prisoners-of-war*).

To shore up a military now losing: MEB, "Overall View of Germany's Economic, Political, and Military Situation at the Beginning of 1945," May 1950, NARA RG 319, R-series #28, 12; Greenfield, ed., *Command Decisions*, 347; *Ardennes*, 8 ("*rear-area swine*"), 15; Steinhoff et al., *Voices from the Third Reich* , 461 ("*out of sheer terror*"); *TT*, 43; Megargee, *Inside Hitler's High Command*, 221 (Volkssturm); Evans, *The Third Reich at War*, 676 ("*Closed because of the call-up*"); Willmott, *The Great Crusade*, 416 (*robbed German industry*); Rush, *Hell in Hürtgen Forest*, 306 ("*bow-and-arrow infantry*").

Secret weapons always beguilded: Rudolf Lusar, "The German Weapons and Secret Weapons of World War II and Their Subsequent Development," 1956, CMH, 16–17; *Germany VII*, 339 ("*as if an angel*"), 341–48, 353–54; *VW*, vol. 2, 144 (*oddly ineffective*); Muller, "Losing Air Superiority: A Case Study from the Second World War," *Air & Space Power Journal* (winter 2003): 55+.

No less innovative were new "electro" U-boats: Tooze, *The Wages of Destruction*, 613–16; Spector, *At War at Sea*, 253; Brower, ed., *World War II in Europe: The Final Year* , 128; Hinsley, 600–603; Blair, *Hitler's U-Boat War*, vol. 2, *The Hunted, 1942–1945*, 627, 657–59.

Well into 1945, German submarines continued: U-boats during the war were credited with sinking three thousand Allied and neutral vessels (Roskill, *White Ensign*, 413–15, 422–23). Clay Blair calculates that in 1944–45, a total of 188 ships were sunk by U-boats (*Hitler's U-Boat War*, vol. 2, *The Hunted, 1943–1945*, 820).

But scarcely any vessels would be sunk by the new U-boats: Blair, *Hitler's U-Boat War*, vol. 2, *The Hunted, 1942–1945*, 659, 820; Weinberg, *A World at Arms*, 771–72.

Dusk enfolded the Taunus Hills: Günther Blumentritt, "Battle of the Bulge," part 1, n.d., PIR, MHI, 8–10 (*Many believed they had been summoned*); Spayd, *Bayerlein*, 179–80 (*each man surrender his sidearm*); Kappes, "Hitler's Ultra-Secret Adlerhorst," 2003, http://www.militaryhistoryonline.com/wwii/articles/adlerhorst.aspx.

A double row of armed SS guards: Spayd, *Bayerlein*, 179–80; *TT*, 47 ("*handkerchief*").

Ten minutes later Hitler hobbled in: Günther Blumentritt, "Battle of the Bulge," part 1, n.d., PIR, MHI, 1; OH, Hasso von Manteuffel, Oct. 12, 1966, John S. D. Eisenhower, CBM, MHI, box 6, 15–17; Spayd, *Bayerlein*, 180 (*Nick-Esel*); Hasso von Manteuffel, "The 5. Pz Army and the Offensive in the Ardennes," Apr. 1946, FMS, #B-151, MHI, 78–79 (" *a broken man*"); Parker, ed., *The Battle of the Bulge: The German View*, 121–22 ("*stared vacantly*").

Then he spoke: Parker, ed., *The Battle of the Bulge: The German View*, 4.

"*Never in history*": Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 578.

As the Allies approached each other: *GS* VI, 65; Jacobsen and Rohwer, eds., *Decisive Battles of World War II: The German View*, 401–2 (*Canada*).

"*Rome would not be thinkable*": Parker, ed., *The Battle of the Bulge: The German View*, 4–8 ("*most daring*"); Megargee, *Inside Hitler's High Command*, 218.

Toward that end he had a plan: The name was changed shortly before the attack for security reasons. HERBSTNEBEL had been the army group code-name (*TT*, 36–38).

It had come to him as in a fever dream: Alfred Jodl, ETHINT 50, July 26, 1945, K. W. Hechler, CBM, MHI, box 12; Kershaw, *Hitler, 1936–45: Nemesis*, 732; *Ardennes*, 1–10, 13; Charles V. von Lüttichau, "The Ardennes Offensive: Planning and Preparations," Aug. 1953, OCMH, NARA RG 319, R-series #12, 11–13, 31–33 ("*Antwerp*"); MEB, "The Idea for the German Ardennes Offensive in 1944," May 1952, OCMH, NARA RG 319, R-series #9, 22–23 ("*sealed in the West*").

The naysayers promptly said nay: MEB, "The Idea for the German Ardennes Offensive in 1944," May 1952, OCMH, NARA RG 319, R-series #9, 109 ("*great surprise*"); Parker, ed., *Hitler's Ardennes Offensive*, 248 ("*no offensive*"); Charles V. von Lüttichau,

"The Ardennes Offensive: Germany's Situation in the Fall of 1944," 1953, OCMH, CMH, 2-3.7, 39; *Ardennes*, 72 (*invasion of the Soviet Union*); British interrogation report, Gerd von Rundstedt, July 9, 1945, NARA RG 407, E 427, ML #2126, box 24231 ("much *too weak*"); Jacobsen and Rohwer, eds., *Decisive Battles of World War II: The German View*, 396–97.

"*The soldier can do nothing*": Günther Blumentritt, "Battle of the Bulge," part 1, n.d., PIR, MHI, 6; Blumentritt, *Von Rundstedt*, 268–70 ("*I am a better judge*").

Even Model, who claimed to love: Lewin, *Montgomery as Military Commander*, 312 ("*moldy*"); Westphal, *The German Army in the West*, 180–81 ("*small solution*"); "The Ardennes Offensive," British monograph, Aug. 1, 1945, CMH, Geog Belgium, 370.2, 7–8; OH, Hasso von Manteuffel, Oct. 12, 1966, John S. D. Eisenhower, CBM, MHI, box 6, 15–16; Hasso von Manteuffel, "The 5. Pz Army and the Offensive in the Ardennes," Apr. 1946, FMS, #B-151, MHI, 78-38-45, 71; Fritz Krämer, ETHINT 21, Aug. 14–15, 1945, MHI, 3 (*Wehrmacht soldiers would fight*).

The Führer was unmoved: Warlimont, *Inside Hitler's Headquarters*, 482–85; *Ardennes*, 34–35 (*promised thirty-eight divisions*), 30–32 (*virtually unchanged*); Hasso von Manteuffel, "The 5. Pz Army and the Offensive in the Ardennes," Apr. 1946, FMS, #B-151, MHI, 73 (*two thousand planes*); *GS* VI, 66–67 ("*Not to Be Altered*").

And thus was the plan fixed: *Ardennes*, 71–72; *Germany VII*, 681; Cirillo, "Ardennes-Alsace," 3, 10.

With the possible exception of the Vosges: MacDonald, "The Neglected Ardennes," *Military Review* (Apr. 1963): 74+ ("*impenetrable massif*"); *Ardennes*, 43 (*ten all-weather roads*).

Hitler had been consumed for weeks: Warlimont, *Inside Hitler's Headquarters*, 482–85 (*Alsatian troops*); "Germany's War Effort and Its Failure," Oct. 8, 1945, UK Chiefs of Staff Committee, NARA RG 334, E 315, ANSCOL, GB JIC (46) 33, 153 (*vehicles built in November*); Merriam, *Dark December*, 105 ("*hold the reins loose"*); Jacobsen and Rohwer, eds., *Decisive Battles of World War II: The German View*, 396–97 (*German forces on the Meuse within forty-eight hours*); Hasso von Manteuffel, ETHINT 46, Oct. 29, 1945, MHI, 9 (*four to six days*). Westphal quoted Jodl as claiming that six days to the Meuse would be "quite permissible for this phase" (*The German Army in the West*, 182).

No significant interference was expected: *Germany VII*, 682 (*Brussels*); Herbert Büchs, Jodl aide, ETHINT 34, Aug. 31, 1945, MHI, 12–13 (*Vague plans*).

Two tank armies would form the point: Barnett, ed., *Hitler's Generals*, 411–13, 419; MMB, 133 (*hippopotamus whips*); Belfield and Essame, *The Battle for Normandy*, 166–67 (*of his original 23,000 men*); *TT*, 160–61 ("*decent but stupid*"), 26, 29 (*Losheim Gap*); Jacobsen and Rohwer, eds., *Decisive Battles of World War II: The German View*, 396–97 (*nine divisions*); Cirillo, "Ardennes-Alsace," 11; *Ardennes*, 77 (*wheeling northwest toward Antwerp*).

On the left, the Fifth Panzer Army: Jacobsen and Rohwer, eds., *Decisive Battles of World War II: The German View*, 396–97; "Battlebook," USAREUR staff ride, Ardennes, Dec. 2001 ("*a daredevil*"); *SLC*, 396 (*a thousand artillery tubes*); Liddell Hart, *The Other Side of the Hill*, 450 (*fretted more about fuel*); "The Ardennes Offensive," British monograph, Aug. 1, 1945, CMH, Geog Belgium, 370.2, 11; Parker, ed., *The Battle of the Bulge: The German View*, 136–37 (*only three million gallons*), 133 (*two thousand horses*); Barnett, ed., *Hitler's Generals*, 327 ("*take it from the Americans*").

A thousand trains beginning in early December: München-Gladbach's name was changed to Mönchengladbach after the war. "The German Counter-Offensive in the Bulge," Sept. 1945, U.K. War Office, Directorate of Tactical Investigation, CARL, N-13205, 3.

Security remained paramount: *Ardennes*, 48–51; Hasso von Manteuffel, ETHINT 46, Oct. 29, 1945, MHI, 1–2 (*started a rumor*).

Maps remained sealed: "The Ardennes Offensive," British monograph, Aug. 1, 1945, CMH, Geog Belgium, 370.2, 12–16, 23; *Ardennes*, 69–70 (*delayed again for nearly a week*).

"*The army must gain a victory*": Josef "Sepp" Dietrich, ETHINT 16, July 10, 1945, MHI, 2–3; Parker, ed., *The Battle of the Bulge: The German View*, 9–10 ("*both sides are equal*").

The central weather office in Berlin: Royce L. Thompson, "Weather of the Ardennes Campaign," Oct. 2, 1953, CMH, 10–12.

"*Troops must act with brutality*": Bauserman, *The Malmédy Massacre*, 2–6.

"*War is of course a test of endurance*": Warlimont, *Inside Hitler's Headquarters*, 486–87; Bullock, *Hitler: A Study in Tyranny*, 762.

Finally spent, Hitler ended: Spayd, *Bayerlein*, 180 (*would not disappoint*); *Ardennes*, 28–32 ("*grave doubts*").

The Light Line

For three months after her glorious liberation: Moorehead, *Eclipse*, 186 ("*without light*"); Pogue, *Pogue's War*, 212 (*leg sores*); Gellhorn, *The Face of War*, 183 ("*bath in champaigne*"); Moorehead, *Gellhorn*, 224 ("*platform soles*").

The small fuel ration: corr, Pleas B. Rogers to family, Jan. 17, 1945, and Nov. 14, 1944 ("*cold as charity*"), and Oct. 14, 1944

(*crematorium*), Rogers papers, MHI; Richler, ed., *Writers on World War II*, 542–43 (*sawdust by the ton*); memoir, William Henry Baumer, n.d., HIA, box 1, 170 ("*we opened the windows*"); memoir, Raymond H. Croll, 1974, Croll papers, MHI, 300 ("*refrigerator door*").

By late November conditions began to brighten: Pogue, *Pogue's War*, 212; pamphlet, "Red Ball SOP," Oct. 1, 1944, Ewart G. Plank papers, HIA ("*light line*"); Whipple, "Logistical Bottleneck," *IJ* (March 1948): 6+ (*seven thousand tons a day*); minutes, meeting of chief administrative officers, Dec. 22, 1944, Versailles, NARA RG 331, E 1, SHAEF SGS, box 55 ("*electricity consumption in Paris*").

For liberators behind the light line: diary, Jan. 22, 1945, Kingsley Andersson, HIA, box 1 (*PX open only to general officers*); corr, E. S. Hughes to wife, Dec. 8, 1944, Everett S. Hughes papers, LOC MS Div, box II:3, folder 4 (*hunting partridge*); diary, CBH, Dec. 27, 1944, MHI, box 4 (*Chesapeake oysters*); Middleton, *Our Share of Night*, 336 ("*chair-borne infantry*"); Pogue, *Pogue's War*, 334 ("*COMZ set-up*"), 213 (*French waitresses*).

The Majestic was hardly unique: OH, J. C. H. Lee, Mar. 21, 1947, FCP, MHI (*Fifty-one generals*); Pogue, *Pogue's War*, 203 (*frock coats*); Beevor and Cooper, *Paris After the Liberation, 1944–1949*, 126 (*Wehrmacht boot leather*).

"*Don't go forward of army group*": Rosengarten, "With Ultra from Omaha Beach to Weimar, Germany," *Military Affairs* (Oct. 1978): 127+.

The British occupied twelve hotels: minutes, SHAEF, Oct. 20, 1944, Versailles, NARA RG 331, SHAEF SGS, Geog Corr, box 108; corr, Thor M. Smith to family, Oct. 25, 1944, HIA, box 1 (*Champagne cost*); ASF, Technical Intelligence Report No. 2426, Apr. 12, 1945, CARL, N-9270 (*black market rates*). SHAEF in December noted that soldiers felt they were "the victims of extreme financial injustice" because the official exchange rate of 50 francs to the dollar was four to five times less than black market transactions (Coles and Weinberg, *Civil Affairs*, 747–48).

stoppers were at a premium: "The Reminiscences of Alan Goodrich Kirk," Col U OHRO, transcript in NHHC, 374; memo, "Whiskey and Gin for General Officers," Dec. 2, 1944, COMZ, MBR, MHI, box 22.

For GIs without stars: "Leaves, Furloughs and Passes in the Theater," May 1946, General Board study no. 4, NARA RG 407, AG WWII operations reports, E 427, 97-USF5-0.3.0 (*first leave center*); memo, Nov. 8, 1944, Minutes, NARA RG 331, SHAEF SGS, Geog Corr, box 108; "Special Service Clubs," General Board report no. 121, n.d., NARA RG 407, AG WWII Operations Reports, E 427, 97-USF-0.3.0 (*fifty-one GI clubs*); Pogue, *Pogue's War*, 224 (*Glenn Miller's orchestra*), 230–31 (*ten thousand soldiers a day*); corr, T. R. Bruskin to wife, Sept. 27, 1944, a.p. ("*Just returned from a trip*"); Helen Van Zonneveld, "A Time to Every Purpose," n.d., HIA, 382–83 ("*canvas-covered bathtubs*"); Beevor and Cooper, *Paris After the Liberation, 1944–1949*, 125–26 ("*easygoing manner*").

Troops packed movie theaters: Pogue, *Pogue's War*, 224 (*hamburgers and bourbon*); Beevor and Cooper, *Paris After the Liberation, 1944–1949*, 130 (*Sunny Side of the Street*); "History of Special Service Operations in the ETO," n.d., NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #573, 46, 51–52 (*activities*); Nicholas, *The Rape of Europa*, 306–7 (*Bayeux Tapestry*).

In early December, Gertrude Stein: Nicholas, *The Rape of Europa*, 306–7 ("*stratified*"); Pogue, *Pogue's War*, 225 (*cigarettes and soap*); Beevor and Cooper, *Paris After the Liberation, 1944–1949*, 71 (*underwear*); Taylor and Taylor, eds., *The War Diaries*, 525 ("*all over the world?*").

For many soldiers, of course, culture: Fussell, *The Boys' Crusade*, 41 ("*going to get laid*"); report, Seine Section, COMZ, n.d., NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #599 (*230 brothels*); memo, "Venereal Disease," Feb. 21, 1945, SHAEF G-5, public safety division, NARA RG 331, SHAEF, E-47, box 931 (*more than a third*); Neillands, *The Battle for the Rhine*, 75 (*three packs of Chesterfields*); memo to chief surgeon, COMZ, "Remarks on Attitudes and Behavior of Enlisted Men Related to VD," n.d., NARA RG 330, E 94, attitude surveys, ETO B-24, 1 (*intercourse at least once*); Pogue, *Pogue's War*, 233 ("*Come along*"); Schrijvers, *The Crash of Ruin*, 182 ("*Zig zig?*"); Cosmas and Cowdrey, *Medical Service in the European Theater of Operations*, 541 ("*VD contact form*"); Kennett, *G.I.: The American Soldier in World War II*, 207 ("*aphrodisiac dreams*").

They were devastated by more than dreams: Cosmas and Cowdrey, *Medical Service in the European Theater of Operations*, 541 (*two-thirds of all infections*); "V.D.," *Army Talks* 46, Dec. 2, 1944, NARA RG 498, ETO HD (*since 1830*); memo, A. W. Kenner, chief medical officer, to R. W. Barker, Nov. 8, 1944, and memo, R. W. Barker to W. B. Smith, Nov. 10, 1944, NARA RG 331, E 1, SHAEF SGS, entry 6, box 45 (*rate in Europe*); G-1 history, n.d., NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #550, 12 (*off-limits*).

Twenty-nine prophylactic dispensaries: Steckel, "Morale Problems in Combat," *Army History* (summer 1994): 1+; Rottman, *FUBAR: American Soldier Slang of World War II*, 98; "The Reminiscences of Alan Goodrich Kirk," Col U OHRO, transcript in NHHC, 368 ("*proof of chastity*"); "V.D.," *Army Talks* 46, Dec. 2, 1944, NARA RG 498, ETO HD ("*Don't forget the Krauts*").

Still the VD rate climbed: Nickell, *Red Devil*, 139 ("*whores de combat*"); Rottman, *FUBAR: American Soldier Slang of World War II*, 80 ("*No-Clap Medal*"); Schrijvers, *The Crash of Ruin*, 182 ("*Hershey bars*"); Blunt, *Foot Soldier*, 49 ("*horizontal refreshment*"); corr, French Foreign Ministry to SHAEF, Feb. 24, 1945, NARA RG 331, E 1, SHAEF SGS, entry 6, box 45 ("*noteworthy recrudescence*");

corr, GSP to DDE, Oct. 19, 1944 ("*human nature*"), and DDE to GSP, Oct. 21, 1944 ("*do* not *agree*"), NARA RG 331, E 1, SHAEF SGS, entry 6, box 45.

Paris soldiered on: corr, Thor M. Smith to family, Oct. 24 and 25, 1944, HIA, box 1 (*stamp market*) and Nov. 17, 1944 (*surreptitious dancing*); Beevor and Cooper, *Paris After Liberation, 1944–1949*, 68 (*clenched-fist salutes*); Mauldin, *The Brass Ring*, 250–51 ("*jammed with French civilians*").

Among the liveliest tableaus: Beevor and Cooper, *Paris After Liberation, 1944–1949*, 73 ("*American enclave*"); Capa, *Slightly Out of Focus*, 189 (*Suffering Bastard*); *TSC*, 523–25 (*100,000 words*); "A History of Field Press Censorship in SHAEF," n.d., MHI, 47–52 ("*hot stops*"); White, *Conquerors' Road*, 110 ("*nimble French youths*").

Sporadic privation would beset Paris: minutes, "Critical Supply Situation in Paris," Jan. 18, 1945, NARA RG 331, SHAEF SGS, Geog Corr, box 108; Beevor and Cooper, *Paris After Liberation, 1944–1949*, 101 (*government stationery*); ETO inspection report, cigarette shortage, Dec. 15, 1944, NARA RG 498, file #44, box 10; Robert M. Littlejohn, "Ports and Transportation," chapter 27, PIR, MHI, 11–12, appendix B (*blankets and sleeping bags*); D'Este, *Eisenhower: A Soldier's Life*, 620 (*rolling his own*).

Not least among the problems for Court House Lee: Ecker, "G.I. Racketeers in the Paris Black Market," *Yank*, May 4, 1945, 2; Pogue, *Pogue's War*, 231–32 ("*black market bag*"); Durnford-Slater, *Commando*, 205 (*Danish butter*); OH, Henry S. Aurand, 1974, William O. Morrison, SOOHP, MHI (*entire train with three engines*); "The Administrative History of the Operations of 21 Army Group on the Continent of Europe, 6 June [1944]–8 May, 1945," Nov. 1945, NARA RG 334, E 315, ANSCOL, GB 21-AG AH, 53 (*captured German horses*); White, *Conquerors' Road*, 110 ("*camouflaged horse steak*").

Eisenhower's provost marshal estimated: Hastings, *Armageddon*, 185; Cawthon, *Other Clay*, 165 (*hiding in the Parisian demimonde*); "Subsistence in the ETO," 1959, chapter 55, PIR, Robert M. Littlejohn papers, HIA (*peddle K rations*); report, provost marshal, Seine Section, COMZ, n.d., NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #599-G (*hundreds of such vehicles*); Pogue, *Pogue's War*, 230–31 (*selling the entire deuce-and-a-half* and "*Chicago-sur-Seine*"); resume, n.d., Pleas B. Rogers papers, MHI (*four thousand military policemen*); "Report of Visit to Paris Detention Barracks," March 9, 1945, NARA RG 498, ETO inspection report, file #37 (*trucked back to the front*); Bykofsky and Larson, *The Transportation Corps: Operations Overseas*, 351; Ecker, "G.I. Racketeers in the Paris Black Market," *Yank*, May 4, 1945, 2 (*fifty years*).

Shortly before six P.M. *on Tuesday, December 12*: Chandler, vol. 5, chronology, 175; "The Tendons of an Army," ETOUSA, n.d., RG 490, ETO HD, admin file #531, 2.

As his car sped southeast across Piccadilly: S. N. Behrman, "The Suspended Drawing Room," in *The New Yorker Book of War Pieces*, 424 ("*little points of blue light*"); Ziegler, *London at War, 1939–1945*, 309 ("*Children's amusement section*").

A national ban on making ice cream: Ziegler, *London at War, 1939–1945*, 305; Stiles, *Serenade to the Big Bird*, 170 ("*cave dwellers*"); S. N. Behrman, "The Suspended Drawing Room," in *The New Yorker Book of War Pieces*, 429 (*five deep*); Ackroyd, *London Under*, e-book, chapter 12 (*Elgin Marbles*); Arthur, *Forgotten Voices of World War II*, 372 ("*It's death*").

As in Antwerp, death could also arrive: M. C. Helfers, "The Employment of V-Weapons by the Germans During World War II," OCMH, 1954, NARA RG 319, 2-3.7 AW, 75; Ziegler, *London at War, 1939–1945*, 298 (*half in greater London*); *Germany VII*, 454–55 (*equivalent to that of producing 24,000 fighter planes*).

Radar usually detected V-2 launches: "V-2 Countermeasures in the ETO," July 4, 1945, NARA RG 337, AGF OR #506, 18–20, 40–41; Ackroyd, *London Under*, e-book, chapter 12 (*floodgates*); S. N. Behrman, "The Suspended Drawing Room," in *The New Yorker Book of War Pieces*, 421 ("*You just strolled along*"); Collier, *The Defence of the United Kingdom*, 417 (*as high as a thousand to one*); Masterman, *The Double-Cross System*, 181 (*agents controlled by British counterintelligence*); Howard, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, vol. 5, *Strategic Deception*, 182–83 (*sparing an estimated 1,300 British lives*).

That was cold comfort for the nearly three thousand: Official British figures listed 9,300 V-2 casualties, including 2,800 fatalities, a bit less than half the corresponding figures for the V-1 attacks (Collier, *The Defence of the United Kingdom*, 527).

"*Never have I seen buildings*": Ziegler, *London at War, 1939–1945*, 296–97; Longmate, *Hitler's Rockets*, 209 (*Saturday sale on saucepans*).

"*A horse's head was lying in the gutter*": Roberts, *The Storm of War*, 518; http://lewishamwarmemorials.wikidot.com/incident:world-war-ii-new-cross-woolworths-v2-rocket; Ziegler, *London at War, 1939–1945*, 298; Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, 836 ("*quite a lot to take*").

No V-weapons fell on Whitehall: Eisenhower, *Eisenhower at War, 1943–1945*, 551.

Eisenhower now commanded sixty-nine divisions: *GS* VI, 18–19; author visit, Churchill Museum and Cabinet War Rooms, London, 2005 (*pushpins and colored yarn*).

"*Ike explained his plan*": Danchev, 634–35.

Two years earlier, under similar circumstances: *AAAD*, 282–83 (*retreating in disarray*); "U.S. Military Government in Germany: Operations During the Rhineland Campaign," 1950, CMH, 8-3.1 DA5, 28 ("*capability of concentration*"); Eisenhower, *Eisenhower at War, 1943–1945*, 551; Chandler, 2341.

"*Ike was good*": Crosswell, *Beetle*, 786.

The evening ended in stilted silences: Eisenhower, *Eisenhower at War, 1943–1945*, 552 ("*evening of my life*"); Danchev, 634–35 ("*utterly failed*"); Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Soldier, General of the Army, President-Elect, 1890–1952*, vol. 1, 361.

Eisenhower flew back to Versailles: Carver, ed., *The War Lords*, 533; Chandler, 2341 ("*Brooke seemed disturbed*"); Eisenhower, *Eisenhower at War, 1943–1945*, 550 ("*let it be sunny*").

"*I greatly fear the dwindling*": D'Este, *Decision in Normandy*, 265; Howard, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, vol. 5, *Strategic Deception*, 199 (*fourteen British divisions*); memo, E. I. C. Jacob, Dec. 5, 1944. Also, BLM to A. Brooke, Oct. 26, 1944 ("*acute problem in the next six months*"), and A. Brooke to WSC, Nov. 3, 1944; WSC, "Personal Minute," Dec. 3, 1944, and "Note on Reduction of 50 Div in 21 Army Group," Dec. 8, 1944, and memo, WSC, Dec. 12, 1944: all in UK NA, WO 215/101; *VW*, vol. 2, 142–43 (*Wastage in infantry riflemen*); Hastings, *Armageddon*, 77 (*20 percent*).

"*All of us are now faced with an unanticipated shortage*": FDR to WSC, Oct. 16, 1944, in NARA RG 165, E 422, WD, OPD, history unit, box 55.

The American dearth was even more problematic: *GS* VI, 19; Matloff, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1943–1944*, 409 (*new B-29 bomber*); Eiler, *Mobilizing America*, 400 (*300,000 workers already building*), 397 (*occupational deferments*), 417n (*hard-pressed critical industries*); Bland, ed., *George C. Marshall Interviews and Reminiscences for Forrest C. Pogue*, 390 (*Marshall felt pressure*).

To swell the ranks, Selective Service exemptions: Kennedy, *Freedom from Fear*, 635; Eiler, *Mobilizing America*, 635 (*many new privates*); Palmer et al., *The Procurement and Training of Ground Combat Troops*, 207, 224 (*ban on shipping eighteen-year-olds*); *LSA*, vol. 2, 506 ("*physically imperfect men*"); Wiltse, ed., *Physical Standards in World War II*, 194 ("*such terms as 'imbecile'*"), 42, 199–200 ("*put their hands under cars*").

The need for more soldiers: *LSA*, vol. 2, 316–17 (*two thousand a day* and *trench foot epidemic*); Palmer et al., *The Procurement and Training of Ground Combat Troops*, 217 (*figure hit three thousand*); "Reinforcement System and Reinforcement Procedures in the European Theater," n.d., NARA RG 407, E 427, AG WWII operations reports, 97-USF-0.3.0, study no. 3 (*three hundred thousand individual replacement troops*); Robert J. Greenwald, "Human Logistics: The Supplying of Men, a Study of the Reinforcement System," Jan. 31, 1945, ETOUSA, NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #571-K, 94 (*below its authorized strength*); Bradley Commentaries, Chester B. Hansen collection, MHI, box 42 ("*life expectancy of a junior officer*"); diary, Dec. 3, 1944, GSP, LOC MS Div, box 3, folder 9 ("*Our situation is bad*").

All combat arms felt pinched: "Report of Observers, ETO," Apr. 27, 1945, NARA RG 337, AGF OR no. 371 ("*delivery of armored replacements*"); Rush, *Hell in Hürtgen Forest*, 65 ("*black line on a map*"); *LSA*, vol. 2, 506 (*obsolete data*); Greenwald, "Human Logistics: The Supplying of Men, a Study of the Reinforcement System," Jan. 31, 1945, ETOUSA, NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #571-K, 75 (*actual figure was 83 percent*); Palmer et al., *The Procurement and Training of Ground Combat Troops*, 216 (*a need for 300,000*).

Of more than eight million soldiers in the Army: Weigley, *History of the United States Army*, 440; Palmer, "Procurement of Enlisted Personnel for the AGF: The Problem of Quality," 1946, AGF, historical section S #4, NARA RG 334, E 315, ANSCOL, box 150, 40 (*disproportionate share*); Eric Klinek, "The Army's Orphans: The United States Army Replacement System During World War II and Its Impact on Combat Effectiveness," paper, SMH, Ogden, Utah, Apr. 19, 2008.

The severest shortage was of that priceless creature: Crosswell, *Beetle*, 797; Weigley, *History of the United States Army*, 464 (*27 rifle companies*); "Reinforcement System and Reinforcement Procedures in the European Theater," n.d., NARA RG 407, E 427, AG WWII operations reports, 97-USF-0.3.0, study no. 3 ("*We find ourselves totally out*"); Fussell, *The Boys' Crusade*, 96 ("*Nobody gets out*"); Fussell, *Doing Battle*, 122 ("*no infantryman can survive*").

Frantic efforts were made: Crosswell, *Beetle*, 788 (*Seventeen of those divisions*); Palmer et al., *The Procurement and Training of Ground Combat Troops*, 472–74 (*sixteen platoon leaders*); Report No. ETO-5, n.d., Surveys of Attitudes of Soldiers Fighting in the ETO, NARA RG 330, E 94, 6 ("*show them how to load their rifles*").

Crash programs to convert quartermaster soldiers: Robert J. Greenwald, "Human Logistics: The Supplying of Men, a Study of the Reinforcement System," Jan. 31, 1945, ETOUSA, NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #571-K, 84–85; Report No. ETO-5, n.d., Surveys of Attitudes of Soldiers Fighting in the ETO, NARA RG 330, E 94, 13 ("*miracle men*"); Steckel, "Morale Problems in Combat," *Army History* (summer 1994): 1+ ("*retreads*"); Edward J. Drea, "Unit Reconstitution: A Historical Perspective," Dec. 1983, CSI, 19 (*refused to accept hundreds*); inspection report, 16th Reinforcement Depot, Dec. 29–31, 1944, NARA RG 498, 290/57/30/4, box 2, file 3 ("*State of mind of men*"); Crosswell, *Beetle*, 789 ("*aren't good for anything else*"); Fussell, *Doing Battle*, 108 ("You *are*

expendable").

Even the deployment of intact divisions: "History of the Red List," 1946, CMH, 3-5.1 A BA, 1-4, 55f, 60–66, 75.

The Red List was a paragon of efficiency: memo, DDE to GCM, Feb. 17, 1945, NARA RG 498, SGS IG, 333.5 ("*feeling of being a lost soul*"); Greenwald, "Human Logistics: The Supplying of Men, a Study of the Reinforcement System," Jan. 31, 1945, ETOUSA, NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #571-K, 34 (*adhesive tape*); "History of the Ground Force Replacement System, ETO," n.d., NARA RG 498, ETO HD file #571A (*World War I–vintage rifles*); OH, Andre Beaumont, n.d., ROHA, http://oralhistory.rutgers.edu ("*We left Fort Meade*").

Replacements traveled for days: Robert J. Greenwald, "Human Logistics: The Supplying of Men, a Study of the Reinforcement System," Jan. 31, 1945, ETOUSA, NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #571-K, 16–17, 21; corr, DDE to GCM, Feb. 25, 1945, NARA RG 498, SGS IG, 333.5 ("*We have reduced the figure*"); inspection report, 16th Reinforcement Depot, Dec. 29–31, 1944, NARA RG 498, 290/57/30/4, box 2, file 3 ("*stockage depots*"); Eric Klinek, "The Army's Orphans: The United States Army Replacement System During World War II and Its Impact on Combat Effectiveness," paper, SMH conference, Apr. 19, 2008, Ogden, Utah (*combat skills deteriorated*); "History of the Ground Force Replacement System, ETO," n.d., chapter 4, "Major Problems Encountered by Ground Force Reinforcement Command," NARA RG 498, ETO HD file #571F, 346 ("*had not bathed in thirty days*").

"*We want to feel that we are a part of something*": Report No. ETO-5, n.d., Surveys of Attitudes of Soldiers Fighting in the ETO, NARA RG 330, E 94, 14; Robert J. Greenwald, "Human Logistics: The Supplying of Men, A Study of the Reinforcement System," Jan. 31, 1945, ETOUSA, NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #571-K, 34–36 ("*scared the pants off*").

Court House Lee proposed on December 1: Robert J. Greenwald, "Human Logistics: The Supplying of Men, a Study of the Reinforcement System," Jan. 31, 1945, ETOUSA, NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #571-K, 34–35, 65, 36 (*almost half a million replacements*); Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 446–47 ("*cannon fodder implication*"); memo, "Replacement System," July 29, 1944, 9th ID IG, NARA RG 498, box 9, file 34 ("*morale of our officers*").

Now the Army's ability to replenish its ranks: Lee, *The Employment of Negro Troops*, 688–89 (*shortage of 23,000*); *LSA*, vol. 2, 321–28 (*truncated to two weeks*).

No one was more fretful than Omar Bradley: The tank figure includes those in Ninth Army, temporarily seconded to 21st AG (Royce L. Thompson, "Ardennes Campaign Statistics," Apr. 1952, OCMH, NARA RG 319, E 97, *LSA* vol. 1, background files, box 7).

mustered less than 80 percent: "Report of Operations," n.d., 12th AG, vol. 2, G-1 section, CARL, 30; Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 446–47 ("*Don't they realize*").

"Go Easy, Boys. There's Danger Ahead"

Allied intelligence first recognized in September: Hinsley, 550–55; Bennett, *Ultra in the West*, 189–99; "Estimate No. 37," First Army, G-2, Dec. 10, 1944, USAREUR staff ride, Dec. 2001 (*Skorzeny*); memo, K. W. D. Strong, SHAEF, to army groups, Oct. 19, 1944, NARA RG 331, SHAEF SGS, 383.6/4, box 86.

The U.S. First Army had flown: Hinsley, 558–59 (*361 reconnaissance sorties*); *AAFinWWII*, 679 (*canvas-covered flatcars*); Bennett, *Ultra in the West*, 196 (*two hundred troop trains*).

None of this suggested an enemy offensive: Royce L. Thompson, "American Intelligence on the German Counteroffensive," vol. 1, Nov. 1949, CMH, 2-3.7 AE P-1 (*counterattack force*); Hinsley, 558–59 ("*true counter-offensive*"); Sibert, G-2, 12th AG, "Military Intelligence Aspects of the Period Prior to the Ardennes Counter Offensive," sent to Hanson Baldwin, Jan. 2, 1947, CBM, MHI, box 6, 8–9 (*reconnaissance of the Meuse bridges*); *VW*, vol. 2, 175 ("*bruited drive on Antwerp*").

Those nearest the front: "Estimate of Enemy Capabilities Prior to the Counter-Offensive," n.d., in "History of the Ardennes Campaign," NARA RG 498, ETOUSA HD, UD 584, box 1, 4 (*officers interviewing German prisoners*); *TSC*, 365 (*assumed to be green units*); Royce L. Thompson, "American Intelligence on the German Counteroffensive," vol. 2, "Division Level," March 1949, CARL, N-16829.2 ("*German army* [*is*] *disintegrating*"); *Ardennes*, 59–61.

Several factors fed this disregard: *TSC*, 372 (*Hitler rather than the prudent Rundstedt*); *VW*, vol. 2, 171 ("*in the hands of soldiers*"); 21st AG intelligence review, Dec. 3, 1944, Oscar W. Koch papers, MHI, box 12 (*No sensible field marshal*); Pogue, "The Ardennes Campaign: The Impact of Intelligence," lecture, Dec. 16, 1980, NSA Communications Analysis Association, a.p. ("we *would not attack*"); Sibert, G-2, 12th AG, "Military Intelligence Aspects of the Period Prior to the Ardennes Counter Offensive," sent to Hanson Baldwin, Jan. 2, 1947, CBM, MHI, box 6, 3 ("*intentions of a maniac*").

Top Allied officers also had become overly enchanted: Bennett, *Ultra in the West*, 191; "Synthesis of Experiences in the Use of Ultra Intelligence by U.S. Army Field Command in the ETO," n.d., NARA RG 457, E 9002, NSA, SRH-006, 12–16.

"*They had become so dependent*": OH, Richard Collins, 1976, Donald Bowman, SOOHP, MHI, 8; OH, Ralph Hauenstein, Jan. and Feb. 2102, author, Palm Beach and Naples, Fla. The list of Ultra recipients grew to about six hundred by March 1945 ("List of

Recipients," March 25, 1945, Richard Collins papers, MHI, box 1).

"*Instead of being the best*": E. T. Williams, "Reports Received by U.S. War Department on Use of Ultra in the European Theater," Oct. 1945, NARA RG 457, E 9002, NSA, SRH-037, 1, 13; Bennett, *Ultra in the West*, 202–3; Lewin, *Ultra Goes to War*, 428–33.

Some would later claim clairvoyance: "Estimate No. 37," First Army, G-2, Dec. 10, 1944, USAREUR staff ride, Dec. 2001; *TSC*, 366–68 (*a windy alarmist*); OH, E. T. Williams, May 30–31, 1947, FCP, MHI; Strong, *Intelligence at the Top*, 242–43; *TT*, 76–77 (*departure from Spa*); Weigley, *Eisenhower's Lieutenants*, 460.

A suggestion in early December: OH, W. B. Smith, Apr. 1949, SLAM, OCMH WWII General Miscellany, MHI; *TSC*, 365n (*ample reinforcements had been positioned*); corr, K. W. D. Strong to FCP, Aug. 31, 1951, NARA RG 319, *SC* background files, 2-3.7 CB 8 (*chose not to trouble* Eisenhower); OH, Edwin L. Sibert, May 11, 1951, FCP, NARA RG 319, *SC* background files, 2-3.7 CB 8 ("*I don't think they will come*"). Bradley grew sufficiently concerned that he told Sibert he wanted Eisenhower to reinforce him with the 12th Armored Division.

Perhaps the only true prescience: *TT*, 52 ("*has* not *been a rout*"); Third Army intel summaries, Dec. 7 and 14, 1944, Oscar W. Koch papers, MHI, box 12 ("*large panzer concentration*" and *persistent mystery*); Blumenson, *Patton: The Man Behind the Legend, 1885–1945*, 245 (*vulnerability of VIII Corps*); *TSC*, 366–67; *PP*, 582 ("*The First Army is making a terrible mistake*").

Yet in other Allied high councils a confident swagger: "Strategy of the Campaign in Western Europe, 1944–1945," n.d., USFET, General Board study no. 1, 69; Hinsley, 563 ("*sudden attack in the West*"); OH, Edwin L. Sibert, May 11, 1951, FCP, NARA RG 319, *SC* background files, 2-3.7 CB 8 (*punch up the prose*); *TSC*, 369n; intel summary no. 18, 12th AG, Dec. 12, 1944, Oscar W. Koch papers, MHI, box 11 ("*Attrition is steadily sapping*"); Royce L. Thompson, "American Intelligence on the German Counteroffensive," vol. 1, Nov. 1949, CMH, 2-3.7 AE P-1 ("*given time and fair weather*").

Montgomery needed no ghostwriter: Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 587n ("*cannot stage major offensive operations*").

"*I still have nine days*": *TSC*, 370n.

Marlene Dietrich cut a wide swath: Weintraub, *11 Days in December*, 28–30; Atkinson, "Ghost of a Chanteuse," *WP*, May 7, 1996; Joseph Edgar Martin, "From Casblanca to Berchtesgaden: A Memoir of World War II," 2003, a.p., 53 (*sequined gown*); Goolrick and Tanner, *The Battle of the Bulge*, 41 (*lipstick autographs*); Kennett, *G.I.: The American Soldier in World War II*, 202 (*eleven pistols*); Codman, *Drive*, 200–201 ("*the first girl laughed*"); Spoto, *Blue Angel*, 196–200 ("*how could it have been Eisenhower?*").

On a rainy Thursday evening, December 14: corr, Malcolm Richard Wilkey, March 7, 1983, CBM, MHI, box 1, 3; *TT*, 96–97; McManus, *Alamo in the Ardennes*, 33.

The U.S. Army's Guide to the Cities of Belgium: Schrijvers, *The Crash of Ruin*, 31, 213; *Ardennes*, 238 ("*quiet paradise*"); Babcock, *Taught to Kill*, 63 ("*crisp and sunny day*"); Richard Henry Byers, "Battle of the Bulge," 1983, a.p., 22–23 ("*I'll be getting fat*"); Toland, *Battle*, 18 (*sang while eating crackers*); Blunt, *Foot Soldier*, 108; OH, Albert Handaly, ROHA, http://oralhistory.rutgers.edu/Interviews/handaly_albert.html* (*death notifications*).

Among visitors to the First Army headquarters: Benjamin A. Dickson, "G-2 Journal: Algiers to the Elbe," MHI, 180–83; Sylvan, 211; Hogan, *A Command Post at War*, 207, 212 (*worn down by fatigue*); Holt, *The Deceivers*, 657 ("*The retreat we beat*").

Ten thousand Belgian civilians: Schrijvers, *The Unknown Dead*, 12 ("*connected with Germany*"); corr, Ralph G. Hill, Jr., Nov. 10, 1973, Maurice Delaval collection, MHI, box 9 (*Army trucks then hauled the beef*); *TT*, 127–28 (*Another roundup*); corr, John I. Hungerford, June 26, 1957, JT, LOC MS Div, box 36 ("*cornfield forest*"); Marshall, *A Ramble Through My War*, 170 ("*Go easy, boys*").

Of the 341,000 soldiers in the U.S. First Army: Royce L. Thompson, "Ardennes Campaign Statistics," Apr. 1952, OCMH, NARA RG 319, E 97, *LSA* vol. 1, background files, box 7; *Ardennes*, 56; corr, Troy H. Middleton to theater historians, July 30, 1945, NARA RG 498, ETOUSA HD, UD 584; *TSC*, 371; Price, *Troy H. Middleton: A Biography*, 212–13 (*phony shoulder flashes*); John C. Hollinger, "The Operations of the 422nd Infantry Regiment," 1949, Infantry School, Ft. Benning, Ga. (*frontages*); Lauer, *Battle Babies*, 6–7.

For much of the fall, four veteran U.S. divisions: *SLC*, 612–15; Beck, 461 (*eighteen-year-old draftees*); Alan W. Jones, Jr., "The Operations of the 423rd Infantry," 1949, IS, 6 (*across the Losheim Gap*).

As with so many newer divisions: John C. Hollinger, "The Operations of the 422nd Infantry Regiment," 1949, IS (*seven thousand men had been transferred*); OH, "German Breakthrough in the Ardennes," 106th ID, n.d., NARA RG 407, E 427-A (*arriving at Le Havre*); Dupuy, *St. Vith: Lion in the Way*, 15–16 ("*numb, soaked, and frozen*").

Few soldiers of the 106th had ever heard: corr, John I. Hungerford, June 26, 1957, JT, LOC MS Div, box 36; Alan W. Jones, Jr., "The Operations of the 423rd Infantry," 1949, IS, 8 (*calibration of new sets*); OH, "German Breakthrough in the Ardennes," 106th ID, n.d., NARA RG 407, E 427-A (*shortages of winter clothing*); Rosser L. Hunter, IG report, "Action of 106th Infantry Division," Jan. 26, 1945, NARA RG 338, FUSA AG, 333.9, 1 ("*aggressive defense*"); report, M. C. Shattuck, VIII Corps, Dec. 13, 1944, NARA

RG 498, G-3 OR, box 9 (*German war dogs*).

"*The woods are of tall pines*": Richard Henry Byers, "Battle of the Bulge," 1983, a.p., 14; "The Losheim Gap," n.d., ETO HD, NARA RG 498, UD 584, box 4; OH, Mark Devine, 14th Cavalry Group, n.d., NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, folder #329 ("*sugar bowls*").

"*It has been very quiet*": Dupuy, *St. Vith: Lion in the Way*, 15–16.

Straw and rags muffled gun wheels: *Ardennes*, 70; OH, Hasso von Manteuffel, Oct. 12, 1966, John S. D. Eisenhower, CBM, MHI, box 6, 21–22 (*authorized to shoot out tires*); Parker, ed., *The Battle of the Bulge: The German View*, 139–40 (*portaged ammunition*); memo, Walter Model, "Maximum Performance Without Sleep," Dec. 17, 1944, NARA RG 498, ETOUSA HD, UD 584 ("*strengthening foods*"); Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 582 ("*Some believe in living*").

Two hundred thousand assault troops: *Ardennes*, 72–73, 650.

"*Tomorrow brings the beginning*": ibid., 74.

In the red-roofed Belgian army barracks: *TT*, 189; Price, *Troy H. Middleton: A Biography*, 215–16 (*champagne corks*); Weigley, *Eisenhower's Lieutenants*, 121 ("*outstanding infantry regimental commander*").

A few miles to the east, the faint clop: *Ardennes*, 194, 63 ("*Nothing to report*"); Royce L. Thompson, "Weather of the Ardennes Campaign," Oct. 2, 1953, CMH, 22.

Chapter 9: The Bulge

A Rendezvous in Some Flaming Town

Sheets of flame leaped: Richard Henry Byers, "Battle of the Bulge," 1983, a.p., 26; OH video, I&R platoon, 394th Inf, 99th ID, compiled by NWWIIM, 2008 ("*the end of the world*").

For some, yes: OH, 14th Cavalry Group, n.d., NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, folder 329; Dupuy, *St. Vith: Lion in the Way*, 3; OH video, I&R platoon, 394th Inf, 99th ID, compiled by NWWIIM, 2008 ("*The whole German army*").

The battle was joined, this last great grapple: As described later in this chapter, Operation NORDWIND, effectively a coda to the Bulge attack, was the last substantial German offensive in the west (OH, 99th ID, Jan. 1945, NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, folder 209; *Ardennes*, 82).

Es geht um das Ganze: "Intelligence Notes on the Breakthrough," 99th ID, G-2, n.d., CBM, MHI, box 4.

No man embraced the field marshal's sentiments: Royce L. Thompson, "The ETO Ardennes Campaign: Operations of the Combat Group Peiper," July 24, 1952, CMH; *Ardennes*, 260–61; http://www.ss501panzer.com/Trail_KG_Peiper.htm.

As commander of the 1st SS Panzer Regiment: *TT*, 198–99, 462–63; "Malmedy Massacre Investigation," U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee, Oct. 1949 (*Blow Torch Battalion*); Bauserman, *The Malmédy Massacre*, 5–6; MMB, 418; Reynolds, *The Devil's Adjutant*, 25 (*Two brothers, also SS men*); memo, European Command judge advocate, March 28, 1949, CMH, LAW 2-7, 2. (*Hitler's orders to wield fear*).

In early December, after a test run: "An Interview with Obst Joachim Peiper," ETHINT 10, Sept. 7, 1945, MHI, 2–3, 7, 13–14 ("*these roads were not for tanks*").

Both German and American mines cost Peiper: ibid., 15; Eisenhower, *The Bitter Woods*, 218; Royce L. Thompson, "The ETO Ardennes Campaign: Operations of the Combat Group Peiper," July 24, 1952, CMH (*clattered into Honsfeld*); *TT*, 203; *Ardennes*, 261; "The Battle of the Bulge," *AB*, no. 4 (1974): 1+ (*stripped boots*).

German intelligence had correctly identified: *Ardennes*, 261, 91; Royce L. Thompson, "The ETO Ardennes Campaign: Operations of the Combat Group Peiper," July 24, 1952, CMH. "An Interview with Obst Joachim Peiper," ETHINT 10, Sept. 7, 1945, MHI, 16 (*fifty thousand gallons*). The official Army history contends that fifty American soldiers were murdered in Büllingen, but Charles B. MacDonald, a particularly capable historian, asserts that a single GI was murdered there (*TT*, 206–9).

This serendipity proved catastrophic for Battery B: Bauserman, *The Malmédy Massacre*, ix; Schrijvers, *The Unknown Dead*, 37–38 ("*Boches!*"); *TT*, 213–15.

Boches there were, and in a particularly foul mood: Royce L. Thompson, "The ETO Ardennes Campaign: Operations of the Combat Group Peiper," July 24, 1952, CMH; Bauserman, *The Malmédy Massacre*, 40–50, 62; Schrijvers, *The Unknown Dead*, 37 (*captors stripped them of rings*).

"Da kriegt noch einer Luft": Bauserman, *The Malmédy Massacre*, 67.

"*I was wounded in the left arm*": affidavit, Homer D. Ford, in memo to ONB, Dec. 29, 1944, NARA RG 498, ETOUSA HD, UD 584;

Ed Cunningham, "The Battle of the Bulge," *Yank*, March 2, 1945, in *Reporting World War 2*, 582 ("*then the click*").

For twenty minutes executioners prowled: *TT*, 219; author interviews, Bastogne, 50th anniversary, Battle of the Bulge, Dec. 17, 1994 (*claret color*).

Unaware for the moment that his minions: "An Interview with Obst Joachim Peiper," ETHINT 10, Sept. 7, 1945, MHI, 16–17; "The Battle of the Bulge," *AB*, no. 4 (1974): 1+ (*wolfing down the lunch*); *TT*, 229 (*killing seven. The eighth fled*).

"*God made me to know him*": McNally, *As Ever, John*, 57–58.

Twilight had fallen when Pieper reached: *Ardennes*, 265–66; Royce L. Thompson, "The ETO Ardennes Campaign: Operations of the Combat Group Peiper," July 24, 1952, CMH (*strung out for twenty-five kilometers*).

Behind him, near Malmédy: Bauserman, *The Malmédy Massacre*, 83 (*word of the massacre passed*); author interviews, Bastogne, 50th anniversary, Battle of the Bulge, Dec. 17, 1994 (*Vows to give no quarter*); Linderman, *The World Within War*, 139; war diary, Ninth Army, Dec. 23, 1944, William H. Simpson papers, MHI, box 11 ("*American troops are now refusing*").

Peiper had bored a small, vicious hole: *Ardennes*, 78, 101–6; Brower, ed., *World War II in Europe: The Final Year*, 225 ("*red nightmare*"); Lauer, *Battle Babies*, 17, 42 (*flame pits*); OH, 99th ID, Jan. 1945, NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, folder 209 (*bayoneting GIs*).

"*One of our young lieutenants*": Brower, ed., *World War II in Europe: The Final Year*, 225; OH, 99th ID, Jan. 1945, NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, folder 209; Richard Henry Byers, "Battle of the Bulge," 1983, a.p., 33–34 (*killed their own major*), 32 ("I've a rendezvous with death"*)*; *TT*, 179 (*played a piano*); *Ardennes*, 123 (*climb to two thousand*).

Two towns, actually: Royce L. Thompson, "Tank Fight of Rocherath-Krinkelt," Feb. 13, 1952, CMH, 2-37 AE P-12, 2–8; Toland, *Battle*, 80 ("*more like postmen*").

A full-throated German assault: Royce L. Thompson, "Tank Fight of Rocherath-Krinkelt," Feb. 13, 1952, CMH, 2-37 AE P-12, 4; Reynolds, *Men of Steel*, 87 ("*perfect panzer graveyard*").

At dusk on Tuesday, with the last remnants: USAREUR staff ride, Elsenborn, Dec. 5–8, 2001 (*unmarked on Belgian military maps*).

Corps gunners muscled hundreds of tubes: *Blue Spaders*, 99–100 (*Tiger tanks being dropped by parachute*), 99 ("*worry no longer*"); Richard Henry Byers, "Battle of the Bulge," 1983, a.p., 32 ("*throw back my head*").

Just so. At the moment when artillery prowess: Albert H. Smith, Jr., ed., "Biographical Sketches," n.d., Stanhope Mason papers, MRC FDM, 1994.126.

Here for three days and nights: Wheeler, *The Big Red One*, 353–57; Knickerbocker et al., *Danger Forward*, 341 ("*Attack repulsed"*); *Blue Spaders*, 104 (*"We are killing"*).

The heaviest blows fell: corr, Derrill M. Daniel to JT, "The Operations of the 2nd Battalion, 26th Infantry, at Dom Bütgenbach," June 9, 1958, CBM, MHI, box 2; *TT*, 404–5; *Blue Spaders*, 105; *Ardennes*, 129–32; Rivette, "The Hot Corner at Dom Bütgenbach," *IJ* (Oct. 1945): 19+ (*Thursday brought worse yet*).

"*Get me all the damned artillery*": *Blue Spaders*, 108; Rivette, "The Hot Corner at Dom Bütgenbach," *IJ* (Oct. 1945): 19+ (*finally winkled out the last defenders*).

Army patrols reported enemy dead: corr, Derrill M. Daniel to JT, "The Operations of the 2nd Battalion, 26th Infantry, at Dom Bütgenbach," June 9, 1958, CBM, MHI, box 2; *TT*, 406–7, 410–11 (*five thousand others were killed*).

But the American line held: Percy E. Schramm, "The Course of Events in the German Offensive in the Ardennes," n.d., FMS, #A-858, MHI, 4, 7; author visit, 1st ID memorial, Dom Bütgenbach, June 2, 2009; Cirillo, "Ardennes-Alsace," 16; *TT*, 410; Westphal, *The German Army in the West*, 183 (*muscle-bound and clumsy*). Dietrich later claimed that one-quarter of his tanks had been immobilized by various misfortunes simply in moving to the line of departure (USAREUR staff ride, Elsenborn, Dec. 5–8, 2001).

The Americans by contrast demonstrated agility: MacDonald, "The Neglected Ardennes," *Military Review* (Apr. 1963): 74+; Charles V. von Lüttichau, "Key Dates During the Ardennes Offensive," part 2, April 1952, NARA RG 319, R-series, #11, 104–8 (" *the Elsenborn attack is gaining*"); "Answers to Questions Asked General Westphal," 1954, FMS, #A-896, MHI, 8–9 (*tactical fortunes of Dietrich*). The formal shift of emphasis from north to south occurred on Dec. 20 (*Ardennes*, 134–35).

Two armored corps abreast had come down: *TT*, 130–31; David E. Wright, "The Operations of the 1st Battalion, 110th Infantry," 1948, IS, 7 (*Cota's 28th Division*); Royce L. Thompson, "American Intelligence on the German Counteroffensive," vol. 2, "Division Level," March 1949, CARL, N-16829.2, 140–41 (*found themselves fighting five*).

As artillery and mortar barrages shredded: *Ardennes*, 181–82; Phillips, *To Save Bastogne*, 52; AAR, 28th ID, Unit Report No. 6, Dec. 1944, JT, LOC MS Div, box 34 (*German infiltrators forded the Our*); corr, Bill Jarrett, May 23, 1945, Norman D. Cota papers,

DDE Lib, box 2 ("*While I was being searched*"); *Ardennes*, 188 ("*clay pipes*"), 198–99 ("*not healthy anymore*").

Yet as in the north, frictions and vexations: *TT*, 143–44; *Ardennes*, 186 (*Engineers eventually built two spans*); "The Breakthrough to Bastogne," vol. 2, n.d., CMH, 8-3.1 AR, 4–6 (*reduced traffic to a crawl*).

On the American right, where four infantry divisions: *Ardennes*, 212–13; Ent, ed., *The First Century*, 176 (*would fall back slowly for four miles*). Seventh Army took several days to throw five bridges across the Our. Jacobsen and Rohwer, eds., *Decisive Battles of World War II: The German View*, 405–6.

On Cota's left, two battlion kitchens: corr, Gustin M. Nelson, CO, 112th Inf, to father, May 1945, CBM, MHI, box 3; *Ardennes*, 193; Ent, ed., *The First Century*, 174.

That left Cota a single regiment: The 110th Inf also had only two infantry battalions on line, with the third held to the west in division reserve ("The Breakthrough to Bastogne," vol. 2, n.d., CMH, 8-3.1 AR, 4–6).

Here Manteuffel swung his heaviest blow: *Ardennes*, 176–77, 190–91 (*barricaded themselves*); Jacobsen and Rohwer, eds., *Decisive Battles of World War II: The German View*, 394–95 (*under a Führer order*); *Clervaux en Ardennes*, 12, 26–27 (*John the Blind*); Toland, *Battle*, 99 (*pleas for salvation*).

A mile up the road, in the three-story Hotel: author visit, Clervaux, June 3, 2009; AAR, 110th Inf, n.d., JT, LOC MS Div, box 35 (*advised Cota by radio*); Toland, *Battle*, 88 ("*Hold at all costs*").

At 7:30 on Sunday evening: *TT*, 276–79; AAR, 110th Inf, n.d., JT, LOC MS Div, box 35; corr, Hurley E. Fuller to Norman D. Cota, Feb. 22, 1945, Cota papers, DDE Library, box 2 (*Within hours Fuller had been captured*).

The castle too was burning: McManus, *Alamo in the Ardennes*, 93–94, 143; Phillips, *To Save Bastogne*, 142–43 (*garrison hoisted a white flag*); Jos. Märtz, "Luxemburg in der Rundstedt-Offensive," JT, LOC MS Div, box 39, 144 (*German looting*); Margaret Henry Fleming, "With the American Red Cross in the Battle of the Bulge," n.d., Columbus WWII Round Table Collection, MHI, box 1 ("*Of course we're open*").

Not far from Clervaux, frightened civilians: diary, "First Army," Dec. 19, 1944, JT, LOC MS Div, box 36; *Ardennes*, 226 (*fled Diekirch in bitter cold*); Weintraub, *11 Days in December*, 40 (*Christmas packages and letters*); "The Breakthrough to Bastogne," vol. 2, n.d., CMH, 8-3.1 AR, 31, 37–40 (*A gaggle of Army bandsmen*).

"*This was the end*": *Ardennes*, 210–11; Daniel B. Stickler, XO, 110th Inf, "The Battle of the Bulge," n.d., CBM, MHI, box 3 (*radium-dial compasses*); McManus, *The Deadly Brotherhood*, 160 ("*laughing at me*").

The 110th Infantry had been annhilated: "The Breakthrough to Bastogne," vol. 2, n.d., CMH, 8-3.1 AR, 31, 40–41; Cirillo "Ardennes-Alsace," 25.

Only in the center of the German onslaught: Royce L. Thompson, "Intensity of Fighting on a Division Level: The Ordeal of the 106th ID," n.d., CMH, 2-3.7 AE P-5, 135; Dupuy, *St. Vith: Lion in the Way*, 35, 46 (*Siegfried Line pillboxes*); "The Defense of St. Vith, Belgium," n.d., AS, Ft. K, NARA RG 407, E 427, Miscl AG Records, #2280, 2–7 (*hoped to capture St.-Vith within a day*); *Ardennes*, 145 (*On no segment of the Western Front*), 147 ("*Take a ten-minute break"*); "The Losheim Gap," n.d., NARA RG 498, ETO HD, UD 584, 6–10.

Not for long, at least on the left flank: "VIII Corps Strength, 16 Dec 1944," n.d., CMH, 2-3.7, AE P-14 (*sixteen hundred troopers*); "The Losheim Gap," n.d., NARA RG 498, ETO HD, UD 584, 3–4, 18 (*put Manderfeld to the torch*); OH, 14th Cavalry Gp, NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, folder #329 ("*Your damn town"* and "*Tanks seventy-five yards"*); "The Losheim Gap," n.d., NARA RG 498, ETO HD, UD 584, 2, 14–16; *TT*, 117 (*the cavalry buckled*); Dupuy, *St. Vith: Lion in the Way*, 28–29 ("*Front lines still intact"*); affidavit, A. D. "Pat" Dugan, former XO, 14th Cavalry Gp, June 12, 1950, a.p., 2–4 (*knocked Devine to the floor*); "Report of Investigation, Action of 14th Cavalry Group," Jan. 29, 1945, IG, NARA RG 338, First Army AG Gen'l Corr (*eight of a dozen tank destroyers*).

Devine's behavior now grew odd: corr, M. A. Devine, Jr., to "Gen. Searcy," Feb. 27, 1945, and handwritten notes, n.d., a.p. (*eating bread, cheese*); affidavit, W. M. Hoge, 4th AD, Apr. 20, 1945, a.p. (*thought his demeanor unremarkable*); testimony, Henry B. Perrine, ADC, 106th ID, and William C. Baker, Jr., chief of staff, 106th ID, in IG memo, Feb. 2, 1945, NARA RG 338, First Army AG Gen'l Corr, box 222 ("*almost incoherent*").

Instead, at daybreak on Sunday Devine: *Ardennes*, 162–64. On his first two visits to St.-Vith, Devine took a French liaison officer, Aspirant George Guderin (Affidavit, G. Guderin, March 12, 1945, a.p.).

"*The Germans are right behind us*": Toland, *Battle*, 66 ("*They've broken through"*); Morelock, *Generals of the Ardennes*, 338–39; Rosser L. Hunter, "Action of 106th Infantry Division," IG, Jan. 26, 1945, NARA RG 338, FUSA AG, 333.9, 1–6; "Report of Investigation, Action of 14th Cavalry Group," Jan. 29, 1945, IG, NARA RG 338, First Army AG Gen'l Corr; "The Losheim Gap," n.d., NARA RG 498, ETO HD, UD 584, 28, 32.

At dusk on Sunday, Devine set out: OH, 14th Cavalry Gp, NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, folder #329.

Thwarted by torrents of traffic: corr, Lawrence J. Smith, former 14th Cav S-3, to CBM, Oct. 22, 1983, CBM, MHI, box 5 (*disheveled, incoherent)*; testimony, William F. Damon, Jr., in IG memo, Feb. 2, 1945, NARA RG 338, First Army AG Gen'l Corr, box 222 ("*I want you to take over*"); affidavit, Robert N. Pritchard, n.d., a.p. (*evacuated to Vielsalm*).

A battalion surgeon later found Devine: testimony, Clark P. Searle, surgeon, 820th Tank Bn, in IG memo, Feb. 2, 1945, NARA RG 338, First Army AG Gen'l Corr, box 222. Even before the war ended, and for five years subsequently, Devine sought to explain his actions. Gen. Middleton described him as "better than the average officer" (Corr, Troy H. Middleton, July 20, 1949, a.p.).

The damage had been done: memo, "Action of 106th Infantry Division," First Army IG to chief of staff, Jan. 26, 1945, NARA RG 338, First Army AG Gen'l Corr; *Ardennes*, 90–91 (*American left flank abruptly unhinged*); "The Losheim Gap," n.d., NARA RG 498, ETO HD, UD 584, 12, 32.

In St.-Vith, General Jones, a stocky native: Persons, *Relieved of Command*, 159–61; *Ardennes*, 155–57.

"*You know how things are up there*": *TT*, 128–29; OH, Troy H. Middleton, July 30, 1945, theater historian, NARA RG 498, ETOUSA HD, UD 584 ("*He felt that he could hold*").

Jones also believed that help was on the way: Morelock, *Generals of the Ardennes*, 295; Rosser L. Hunter, "Action of 106th Infantry Division," IG, Jan. 26, 1945, NARA RG 338, FUSA AG, 333.9, 1–6 (*VIII Corps promised*); Dupuy, *St. Vith: Lion in the Way*, 113–14 ("*indescribable confusion*"); "The Defense of St. Vith, Belgium," n.d., AS, Ft. K, NARA RG 407, E 427, Miscl AG Records, #2280, 9–10 ("*every dog for himself*"); Baldwin, *Battles Lost and Won*, 329 ("*fear-crazed occupants*").

By midday on Sunday: *TT*, 322–23 (*gallstone*); Clarke, "The Battle for St. Vith," *Armor* (Nov.–Dec. 1974): 1+ ("*some trouble"*); Morelock, *Generals of the Ardennes*, 295–300 ("*enough troubles already*").

The crackle of small-arms fire: http://www.cellitinnen-osa.de/en/geschichte-teil3.html; *TT*, 327 ("*thrown in my last chips"*); Clarke, "The Battle for St. Vith," *Armor* (Nov.–Dec. 1974): 1+ ("*You take it now*"); Rosser L. Hunter, "Action of 106th Infantry Division," IG, Jan. 26, 1945, NARA RG 338, FUSA AG, 333.9, 5 (*joined the frantic exodus*).

Jones's stand-fast decision: "The Losheim Gap," n.d., NARA RG 498, ETO HD, UD 584, 32; *Ardennes*, 165–67; "Report of Action Against Enemy," 106th ID, Jan. 6, 1945, Alan W. Jones papers, MHI, box 1; John C. Hollinger, "The Operations of the 422nd Infantry Regiment," IS, 1949 ("*absolutely no expression*").

"*My poor men*": *TT*, 340.

Cooks made towering stacks of pancakes: John P. Kline, "The Service Diary of German War Prisoner #315136," n.d., CBM, MHI, box 2; OH, 106th ID, "German Breakthrough in the Ardennes," n.d., NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, folders 244–245a (*compass azimuth*); Dupuy, *St. Vith: Lion in the Way*, 123 ("*Where the hell are we?"*); "Report on Allied Air Force Operations," May 21, 1945, SHAEF, A-3, CARL, N-9371; Royce L. Thompson, "Air Resupply to Isolated Units, Ardennes Campaign," Feb. 1951, CMH, 2-3.7 AE P, 2–3, 26–29 ("*command incoordination*").

"*Attack Schönberg*": *TT*, 340.

At daybreak on Tuesday, three battalions : OH, 106th ID, "German Breakthrough in the Ardennes," n.d., NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, folders 244–245a; corr, George A. Curtis, Sept. 7, 1957, CBM, MHI, box 4 ("*this isn't exactly as we planned*").

By one P.M.*, at least one battalion*: memo, Distinguished Unit Citation nomination, 423rd Inf, CBM, MHI, box 4; "A Glimpse of War," n.d., submitted by Robert Fullam, NWWIIM, 9 ("*their skin that yellow-white*"); OH, 106th ID, "German Breakthrough in the Ardennes," n.d., NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, folders 244–245a ("*Go blow it out your ass*"); Alan W. Jones, Jr., "The Operations of the 423rd Infantry," IS, 1949, 26 (*Spirits soared for a moment*).

At 2:30 P.M.*, with two thousand of his men*: http://www.purplehearts.net/descheneaux/descheneaux.htm ("*like fish in a pond*"); OH, 106th ID, "German Breakthrough in the Ardennes," n.d., NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, folders 244–245a ("*Destroy all weapons*"); *TT*, 343–45 (*Descheneaux sat on the lip*); memo, Distinguished Unit Citation nomination, 423rd Inf, CBM, MHI, box 4; Leo R. Leisse, "Diary of an Ex-P.O.W.," n.d., CBM, MHI, box 5, 2–4 (*Cavender had reached the same conclusion*); Richard A. Hartman, "The Combat History of the 590th Field Artillery Battalion," 1949, CBM, MHI, box 2 ("*We surrender*").

A few diehards lay low: *Ardennes*, 170; Morelock, *Generals of the Ardennes*, 275 ("*I've lost a division quicker*"); memos, Jan. 26 and March 8, 1945, 365th Station Hospital, Alan W. Jones papers, MHI, box 1 ("*Detachment of Patients*"); Winton, *Corps Commanders of the Bulge*, 253–56, 412.

Long columns of prisoners plodded: John P. Kline, "The Service Diary of German War Prisoner #315136," CBM, MHI, box 2 (*wounded men wailing*); OH, Jacques Peterges, Aug. 5, 1981, and Adolf Schür, Aug. 10, 1981, CBM, MHI, box 6 (*catcalling*); William P. Kirkbridge, "Negotiations for the Surrender at Losheimergraben," n.d., Richard H. Byers papers, 99th ID, MHI, box 1 ("*tanks towing other tanks*").

"*Do not flee*": corr, John I. Hungerford to JT, June 26, 1957, CBM, MHI, box 4; Leo R. Leisse, "Diary of an Ex-P.O.W.," n.d., CBM, MHI, box 5, 3–4 (*back to belly*); Roger S. Durham, "The Past Is Present: The World War II Service of George E. Durham," 1996, a.p., 174–75 (*potato skins*); John P. Kline, "The Service Diary of German War Prisoner #315136," n.d., CBM, MHI, box 2 ("*made us take off our overshoes*").

"*Bayonets aren't much good*": Carroll, *Behind the Lines*, 318–20.

"*Success—complete success*": *TT*, 193.

"Why Are You Not Packing?"

A leaden overcast in Luxembourg City: Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 449 (*Coca-Cola* and "*lifeless chimneys*"); war diaries, Dec. 16, 1944, ONB papers, MHI; "Destroy the Enemy," *Time*, Dec. 4, 1944; Weintraub, *11 Days in December*, 54–55 ("*There's been a complete breakthrough*").

Shortly before three P.M., *a SHAEF colonel*: memo, "Conference in War Room," Dec. 16, 1944, Harold R. Bull papers, DDE Lib, box 2; "Excerpts from Diary, D/SAC," Dec. 16, 1944, NARA RG 319, *SC* background files, 2-3.7 CB 8; Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 449; Strong, *Intelligence at the Top*, 212–17 ("*it would be wrong to underrate*").

Eisenhower and Bradley dined that night: http://www.ibiblio.org/lia/president/EisenhowerLibrary/_General_Materials/DDE_Biography.html (*ascended from lieutenant colonel to general*); Miller, *Ike the Soldier*, 723 (*Piper Scotch*); diary, Dec. 17, 1944, CBH, MHI, box 4 (*five rubbers of bridge*).

Eisenhower in a subsequent cable to Marshall: *TSC*, 375, 376n; *TT*, 186 ("*Tell him that Ike*").

Other moves quickly followed: DDE, "The Battle of the Ardennes Salient," Dec. 23, 1944, Sidney H. Negrotto papers, MHI; *Ardennes*, 334 (*Army tactical doctrine*); *TSC*, 380 ("*By rushing out*"); Strong, *Intelligence at the Top*, 219 ("*Why are you not packing?*").

In a message to Marshall: Chandler, 2368; war diaries, Dec. 17, 1944, ONB papers, MHI (*at least fourteen German divisions*); diary, Dec. 17, 1944, CBH, MHI, box 4 (*sedatives*); memoir, H. Wentworth Eldredge, n.d., Thaddeus Holt papers, MHI (*buried secret documents*).

Still Bradley affected nonchalance: diary, Dec. 17, 1944, Raymond G. Moses papers, MHI, box 1 ("*Rhine crossing plan*"); diary, Dec. 18, 1944, CBH, MHI, box 4 ("*I don't take too serious*"). Gen. Sibert, the army group G-2, continued to see the offensive as a "diversionary attack" that "cannot be regarded as a major long term threat" (*TT*, 190).

Among those who no longer agreed: *Ardennes*, 332 (*engineer company*); memoir, H. Wentworth Eldredge, n.d., Thaddeus Holt papers, MHI ("*Oh, what a beautiful mornin'*"); Carpenter, *No Woman's World*, 209 ("*briskly up, over, and across*").

Fourteen First Army divisions: *Ardennes*, 259; "The Defense of St. Vith, Belgium," n.d., AS, Ft. K, NARA RG 407, E 427, Miscl AG Records, #2280, 5–6 (*165-mile front*); Knickerbocker et al., *Danger Forward*, 338 (*Church bells*); "Defense of Spa," 518th M.P. Bn, n.d., in "History of the Ardennes Campaign," NARA RG 498, ETOUSA HD, UD 584, box 2 (*civilian curfew*); Middleton, *Our Share of Night*, 341 (*tin pans and crockery*); Carpenter, *No Woman's World*, 205–6 (*perimeter strongpoints*); Rosengarten, "With Ultra from Omaha Beach to Weimar, Germany," *Military Affairs* (Oct. 1978): 127+ (*German paratroopers*); Pogue, *Pogue's War*, 296–97 (*lawyers and accountants*).

Soldiers in muddy boots tromped through the Britannique: "Defense of Spa," 518th M.P. Bn, n.d., in "History of the Ardennes Campaign," NARA RG 498, ETOUSA HD, UD 584, box 2 (*twenty-one jailed collaborators*); Pogue, *Pogue's War*, 294 ("*Thermite grenades*"); Zuckerman, *From Apes to Warlords*, 312 (*among those building bonfires*); OH, Robert A. Hewitt, 1981, Earl D. Bevan, SOOHP, MHI, 175; Benjamin A. Dickson, "G-2 Journal: Algiers to the Elbe," MHI, 183 (*Kasserine Pass*).

Perhaps the prospect of a similar debacle: The most comprehensive account of this episode is to be found in Hogan, *A Command Post at War*, 212.

"*probably the most shaken man I have ever seen*": corr, E. N. Harmon to G. F. Howe, Oct. 21, 1952, OCMH, NARA RG 319, Howe papers, background files to *Northwest Africa*: *Seizing the Initiative in the West, USAWWII*; Bradley Commentaries, CBH, MHI, boxes 41–42 ("*almost went to pieces*"); Bolger, "Zero Defects: Command Climate in First U.S. Army, 1944–1945," *Military Review* (May 1991): 61+; OH, Adolph Rosengarten, Jr., Dec. 22, 1947, FCP, MHI (*considered relieving Hodges*).

Officers fussed over how to pack: Pogue, *Pogue's War*, 296–97 ("*I imagine that the Germans*"); Sylvan, 225 (*photos of President Roosevelt*); Carpenter, *No Woman's World*, 212 ("*take my child*"); memo, IG, March 21, 1945, NARA RG 338, First Army AG General Corr, box 223 (*bolting for Huy*); Royce L. Thompson, "Military Impact of the German V-Weapons, 1943–1945," July 31, 1953, CMH, 2-3.7 AE-P-4, 38 (*V-1s hit two fleeing convoys*).

When Hodges tarried at the Britannique: Carpenter, *No Woman's World*, 213 ("*Save yourself*"); OH, JLC, 1972, Charles C. Sperow, SOOHP, MHI, 229–30; Sylvan, 221 (*opened at midnight*); Morelock, *Generals of the Ardennes*, 150 (*food simmering*).

A British liasion officer: Hastings, *Armageddon*, 205–7; Hogan, *A Command Post at War*, 217 (*flagged down passing truck drivers*), 223 (*not until a week into the German offensive*); Morelock, *Generals of the Ardennes*, 150 (*uncertain where the First Army command post*); corr, Weldon Hogie to family, Dec. 30, 1944, "Letters Back Home," a.p., 82–83 ("*We can't lose three months' gains*").

Evacuation of the vast supply dumps: "Operational History of the Advance Section, COMZ," n.d., NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #583F, 109; Robert M. Littlejohn, ed., "Battle of the Bulge," 1955, chapter 21, PIR, MHI, 3–4 (*stocks could be found in the rear*); Fest, "The German Ardennes Offensive: A Study in Retrograde Logistics," *Ordnance* (Feb. 1983): 51+; Wendt, "Logistics in Retrograde Movements," *Military Review* (July 1948): 34+.

Three miles of primacord: "Ardennes, Supply Installations, Withdraw of," FUSA, Apr. 29, 1945, NARA RG 498, ETOUSA HD, UD 584, box 2; Cooper, *Death Traps*, 183 (*fuel dump covered several square miles*); "The Quartermaster in the Bulge," in "History of the Ardennes Campaign," NARA RG 498, ETOUSA HD, UD 584, box 2 (*ignited in a roadblock*); Wendt, "Logistics in Retrograde Movements," *Military Review* (July 1948): 34+.

Crows or starlings might have been mistaken: "Kampfgruppe von der Heydte," FMS, #B-823, JT, LOC MS Div, box 38; interrogation, F. von der Heydte, Oct. 31, 1945, London, NARA RG 407, E 427, ML #1068; *Ardennes*, 271.

Operation GREIF, or "condor": DOB, 244 (*flamboyant Viennese commando*); *Ardennes*, 270 (*150th Armored Brigade*); Skorzeny, *Skorzeny's Special Missions*, 156–58; interrogation, Otto Skorzeny, n.d., ETHINT 12, CBM, box 12; Weingartner, "Otto Skorzeny and the Laws of War," *JMH* (Apr. 1991): 207+ (Casablanca).

found to be wearing swastika brassards: "The History of the CIC," n.d., Intelligence Center, Ft. Holabird, CBM, box 6, 2–3, 10–12, 19; memo, Richard F. Shappell to Hugh M. Cole, May 14, 1945, FUSA G-2, Operation GREIF, NARA RG 407, E 429, ML #994 (*sixteen infiltrators*); *Ardennes*, 559 (*without effecting a single act*), 360–63; Weingartner, "Otto Skorzeny and the Laws of War," *JMH* (Apr. 1991): 207+.

The sole accomplishment of GREIF: memo, C. Hodges to SHAEF, Dec. 20, 1944, NARA RG 331, E 1, SGS, "Assassins," box 8; "The History of the CIC," n.d., Intelligence Center, Ft. Holabird, CBM, box 6, 12; memo, FUSA to SHAEF, Dec. 22, 1944, NARA RG 331, E 1, SGS, "Assassins," box 8 ("*dueling scars*"); Toland, *Battle*, 158–59 (*brawling over a ballerina* and *nuns*); CI News Sheet No. 12, Dec. 26, 1944, 21st AG, in FUSA G-2, Operation GREIF, NARA RG 407, E 429, ML #994 (*sulfuric acid*); Paul E. Kohli, "Stavelot, Belgium, 16–18 December 1944," 1985, Columbus WWII Round Table collection, MHI, box 1, 5 (*spoke English better*); "The History of the CIC," n.d., Intelligence Center, Ft. Holabird, CBM, box 6, 18 (*top button of a uniform*); *Ardennes*, 559 ("*Belgian or French café keepers*").

MPs at checkpoints sought to distinguish: FUSA G-2, Operation GREIF, NARA RG 407, E 429, ML #994; "The History of the CIC," n.d., Intelligence Center, Ft. Holabird, CBM, box 6, 18 (*Sinatra's first name?*); Elstob, *Hitler's Last Offensive*, 189 (*Where is Little Rock?*); Capa, *Slightly Out of Focus*, 208 (*capital of Nebraska*); Pogue, *Pogue's War*, 302–3 ("*The capital is Frankfort*"); Weintraub, *11 Days in December*, 59 ("*Who won the World Series*"). Niven was attached to 12th Army Group as a liaison officer.

Cooks, bakers, and clerks were tutored: Price, *Troy H. Middleton: A Biography*, 223; memo to W. B. Smith, Dec. 21, 1944, NARA RG 331, E 1, SGS, "Assassins," box 8 (*gunned down four French civilians*); war diary, Dec. 22, 1944, Ninth Army, William H. Simpson papers, MHI, box 11 ("*get out of my way*"); Murphy, *Diplomat Among Warriors*, 239 ("*We deployed into the garden*").

a perfect body double: "The History of the CIC," n.d., Intelligence Center, Ft. Holabird, CBM, box 6, 14; *TT*, 226.

The real Eisenhower, traveling with Tedder: diary, Dec. 19–20, 1944, CBH, MHI, box 4; Baldwin, *Battles Lost and Won*, 335 ("*What the hell is this?*").

"*The present situation is to be regarded*": Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, 371.

Two staff officers reviewed the battlefront: "Record of Meeting," Dec. 19, 1944, Harold R. Bull papers, DDE Lib, box 2; *TT*, 419–20 (*seventeen German divisions*), 417 (*180,000 troops*); "Allied Air Power and the Ardennes Offensive," n.d., director of intelligence, USSAFE, NARA RG 498, ETOUSA HD, UD 584, box 1 (*Daily Luftwaffe sorties*); "Task Force Thrasher: History of the Defense of the Meuse River," 1945, NARA RG 407, ML #945, box 24198 (*Seven French infantry battalions*).

Eisenhower then spoke: "Record of Meeting," Dec. 19, 1944, Harold R. Bull papers, DDE Lib, box 2 ("*positive concerted action*"); "Counter-offensive Measures," SHAEF, Dec. 22, 1944, NARA RG 498, ETOUSA HD, UD 584, box 1 ("*a supply desert*"); *Ardennes*, 487; "The Intervention of the Third Army: III Corps in the Attack," n.d., CMH, 8-3.1 AR, I-1 (*three corps facing the Saar*).

"*George, how soon*": Verdun conference participants left varying accounts of this exchange, including one staff officer who recalled Patton saying he could attack in two days (OH, Reuben Jenkins, 6th AG G-3, Oct. 14, 1970, Thomas E. Griess, YCHT, 39–40). Most recalled a claim of three days. "Notes on Bastogne Operation," Third Army, Jan. 15, 1945, NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, "The Siege of Bastogne," folder #227.

"*On December 22*": *PP*, 599–600. John Nelson Rickard notes that some evidence suggests Patton may have proposed Dec. 21

(*Advance and Destroy*, 106).

Leaning forward, Eisenhower quickly calculated: OH, Reuben Jenkins, 6th AG G-3, Oct. 14, 1970, Thomas E. Griess, YCHT, 39–40; *TT*, 421 ("*Don't be fatuous*").

"*We can do that*": Hirshson, *General Patton: A Soldier's Life*, 577.

Before leaving the barracks, Patton phoned: "Notes on Bastogne Operation," Jan. 16, 1945, GSP, LOC MS Div, box 49, folder 13; Allen, *Lucky Forward*, 33 ("*Everyone is a son-of-a-bitch*").

"*Yes, and every time you get attacked*": Codman, *Drive*, 233–34; diary, Dec. 19, 1944, GSP, LOC MS Div, box 3, folder 9; diary, Dec. 19, 1944, CBH, MHI, box 4 ("*great expansive exuberance*").

"*There's something about the guy*": diary, Nov. 8, 1944, CBH, MHI, box 4.

Eisenhower had urged his lieutenants: "Record of Meeting," Dec. 19, 1944, Harold R. Bull papers, DDE Lib, box 2 ("*avoid any discouragement*").

British intelligence on Tuesday evening: Belchem, *All in the Day's March*, 247; msg, BLM to Brooke, Dec. 19, 1944, IWM, PP/MCR, C46, Ancillary Collections, micro R-1 ("*Ike ought to place me*"); *Ardennes*, 423–24 (*best be managed by two commanders*).

Bradley's subordinate generals to the north: *Ardennes*, 423–24; Merriam, *Dark December*, 123; Belchem, *All in the Day's March*, 248–49; notes, phone conversation, A. Coningham and James M. Robb, SHAEF, Dec. 22, 1944, DDE Lib, PP-pres, box 98 (*not a single staff officer*); OH, ONB, Dec. 1974 to Oct. 1975, Charles Hanson, MHI, VI, 34 ("*That would startle the people of Luxembourg*").

Rousted from his bed: Strong, *Intelligence at the Top*, 224–25.

As Whiteley and Strong slunk away: Bradley Commentaries, CBH, MHI, boxes 41–42; *Ardennes*, 423–24; *TT*, 422–23 (*drew a line on the map*).

"*Ike thinks it may be a good idea*": Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 476; Bradley and Blair, *A General's Life*, 363–64 ("*I'd question whether such a changeover*").

By Wednesday morning, when Eisenhower called: Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Soldier, General of the Army, President-Elect, 1890–1952*, vol. 1, 368; Strong, *Intelligence at the Top*, 226 ("*those are my orders*"), 233; OH, BLM, March 29, 1949, R. W. W. "Chester" Wilmot papers, LHC, LH 15/15/127 ("*I think you'd better take charge*").

At 12:52 P.M., a SHAEF log entry: corr, H. R. Bull to Hanson Baldwin, Sept. 12, 1946, Harold R. Bull papers, DDE Lib, box 2; OH, Arthur Coningham, Feb. 14, 1947, FCP, MHI ("*absolutely livid*").

Amid the dogs, goldfish, and singing canaries: Hamilton, *Monty: Final Years of the Field-Marshal, 1944–1976*, 181; Hastings, *Armageddon*, 205–7 ("*now have to pay the price*").

"*There is great confusion*": corr, BLM to A. Brooke, Dec. 19, 1944, IWM, PP/MCR, C-46, Ancillary Collections, micro R-1.

Little of this was true: Weigley, *Eisenhower's Lieutenants*, 505 ("*energy and verve*"); Sylvan, 223 ("*bedside conference*"); "Operations of 30 (Br) Corps During the German Attack in the Ardennes," n.d., NARA RG 498, ETOUSA HD, UD 584, box 2; Belchem, *All in the Day's March*, 247 (*piled carts*).

The field marshal himself arrived: OH, BLM, Oct. 1, 1966, John S. D. Eisenhower, CBM, MHI, box 6, 6; Hamilton, *Monty: Final Years of the Field-Marshal, 1944–1976*, 246 (*eight pullovers*); Carpenter, *No Woman's World*, 215–16 ("*Unwrapping the bearskin*"); Wishnevsky, *Courtney Hicks Hodges*, 161 ("*monkey on a stick*"); Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 592 ("*Christ come to cleanse*").

Three hours later they had both a plan: Hogan, *A Command Post at War*, 219–20; Belchem, *All in the Day's March*, 248–49 (*Hodges feared that two First Army divisions*); Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 593; *Ardennes*, 426–27; war diary, Ninth Army, Dec. 20, 1944, William H. Simpson papers, MHI, box 11 (*assemble a strike force*); "Operations of 30 (Br) Corps During the German Attack in the Ardennes," and tally of British equipment transfers, n.d., NARA RG 498, ETOUSA HD, UD 584, box 2 ("*enemy's hopes of bouncing*" and *British stocks*); "Combat Engineering," Aug. 1945, Historical Report No. 10, CEOH, box X-30, 89–90 (*all Meuse bridges*).

"*Hodges is not the man I would pick*": OH, W. B. Smith, May 8, 1947, FCP, MHI.

"*Hodges is the quiet reticent type*": Chandler, 2369.

SHAEF ordered the new command arrangement: "The Old Army Game," *Time* (Jan. 1, 1945): 45; Elstob, *Hitler's Last Offensive*, 462 ("*They seemed delighted*"); Hamilton, *Monty: Final Years of the Field-Marshal, 1944–1976*, 238 ("*a 1st Class bloody nose*").

As for Bradley: OH, James M. Robb, n.d., FCP, MHI (*Bronze Star*); Chandler, 2367–68 ("*I retain all my former confidence*").

Civilian refugees with woeful tales: "The Battle of Bastogne, 19–28 Dec. 44," n.d., Battle Studies, CMH, Geog Belgium 370.2, 2; Rapport and Northwood, *Rendezvous with Destiny*, 665 ("*ancient town in the dreariest part*"); "The Battle of the Bulge," *AB*, no. 4 (1974): 1+ ("*unattended vehicles*"); *TT*, 506–7 (*hundreds took refuge*).

The first paratroopers from the 101st Airborne: *Ardennes*, 305–9; Booth and Spencer, *Paratrooper*, 244 ("*Get out of the sack*"); Toland, *Battle*, 94 (*interrupted a ballet performance*).

Since leaving Holland in November: memo, MBR to Maxwell D. Taylor, Nov. 12, 1944, MBR papers, MHI, box 21 (*AWOL incidents*); Schrijvers, *The Crash of Ruin*, 171 (*drunken brawls*); Kennett, *G.I.: The American Soldier in World War II*, 209–10 (*troopers held contests*); Marshall, *Bastogne*, 10 (*in England with seventeen officers*); Blair, *Ridgway's Paratroopers*, 362, 513 (*killed himself with a pistol*).

Anthony Clement McAuliffee: MMB, 351. McAuliffe was born in Washington, D.C., and attended West Virginia University before West Point (http://www.arlingtoncemetery.net/amcauli.htm; http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anthony_McAuliffe#cite_note-2; "Gale Encyclopedia of Biography," http://www.answers.com/topic/anthony-mcauliffe; Blair, *Ridgway's Paratroopers*, 221, 336–37).

Several thousand replacement troopers: OH, A. C. McAuliffe, Jan. 2, 1945, Paris, in Brereton, *The Brereton Diaries*, 378–82; Bowen, *Fighting with the Screaming Eagles*, 161 ("*olives in a jar*"); "Bastogne," n.d., NARA RG 498, ETOUSA HD, UD 584 (*without helmets or rifles*); "Battle of the Bulge," 101st Airborne miscellany, NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, folder #229 (*emergency convoy*); OH, William L. Roberts, CCB, 10th AD, Jan. 12, 1945, NARA RG 407, E 427-A, folder #305 ("*fluid and obscure*"); "The Battle of Bastogne, 19–28 Dec. 44," n.d., Battle Studies, CMH, Geog Belgium 370.2, 2 (*first wounded*); *Ardennes*, 315; Price, *Troy H. Middleton: A Biography*, 248 (*in his Packard*).

Bearing down on Bastogne: *Ardennes*, 449, 229 (*Foot soldiers slouching westward*); Cirillo, "Ardennes-Alsace," 26; Ritgen, *Die Geschischte der Panzer-Lehr Division im Westen*, no pagination; "The Battle of the Bulge," *AB*, no. 4 (1974): 1+; Charles V. von Lüttichau, "Diary of Thuisko von Metzch," Army Group B, May 1952, and OH with von Metzch, n.d., NARA RG 319, R-series, #10, 25–26 (*Model now privately doubted*).

"*an abscess on our line*": Toland, *Battle*, 119.

Two straggling artillery battalions at Longvilly: *Ardennes*, 449, 303–4 ("*We're not driven out*"), 319–20.

No less vital in delaying the enemy: Price, *Troy H. Middleton: A Biography*, 230; OH, William R. Desobry, 1978, Ted S. Chesney, SOOHP, MHI ("*by guess and by God*"); Marshall, *Bastogne*, 57–59 (*ripped into nine panzers*).

All morning and through the afternoon: OH, William R. Desobry, 1978, Ted S. Chesney, SOOHP, MHI; AAR, 506th PIR, Jan. 8, 1945, in "Battle of the Bulge," NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, folder 229 (*pounded Noville to rubble*).

At midday on Wednesday, December 20: *Ardennes*, 454–55 ("*Situation critical*"); OH, R. Harwick, 506th PIR, n.d., HI (*four remaining Shermans*); *TT*, 500; McManus, *Alamo in the Ardennes*, 252; author visit, Noville, Bastogne, June 3, 2009, tourist pamphlet (*Gestapo agents*).

Strongpoints east of Bastogne, now reinforced: OH, J. Ewell, "Action of 501st Regiment at Bastogne," Jan. 6, 1945, NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, folder #230 ("*mantrap*"); OH, Stanfield Stach, 501st PIR, n.d., HI ("*We took no prisoners*"); Marshall, *Bastogne*, 76 ("*dam of fire*"); *Ardennes*, 456–58.

Little profit had been found in frontal assaults: *Ardennes*, 321; Jacobsen and Rohwer, eds., *Decisive Battles of World War II: The German View*, 405–6.

Among the few heartening reports: AAR, Albert J. Crandall, First Airborne Surgical Team, June 8, 1945, "Medical Department Activities in ETO," NARA; Rapport and Northwood, *Rendezvous with Destiny*, 468 ("*bullets were so close*"); "Bastogne," n.d., NARA RG 498, ETOUSA HD, UD 584 (*division surgeon*).

"Above all," Middleton had instructed: "Bastogne," n.d., NARA RG 498, ETOUSA HD, UD 584; "Report on Allied Air Forces Operations," SHAEF, May 21, 1945, CARL, N-9371 (*twenty-nine sorties in Europe*); Jacobsen and Rohwer, eds., *Decisive Battles of World War II: The German View*, 407–9 (*Resurgent optimism*).

At 11:30 on Friday morning: Rapport and Northwood, *Rendezvous with Destiny*, 510–11.

"*The fortune of war is changing*": Devlin, *Paratrooper!*, 529–30.

At 12:25 P.M. the ultimatum reached McAuliffe: "The Battle of Bastogne, 19–28 Dec. 44," n.d., Battle Studies, CMH, Geog Belgium 370.2, 3; "Bastogne," n.d., NARA RG 498, ETOUSA HD, UD 584; corr, Eugene A. Watts to CBM, Feb. 28, 1985, CBM, MHI, box 1; *Ardennes*, 459 (*only five battalions among the four regiments*); OH, William L. Roberts, CCB, 10th AD, Jan. 12, 1945, NARA RG 407, E 427-A, folder #305 (*mimeographed useful tips* and *two meals a day*); Marshall, *Bastogne*, 133–34 ("*whites of their eyes*");

Ardennes, 460–61 (*flapjacks*).

Perhaps inspired by the legendary epithet: John Glendower Westover, "Selected Memories," vol. 3, MHI, 56, 89–90; OH, Harry W. O. Kinnard, May 2004, author, Arlington, Va.

"*We will kill many Americans*": "Bastogne," n.d., NARA RG 498, ETOUSA HD, UD 584.

"*This is crazy*": OH, Hasso von Manteuffel, Oct. 12, 1966, John S. D. Eisenhower, CBM, MHI, box 6, 21.

The town had been named for Saint Vitus: http://saintvitus.com/SaintVitus/Catholic_Encyclopedia.html; http://www.catholic-saints.info/patron-saints/saint-vitus.htm; author visit, St.-Vith, June 2, 2009, signage (*Various unpleasantries*); http://st.vith.be/touristinfo/?Geschichtliches; Manteuffel assessment, 1964, in terrain study, Northern Army Group, June 1976, MHI, 11 (*German plan to occupy St.-Vith*).

Gunfights had erupted around the town: AAR, 106th ID, Jan. 6, 1945, Alan W. Jones papers, MHI, box 1; Morelock, *Generals of the Ardennes*, 306–7 (*easternmost U.S. redoubt*); *Ardennes*, 292–93 ("*German tide*").

With supply lines cut: *Ardennes*, 399 (*seven rounds*); AAR, 442nd FA Group, March 18, 1946, Robert W. Hasbrouck papers, MHI, box 1 ("*old propaganda shells*"); Donald P. Boyer, Jr., "Narrative Account of Action of 38th Armored Infantry Battalion," n.d., Robert W. Hasbrouck papers, MHI, box 1 ("*for every round fired*"); Schrijvers, *The Unknown Dead*, 169–70 (*burning slaughterhouse*); "Engineer Memoirs: General William M. Hoge," 1993, CEOH, 134 (*gobbled amphetamines*); Lauer, *Battle Babies*, 83 (*greasy smoke*); Ellis, *On the Front Lines*, 97 ("*cold, plodding, unwilling*"); memoir, Archie Ross, n.d., 424th Inf, NWWIIM ("*grow into an old man*").

Manteuffel on December 20: "The Defense of St. Vith, Belgium," n.d., AS, Ft. K, NARA RG 407, E 427, Miscl AG Records, #2280, 25; *Ardennes*, 404–6 (*flat-trajectory flares*); Donald P. Boyer, Jr., "Narrative Account of Action of 38th Armored Infantry Battalion," n.d., Robert W. Hasbrouck papers, MHI, box 1 ("*They're blasting my men*"); "The Defense of St. Vith, Belgium," n.d., Ft. K, AS, NARA RG 407, E 427, Miscl AG Records, #2280, 29 (*ordered his troops to fall back*); Blair, *Ridgway's Paratroopers*, 385; *TT*, 481 (*twenty thousand others*).

General Hodges had given XVIII Airborne Corps: war diary, XVIII Airborne Corps, Dec. 19, 1944, MBR papers, MHI, box 59; *Ardennes*, 401 (*twenty-five miles to eighty-five*), 410–13 (*battalion staff at Neubrück*); Morelock, *Generals of the Ardennes*, 308–10, 326 (*lost half its strength*).

"*This terrain is not worth a nickel*": Bruce C. Clarke, "The Battle of St. Vith: A Concept in Defensive Tactics," n.d., CARL, N-8467.297; msg, R. Hasbrouck to MBR, Dec. 22, 1944, Robert W. Hasbrouck papers, MHI, box 1; corr, MBR to JMG, Oct. 6, 1978, Maurice Delaval papers, MHI, box 9; Ridgway, *Soldier*, 120 ("*We're not going to leave you*").

Reluctantly, Ridgway in midafternoon: *Ardennes*, 412–13; corr, MBR to JMG, Oct. 6, 1978, Maurice Delaval papers, MHI, box 9; Morelock, *Generals of the Ardennes*, 308–10 ("*They can come back*").

Fourteen hours of December darkness: Goolrick and Tanner, *The Battle of the Bulge*, 124 ("*Go west*"); memoir, Roger W. Cresswell, 7th AD, Sept. 23, 1979, Maurice Delaval collection, MHI, box 7 (*each man gripping the belt* and "*only their eyes showing*" and "*Stay right where you are*"); "The Defense of St. Vith, Belgium," n.d., AS, Ft. K, NARA RG 407, E 427, Miscl AG Records, #2280, 36 (*prodigal counterfire*); *TT*, 481, 487 (*Hasbrouck stood on a road*).

Ridgway estimated that fifteen thousand troops: Blair, *Ridgway's Paratroopers*, 389; *Ardennes*, 422 (*casualties east of the Salm*); *TT*, 487 (*would long resent Ridgway*); Soffer, *General Matthew B. Ridgway*, 71 ("*Nobody is worried*").

German troops ransacked St.-Vith: *Ardennes*, 412–13.

"*Model himself directs traffic*": Baldwin, *Battles Lost and Won*, 338.

Looting was best done quickly: "Allied Air Power and the Ardennes Offensive," n.d., director of intelligence, USSAFE, NARA RG 498, ETOUSA HD, UD 584, box 1 (*seventeen hundred tons*); author visit, June 2, 2009, signage, tourist brochure; Schrijvers, *The Unknown Dead*, 183–84; Hastings, *Armageddon*, 211 ("*big-mouthed apes*").

A GI shivering in an Ardennes foxhole: Blunt, *Foot Soldier*, 119 ("*How come* we *don't*"); Baxter, *Scientists Against Time*, 222 ("*most remarkable scientific achievement*").

The new weapon's origin dated to 1940: "Employment of VT Fuzes in the Ardennes Campaign," n.d., CMH, 3–6 (*2,500 antiaircraft artillery shells*); Baxter, *Scientists Against Time*, 223–24 (*ice cream cone*).

The resulting device, eventually known: Baxter, *Scientists Against Time*, 223–24, 235; Green et al., *The Ordnance Department*, 363–66 (*used only over open water*); Appleman et al., *Okinawa: The Last Battle*, 257; "Employment of VT Fuzes in the Ardennes Campaign," n.d., CMH, 3–6, 17; Morton, "The VT Fuze," *Army Ordnance* (Jan.–Feb. 1946): 43+ (*five times more effective*); Baldwin, *The Deadly Fuze*, 275–76 (*Lancaster bombers had flown*).

Pozit variants had been developed: Cooper, *Death Traps*, 206; corr, Ben Lear to GCM, n.d. (fall 1944), Henry B. Sayler papers, DDE Lib, box 9 ("*most important new development*"); Morton, "The VT Fuze," *Army Ordnance* (Jan.–Feb. 1946): 43+.

With approval from the Charlie-Charlies: "Employment of VT Fuzes in the Ardennes Campaign," n.d., CMH, 9–11, 21–24 ("*slaughter of enemy concentrations*" and "*terror weapon*"); Richard Henry Byers, "Battle of the Bulge," 1983, a.p., 39 ("*piles of shells*"); "Operational Use of VT Artillery Fuzes," OPD Information Bulletin, Feb. 23, 1945, vol. 4, #2, NARA RG 334, E 315, ANSCOL, box 1164; Green et al., *The Ordnance Department*, 363–66 ("*severely upset*").

Three hundred American companies: Baxter, *Scientists Against Time*, 233, 236 ("*The other night we caught*"); *Ardennes*, 655–56; "VT Fuzes," March 29, 1945, NARA RG 337, AGF OR #282 (*exaggerations*); "Employment of VT Fuzes in the Ardennes Campaign," n.d., CMH, 3 (*the Army's heaviest shells*); Green et al., *The Ordnance Department*, 366; Chester C. Hough, "Effectiveness of VT Fuze," Apr. 18, 1945, NARA RG 337, AGF OR #305.

Yet the pozit would prove as demoralizing: Baldwin, *The Deadly Fuze*, 284; Carpenter, *No Woman's World*, 232 ("*It hangs in the air*"); memo, "Results of Use of Pozit Fuses," Jan. 10, 1945, V Corps to First Army, NARA RG 498, G-3 OR, box 1 (*single 155mm airburst*); "Effect of Pozit Fuze," Jan. 6, 1945, XV Corps, NARA RG 498, G-3 OR, box 10 ("*The devil himself*").

But what of the devil's henchmen?: Guns of the 30th ID first used pozit shells on December 19, and gunners estimated that one-quarter of all rounds fired around La Gleize were so fuzed ("VT Fuzes," March 29, 1945, NARA RG 337, AGF OR #282).

Peiper's drive toward the Meuse: corr, J. Peiper to John S. D. Eisenhower, Apr. 4, 1967, CBM, MHI, box 6; *TT*, 239–40 (*blew all three bridges*); "An Interview with Obst Joachim Peiper," ETHINT 10, Sept. 7, 1945, MHI, 21 (*Peiper swung north*); Reynolds, *Men of Steel*, 95; *Ardennes*, 337–39 (*cans of water*).

More spans were demolished: Royce L. Thompson, "The ETO Ardennes Campaign: Operations of the Combat Group Peiper," July 24, 1952, CMH; Toland, *Battle*, 176 (*fuel cans into the Amblève*); Weingartner, *Crossroads of Death*, 58–60; *Ardennes*, 349–50, 364–65; Schrijvers, *The Unknown Dead*, 54–56 (*priest gave general absolution*); *TT*, 445.

Peiper had traveled some sixty miles: Royce L. Thompson, "The ETO Ardennes Campaign: Operations of the Combat Group Peiper," July 24, 1952, CMH; Reynolds, *Men of Steel*, 125 (*fifteen hundred survivors*); "Kampfgruppe Peiper," n.d., FMS, #C-004, MHI, 12–13 (*a hundred American prisoners*); Hal D. McCown, CO, 2nd Bn, 119th Inf, "Observations of an American Field Officer," n.d., MHI; *TT*, 459 ("*communist menace*"); Schrijvers, *The Unknown Dead*, 42–48; Moriss, "The Defense of Stavelot," *Yank*, Feb. 9, 1945, 8+; Hitchcock, *The Bitter Road to Freedom*, 84–85; "Malmédy Massacre Investigation," Senate Armed Services Committee, Oct. 1949, 2.

By late Friday, American machine guns: *TT*, 459; Royce L. Thompson, "The ETO Ardennes Campaign: Operations of the Combat Group Peiper," July 24, 1952, CMH (*burned secrets in the cellar*); Reynolds, *Men of Steel*, 126; *Ardennes*, 374–77; *TT*, 457–59 (*Luger pistols*), 465 (*hit Malmédy instead*).

"*Position considerably worsened*": H. Priess, "Commitment of the I SS Panzer Corps During the Ardennes Offensive," March 1946, FMS, #A-877, MHI, 40–43; Reynolds, *Men of Steel*, 133 (*coded message*); Reynolds, *The Devil's Adjutant*, 225–35 (*shot for desertion*); *Ardennes*, 376–77 (*last twenty-eight panzers*).

At two A.M. *on Sunday, December 24*: *Ardennes*, 376–77. Other accounts cite fewer German wounded and more American prisoners left behind (Reynolds, *Men of Steel*, 133).

During a brief firefight with an American patrol: Hal D. McCown, CO, 2nd Bn, 119th Inf, "Observations of an American Field Officer," n.d., MHI; *TT*, 462–63 ("*Yankee Doodle*").

At a ford in the frigid Salm: Reynolds, *Men of Steel*, 134–35 (*human chain*); Royce L. Thompson, "The ETO Ardennes Campaign: Operations of the Combat Group Peiper," July 24, 1952, CMH (*German line at Wanne*); *TT*, 462–63; Reynolds, *Men of Steel*, 134–35 (*770 remained*); "Malmédy Massacre Investigation," Senate Armed Services Committee, Oct. 1949, 2; *Ardennes*, 262; Royce L. Thompson, "Bibliography of the Malmédy Massacre Case," Dec. 9, 1954, CMH, Geog Belgium, 370.2.

Across the Ardennes, heavy snow: Royce L. Thompson, "Weather of the Ardennes Campaign," Oct. 2, 1953, CMH, 29; *Ardennes*, 470; Moorehead, *Eclipse*, 228 (*a "radiant world"*); William A. Carter, "Carter's War," 1983, CEOH, box V-14, XII, 22 (*stacked like sandbags*); Wellard, *The Man in a Helmet*, 209 (*women's dresses*); Lewis, ed., *The Mammoth Book of Eyewitness World War II*, 441 ("*Everyone seems about the same age*").

Troops fashioned sleds: "Ardennes, Supply Installations, Withdraw of," FUSA, Apr. 29, 1945, NARA RG 498, ETOUSA HD, UD 584; "Chief Engineers Report on Camouflage Activities in the ETO," Nov. 15, 1945, Howard V. Canan papers, HIA, box 3 (*lime wash and salt*); Schrijvers, *The Crash of Ruin*, 208 (*Belgian lace*); "Third U.S. Army After Action Report," n.d., chapter 21, CMH (*mattress covers*); "Unit History, 93rd Evacuation Hospital, 1944," Donald E. Currier papers, MHI, box 1, 42–43 (*gloves dipped in paint*); Simpson, *Selected Prose*, 138 ("*out like a match*"); Mary Ferrell, 101st Evacuation Hospital, ts, March 1970, NWWIIM ("*like an untuned radio*").

Clumsy skirmishes and pitched battles: *Ardennes*, 438–39; "Engineer Troops in Ardennes Breakthrough," NARA RG 498, ETOUSA HD, UD 584, box 2, 2 (*impeded the north shoulder*); Liddell Hart, *The Other Side of the Hill*, 463 (*exposed Manteuffel's left flank*); Horst Stumpff, OB West chief armored officer, Aug. 11, 1945, ETHINT 61, MHI, 61 (*new panzers in the Rhine valley*).

But west of St.-Vith in the German center: Gilmore, ed., *U.S. Army Atlas of the European Theater in World War II*, 142–43; Cirillo, "Ardennes-Alsace," 33 (*twenty-five-mile battlefront*).

New anxiety beset First Army headquarters: Sylvan, 231; war diary, Dec. 24, 1944, 0615 hrs, MBR papers, MHI, box 59 ("*The situation is normal*").

Others were far less sanguine: "Report on Allied Air Force Operations," May 21, 1945, SHAEF, A-3, CARL, N-9371; *AAFinWWII*, 773 ("*processing the terrain"*); Royce L. Thompson, "Weather of the Ardennes Campaign," Oct. 2, 1953, CMH, 29–30 (*GIs craned their necks*); Davis, *Carl A. Spaatz and the Air War in Europe*, 532–33 (*heaviest attacks of the war*); Richard Henry Byers, "Battle of the Bulge," 1983, a.p., 36 ("*The bombers have fine, feathery*"); *Ardennes*, 649–50 (*horse-drawn plows*); Quesada, "Operations of the Ninth Tactical Air Command," lecture, May 29, 1945, NARA RG 334, E 315, ANSCOL, L-10-45, 13; diary, Martin Opitz, 295th VG Div, Dec. 25, 1944, NARA RG 407, ETO G-3 OR, box 8 ("*The American Jabos*").

Clear skies also permitted resupply of Bastogne: "Report on Air Resupply to 101st Airborne Division at Bastogne," Jan. 11, 1945, in "Battle of the Bulge," and OH, Carl W. Kohls, G-4, et al., NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, folders #229 and 230. Of 900 sorties to Bastogne, 23 planes would be lost (Royce L. Thompson, "Air Resupply to Isolated Units, Ardennes Campaign," Feb. 1951, CMH, 2-3.7 AE P, 73).

General McAuliffe also had the invaluable services: OH, James E. Parker, "Air Support Part at Bastogne," Jan. 1, 1945, NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, folder #230; Marshall, *Bastogne*, 134–56; "Bastogne," n.d., NARA RG 498, ETOUSA HD, UD 584 (*Tracks in the snow*).

Bastogne was reprieved: OH, William L. Roberts, CCB, 10th AD, Jan. 12, 1945, NARA RG 407, E 427-A, folder #305; "Bastogne," n.d., NARA RG 498, ETOUSA HD, UD 584 (*rationed to ten rounds*); *Ardennes*, 474 (*sixteen miles in circumference*); Ingersoll, *Top Secret*, 250 ("*steel filings*").

More than three thousand civilians remained trapped: Toland, *Battle*, 255–57; "Medical Evacuation and Supply, Bastogne," n.d., NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, folder 230 (*Several hundred wounded*); Cowdrey, *Fighting for Life*, 265–66 ("*their faces were old"*); Rapport and Northwood, *Rendezvous with Destiny*, 469–70 (*toiled by flashlight* and *rifle range*); Cosmas and Cowdrey, *Medical Services in the European Theater of Operations*, 418 (*the moribund lay along a wall* and *cognac*); "Bastogne," n.d., NARA RG 498, ETOUSA HD, UD 584 (*coffee and Ovaltine*); Schrijvers, *The Crash of Ruin*, 166–67.

Napalm fires ringed the town: *Ardennes*, 475.

"*Do not plan, for God's will"*: Weintraub, *11 Days in December*, 137; Simpson, *Selected Prose*, 140 ("*Those who are attacking you*"); Toland, *Battle*, 255–57 ("*Santa Claus Is Coming*"); *Ardennes*, 475 ("*Xmas eve present*"); Marshall, *Bastogne*, 169 ("*We have been let down*").

At 5:10 P.M. an intrepid pilot: "Medical Evacuation and Supply, Bastogne," n.d., NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, folder 230; author visit, Bastogne, June 3, 2009, signage; OH, William L. Roberts, CCB, 10th AD, Jan. 12, 1945, NARA RG 407, E 427-A, folder #305 (*civilian nurse*); Rapport and Northwood, *Rendezvous with Destiny*, 471; "The Battle of Bastogne, 19–28 Dec. 44," n.d., CMH, Geog Belgium 370.2, 4.

Patton attended a candlelight communion: *PP*, 606; corr, GSP to Bea, Dec. 25, 1944, GSP, LOC MS Div, box 12; D'Este, *Patton: A Genius for War*, 691 (*enthroned with Bradley*); Codman, *Drive*, 235 (*crowded, frigid*).

"*brick-red face*": *PP*, 852–53.

Scanning the starry sky outside: Allen, *Lucky Forward*, 184 ("*Noel, noel*"); Wellard, *The Man in a Helmet*, 210 (*personally challenged sentries*); Allen, *Lucky Forward*, 184 ("*root-hog or die"*); D'Este, *Patton: A Genius for War*, 682–83 ("*war in the raw*"); Blumenson, *Patton: The Man Behind the Legend, 1885–1945*, 251 (*asked God for fair weather*); *PP*, 606 ("*clear cold Christmas*").

Patton had made good on his brash promise: H. P. Hudson, "The Intervention of the Third Army: III Corps in the Attack," n.d., NARA RG 498, ETOUSA HD, UD 584, box 3 (*feat was prodigious* and "*Drive like hell*"); Allen, *Lucky Forward*, 180 (*108 artillery battalions*); Rickard, *Advance and Destroy*, 167 (*No SS prisoners were to be taken alive*); Baily, *Faint Praise*, 120 ("*Jumbo" tanks*).

Both commander and commanded had also made missteps: Albret Praun, Wehrmacht signal chief, "German Radio Intelligence," n.d., FMS, #P-038, CMH, 84–85; Holt, *The Deceivers*, 647–48, 658–59; Cirillo, "Ardennes-Alsace," 36 (*plodding frontal assault*); Robert R. Summers et al., "Armor at Bastogne," May 1949, AS, CARL, N-2146.71-2, 123 (*first time since October*); *Ardennes*, 526 (*perilous night attack*); Fox, *Patton's Vanguard*, 388 (*just fourteen Shermans*), 382–84 ("*manure-strewn hell of a village"*); "The Intervention of the Third Army: III Corps in the Attack," n.d., CMH, 8-3.1 AR, II, 12–13; Taylor, *General Maxwell Taylor*, 130 ("*The troops built little fires*").

"*This was probably my fault*": *PP*, 605.

"*it takes a long time to learn war*": Rickard, *Advance and Destroy*, 172; Fox, *Patton's Vanguard* , 388; Robert R. Summers et al., "Armor at Bastogne," May 1949, AS, CARL, N-2146.71-2, 128–31 (*German paratroopers kept infiltrating*); notes, Dec. 26, 1944, SHAEF main, James M. Robb corr, DDE Lib, PP-pres, box 98 (*Patton twice phoned*); "The Intervention of the Third Army: III Corps in the Attack," n.d., CMH, 8-3.1 AR, II, 12–13 ("*I am unhappy*").

In search of a seam: Sorley, *Thunderbolt*, 22, 55 (*eating aspirin*); Fox, *Patton's Vanguard*, 399.

"shooting, clubbing, stabbing melee": *Ardennes*, 552–55; "The Intervention of the Third Army: III Corps in the Attack," n.d., CMH, 8-3.1 AR, VIII, 10 ("*They are through Assenois*").

Five Shermans and a half-track: Sorley, *Thunderbolt*, 80–81; Toland, *Battle*, 282–83 ("*Come here!*"); Capa, *Slightly Out of Focus*, 212 ("*It's good to see you*").

"*Kilroy Was Stuck Here*": Capa, *Slightly Out of Focus*, 212; *Ardennes*, 607–9 (*seven hundred enemy prisoners*), 480–81 (*two thousand American casualties*); Hastings, *Armageddon*, 234 (*smashing his rifle butt*); "Bastogne," n.d., NARA RG 498, ETOUSA HD, UD 584 (*division's tank strength*); "Answers to Questions Asked General Westphal," 1954, FMS #A-896, MHI, 11 ("*failure to conquer Bastogne*").

"*as important as the battle of Gettysburg*": *PP*, 613.

"Glory Has Its Price"

Time *in the last week of December*: "Man of the Year," *Time* (Jan. 1, 1945): cover; *TT*, 600 (*current German salient*); Royce L. Thompson, "Ardennes Campaign Statistics," Apr. 28, 1952, CMH, 2-3.7 AE P-15; "Ordnance," n.d., "History of the Ardennes Campaign," NARA RG 498, UD 584, box 2; "Tactical Air Operations in Europe," XIX Tactical Air Command, May 1945, Frederick L. Anderson papers, HIA, box 83, folder 1, 56 (*ordered to bomb any column*).

Of greater concern was a German armored spearhead: Rickard, *Advance and Destroy*, 202–3; *Ardennes*, 430–35, 535 (*four-night round-trip*), 426–27; *TT*, 577–79 (*five miles from Dinant*); Collins, *Lightning Joe*, 292 (*nearly 100,000 strong*).

Savage fighting raged from the Salm: William E. Dressler et al., "Armor Under Adverse Conditions," 1949, AS, Ft. K, 41–48; *TT*, 583; *Ardennes*, 570 (*equipment from six battalions*), 595–603 (*Sixth Panzer Army's last sally*); Harmon, *Combat Commander*, 240 (*British flame-throwing tank*).

Eisenhower for the past week: Weigley, *Eisenhower's Lieutenants*, 545.

An Ultra intercept decoded just after Christmas: Sent on December 21, the message took five days to decode (Bennett, *Ultra in the West*, 214); Royce L. Thompson, "Ardennes Campaign Statistics," Apr. 28, 1952, CMH, 2-3.7 AE P-15 (*almost four thousand tanks*).

Patton favored driving from the south: *Ardennes*, 610-11; Rickard, *Advance and Destroy*, 191–96.

Collins, in a memorandum on Wednesday: memo, JLC to C. Hodges, "Plans for Offensive Operations," Dec. 27, 1944, JLC papers, DDE Lib, box 3, 201 file.

Montgomery hesitated: war diary, Ninth Army, Dec. 28, 1944, William H. Simpson papers, MHI, box 11; corr, JLC to Bruce C. Clarke, Feb. 21, 1975, CARL, N-8467.297; OH, JLC, 1973, G. Patrick Murray, SOOHP, in "Courtney Hodges Story," MHI ("*Nobody is going to break through*"); OH, JLC, 1972, Charles C. Sperow, SOOHP, MHI, 235–38 ("*You're going to push the Germans out*").

Falaise could hardly be blamed solely on Montgomery: Weigley, *Eisenhower's Lieutenants*, 539; msg, BLM to DDE, Dec. 22, 1944, 2155 hrs, DDE Lib, PP-pres, box 83 (*doubted Patton's ability*); memo, JLC to C. Hodges, Dec. 30, 1944, JLC papers, DDE Lib, box 3 ("*definitely expended itself*").

"*Praise God*": notes, James M. Robb, Dec. 27, 1944, DDE office, DDE Lib, PP-pres, box 98.

"*Monty is a tired little fart*": *PP*, 608; notes, James M. Robb, Dec. 27, 1944, W. B. Smith office, DDE Lib, PP-pres, box 98 ("*our masters in Washington*"); Rickard, *Advance and Destroy*, 193, 198–99 (*Bradley also favored pinching the enemy at Houffalize*); Hogan, *A Command Post at War*, 225 (*counted seventeen uncommitted German divisions*); *Ardennes*, 614 (*clear skies ended*).

Time *magazine had catalogued*: "The Presidency," *Time* (May 8, 1944): 8; Altman, "For F.D.R. Sleuths, New Focus on an Old Spot," *NYT*, Jan. 5, 2010, D1; Bruenn, "Clinical Notes on the Illness and Death of President Franklin D. Roosevelt," *Annals of Internal Medicine* 72, no. 4 (Apr. 1, 1970): 579+ (*260 over 150* and "*Can't eat*"); Goodwin, *No Ordinary Time*, 494, 496–97 (*digitalis*); Burns, "FDR: The Untold Story of His Last Year," *Saturday Evening Post* (Apr. 11, 1970): 12+; Kimball, *Forged in War*, 341 ("*abdominal distress*"); Tully, *F.D.R. My Boss*, 351–53 ("*Lots of sleep*"); Brinkley, *Washington Goes to War*, 265 (*official photographs*).

Yet if the body was frail: Burns, "FDR: The Untold Story of His Last Year," *Saturday Evening Post* (Apr. 11, 1970): 12+; King and Whitehill, *Fleet Admiral King*, 587 (*SHAEF plan*).

Another trill of the bosun's pipe: Argonaut files, UK NA, PREM 4/77/1B; "Trips of the President," FDR Lib, container 21, file 6-1 (*TUNGSTEN*); Moran, *Churchill: Taken from the Diaries of Lord Moran*, 232 ("*very wordy*"); Eden, *The Reckoning*, 590–91 (*bezique*); Leahy, *I Was There*, 294–95 (*Declaration of Independence*); Black, *Franklin Delano Roosevelt*, 1031 ("*pushing Winston uphill*"); Stettinius, *Roosevelt and the Russians*, 70–72 (*defeat of Japan*).

Churchill retrieved an eight-inch cigar: Stettinius, *Roosevelt and the Russians*, 70–72.

Off he went for thirty miles: William M. Rigdon, log, "The President's Trip to the Crimea Conference and Great Bitter Lake, Egypt," Averill Harriman papers, LOC MS Div, 16–18; notes, Feb. 2, 1945, Anna Roosevelt Halsted papers, FDR Lib, box 84 (*half an hour late*); Coffey, *Hap*, 349 (*fourth heart attack*).

"*complete agreement*": *FRUS*, 542–43; Kimball, ed., *Churchill & Roosevelt: The Complete Correspondence*, vol. 3, 523 (*impede Soviet expansion*).

Roosevelt nodded: *FRUS*, 542–43, 548 (*eight o'clock*); King and Whitehill, *Fleet Admiral King*, 587.

This amiable gathering concealed: Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 666; Charles H. Donnelly, "Autobiography," May 1979, MHI, 711 (*bundled in their overcoats*); *FRUS*, 464–66, 471 ("*heart of Germany*"); *LO*, 55–56. SHAEF on January 28 calculated that thirty-three Allied divisions could defend the Rhine line, compared to the forty-two needed if German forces continued to occupy the Colmar Pocket and other salients west of the river (ALH, 178).

Again Field Marshal Brooke: *DOB*, 281–82; Danchev, xv ("*Men admired, feared*"); Kennedy, *The Business of War*, 329 (Monograph of the Pigeons); "Notes About Alan's Childhood and Boyhood," 1943, LHC, Alanbrooke papers, 1/1 (*hoped to become a physician*); Fraser, *Alanbrooke*, 24–29 ("*gunner of genius*"), 215, 448, 514; Keegan, *Six Armies in Normandy*, 47 ("*searching back*").

The tactic befitted the man: Danchev, 649.

The British chiefs, Brooke said: *FRUS*, 472; Weigley, *Eisenhower's Lieutenants*, 578 (*Bulge had revealed the folly*); minutes, CCS, Jan. 30, 1945, FDR Lib, Map Room conferences, box 29 ("*Closing up the Rhine*").

This argument had dragged on: *FRUS*, 473 ("*every single division*"); minutes, CCS, Jan. 30, 1945, FDR Lib, Map Room conferences, box 29 (*barely two dozen divisions*); *GS* VI, 91; John E. Hull, "Unpublished Autobiography," n.d., MHI, 14-2.

Marshall concurred: *FRUS*, 473; Chandler, 2463–64 ("*You may assure*").

"*I am feeling very tired*": Danchev, 652.

Worse was to come: OH, Field Marshal Viscount Alanbrooke, Jan. 28, 1947, FCP, MHI ("*hands too full*"); Ambrose, *The Supreme Commander*, 586–87 ("*Let's have it out*"); Crosswell, *Beetle*, 862–63; Danchev, 652 ("*talk did both of us good*").

That was unlikely: *SC*, 409; *GS* VI, 90; Crosswell, *Beetle*, 862–63 ("*Please leave this to me*").

As the chiefs convened again: Crosswell, *Beetle*, 862–63; Cray, *General of the Army*, 502–3 ("*practically never sees General Eisenhower*"); Pogue, *George C. Marshall*, 516–17 ("*wrong foot*").

He had not finished: Chandler, 2461; Cray, *General of the Army*, 500–501; *SC*, 413; Bland, ed., *George C. Marshall Interviews and Reminiscences for Forrest C. Pogue*, 400–402 ("*everything he asked for*"); Crosswell, *Beetle*, 862–63 ("*over-cautious commander*").

"*Marshall clearly understood nothing*": Danchev, 653.

"*Marshall's complaint was not unjustified*": Cunningham, *A Sailor's Odyssey*, 626–27; Roberts, *Masters and Commanders*, 577.

For another month, the British conspired: corr, F. L. Anderson to C. A. Spaatz, Feb. 2, 1945, "Operation Argonaut," HIA, Frederick L. Anderson papers, box 95, folder 14; Orange, *Tedder: Quietly in Command*, 297; Hastings, *Armageddon*, 195 ("*a very, very small man*"); Chandler, 2480–82 ("*no question whatsoever*").

"*The P.M. was sore*": Orange, *Tedder: Quietly in Command*, 297.

Light rain spattered Luqa airdrome: Pogue, *George C. Marshall: Organizer of Victory*, 519; Stettinius, *Roosevelt and the Russians*,

28–29 (*Mission No. 17*); "Argonaut," No. AR/2, n.d., UK NA, CAB 120/172 (*black bands and yellow tags*).

Roosevelt in recent months had proposed: Olsen, "Full House at Yalta," *American Heritage* (Jan. 1972): 1+. Stalin initially proposed Odessa, but that port city remained within range of German bombers (Mason, ed., *The Atlantic War Remembered*, 447–48).

"*I emphasized the difficulties*": memo, A. Harriman to FDR, Dec. 27, 1944, NARA RG 165, E 422, OPD, box 31; cable file, ARGONAUT, NARA RG 165, E 422, OPD, box 31 ("*toilet facilities*"); Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, 844–45 ("*his adventurous spirit*").

Roosevelt and Churchill had agreed to limit: memo, William Leahy to GCM, E. King, Dec. 28, 1944, NARA RG 165, E 422, OPD, box 31; Clemens, *Yalta*, 111; Mason, ed., *The Atlantic War Remembered*, 447–48 (*Americans numbered 330*); "Argonaut," No. AR/2, n.d., UK NA, CAB 120/172; admin papers, UK NA, CAB 104/177 ("*plausible cover story*").

In view of the rustic conditions: admin papers, UK NA, CAB 104/177; memo, M. Moritz, Malta Command, to E. A. Armstrong, War Cabinet Offices, Feb. 23, 1945; admin papers, UK NA, CAB 104/177 ("*Yalta Voyage 208*"); Harriman and Abel, *Special Envoy to Churchill and Stalin, 1941–1946*, 390 ("*good for typhus*").

"*We left Malta in darkness*": Charles H. Donnelly, "Autobiography," May 1979, MHI, 719–23; Leahy, *I Was There*, 295–301 (*set their watches ahead*).

Churchill boarded a four-engine C-54: Kuter, *Airman at Yalta*, 103; Goodwin, *No Ordinary Time*, 575 ("*hot pink baby*").

Down the flight line stood C-54 No. 252: http://www.strategic-air-command.com/aircraft/cargo/c54_skymaster.htm; Bishop, *FDR's Last Year*, 300 (*caged elevator*); Gallagher, *FDR's Splendid Deception*, 202 ("*a transparency*").

Spitfire and P-38 fighter escorts: memo, Jan. 27, 1945, Naples, "Trips of the President," FDR Lib, container 21, file 6-1; William M. Rigdon, log, "The President's Trip to the Crimea Conference and Great Bitter Lake, Egypt," Averill Harriman papers, LOC MS Div, 17–18.

A Fateful Conference

Wedged into a natural amphitheater: Twain, *The Innocents Abroad*, 280; Anton Chekhov, "The Lady with the Pet Dog," http://www.enotes.com/lady-pet-text ("*The stories told*").

That sea—to the ancients Pontus Euxinus: Thomas Spencer Baynes, ed., *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. 3, 795, online ed.; "Notes on the Crimea," 1945, "WWII Summit Conferences," Charles H. Donnelly papers, MHI (*Cimmerians and Scythians*); Ponomarenko, *Yalta: A Short Guide*, 11, 19–21 (*Lenin's decree*); Yhagapov and Shekurov, *Greater Yalta*, 19–26; Clemens, *Yalta*, 113 (*three dozen sanatoriums*).

Then came the Germans: Leasor, *The Clock with Four Hands*, 286–87; corr, E. J. Flynn to wife, Feb. 8, 1945, Edward J. Flynn papers, FDR Lib, box 25 (*brass doorknobs*); John E. Hull, "Unpublished Autobiography," n.d., MHI, 14-4; Mason, ed., *The Atlantic War Remembered*, 449–50; Harriman and Abel, *Special Envoy to Churchill and Stalin, 1941–1946*, 393 (*coat hangers*).

British and American support ships: Buhite, *Decisions at Yalta*, 4 ("*didn't leave a map*"); Olsen, "Full House at Yalta," *American Heritage* (Jan. 1972): 1+ (*nine hundred hairpin turns*); memo, T. W. Sullivan and L. H. Backus, U.S. Navy physicians, Feb. 18, 1945, Ross T. McIntire papers, FDR Lib, box 4 ("*marked infestation*").

Four Soviet regiments arrived: Montefiore, *Stalin: The Court of the Red Tsar*, 480–81; Davies, *No Simple Victory*, 191–92 (*dozen Georgians*); Plokhy, *Yalta*, 58, 233 (*Eavesdroppers*).

"*This may well be a fateful conference*": corr, WSC to FDR, Jan. 8, 1945, GCM Lib, box 62, folder 19; Pawle, *The War and Colonel Warden*, 358 ("*nineteen full colonels*"); Ismay, *The Memoirs of General Lord Ismay*, 384 ("*would have been difficult*").

Sacred Cow *touched down*: William M. Rigdon, log, "The President's Trip to the Crimea Conference and Great Bitter Lake, Egypt," Averill Harriman papers, LOC MS Div, 19; Stettinius, *Roosevelt and the Russians*, 80–81 (*agent lifted him*); Clemens, *Yalta*, 128 ("*Stone Ass*"); Guy H. Spaman, "President's Trip," July 5, 1945, Secret Service records, FDR Lib, container 4, file 103-1 (*ammunition had been confiscated*); Moran, *Churchill: Taken from the Diaries of Lord Moran*, 234 ("*a great icicle*").

"*We will destroy*": Aron Kots version, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Internationale#Russian_lyrics.

Beside steaming glasses of tea: Charles H. Donnelly, "Autobiography," May 1979, MHI, 719–23; John E. Hull, "Unpublished Autobiography," n.d., MHI, 14-4 ("*Let's get going*"); Houghton, "That Was Yalta," *New Yorker* (May 23, 1953): 86+ (*khaki overcoat*).

Soon a weaving convoy: Stettinius, *Roosevelt and the Russians*, 81; U.S. Navy color footage, FDR Lib, 71-8: 65–67 (*women in shawls*); Kuter, *Airman at Yalta*, 114–15; Charles H. Donnelly, "Autobiography," May 1979, MHI, 719–23; notes, Feb. 3–4, 1945, Anna Roosevelt Halsted papers, FDR Lib, box 84 (*a few sheep*); William M. Rigdon, log, "The President's Trip to the Crimea Conference and Great Bitter Lake, Egypt," Averill Harriman papers, LOC MS Div, 18–20 (*Route Romanoff*). Author Michael Dobbs

notes that at least some of the destruction likely was inflicted by Soviet forces during a 1944 purge of Tatar villages (*Six Months in 1945*, 24–25, 10 [Don Juan]).

Churchill and the British contingent: Ismay, *The Memoirs of General Lord Ismay*, 386–87; Dilks, ed., *The Diaries of Sir Alexander Cadogan*, 703 ("*hideosity*"); Churchill, *Triumph and Tragedy*, 347 (*goldfish*).

"*nothing is left out but cleanliness*": Moran, *Churchill: Taken from the Diaries of Lord Moran* , 237–38; Leasor, *The Clock with Four Hands*, 288 (*shipped by special train*); Richardson, *From Churchill's Secret Circle to the BBC* , 198 ("*We sleep in droves"*); Plokhy, *Yalta*, 50 ("*queuing for a bucket*"); Hastings, *Winston's War*, 442 ("*Riviera of Hades*"); Danchev, 656 ("*a great northern diver*").

Ten miles away the Americans settled: Kuter, *Airman at Yalta*, 121–22, 138 (*tea in tall glasses*); Olsen, "Full House at Yalta," *American Heritage* (Jan. 1972): 1+; Houghton, "That Was Yalta," *New Yorker* (May 23, 1953): 86+ ("*Please do not pilfer*").

An air of tragedy: Clemens, *Yalta*, 113 (*two million rubles*); Massie, *Nicholas and Alexandra*, 156–64 (*reindeer tongue*); Plokhy, *Yalta*, 43–44.

Now Roosevelt slept: Houghton, "That Was Yalta," *New Yorker* (May 23, 1953): 86+.

At four o'clock on Sunday: William M. Rigdon, log, "The President's Trip to the Crimea Conference and Great Bitter Lake, Egypt," Averill Harriman papers, LOC MS Div, photo; OH, John E. Hull, 1974, James W. Wurman, SOOHP, MHI, VI-6, 7; Beevor, *Berlin: The Downfall, 1945*, 79 (*Hero of the Soviet Union*); Dobbs, *Six Months in 1945*, 35 (*talcum powder*); Buhite, *Decisions at Yalta*, 17 (*smallpox scars*); Houghton, "That Was Yalta," *New Yorker* (May 23, 1953): 86+ (*rattle the teacups*).

Joseph Stalin intrigued even Franklin Roosevelt: Bohlen, *Witness to History, 1929–1969*, 180; Fox, "The Super-Powers Then and Now," *International Journal* (summer 1980): 417+; Reynolds, *Rich Relations*, 438. See also William T. R. Fox, *The Super-Powers* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1944).

In other respects the wealthy patrician: Montefiore, *Stalin: The Court of the Red Tsar*, 25; Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932–1945*, 521 ("*a Christian gentleman*"); Plokhy, *Yalta*, 56–57, 77; MMB, 527–28; Overy, *Why the Allies Won*, 259 ("*military brain*"); Murphy, *Diplomat Among Warriors*, 232–33 ("*I can handle Stalin*"); Roberts, *Masters and Commanders*, 486 ("*bigger coins*").

Beneath a painting of a farmer: Hastings, *Winston's War* , 444 ("*You said it!"*); Stettinius, *Roosevelt and the Russians*, 99 (*communicate directly*).

The marshal replied that the carnage: Tooze, *The Wages of Destruction*, 468–69, 477–83; *FRUS*, 571–73 ("*sadistic hatred*").

Roosevelt offered Stalin: Bishop, *FDR's Last Year* , 310–11; Kersaudy, *Churchill and De Gaulle*, 392–93 ("*unpleasant and impossible*").

"*Only out of kindness*": *FRUS*, 571–73; Montefiore, *Stalin: The Court of the Red Tsar*, 492 ("*Why did nature*").

Upon Churchill's arrival : William M. Rigdon, log, "The President's Trip to the Crimea Conference and Great Bitter Lake, Egypt," Averill Harriman papers, LOC MS Div, photo; Bishop, *FDR's Last Year* , 312–13; Massie, *Nicholas and Alexandra*, 168–69 (*diamonds and pearls*).

Much of ARGONAUT's initial meeting: Bland, ed., *George C. Marshall Interviews and Reminiscences for Forrest C. Pogue* , 405; *FRUS*, 575–78. Among other discrepancies, Soviet minutes of the conference quote Marshall as putting German oil production at 40 percent of previous levels (Clemens, *Yalta*, 124). A Soviet account also reported that Churchill seemed bored by the military recitations ("The Crimea and Potsdam Conferences of the Leaders of the Three Great Powers," *International Affairs*, All-Union Society, Moscow [June 1965]: 97).

The Soviet account: *FRUS*, 582–83; Erickson, *The Road to Berlin*, 447–48, 461, 471–72; Read and Fisher, *The Fall of Berlin*, 211 ("*You are now in goddam Germany*").

The Soviets currently possessed a seven-to-one advantage: Horst Boog, "Invasion to Surrender: The Defense of Germany," in Brower, ed., *World War II in Europe: The Final Year* , 132; *FRUS*, 582–83 (*180 to 80*); Robert H. Abzug, "The Liberation of the Concentration Camps," in *Liberation 1945*, 35–36; "Auschwitz," USHMM, http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005189; Posner and Ware, *Mengele: The Complete Story*, 3–8 (*medical experiments*); Gill, *The Journey Back from Hell*, 25–27; Weinberg, *A World at Arms*, 798–800 (*seven tons of women's hair*); Read and Fisher, *The Fall of Berlin*, 212 (*pyramids of dentures*).

"*Our wishes*": *FRUS*, 582–83; Feis, *Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin*, 498–99; Weinberg, *A World at Arms*, 798–800; Erickson, *The Road to Berlin*, 475–76, 480, 517 (*threatened the flanks in East Pomerania*); Buell, *Master of Seapower*, 487 ("*It takes a very brave man*").

By late 1945, an estimated two million German women: Antony Beevor, introduction to Anonymous, *A Woman in Berlin*, xx; Hitchcock, *The Bitter Road to Freedom*, 154–167 (*dragged from operating tables* and *forced migration of 7.5* million Germans);

Evans, *The Third Reich at War*, 710 (“*Our men shoot the ones*” and “*They are going to remember*”); Erickson, *The Road to Berlin*, 466–67 (*nailed by their hands*).

“*in very good humor*”: *FRUS*, 589–90.

Great care had been taken: notes, Feb. 4, 1945, Anna Roosevelt Halsted papers, FDR Lib, box 84; Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, 852 (*Filipino mess boys*); William M. Rigdon, log, “The President’s Trip to the Crimea Conference and Great Bitter Lake, Egypt,” Averill Harriman papers, LOC MS Div, 25 (*five types of wine*); Bishop, *FDR’s Last Year*, 319 (“*peace for a hundred years*”); Dilks, ed., *The Diaries of Sir Alexander Cadogan*, 707 (“*drinking buckets*”); Stettinius, *Roosevelt and the Russians*, 111 (*recharging his glass*).

Not until the final half hour: *FRUS*, 589–90.

“*But of your seven million Poles*”: Stettinius, *Roosevelt and the Russians*, 113.

“*The eagle should permit*”: *FRUS*, 589–90.

“*A terrible party*”: Eden, *The Reckoning*, 593.

Stalin’s attitude toward Germany: *FRUS*, 611–14, 624–27, 633.

Glancing at a note slipped to him: ibid., 612–18, 629, 634.

“*I can get the people and Congress*”: Stettinius, *Roosevelt and the Russians*, 127.

“*Germany should be run by those*”: *FRUS*, 612–18.

“*He loves France like a woman*”: Moran, *Churchill: Taken from the Diaries of Lord Moran*, 241.

rather than remind Stalin: Fenno, ed., *The Yalta Conference*, 48–50; *FRUS*, 612–18, 629 (“*France must take her place*”).

But who should pay: Clemens, *Yalta*, 37 (*Stalin had pressed*); Smith, *American Diplomacy During the Second World War*, 132; *FRUS*, 620–21; Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly*, 26–27.

Washington and London had second thoughts: Clemens, *Yalta*, 37–41, 137–39, 172; “The Crimea and Potsdam Conferences of the Leaders of the Three Great Powers,” *International Affairs*, All-Union Society, Moscow (June 1965): 101; Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly*, 28 (*$200 million*).

Recalling the ruinous conditions: *FRUS*, 621–23.

On it went for six more days: Stettinius, *Roosevelt and the Russians*, 185 (“*in for ½ hour of it*”); Meacham, *Franklin and Winston*, 319 (“*ran away from the interpreter*”); Moran, *Churchill: Taken from the Diaries of Lord Moran*, 243 (*wooden stethoscope*); Danchev, 658–59; Roberts, *Masters and Commanders*, 552–55 (*Crimean War battlefields*).

Back at the Villa Livadia: Churchill, *Triumph and Tragedy*, 365; Hastings, *Winston’s War*, 417 (“*feeble lot of fools*”); Clemens, *Yalta*, 174–177; Harriman and Abel, *Special Envoy to Churchill and Stalin, 1941–1946*, 411 (*150,000 Polish soldiers*); Montefiore, *Stalin: The Court of the Red Tsar*, 494 (*ten million Red Army troops*).

Rising from his chair: Bohlen, *Witness to History, 1929–1969*, 187; Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly*, 30–32 (“*Within a month’s time*”).

elections would not be held in Poland for two years: Kimball, *Forged in War*, 307–8; Dobbs, *Six Months in 1945*, 64, 85 (*Missouri*); Colville, *The Fringes of Power*, 555 (“*All the Balkans except Greece*”); Addison, *Churchill, the Unexpected Hero*, 206–7 (“*Terrible and humbling submissions*”).

For Roosevelt, two paramount concerns: *FRUS*, 396; Fenno, ed., *The Yalta Conference*, 96–98; Howarth, ed., *Men of War*, 104; FCP, “Yalta in Retrospect,” in Snell, ed., *The Meaning of Yalta*, 201 (*huge American casualties*); Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932–1945*, 517; Stoler, *George C. Marshall: Soldier-Statesman of the American Century*, 126.

Stalin at the Teheran conference: Kimball, ed., *Churchill & Roosevelt: The Complete Correspondence*, vol. 3, 527; Harriman and Abel, *Special Envoy to Churchill and Stalin, 1941–1946*, 400, 412 (“*same horse twice*”); Plokhy, *Yalta*, 285–88; Feis, *Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin*, 535 (*Japan forfeited its entire empire*); Leahy, *I Was There*, 318–21.

The second issue preoccupying Roosevelt: Leahy, *I Was There*, 315; http://www.un.org/en/aboutun/history/ (“*United Nations*”); Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932–1945*, 507 (*committed to the wider world*); Clemens, *Yalta*, 216–18 (*all sixteen Soviet republics*); Stettinius, *Roosevelt and the Russians*, 174–75, 187, 281; Plokhy, *Yalta*, 289–92, 366–67; Leahy, *I Was There*, 321 (*would remain secret*). Stalin at one point offered Roosevelt two extra votes for the United States.

ARGONAUT *staggered to an end*: Kimball, *Forged in War*, 324 (“*tired all through*”); *FRUS*, 797–98 (*forty-five toasts*); diary, William D. Leahy, Feb. 8, 1945, LOC MS Div, micro R-4, container 6, 27 (*mosquitoes*); Bishop, *FDR’s Last Year*, 384–85 (“*Drink it down!*”);

FRUS, 797–98; Churchill, *Triumph and Tragedy*, 361–62 ("*We regard Marshal Stalin's life*").

Roosevelt, who had tossed down two cocktails: Bishop, *FDR's Last Year*, 384–85. A staff officer who later rose to four-star rank, John E. Hull, described FDR as drinking heavily at one dinner (OH, 1974, James W. Wurman, SOOHP, MHI, VI-6, 7).

Guests hopped around the table: diary, William D. Leahy, Feb. 8, 1945, LOC MS Div, micro R-4, container 6, 28; Peckham and Snyder, eds., *Letters from Fighting Hoosiers*, vol. 2, 211 (*butter and oily salmon*); Cunningham, *A Sailor's Odyssey*, 628 (*advising the marshal*); Montefiore, *Stalin: The Court of the Red Tsar*, 493, 516–20 ("*our Himmler*").

Churchill hosted the final dinner: Churchill, *Triumph and Tragedy*, 393 ("*The fire of war*"); Bohlen, *Witness to History, 1929–1969*, 178–80; Meacham, *Franklin and Winston*, 320 ("*secret weapon*"); menu, Feb. 10, 1945, Anna Roosevelt Halsted papers, FDR Lib, box 84; Bishop, *FDR's Last Year*, 421–22 (*gathered in the foyer*).

They were done: Clemens, *Yalta*, 300; *FRUS*, 972–73 ("*declaration on liberated Europe*"); Black, *Franklin Delano Roosevelt*, 1072 ("*We will meet again*"); William M. Rigdon, log, "The President's Trip to the Crimea Conference and Great Bitter Lake, Egypt," Averill Harriman papers, LOC MS Div, 31 (Target: Germany); Roosevelt, *As He Saw It*, 242–43 (*Two Russian servants*); Bishop, *FDR's Last Year*, 430–31 ("*worked so hard*").

Churchill had begun the day: Moran, *Churchill: Taken from the Diaries of Lord Moran*, 248–49, 251 (*chef from the* Queen Mary); Clemens, *Yalta*, 267–68 ("*this bloody thing*"); Argonaut files, UK NA, PREM 4/77/1B (*hampers of gifts*).

"*Papa, genial and sprightly*": Jenkins, *Churchill: A Biography*, 782.

"*I am a bit exhausted*": Goodwin, *No Ordinary Time*, 582; Jonathan Daniels, "The Presidency," in Goodman, ed., *While You Were Gone*, 124 ("*afraid of getting hit*").

"*in a sulky mood*": Willis, *The French in Germany*, 13.

Instead the president again boarded Quincy: OH, W. B. McCarthy, U.S.S. *Murphy*, March 8, 1945, NARA RG 38, E 11, U.S. Navy WWII Oral Histories; official file, 200-4-E, ship's logs, FDR Lib, box 67; William M. Rigdon, log, "The President's Trip to the Crimea Conference and Great Bitter Lake, Egypt," Averill Harriman papers, LOC MS Div, 43–49 ("*harem attire*"); Tully, *F.D.R. My Boss*, 352–53 ("*2 Kings & 1 Emperor*").

"*a slender contact with life*": Churchill, *Triumph and Tragedy*, 397; Roosevelt, *As He Saw It*, 246 ("*It's been a global war*").

"*We really believed in our hearts*": Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, 870. Hopkins had been treated for stomach cancer as early as 1937 (James A. Halsted, "Severe Malnutrition in a Public Servant of the World War II Era: The Medical History of Harry Hopkins," *Transactions of the American Clinical and Climatological Association*, 86 (1975), http://www.scribd.com/doc/20368863/Harry-Hopkins-Medical-Bio, 23+).

"*For what we have gained here*": Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries*, 226; Danchev, 661 ("*Conference is finished*").

"*Stalin doesn't want anything*": Roberts, *Masters and Commanders*, 557–58; Stoler, *Allies in War*, 196 ("*I don't think I'm wrong*"); Reynolds, *In Command of History*, 465 ("*great and good man*").

"*justify and surpass most of the hopes*": msg, Jonathan Daniels to S. Early, Feb. 13, 1945, official files, FDR Lib, box 3; memo, Hadley Cantril to FDR, "Public Reaction to the Crimea Conference," March 13, 1945, official file 200-4-E, FDR Lib, box 67 (*Polling results*); Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly*, 45 ("*all doubts*").

"*the shadows of victory*": Colville, *The Fringes of Power*, 562–63; Reynolds, *In Command of History*, 468 (*Neville Chamberlain*); Smith, *American Diplomacy During the Second World War*, 134–35; Clemens, *Yalta*, 269–71, 277, 280–89; Weinberg, *A World at Arms*, 809 (*Moscow in turn consolidated its grip*); Dobbs, *Six Months in 1945*, 114 (*slave laborers*), 110 ("*partition of Poland*"); Kissinger, "The Age of Kennan," review of John Lewis Gaddis, *George F. Kennan: An American Life*, *NYT Book Review*, Nov. 13, 2011 (*sentimentality of* ARGONAUT); Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries*, 231 ("*Russian non-cooperation*"); Harriman and Abel, *Special Envoy to Churchill and Stalin, 1941–1946*, 444 ("*We can't do business*"); Black, *Franklin Delano Roosevelt*, 1081 ("*the best I could do*").

Recriminations followed: I am particularly grateful to Prof. Mark A. Stoler for his insights on Malta and Yalta. His essay "World War II" provides a fine survey of the subsequent historiography after Yalta, in Schulzinger, ed., *A Companion to American Foreign Relations*, 188+ ("*connotation of shameful failure*").

For decades the Western delegates would be blamed: Miller, *F.D.R.: An Intimate History*, 506.

Roosevelt's frailty came to be seen: Moran, *Churchill: Taken from the Diaries of Lord Moran*, 239–41 ("*The shrewdness has gone*"); Feis, *Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin*, 557; Gallagher, *FDR's Splendid Deception*, 169–70 ("*extraordinary effort*"); Goodwin, *No Ordinary Time*, 585; Plokhy, *Yalta*, 400 ("*trademark ability*"); Eden, *The Reckoning*, 592–93 ("*impression of failing powers*"); U.S. Navy movie footage, FDR Lib, 71-8: 65–67; transcript, 992nd press conference, *Quincy*, Feb. 23, 1945, Anna Roosevelt Halsted papers, FDR Lib, box 84.

Two generations later, Yalta can be seen: Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932–1945*, 519, 533 ("*military and political* glacis"); Forrest C. Pogue, "Yalta in Retrospect," in Snell, ed., *The Meaning of Yalta*, 191; Plokhy, *Yalta*, 228, 287, 401 ("*saved two million Americans*"). James MacGregor Burns later wrote that Roosevelt had "reached the limit of his bargaining power" ("FDR: The Untold Story of His Last Year," *Saturday Review* [Apr. 11, 1970]: 12+).

War had held the Big Three together: Addison, *Churchill, the Unexpected Hero*, 200 (*met on nine occasions*); transcript, 992nd press conference, *Quincy*, Feb. 23, 1945, Anna Roosevelt Halsted papers, FDR Lib, box 84 ("*mid-Victorian*"); Moran, *Churchill: Taken from the Diaries of Lord Moran*, 245 ("*seems to upset him*"); Eden, *The Reckoning*, 593 ("*dependent upon the United States*").

"*We have moved a long way*": Hastings, *Winston's War*, 459; Churchill, *Triumph and Tragedy*, 401 ("*a world of imponderables*").

"*The Americans pitch their song*": Moran, *Churchill: Taken from the Diaries of Lord Moran*, 249.

"Only Our Eyes Are Alive"

From the Swiss border: Bonn, *When the Odds Were Even*, 177–78 ("*Stay Alive*"); L. D. Docken, "My Recollections of the Battle of Phillipsburg in Jan. 1945," 1981, NARA RG 319, *RR* background files, FRC 5 ("*My mind is absolutely stripped*").

The harshest winter in decades: Schrijvers, *The Crash of Ruin*, 21 ("*tuning forks*"); Blunt, *Foot Soldier*, 122 ("*block of ice*"); Fussell, *Doing Battle*, 130 ("*hands in the crotch"*); Murphy, *To Hell and Back*, 233 (*patches of hair*); Blair, *Ridgway's Paratroopers*, 424 (*igloos*); *Blue Spaders*, 117 (*quarter-pound TNT block*); Fussell, *The Boys' Crusade*, 41 ("*Austin White, Chicago, Ill.*").

A SHAEF plan to cut one million cords: *LSA*, vol. 2, 213; Frank A. Osmanski, "Critical Analysis of the Planning and Execution of the Logistic Support of the Normandy Invasion," Dec. 1949, Armed Forces Staff College, Osmanski papers, MHI; OH, Philip Carlquist, 1978, Emory University, http://sage.library.emory.edu/collection-0608.html; Cowdrey, *Fighting for Life*, 278 (*Sled dogs*).

"*To date, I've slept*": Richard Henry Byers, "Battle of the Bulge," 1983, a.p.

"*I tried to knock him out*": McManus, *The Deadly Brotherhood*, 141.

"*Everywhere we searched*": Blunt, *Foot Soldier*, 156.

"*Tell 'em it's rough*": CBM, *Company Commander*, quoted in Ellis, *On the Front Lines*, 332; Wandrey, *Bedpan Commando*, 163 ("*nice cowboy boots*"); Hauser, "Shock Nurse," *Saturday Evening Post* (March 10, 1945): 12+ ("*their mothers can't see them*").

Prison-camp guards opened: memo, Theater IG to CG, Advance COMZ, Apr. 1, 1945, NARA RG 498, ETO IG, box 19; DDE to GCM, March 18, 1945, memos, NARA RG 498, ETO SGS classified gen'l corr, 383.6, box 51 ("*I certainly loathe*").

"*Will you tell me what the hell*": Heinz, *When We Were One*, 231; memoir, Ralph M. Morales, 254th Inf, 1964, NARA RG 319, *RR* background files, FRC 4 ("*a thousand deaths*"); L. D. Docken, "My Recollections of a Raiding Party into Lixing, Feb. 1945," n.d., NARA RG 319, *RR* background files, FRC 5 ("*Things didn't go exactly as planned*"); Fussell, *Doing Battle*, 140 ("*accident and contingency*").

"*How hard I have become*": Vining, ed., *American Diaries of World War II*, 106; Blunt, *Foot Soldier*, 138, 86 ("*I sat and ate*"); Gray, *The Warriors*, 233–34 ("'*Tis bitter cold*'").

A survey of four thousand GIs: "Attitudes of Soldiers in the European Theater," Apr.–May 1945, report no. ETO 85, NARA RG 330, E 94, 6; Schrijvers, *The Crash of Ruin*, 76 ("*A hatred such as I have never seen*"); Ellis, *On the Front Lines*, 286 ("*The question of killing*").

"*Slowly it is beginning to dawn*": Peckham and Snyder, eds., *Letters from Fighting Hoosiers*, vol. 2, 165; Christen T. Jonassen, "Living Conditions in the E.T.O.," 1987, Columbus WWII Round Table, MHI, box 1, 4 ("*Screw the bastards*"); Ellis, *On the Front Lines*, 286 ("*When the Jerries come in*"); Toole, *Battle Diary*, 57 ("*Some of our best men*").

"*Their visible wish to surrender*": Fussell, *Doing Battle*, 124.

"*Killing is an obsession*": corr, Waldo Heinrichs, Jr., to parents, Apr. 30, 1945, MHI, box 1.

At 7:30 A.M. on Wednesday: Huie, *The Execution of Private Slovik*, 22–25, 34, 60; "The Execution of Eddie Slovik," *AB*, no. 32 (1981): 28+.

Indiscipline had become a nagging worry: "Military Justice Administration in Theater of Operations," n.d., USFET General Board study no. 83, NARA RG 407, E 427, AG WWII operations reports, 97-USF5-0.30, 1–2 (*11,000 general courts-martial*); desk calendar, Nov. 5, 1944, DDE Lib, Barbara Wyden papers, box 1 ("*Disciplinary conditions*"); memo, DDE, Dec. 13, 1944, NARA RG 331, E 1, SHAEF SGS, box 11 ("*The large incidence of crimes*"); Wieviorka, *Normandy*, 328 ("*liberators have turned into looters*"); "Alleged Lawlessness of American Troops in Normandy Area," Nov. 18, 1944, NARA RG 498, ETO inspection file #40 ("*fear of being accosted*"); Ellis, *On the Front Lines*, 200 (*less than one-half of one percent*); memo, SHAEF G-2 to SHAEF G-1, Jan. 24, 1945, NARA RG 331, E 1, SHAEF SGS, box 11 ("*a considerable percentage*"). Beetle Smith subsequently complained to

commanders on March 20, 1945, that "large scale looting is being practiced by both U.S. and British troops in Holland and Germany."

Severe punishment had a fitful deterrent effect: "The Military Offender in the Theater of Operations," n.d., USFET General Board study no. 84, NARA RG 407, E 427, AG WWII operations reports, 97-USF5-0.30, 1–2 ("*mental ages*" and *dishonorable discharge*); "Military Justice Administration in Theater of Operations," n.d., USFET General Board study no. 83, NARA RG 407, E 427, AG WWII operations reports, 97-USF5-0.30, 7–9.

Four hundred and forty-three death penalties: "Normandy Executions," *AB*, no. 85 (1994). At least one author subsequently claimed that fourteen thousand European women were raped by U.S. soldiers. John H. Morrow, Jr., review of J. Robert Lilly, *Taken by Force*, *JMH* (Oct. 2008): 1324. See also Davies, *No Simple Victory*, 339. SHAEF and Army figures suggest that the numbers, though appalling, were far lower. See AAR, 12th AG, vol. 10, NARA RG 331, E 200A, SHAEF, box 267; Ziemke, *The U.S. Army in the Occupation of Germany, 1944–1946*, 220; and Wieviorka, *Normandy*, 328.

Seventy executions took place in Europe: corr, Theodore Wyman, Jr., to OCMH, May 5, 1954, NARA RG 319, E 97, *LSA*, vol. 1, background files, box 4,14; Lilly, "U.S. Military Executions," *AB*, no. 90 (1995): 50+; "Normandy Executions," *AB*, no. 85 (1994) ("*manila hemp*").

Desertion, defined by the U.S. military: "The Execution of Eddie Slovik," *AB*, no. 32 (1981): 28+; Laffin, *Combat Surgeons*, 197–98 (*more than three thousand death sentences*).

The German military issued: Geoffrey P. Megargee, World War II panel, SMH conference, May 22, 2004, Bethesda, Md.; Rush, *Hell in Hürtgen Forest*, 336; Horst Boog, "Invasion to Surrender: The Defense of Germany," in Brower, ed., *World War II in Europe: The Final Year*, 129. Boog estimates that "somewhat less than half" of the fifty thousand condemned were executed.

Twenty-one thousand soldiers would desert: *DOB*, 508; Fussell, *The Boys' Crusade*, 108 (*less than half had been caught*).

Of nearly two thousand deserters convicted in Europe: "Military Justice Administration in Theater of Operations," n.d., USFET General Board study no. 83, NARA RG 407, E 427, AG WWII operations reports, 97-USF5-0.30, 4. Several dozen others were condemned for mutiny, sedition, or misbehavior before the enemy, i.e., fleeing from battle.

since 1864: Huie, *The Execution of Private Slovik*, 146.

Slovik was arrested in October: ibid., 121–22, 150–51 ("*in a little trouble*"), 174, 179–80; Carroll, "A Deserter Begs Eisenhower to Spare His Life," *World War II* (Jan.–Feb. 2012): 21+ ("*How can I tell you*"); Morgan, *Eisenhower Was My Boss*, 134 ("*Hanging Hour*"); "The Execution of Eddie Slovik," *AB*, no. 32 (1981): 28+.

The MP guards had lost the handcuff key: Huie, *The Execution of Private Slovik*, 203–11, 217–21, 227.

Gray overcast roofed the garden: "The Execution of Eddie Slovik," *AB*, no. 32 (1981): 28+; Miller, *Division Commander*, 160–62. In a letter to author William Bradford Huie in 1953, General Cota said, "I regret that Private Slovik had to be a product of our replacement system. This was a cruel system … and I never liked it." Corr, Dec. 13, 1953, Norman D. Cota papers, DDE Lib, 201 file, box 1.

A priest anointed the body: L. R. Talbot, "Graves Registration in the European Theater of Operations," 1955, chapter 26 PIR, MHI; Lilly, "U.S. Military Executions," *AB*, no. 90 (1995): 50+.

"*the one sore on the whole front*": diary, JLD, Jan. 27, 1945, MHI; Tedder, *With Prejudice*, 657 ("*we must get cleaned up*").

In this he would be further frustrated: *RR*, 533, 538 (*Iron Cross*); OH, 3rd ID, Colmar Pocket, RG 407, E 427-A, CI, 270/65/5/1, folder 26 (*converted into fortresses*); MEB, "The Colmar Pockets, 20 Jan–9 Feb 45," Oct. 1954, NARA RG 319, R-56, 11 (*ten ferry sites*); "Reduction of the Colmar Pocket," Sixth AG, n.d., CARL, N-11980.3, 5 (*floating contact mines*).

General Devers's initial effort: Seaman, "Reduction of the Colmar Pocket," *Military Review* (Oct. 1951): 37+; *The Seventh United States Army in France and Germany*, vol. 2, 627; "History of Ordnance Service in the Mediterranean Theater," vol. 2, n.d., CMH, 8-4 JA, 196–97; Turner and Jackson, *Destination Berchtesgaden*, 120–21; De Lattre de Tassigny, *The History of the French First Army*, 345–48 ("*polished ice terrain*"); memo, Reuben E. Jenkins to JLD, Feb. 24, 1947, Jenkins papers, MHI, box 1 (*French II Corps*); Yeide and Stout, *First to the Rhine*, 307 ("Elsass bleibt deutsch").

"*Having gained surprise*": diary, JLD, Jan. 24–26, 1945, and Feb. 1, 1945 ("*he would be shot*"), MHI; *RR*, 537 ("*willingness to go all out*"); OH, Henry Cabot Lodge, Aug. 16, 1973, Thomas E. Griess, JLD, YCHT, box 94, 11–12 ("*Goddamn it!*"); Tedder, *With Prejudice*, 657 ("*let down by the French*").

American units had their own difficulties: *The Seventh United States Army in France and Germany*, vol. 2, 629 ("*exhausted and depleted*"); William A. Sutton, "Operation Grandslam, 30th Regiment," 3rd ID, June 2, 1945, Seventh Army Combat Narratives, MHI, 5 (*improvised nightshirts*), 38 ("*Civil War days*"); Taggart, ed., *History of the Third Infantry Division*, 305–9 (*350 men*); Even, *The Tenth Engineers*, 45 (*Maison Rouge*); Melvin J. Lasky, "La Maison Rouge," March 3, 1945, Seventh Army Combat Narratives,

MHI, 2–28 (“*flight and panic*”); *RR*, 544–47; memoir, James T. Cooper, 30th Inf, ts, n.d., Audie Murphy papers, USMA Arch (“*rattled like paper*”).

Audie Murphy helped redeem: Simpson, *Audie Murphy, American Soldier*, 130–37, 153–60; Taggart, ed., *History of the Third Infantry Division*, 310–11; Murphy, *To Hell and Back*, 240–43 (“*huddled like partridges*”); Graham, *No Name on the Bullet*, 90 (“*Things seemed to slow down*”); De Lattre de Tassigny, *The History of the French First Army*, 361 (“*bravest thing*”).

At last an Allied preponderance: MEB, “The Colmar Pockets, 20 Jan–9 Feb 45,” Oct. 1954, NARA RG 319, R-56, 18–19; De Lattre de Tassigny, *The History of the French First Army*, 375 (“*God be praised!*”); *RR*, 551.

By February 5, columns from north and south: Statements collected from GIs by Army historians shortly after the battle included, “We shot the wounded Germans because we only had twenty men and couldn’t fool with them.” OH, 3rd ID, Colmar Pocket, RG 407, E 427-A, CI, 270/65/5/1, folder 26.

A French patriot showed GIs: Weigley, *Eisenhower’s Lieutenants*, 598–99.

“*My dear French comrades*”: Seaman, “Reduction of the Colmar Pocket,” *Military Review* (Oct. 1951): 37+ (“*national event*”); De Lattre de Tassigny, *The History of the French First Army*, 397; *LO*, 238 (*corner of northeastern Alsace*); memo, Reuben E. Jenkins to JLD, Feb. 24, 1947, Jenkins papers, MHI, box 1 (*three times longer*); Graham, *No Name on the Bullet*, 94 (“*frozen, dead chickens*”).

Colmar had cost: De Lattre de Tassigny, *The History of the French First Army*, 398–99. U.S. casualties were put at eight thousand, although only five hundred killed in action (*RR*, 556–57).

“*sacrificed for no appreciable gain”*: *RR*, 558. Russell F. Weigley asserts that one Volksgrenadier unit, the first evacuated across the Rhine, escaped reasonably intact (*Eisenhower’s Lieutenants*, 598–99).

Pulverizing the Reich from above: Willmott, *The Great Crusade*, 414; Webster and Frankland, *The Strategic Air Offensive Against Germany*, vol. 3, *Victory*, part 5, 204 (“*earthquake bomb*”); Green et al., *The Ordnance Department*, 470–71 (*only by the atomic bomb*); “Tactical Air Operations in Europe,” XIX TAC, May 1945, Frederick L. Anderson papers, HIA, box 83, folder 1, 8–9 (“*antipersonnel incendiary*”); Miller, *Masters of the Air*, 4 (“*horrible as possible*”); “Preservation of Historical Monuments, Art Objects, etc.,” Sept. 1944; memo, DDE, June 1, 1944, NARA RG 331, E 1, SHAEF SGS, box 1 (“*symbolizing to the world*”); Schrijvers, *The Crash of Ruin*, 201 (“*Stonehenge*”); Sebald, *On the Natural History of Destruction*, 47 (“*lifeless life*”).

British air strategists considered: memo, L. S. Kuter to H. H. Arnold, Aug. 9, 1944, Frederick L. Anderson papers, HIA, box 96; corr, F. L. Anderson to C. A. Spaatz, Feb. 2, 1945, in “Operation ARGONAUT,” n.d., Frederick L. Anderson papers, HIA, box 95, folder 14; *AAFinWWII*, 724–26; Webster and Noble Frankland, *The Strategic Air Offensive Against Germany*, vol. 3, *Victory*, part 5, 116 (“*ceases to beat*”); Davis, *Bombing the European Axis Powers*, 490–95 (“*already shaky morale*”).

Skeptics objected: THUNDERCLAP originally was planned in Aug. 1944 only to be postponed six months and revived in truncated form (Transcript, phone conversation, J. Doolittle and F. L. Anderson, Aug. 21, 1944, in “Operation Thunderclap: Attack on German Civilian Morale,” Frederick L. Anderson papers, HIA, box 96, folder 2); Ehlers, *Targeting the Reich*, 335 (“*extremely remote*”).

“*Big B is no good*”: “Survey of Combat Crews in Heavy Bombardment Groups in ETO,” June 1944, Research Branch, Eighth AF, Carl A. Spaatz papers, LOC MS Div, box 18.

“*I agree the project”*: DDE, marginalia on “Air Attack on German Civilian Morale,” U.K. Chief of Staff Brief and Action Report, Aug. 7, 1944, NARA RG 331, E 3, SGS conferences and briefings, box 129.

THUNDERCLAP, as the “project”: Davis, *Carl A. Spaatz and the Air War in Europe*, 552–53; Davis, *Bombing the European Axis Powers*, 496–500, 515n; *AAFinWWII*, 724–26; Miller, *Masters of the Air*, 265 (*sixth largest city*).

Even so, bombs smashed: *AAFinWWII*, 724–26. Among those killed was Roland Freisler, the notorious state secretary in the Reich Justice Ministry and a Wannsee Conference participant (Author visit, Wannsee Conference villa, Berlin, Sept. 30, 2009).

“*It was a sunny, beautiful morning”*: “*Vor Fünfzig Jahren: Ein Tagebuch,” Frankfurter Allgemeine*, 1994, a.p.; Friedrich, *The Fire*, 352 (“*people literally ripped clothes*”); Miller, *Masters of the Air*, 478 (“*deer in a storm*”); Whiting, *The Home Front: Germany*, 144–45 (“*flaming rivers*”), 422–26 (*120,000 Germans homeless*); Anonymous, *A Woman in Berlin*, 5, 10 (“*Only our eyes*”).

Other elaborate air missions: Davis, *Carl A. Spaatz and the Air War in Europe*, 571; Schaffer, “American Miltary Ethics in World War II: The Bombing of German Civilians,” *Journal of American History* (Sept. 1980): 318+ (“*virgin areas”*); Juliette Hennessy, “Tactical Operations of the Eighth Air Force,” 1952, AFHRA, historical study no. 70, 119–21, 126 (*civilian will*); *AAFinWWII*, 735 (“*no morale*”).

Most infamous of the winter raids: Webster and Frankland, *The Strategic Air Offensive Against Germany*, vol. 3, *Victory*, part 5, 108–9; Biddle, “Dresden 1945: Reality, History, and Memory,” *JMH* (Apr. 2008): 413+ (*uprooting trees*); Arthur, *Forgotten Voices of World War II*, 404 (“*Chimney stacks fell*”); Colville, *The Fringes of Power*, 562–63 (“*Dresden?*”); “Death Toll in Second World War Dresden Bombing,” *Daily Mail* (U.K.), Oct. 3, 2008, http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1067489/Death-toll-Second-World-

War-Dresden-bombing-25-000-commission-finds.html; *Germany IX*, 390; Sebald, *On the Natural History of Destruction*, 98 (*Treblinka*).

"*We were put to work*": Carroll, *Behind the Lines*, 318–20.

Each night and each day, bombing: Davis, *Carl A. Spaatz and the Air War in Europe*, 588. The German fatality number of 406,000, calculated in 1990, included Austrians, forced laborers, and prisoners of war (*Germany IX*, 475–76). Max Hastings and W. G. Sebald put the number closer to 600,000. See, respectively, *Armageddon*, 299, and *On the Natural History of Destruction*, 3–4.

Devastation scorched seventy cities: Hitchcock, *The Bitter Road to Freedom*, 183, 191 ("*burned like torches*"); Collier, *Fighting Words*, 180 ("*a hairpin*").

Yet still the lifeless life: Crane, *Bombs, Cities & Civilians*, 105 ("*chimera*").

Field Marshal Montgomery had a conqueror's glint: The Canadian First Army offensive also became known as the Battle of the Reichswald (*VW*, vol. 2, 253–57; *LO*, 136–37).

But no crossing could be made on the Roer: OH, 78th ID, 1945, NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, folders 145–149.

The Urft fell easily: Hogan, *A Command Post at War*, 243; OH, 78th ID, 1945, NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, folders 145–149 (*booby-trapped corpses*); Gavin, *On to Berlin*, 262–63; Sylvan, 293 (*forty battalions*); *Lightning: The History of the 78th Infantry Division*, 110.

At eight P.M. *on Friday, February 9*: OH, 78th ID, 1945, NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, folders 145–149; Sylvan, 296–97 (*forty thousand U.S. shells*); Mittelman, *Eight Stars to Victory*, 309–12; *Lightning: The History of the 78th Infantry Division*, 118–20; Miller, *A Dark and Bloody Ground*, 201 (*ominous rumble*); OH, 303rd Engineer Bn and 78th ID, 1945, NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, folders 145–149 ("*tunnel under the sea*").

But mortal wounds had already: *LO*, 81–82; *VW*, vol. 2, 264 (*100 million tons*).

Snowmelt and rain: "Combat Engineering," Aug. 1945, Historical Report No. 10, ETO, CEOH, box X-30, 129; Weigley, *Eisenhower's Lieutenants*, 603.

With Montgomery's concurrence : Ninth Army war diary, Feb. 8–10, 1945, William H. Simpson papers, MHI, box 11; *LO*, 143; OH, William H. Simpson, 1971, Thomas R. Stone, SOOHP, MHI.

For nearly a fortnight, fifteen American divisions: OH, William H. Simpson, 1971, Thomas R. Stone, SOOHP, MHI; *SLC*, 379; Bradley and Blair, *A General's Life*, 340; Stone, "General William Hood Simpson: Unsung Commander of U.S. Ninth Army," *Parameters* 9, no. 2 (June 1981): 44+; Bradley, *Soldier's Story*, 437 ("*uncommonly normal*"); memoir, Richard D. Hughes, n.d., AFHRA, 520.056-234, 60 ("*He displayed no anxiety*").

While Simpson bided his time: The Anglo-Canadian operation was known as VERITABLE (*VW*, vol. 2, 264–71; *LO*, 145).

"*Machine guns are crackling now*": Thompson, *Men Under Fire*, 80, 83; *LO*, 141–42.

At length Ninth Army was ready: Ninth Army war diary, Feb. 22, 1945, William H. Simpson papers, MHI, box 11; OH, George I. Forsythe, 1974, Frank L. Henry, SOOHP, MHI, 180 ("*you could read a document*").

Forty-five minutes later three corps plunged: *LO*, 145–55 ("*indescribable confusion*"), 160–62; "Combat Engineering," CE, ETOUSA, report #10, Dec. 1945, RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #547, 129–33 (*six hundred storm boats*); Hubert S. Miller, XIX Corps engineer, "Roer River Crossing," 1947, CARL, N-9924.2, part I, 17 (*knocked out eight times*). VII Corps was still part of First Army (*LO*).

But within hours brute force won: Hubert S. Miller, XIX Corps engineer, "Roer River Crossing," 1947, CARL, N-9924.2, part I, 12–13; "Combat Engineering," CE, ETOUSA, report #10, Dec. 1945, RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #547, 129–33; Ninth Army war diary, Feb. 23, 1945, William H. Simpson papers, MHI, box 11 ("*cities captured*"); Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 673 (*nineteen bridges*); *LO*, 167 ("*things are beginning to break*").

On Tuesday, Simpson committed his armor: *LO*, 172; Ninth Army war diary, March 12, 1945, William H. Simpson papers, MHI, box 11 ("*dead, lifeless giant*").

Eight bridges spanned the great river: *LO*, 174.

"*the enemy is completely disorganized*": Ninth Army war diary, March 4, March 5 ("*unwise*"), and March 27, 1945 ("*time out for tea*"), William H. Simpson papers, MHI, box 11; OH, William H. Simpson, 1971, Thomas R. Stone, SOOHP, MHI ("*Don't go across*" and "*selfish idea*"); *LO*, 178; Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 677 ("*industrial wilderness*").

GRENADE *was over*: *LO*, 184; *VW*, vol. 2, 277.

Despite the staggering losses: *LO*, 171 (“*heavy heart*”).

CHAPTER 11: CROSSINGS

The Inner Door to Germany

Into the Rhineland they pounded: William A. Carter, “Carter’s War,” 1983, CEOH, box V, XIII-25; Thompson, *Men Under Fire*, 54 (“*other sort of war*”).

German refugees trudged away: corr, Thor Smith to family, March 13, 1945, Thor M. Smith papers, HIA, box 1; Ed Cunningham, “The Battle of the Bulge,” *Yank*, March 2, 1945, in *Reporting World War II*, vol. 2, 585; war diary, Lasky, “Military History Stood on Its Head,” *Berlin Journal* 14 (spring 2007), American Academy of Berlin, 20+ (“wir folgen”); Botting, *From the Ruins of the Reich*, 3 (“Krieg weg!”); Gander, *After These Many Quests*, 313–14 (“*In Memoriam*” *notices*); Heinz, *When We Were One*, 156 (“*They stood facing*”), 261 (*tossed bread*); Simpson, *Audie Murphy, American Soldier*, 212 (“*fodderland*”).

As two dozen British, Canadian, and American divisions: Fraser, *And We Shall Shock Them*, 390; “Report of Rhine River Crossings,” May 1945, FUSA, Office of the Engineer, NARA RG 407, Miscl AG records, ML #887, box 19135 (*three corps abreast*); Sylvan, 319 (“*impossible not to be elated*”); *LO*, 114–15, 240, 252; White, *Conquerors’ Road*, 33 (“*bullshit wagon*”); 4th AD combat interviews, March–Apr. 1945, NARA RG 407, Miscl AG records, ML #857, box 19133 (*tank and howitzer shells*); corr, A. C. Gillem to wife, Feb. 25, 1945, Alvan Cullom Gillem, Jr., papers, MHI, box 7 (“*On the road yesterday*”); Friedrich, *The Fire*, 122–24; William A. Carter, “Carter’s War,” 1983, CEOH, box V, XIII-6 (“*most totally destroyed city*”); Henry L. Barr, “Infantry Living Conditions in Combat Area,” n.d., Columbus WWII Round Table Collection, MHI, box 1 (*Doors torn from their hinges*).

“*Everything smelled*”: Carpenter, *No Woman’s World*, 257; White, *Conqueror’s Road*, 42–43 (“*rat hunt*”); Moorehead, *Eclipse*, 235 (“*lovely play of light*”); corr, P. B. Rogers to family, March 7, 1945, Pleas B. Rogers papers, MHI (“*certainly scorched*”).

“*The cattle, so numerous*”: Moorehead, *Eclipse*, 230–31.

“*Every house seemed to have*”: Thompson, *Men Under Fire*, 35.

“*vast stocks of sugar*”: Martha Gellhorn, “*Das Deutsches Volk*,” *Collier’s*, May 26, 1945, in *Reporting World War II*, vol. 2, 675.

Here was a world of Dresden plates: White, *Conquerors’ Road*, 20–21; Nickell, *Red Devil*, 154 (*boiled eggs*); Bourke-White, *Portrait of Myself*, 262–63 (*motherhood medals*); Thompson, *Men Under Fire*, 145 (*Christian texts*); Pogue, *Pogue’s War*, 356–57 (*Dutch or Belgian*); Martha Gellhorn, “*Das Deutsches Volk*,” *Collier’s*, May 26, 1945, in *Reporting World War II*, vol. 2, 671 (“*No one is a Nazi*”).

Here too was a world to be looted: Robert E. Walker, “With the Stonewallers,” n.d., MMD, 111 (“*We’re advancing*”); memo, ONB to GSP, “Misbehavior of Allied Troops,” May 7, 1945, GSP, LOC MS Div, box 13 (“*processed*”); memo, FUSA IG, Apr. 23, 1945, NARA RG 338, First Army AG gen’l corr, box 220 (*Leica cameras*); Wellard, *The Man in a Helmet*, 224–25; Marshall, *A Ramble Through My War*, 226 (*medieval grave*); memo, W. B. Smith to ONB, March 20, 1945, NARA RG 331, E 1, SGS, box 11 (*floorboards*); Schrijvers, *The Crash of Ruin*, 205 (*mine detectors*); Heinz, *When We Were One*, 233 (*women’s dresses*); Kessler, *The Battle of the Ruhr Pocket*, 45 (“*Lootwaffe*”); Christen T. Jonassen, “Living Conditions in the E.T.O.,” 1987, Columbus WWII Round Table collection, MHI, box 1, 2 (“*two shooting*”); Moorehead, *Eclipse*, 253 (“*German cars by the hundred*”); Adams, “Operations of an American Military Government Detachment in the Saar, 1944–45,” *Military Affairs* (autumn 1955): 121+ (*motorcycles, typewriters*); Gander, *After These Many Quests*, 312 (“*unhindered shoplifting*”).

“*drunken, end-of-the-world carnival*”: Schrijvers, *The Crash of Ruin*, 171.

“*First I took a hammer*”: Linderman, *The World Within War*, 244.

“*I did not feel sorry*”: Thompson, *The Imperial War Museum Book of Victory in Europe*, 260.

Allied commanders also found themselves: *LO*, 330 (“Bitte, schlafen mit”); Thompson, *The Imperial War Museum Book of Victory in Europe*, 261 (“*ogling*”); Willoughby, “The Sexual Behavior of American GIs During the Early Years of the Occupation of Germany,” *JMH* (Jan. 1998): 155+ (“*$65 question*”); Kennett, *G.I.: The American Soldier in World War II*, 213 (“*Don’t play Samson*”); Stafford, *Endgame 1945*, 128–29 (“*To frat*”); Schrijvers, *The Crash of Ruin*, 183 (“*copulation without conversation*”); D’Este, *Patton: A Genius for War*, 653 (“*Tell the men of Third Army*”).

General Hodges ordered champagne: Sylvan, 322; Friedrich, *The Fire*, 221–25 (*only 10,000*); Hitchcock, *The Bitter Road to Freedom*, 182–89 (“*charred corpse*”).

Volksstrum pensioners fought: Cooper, *Death Traps*, 257; Margry, “The Battle for Cologne,” *AB*, no. 104 (1999): 2+ (*cavalry charge*); Janet Flanner [Genêt], “Letter from Cologne,” March 31, 1945, *New Yorker*, in *Reporting World War II*, vol. 2, 664–68 (“*scarlet garbage*”).

Hodges on Wednesday, March 7: Margry, “The Battle for Cologne,” *AB*, no. 104 (1999): 2+; *LO*, 191.

"*The Rhine. I didn't know*": David Pergrin, 291st Engineer Bn, "The Remagen Bridgehead," 1983, CEOH, box X-26, folder 2, 19; "Combat Engineering," historical report no. 10, Aug. 1945, CEOH, box X-30, 148–49 (*150 glaciers*); Michael George Mulhall, *The Dictionary of Statistics*, 515 (*fifteenth-largest*); *LSA*, vol. 2, 373 ("*short sea voyage*"); "Forced Crossing of the Rhine, 1945," historical report no. 20, Aug. 1945, CEOH, box X-32, folder 20, 1 ("*fordable*" and *eleven miles an hour*); Dziuban, "Rhine River Flood Prediction Service," *Military Engineer* (Sept. 1945): 348+ (*floods had been the highest*); Tooze, *The Wages of Destruction*, 651 (*relatively unpolluted*); ALH, 178 (*wreckage clogged its bed*); corr, H. L. Ismay to W. B. Smith, Dec. 30, 1944, LHC, 4/29/15 ("*another D-Day*").

Plans to jump the Rhine: "Forced Crossing of the Rhine," Dec. 1945, CE, NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #547, 4; "Rhine River Crossing," Jan. 26, 1945, ETOUSA, CEOH, box X-24A, folder 2; OH, Franklin F. Snyder, "Water Resources: Hydraulic and Hydrology," 1995, CEOH, 5, 45, 57 (*engineers in Vicksburg*); Dziuban, "Rhine River Flood Prediction Service," *Military Engineer* (Sept. 1945): 348+ (*radio broadcasts* and *Grenoble);* Abrams, *Our Secret Little War*, 62–63 (*170 models*).

River-crossing schools on the Loire: "Forced Crossing of the Rhine," Dec. 1945, CE, NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #547, 10–12; *The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers: A History*, 145; Henry F. Pringle, "Weapons Win Wars," n.d., CMH, 2-3.7 AB.B, 201–2 (*Boatyards*); "Supply: Oversea Theaters of Operation," 1945, NARA RG 319, *Global Logistics and Strategy, 1943–1945* background files, 2-3.7 (*nested and crated*); *We Bought the Eiffel Tower: The Story of the General Purchasing Agent, European Theater* , 1949, MHI, 60, 174–75; OH, Alan G. Kirk, Sept. 22, 1945, NARA RG 38, CNO, box 15, 3–4 (*up the Albert Canal*); Davis, *Across the Rhine*, 8 (*bulldozers*); *IFG*, 318; Karig, *Battle Report: The Atlantic War*, 394–96 ("*festooned with treetops*").

By early March, forward depots: Henry F. Pringle, "Weapons Win Wars," n.d., CMH, 2-3.7 AB.B, 201–2 (*2,500 outboard motors*); Davis, *Across the Rhine*, 8 (*1,100 assault boats*).

Just such a bridge still stood: Hechler, *The Bridge at Remagen*, 3, 49–53; Zaloga, *Remagen 1945*, 35. Some locals referred only to an adjacent subterranean gallery, used as an air raid shelter, as the Dwarf's Hole (http://www.herrlichkeit-erpel.de/EnglischeVersion/Bruecke03_eng.htm).

Local aesthetes complained: author visit, Friedensmuseum Brücke von Remagen, June 18, 1996.

Retreating German soldiers: Steinhoff et al., *Voices from the Third Reich* , 410 ("*cannons being pulled*"); Hechler, *The Bridge at Remagen*, 44–45 (*fractured command architecture*); *LO*, 214 (*Model had promised*).

Sixty zinc-lined boxes: *LO*, 213; "The Ludendorff Railway Bridge," *AB*, no. 16 (1977): 2+; Kenneth W. Hechler, "The German Reaction to Remagen," OCMH, July 1957, NARA RG 319, R-series, #101, 6.

"*Do you see*": OH, John W. Leonard, 9th AD, CG, March 16, 1945, NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI 300, box 19081.

At 8:20 A.M.: Reavis, "Crossing of Rhine Remembered," *Stars and Stripes*, March 8, 1995, 1; Hechler, *The Bridge at Remagen*, 79 ("*There is no glory*").

Now Lieutenant Timmermann would prove: Hechler, *The Bridge at Remagen*, 88; *LHD*, 201 ("*Do you know what the hell*"); corr, L. E. Engeman, CO, 14th Tank Bn, to JT, Apr. 5, 1964, JT, LOC MS Div, *LHD*, box 10 (*locomotives with steam up*).

As three platoons descended: Hechler, *The Bridge at Remagen*, 98; *LHD*, 202; Hechler, *Hero of the Rhine*, 18–20.

Shortly before two P.M. *a dark geyser*: OH, Karl Timmermann, Murray Deevers, William M. Hoge et al., 27th Armored Inf Bn, March–Apr. 1945, NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI ("*chicken dinner*"); Hechler, *The Bridge at Remagen*, 104–5 ("*before they blow it*").

Barely half a mile away, pandemonium: *LO*, 217; Hechler, *The Bridge at Remagen*, 112–13 ("*Everybody lie down*").

With a doleful boom: "Report of Rhine River Crossings," May 1945, FUSA, Office of the Engineer, NARA RG 407, Miscl AG records, ML #887 (*fourteen hundred pounds*); "Engineers at Remagen," n.d., 7, and OH, Sears Y. Coker, 9th Armored Engineer Bn, March 11, 1945, JT, LOC MS Div, *LHD*, boxes 9 and 10; *LO*, 230.

Reprieved, Timmermann and his men: OH, Karl Timmermann, Murray Deevers, William M. Hoge et al., 27th Armored Inf Bn, March–Apr. 1945, NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI 300, box 19081.

By late afternoon, Company A: ibid.; OH, George P. Soumas, 14th Tank Bn, n.d., NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI 300, box 19081; "Report of Rhine River Crossings," May 1945, FUSA, Office of the Engineer, NARA RG 407, Miscl AG records, ML #887 (*GIs blew apart*); *LHD*, 210; Hechler, *The Bridge at Remagen*, 128; Kenneth W. Hechler, "The German Reaction to Remagen," OCMH, July 1957, NARA RG 319, R-series, #101, 7 ("*Inform them*"). There is no evidence that this particular message reached a higher headquarters.

Night fell, a sodden, moonless night: "Engineer Memoirs: General William M. Hoge," 1993, CEOH, 151 ("*dark as a pocket*"); Ben Cothran, "Remagen, 7 March 1945," n.d., JT, LOC MS Div, *LHD*, box 10 (*drivers napped*); OH, Donald J. Russel [*sic*], 27th Armored Inf Bn, June 12, 1945, NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI 300, box 19081 (*three depleted rifle companies*); Reichelt, *Phantom Nine*, 210 (*half a ton of explosives*).

At last nine Shermans: "Engineers at Remagen," n.d., JT, LOC MS Div, *LHD*, box 9, 4 ("*most harrowing*"); OH, George P. Soumas, 14th Tank Bn, n.d., NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI 300, box 19081 ("*Ominous and nerve-wracking*"); Rudolf Schulz, "The Bridge of Decision," Dec. 1951, JT, LOC MS Div, box 10, *LHD*, 5 ("*inner door*").

Ancient, stately Reims: "Code Names and Code Words," NARA RG 331, E 1, SGS, 290/7/2-4/1, box 24; Baedeker, *Northern France*, 85, 103; Abram et al., *The Rough Guide to France*, 272–75; memoir, William Henry Baumer, n.d., HIA, box 1, 183 (*blind tastings*).

Eisenhower messed in the borrowed house: Danchev, 669.

"*Brad, that's wonderful*": *Three Years*, 764, 767–78.

Returning to the dining room: OH, DDE, June 3, 1946, SLAM, A. S. Nevins papers, "Message Log Oral History Interview," MHI; Taylor, *Swords and Plowshares*, 105–6 ("*badly located*").

They drank to the bridge: Courtney H. Hodges, "Remagen: The Bridge That Changed the War," 1949, Hodges papers, MHI, box 21, 24–25; OH, John Millikin, March 19, 1945, NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, folder 339 ("*Nobody ever*"); diary, March 7, 1945, CBH collection, MHI, box 4; Weigley, *Eisenhower's Lieutenants*, 629; David Pergrin, 291st Engineer Bn, "The Remagen Bridgehead," 1983, CEOH, box X-26, folder 2, 17 (*the Ludy*).

For the moment, Eisenhower would commit: memo, "Telephone Conversation—General Bradley–General Bull," March 9, 1945, Harold R. Bull papers, DDE Lib, box 2; Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 510–14 (*gain the autobahn*); author visit, Friedensmuseum Brücke von Remagen, June 18, 1996 (*eight thousand GIs*); OH, Ben J. Cothran, 9th AD, March 14, 1945, NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI 300, box 19081; "Report of Rhine River Crossings," May 1945, FUSA, Office of the Engineer, NARA RG 407, Miscl AG records, ML #887, box 19135 (*protective booms*); B. C. Andrus, III Corps, March 24, 1945, NARA RG 498, ETO G-3 OR (*Searchlights swept the water*); Beck, 510–11 (*depth charges*); OH, F. Russell Lyons et al., III Corps engineers, March 21, 1945, NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, folders 339–340 (*seven tons*).

As engineers toiled: "Report of Rhine River Crossings," May 1945, FUSA, Office of the Engineer, NARA RG 407, Miscl AG records, ML #887, box 19135; "Combat Engineering," historical report no. 10, Aug. 1945, CEOH, box X-30, 151–60 (*nineteen floats in ten minutes*); David Pergrin, 291st Engineer Bn, "The Remagen Bridgehead," 1983, CEOH, box X-26, folder 2, 32–38 ("*Boys, I've had it*"), 70 (*first jeep crossed*); *SC*, 424; Courtney H. Hodges, "Remagen: The Bridge That Changed the War," 1949, Hodges papers, MHI, box 21, 31 (*four miles deep*).

Loss of the Ludendorff: "History of U.S. Strategic Air Force Europe vs. German Air Force," Sept. 1945, SRH-013, NARA RG 457, E 9002, NSA, 338 ("*immediately destroyed*"); Rudolf Schulz, "The Bridge of Decision," Dec. 1951, JT, LOC MS Div, box 10, *LHD*, 3, 7 (*11th Panzer Division*); OH, F. Russell Lyons et al., III Corps engineers, March 21, 1945, NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, box 19086, folders 339–340; *LO*, 228; Zaloga, *Remagen 1945*, 59; OH, Rich Porter, with author, Jan. 27, 2009 (*Reichsmark notes*).

Hermann Göring sought volunteers: Zaloga, *Remagen 1945*, 56, 59 (*Army's densest concentration*); Hinsley, 592 (*Allied eavesdroppers*); B. C. Andrus, III Corps, March 24, 1945, NARA RG 498, ETO G-3 OR (*barrage balloons*); Paul Semmens, "The Hammer of Hell," n.d., CMH, 156–67 (*nearly seven hundred*); Wishnevsky, *Courtney Hicks Hodges*, 183 ("*a million dollars*"); *LO*, 228 (*aircraft shot down*); Royce L. Thompson, "Military Impact of the German V-Weapons, 1943–1945," July 31, 1953, CMH, 2-3.7 AE-P-4, 39; M. C. Helfers, "The Employment of V-Weapons by the Germans During World War II," 1954, OCMH, NARA RG 319, 2-3.7 AW, 81; Hechler, *The Bridge at Remagen*, 162; Beck, 510–11.

The debacle at Remagen clearly called: Blumentritt, *Von Rundstedt*, 279; Carver, ed., *The War Lords*, 199 (*repaired to Bad Tölz*); Westphal, *The German Army in the West*, 192–93 ("*his own shadow*"); *LO*, 222; *AAAD*, 166–67; *DOB*, 93.

Harsher fates befell: Günther Kraft, "The Shooting of My Father in Consequence of the Remagen Incidents," Apr. 10, 1946, trans. Duscha Ziegel, OCMH, JT, LOC MS Div, *LHD*, box 10; Zumbro, *Battle for the Ruhr*, 102–5; Hechler, *The Bridge at Remagen*, 178–79 (*letters*). A fifth officer, Captain Willi Bratge, was tried in absentia, having been captured.

Such rough justice: Spayd, *Bayerlein*, 198 ("*bridge psychosis*"); Colley, *Blood for Dignity*, 93.

"*Hitler was the one*": Sherry, *In the Shadow of War*, 101.

"*You ain't in the quartermaster*": Charles Roland, "G.I. Joe: The Citizen Soldier in World War II," 1979, MHI, ASEQ, 3rd Bn, 394th Inf, 99th ID, 24.

They of course had already been in the Army: memo, "Report of Board of Officers on Utilization of Negro Manpower," to GCM, Nov. 17, 1945, and "Negro Platoons in Composite Rifle Companies—World War II Style," "Army Talk," no. 170, Apr. 12, 1947, Alvan C. Gillem, Jr., papers, DDE Lib, box 14; MacGregor, *Integration of the Armed Forces*, 51–53. A proposal by John C. H. Lee to fully integrate them was rejected by Eisenhower after Smith noted that such radical integration contradicted War Department policy (Colley, *Blood for Dignity*, 49; Lee, *The Employment of Negro Troops*, 688–97).

Despite the creditable fighting records: *DOB*, 381–83; Lee, *The Employment of Negro Troops*, 648–52, 661–64, 679; Patton, *War as*

I Knew It, 160 ("*cannot think fast enough*"); Colley, *Blood for Dignity*, 53–55 ("*make liars out of the whites*"); Reynolds, *Rich Relations*, 315 ("*I am an American negro*"); e-mail, Harry Dewey to author, Dec. 15, 2008 ("*We were short-handed*").

Repairs on the Ludendorff continued: corr, Justin Dwight Hillyer to Ken Hechler, Oct. 25, 1959, CEOH, box X-26, folder 1.

Just before three P.M. *on Saturday, March 17*: Beck, 510–11; David Pergrin, 291st Engineer Bn, "The Remagen Bridgehead," 1983, CEOH, box X-26, folder 2, 100–105 ("*slow-motion movie*").

Of those who rode the Ludy down: Hechler, *The Bridge at Remagen*, 163–64; OH, F. Russell Lyons et al., III Corps engineers, March 21, 1945, NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, box 19086, folders 339–340 (*engineers with axes*); "Report of Rhine River Crossings," May 1945, FUSA, Office of the Engineer, NARA RG 407, Miscl AG records, ML #887, box 19135 (*8-inch howitzer battery*); "Combat Engineering," historical report no. 10, Aug. 1945, CEOH, box X-30, 151–60; David Pergrin, 291st Engineer Bn, "The Remagen Bridgehead," 1983, CEOH, box X-26, folder 2, 107 ("*glad the damned thing*"). Hodges sacked General Millikin the day the bridge fell for failure to properly organize the bridgehead (Sylvan, 335–37).

Late Saturday night, seven German frogmen: B. C. Andrus, III Corps, Mar. 24, 1945, NARA RG 498, ETO G-3 OR; *LO*, 228–30; *VW*, vol. 2, 283.

Eisenhower approved shoving: *LO*, 234; Sylvan, 338 ("*The war is over*").

Two If by Sea

Field Marshal Kesselring's buoyant optimism: Macksey, *Kesselring: The Making of the Luftwaffe*, 6–8; Kesselring, *The Memoirs of Field-Marshal Kesselring*, 9, 13–14, 243 ("*Hang on*"); Warlimont, *Inside Hitler's Headquarters*, 451 ("*I don't believe*"), 506.

Now Kesselring's luck: Kesselring, *The Memoirs of Field-Marshal Kesselring*, 218–19, 241; MacDonald, *The Mighty Endeavor*, 457 (*quarter-million Germans had vanished*), 239 ("*one hundred combatants"*); Warlimont, *Inside Hitler's Headquarters*, 506 (*Channel Islands garrison*); Steinhoff et al., *Voices from the Third Reich*, 413 (*shoot all German corporals*).

Field commanders in mid-March urged Kesselring: *LO*, 244, 257–58; Kesselring, *The Memoirs of Field-Marshal Kesselring*, 249–50 ("*bricks without straw*").

George Patton had taken brief leave: *PP*, 643; Codman, *Drive*, 254–57.

In Trier, for instance: Friedrich, *The Fire*, 248–49.

"*The desolation is frozen*": Edsel, *The Monuments Men*, 260–62.

"*smell the sweat of the legions*": *PP*, 655.

Rarely, perhaps never, had his generalship: Weigley, *Eisenhower's Lieutenants*, 639; *LO*, 262 ("*Scarcely a man-made thing"*); Wandrey, *Bedpan Commando*, 179 ("*hanging onto my hand*"); Allen, *Lucky Forward*, 254 ("*Roads don't matter"*); Ayer, *Before the Colors Fade*, 193 ("*blow up the goddamn gun*").

By Wednesday, March 21: *LO*, 250–51, 259; Allen, *Lucky Forward*, 260 ("*We're going to cross the Rhine*").

He made good his boast: memo, William Sackville, XII Corps, March 26, 1945, NARA RG 498, ETO G-3 OR, box 9; Allen, *Lucky Forward*, 263; *LO*, 267–71 ("*walking death*"); diary, GSP, March 24, 1945, LOC MS Div, box 3, folder 11 ("*drove to the river*").

"*Brad, we're across*": Codman, *Drive*, 269; *LO*, 273 ("*feeling of rivalry*").

"*I love war*": Semmes, *Portrait of Patton*, 264.

Churchill had proposed riding: Roberts, *Masters and Commanders*, 561; Hastings, *Winston's War*, 456 ("*I'm an old man*"); Colville, *Footprints in Time*, 184–87; AAR, "Operation Varsity," First Allied Airborne Army, May 19, 1945 (*smoke screen*); Saunders, *The Red Beret*, 287 ("*thick black haze*").

They found Montgomery's command post: Colville, *The Fringes of Power*, 575; Churchill, *Triumph and Tragedy*, 411; *LO*, 303 ("*Two if by sea*").

Under Montgomery's command: *SC*, 421; *LO*, 301 ("*pretend to resist"*); Callahan, *Churchill & His Generals*, 222 (*thirty-five infantry battalions*).

The plan for PLUNDER: *VW*, vol. 2, 286–87; AAR, "Activities, Final Phase, European War," IX Troop Carrier Command, June 1945, MBR papers, MHI, box 62, 56–76; Harris, "The Bigger They Are the Harder They Fall," *FAJ* (May–June 1938): 229+ (*single 105mm howitzer*); Thompson, *I Was Churchill's Shadow*, 151 ("*Hitler Personally*"). Ninth Army had accumulated 138,000 tons of supplies (*LO*, 297).

Churchill and Brooke strolled: Danchev, 674.

"*They were slightly bent under their packs*": Sevareid, *Not So Wild a Dream*, 499–502.

"*If you happen to hear*": Arthur, *Forgotten Voices of World War II*, 405–6.

"*a single hurrying black moth*": Moorehead, *Eclipse*, 240.

"*A great crimson stain*": Thompson, *Men Under Fire*, 106–7.

"*more than mortal powers*": Allen, *One More River*, 241.

"*Burglar-like and in single file*": Moorehead, *Eclipse*, 240; *VW*, vol. 2, 288–89.

A few miles upstream: Allen, *One More River*, 247 ("*shoals of small boats*"); "The Rhine Crossing," Aug. 1945, NARA RG 337, E 15A, AGF OR #608 (*a thousand shells a minute*); *LO*, 305–7 (*seven hundred assault boats* and *thirty-one casualties*); Albert H. Peyton, XVI Corps, March 31, 1945, NARA RG 498, ETO G-3 OR, box 8 (*twenty-ton cranes*).

fishing nets, chicken wire, tar paper: "Chief Engineers Report on Camouflage Activities in the ETO," Nov. 15, 1945, Howard V. Canan papers, HIA, box 3.

Rested and exultant: Colville, *The Fringes of Power*, 576; Colville, *Footprints in Time*, 184–87; Moorehead, *Eclipse*, 240–42 ("*my armies are too vast*").

"*They're coming!*": Moorehead, *Eclipse*, 244.

Here then was VARSITY: "Narrative of Operation Varsity," March 31, 1945, First Allied Airborne Army, Floyd Lavinius Parks papers, MHI, box 3; *LO*, 309; John C. Warren, "Airborne Operations in World War II, European Theater," 1956, AFHRA, historical study no. 97, 192. Various official histories of VARSITY PLUNDER differ markedly on details of the operation. The fighter and fighter-bomber cover included escort, cover, and patrol missions (*AAFinWWII*, 774).

Their orders were to seize the high ground: "Visit to ETO," May 5, 1945, NARA RG 337, E 15A, AGF OR #320; Gander, *After These Many Quests*, 286 ("*loosen up the scrum*").

In this they would be modestly effectual: "Visit to ETO," May 5, 1945, NARA RG 337, E 15A, AGF OR #320; "Narrative of Operation Varsity," March 31, 1945, First Allied Airborne Army, Floyd Lavinius Parks papers, MHI, box 3 (*failed to winkle out*); corr, Paul M. McGuire, 3rd Bn, 513th PIR, to JT, Sept. 6, 1963, JT, LOC MS Div, *LHD*, box 3 ("*holes started appearing*"); A. C. Miller, 2nd Bn, 513th PIR, "Operation VARSITY," Sept. 1963, JT, LOC MS Div, box 3, *LHD* ("*I looked back*").

The body of the plane plummeted: Sevareid, *Not So Wild a Dream*, 503.

"*falling like puppets*": Clark, *Crossing the Rhine*, 319.

"*cracked it open like an egg*": Arthur, *Forgotten Voices of World War II*, 412.

Of four hundred 6th Airborne gliders: Ernest M. Layman, Jr., "The Operations of XVIII Airborne Corps in the Crossing of the Rhine River at Wesel," n.d., JT, LOC MS Div, *LHD*, box 3, 9; *VW*, vol. 2, 291; John C. Warren, "Airborne Operations in World War II, European Theater," 1956, AFHRA, historical study no. 97, 176–77; *LO*, 313.

"*Controls hit by flak*": John C. Warren, "Airborne Operations in World War II, European Theater," 1956, AFHRA, historical study no. 97, 184–87.

"*Stop those Jewish prayers*": Capa, *Slightly Out of Focus*, 219; Richard C. Hottelet, "Big Jump into Germany," *Collier's*, May 5, 1945, in *Reporting World War II*, vol. 2, 658 ("*burning and disabled C-47s*").

The morning proved even more hazardous: "A Historical Study of Some World War II Airborne Operations," [1951?], WSEG staff study no. 3, CARL N-17309.1, 136; Eckelmeyer, "The Story of the Self-Sealing Tank," *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings* (Feb. 1946): 205+ (*sparks up to five inches*); AAR, "Operation Varsity," 52nd Troop Carrier Wing, n.d., MBR papers, MHI, box 62; memo, Maj. Donald W. Nyrop, "Fuel Tanks C-46 Aircraft," Sept. 9, 1944, and H. H. Arnold, "Operational and Tactical Suitability of the C-46A Airplane for Troop Carrier Operations," Aug. 8, 1944, Report of the Army Air Forces Board, both in NARA RG 18, AAF fuel systems, AAF Central Files, 1942–44, file 452.22; Holley, *Buying Aircraft*, 550–51 (*three thousand C-46s*); S. D. Heron, "Development of Aviation Fuels," in Schlaifer, ed., *Development of Aircraft Engines and Fuels*, 640

Two layers of rubber lined the fuel tank: corr, Lt. Col. David N. Laux to Henry L. Stimson, June 1, 1944; memo, Robert Lovett to Henry L. Stimson, July 18, 1944; memo, Brig. Gen. Mervine E. Gross, "Additional Built-in Fuel Capacity for C-46 Airplanes," Oct. 12, 1944; memo, Lewis H. Brereton, First Allied Airborne Army, Nov. 30, 1944; memo, Col. H. A. Shepard to H. H. Arnold, "Self-Sealing Fuel Cells for C-47 Airplanes," Dec. 13, 1944; memo, Col. S. F. Giffin, "Self-Sealing Tanks and Armor Plate for Troop Carrier C-46 and C-54 Aircraft," Feb. 3, 1945; memo, Col. H. G. Bunker, Apr. 16, 1945; Pearson, "Washington Merry-Go-Round," Apr. 29, 1944, *WP*, all in NARA RG 18, AAF fuel systems, AAF Central Files, 1942–44, file 452.22; John C. Warren, "Airborne Operations in World War II, European Theater," 1956, AFHRA, historical study no. 97, 194 (*some C-47s*).

"*I saw pieces*": Allen, *One More River*, 267.

"*The C-46 seemed to catch on fire*": John C. Warren, "Airborne Operations in World War II, European Theater," 1956, AFHRA, historical study no. 97, 180; AAR, "Activities, Final Phase, European War," IX Troop Carrier Command, June 1945, MBR papers, MHI, box 62, 80–81 (*seventy-three C-46s*); AAR, "Operation Varsity," 52nd Troop Carrier Wing, n.d., MBR papers, MHI, box 62 ("*not a suitable troop carrier*").

One final calamity remained: John C. Warren, "Airborne Operations in World War II, European Theater," 1956, AFHRA, historical study no. 97, 189.

Among those shot down: corr, John E. Cannon to Emma Cheek, Apr. 3, 1945, Earle C. Cheek collection, USMA Arch; e-mail, http://www.Accident-Report.com to author, Dec. 11, 2009.

Cheek had survived many harrowing sorties: corr, Earle C. Cheek to Doris, family, Nov. 1944–March 1945, Cheek collection, USMA Arch; "Missing Air Crew Report," HQ, AAF, March 27, 1945, a.p., www.Accident-Report.com. Other crewmen on the plane had completed eighteen to twenty-eight missions.

The sole survivor: corr, A. W. Keenen to Emma Cheek, June 25, 1945; Capt. T. G. Brown to Doris, June 12, 1945; Maj. Gen. Edward F. Witsell to Emma Cheek, Apr. 14, 1945, all in Cheek collection, USMA Arch.

"*The German is whipped*": Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, 390.

Churchill entertained the mess: Pawle, *The War and Colonel Warden*, 373–74.

Engineers were at work on various spans: "Visit to ETO," May 5, 1945, NARA RG 337, E 15A, AGF OR #320.

The utility of VARSITY*'s vertical envelopment*: *VW*, vol. 2, 292; *AAFinWWII*, 774; John C. Warren, "Airborne Operations in World War II, European Theater," 1956, AFHRA, historical study no. 97, 191–93 ("*tremendous success*"). The U.S. Army official history is unusually caustic in evaluating VARSITY (*LO*, 314).

The two airborne divisions incurred: "Narrative of Operation Varsity," Mar. 31, 1945, First Allied Airborne Army, Floyd Lavinius Parks papers, MHI, box 3; "Visit to ETO," May 5, 1945, NARA RG 337, E 15A, AGF OR #320; AAR, "Operation Varsity: First Allied Airborne Army," May 1945, NARA RG 334, E 315, ANSCOL, ACT R A-105, box 62 (*more than three hundred C-47s*); AAR, "Activities, Final Phrase, European War," IX Troop Carrier Command, June 1945, MBR papers, MHI, box 62, 80–81 (*another 357 casualties*); Thompson, *The Imperial War Museum Book of Victory in Europe*, 234 (VARSITY *BLUNDER*); Clark, *Crossing the Rhine*, 323 (*saws and ladders*).

"*an influence, supreme and watchful*": Kessler, *The Battle of the Ruhr Pocket*, 31.

Together in the brilliant sunshine: OH, William H. Simpson, 1971, Thomas R. Stone, SOOHP, MHI; Thompson, *The Imperial War Museum Book of Victory in Europe*, 242 ("*Our men muttered*"); Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, 372 ("*Thank God, Ike*"); Danchev, 676–77 ("*I was misquoted*").

"*I am in command now*": OH, William H. Simpson, 1971, Thomas R. Stone, SOOHP, MHI ("*Get him out of here*"); Churchill, *Triumph and Tragedy*, 416 ("*Why don't we go across*"); "Winston Churchill Visits the Rhine," *AB*, no. 16 (1977): 28+ (*ears cocked*); Davis, *Across the Rhine*, 85 ("*lighting his cigar*").

"*pouting mouth and angry eyes*": Danchev, 677.

After presenting Montgomery: Colville, *The Fringes of Power*, 579; Winston S. Churchill, *Marlborough: His Life and Times*, vol. 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 15.

In short order, seven Allied armies: *LO*, 320; OH, William H. Simpson, n.d., CJR, box 44, folder 14, 10–12 (*Simpson bridled*); war diary, Ninth Army, March 27–31, 1945, William H. Simpson papers, "personal calendar," MHI, box 11 (*languid British pace*); *VW*, vol. 2, 294 (*twenty miles beyond the Rhine*).

On the right flank, in the south: *LO*, 285–89; Wyant, *Sandy Patch*, 189 (*fewer than six thousand combat effectives*).

"*My dear General, you must cross*": *LO*, 321–22; De Gaulle, *The Complete War Memoirs of Charles de Gaulle, 1940–1946*, 845–46; De Lattre de Tassigny, *The History of the French First Army*, 421 ("*even if they do not want you*"), 425 (*A solitary company*).

"*This is the collapse*": Moorehead, *Eclipse*, 244; Benjamin A. Dickson, "G-2 Journal: Algiers to the Elbe," MHI, 203–12 ("*The enemy is capable of collapse*").

"*a systematic annihilation*": *SC*, 429; Biddle, *Rhetoric and Reality in Air Warfare*, 287 (*heaviest bombing month*); Addison, *Churchill, the Unexpected Hero*, 196–97 ("*stigmatizing a policy*"); memoir, Richard D. Hughes, n.d., AFHRA, 520.056-234, 64 ("*petering out*").

"*machinery in their souls*": John Steinbeck, *Bombs Away: The Story of a Bomber Team*, (New York: Penguin, 2009), e-book edition.

"*people accustomed to great spaces*": "Miracle of Supply," *Time* (Sept. 25, 1944): 8+.

The United States in the past year: Wieviorka, *Normandy*, 43.

American factories during the war: Gropman, *Mobilizing U.S. Industry in World War II*, 133. The Allies collectively outproduced Germany in military trucks by a factor of 12 to 1 (Ellis, *Brute Force*, 348–49).

with more than 700,000 vehicles on the Continent: "Ordnance Diary," Dec. 1, 1945, NARA RG 498, ETOUSA HD, UD 602, box 1; Nevins, "How We Felt About the War," in Goodman, ed., *While You Were Gone*, 21 ("*armed workshop*"); Freeman W. Burford, "The Inside Story of Oil in the European War," Nov. 25, 1946, NARA RG 319, E 97, *LSA*, vol. 1, background files, box 6 (*four million gallons*); "Combat Engineering," CE, ETOUSA report no. 10, Dec. 1945, NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #547, 7 (*ten bridges a day*); *LSA*, vol. 2, 422–23 (*fifty-seven more across the Rhine*), 454 (*six thousand tanks*).

"*one might be able to see the end*": Hastings, *Armageddon*, 380.

"*Naturally I am immensely pleased*": Chandler, 2544.

"The Enemy Has Reason to Fear Him"

No sword was swifter: *Three Years*, 797 (*German houses burned*); *PP*, 660 ("*Most of the houses are heaps*"), 656–57 ("*having so much fun*"); Ziemke, *The U.S. Army in the Occupation of Germany, 1944–1946*, 227 ("*brick and stone wilderness*"); D'Este, *Patton: A Genius for War*, 725 ("*reason to fear him*"). The German high command generally was less attentive to Patton individually than Americans liked to believe (Yeide, "The German View of Patton," *World War II* [March–Apr. 2012]: 27+).

"*I am very proud of the fact*": *PP*, 662–63.

His beloved son-in-law: *AAAD*, 339–44; OH, John K. Waters, 1980, William C. Parnell, III, SOOHP, MHI, 240–58; OH, Brooks Kleber, June 27, 1989, William A. Young, III, Kleber papers, MHI, 8–9; http://www.oflag64.us/Oflag64/Oflag_64_Association_homepage.html.

Waters kept a pocket notebook: John K. Waters, "Remembrances," a.p., courtesy George Patton "Pat" Waters.

He also maintained a "Wartime Log": John K. Waters, "A Wartime Log," a.p., courtesy George Patton "Pat" Waters.

The great Russian winter offensive: Blatman, *The Death Marches*, 407; "Sketches from the Lives of the Kriegies of Oflag 64," 1997, a.p., 34; OH, Brooks Kleber, June 27, 1989, William A. Young, III, Kleber papers, MHI, 8–18 (*secret radio*).

On February 26, the column was herded: Margry, "The Hammelburg Raid," *AB*, no. 91 (1996): 1+; Baron et al., *Raid!*, 46–48.

Conditions at Hammelburg were wretched: Deborah A. Smith, "American Prisoners of War in Germany, 1944–45: Hammelburg," May 10, 1976, and OH, Brooks Kleber, June 27, 1989, William A. Young, III, both in Kleber papers, MHI, 19.

Patton had hoped to hear: diary, Jan. 18, 1945, GSP, LOC, MS Div, box 3, folder 9; diary, Third Army chief of staff, Feb. 9, 1945, Hobart Gay papers, MHI, box 2, 722 (*Soviet intelligence*); Blumenson, *Patton: The Man Behind the Legend, 1885–1945*, 260–61 (*new arrivals at Hammelburg*); *PP*, 667 ("*We are headed"*); corr, GSP to Beatrice, March 25, 1945, GSP, LOC MS Div, box 13 ("*Hope to send an expedition*").

The dubious honor of rescuing: Baron et al., *Raid!*, 21–25; "Interview of Major Abraham J. Baum," Sept. 14, 1945, JT, LOC MS Div, *LHD*, box 1; Margry, "The Hammelburg Raid," *AB*, no. 91 (1996): 1+; Whitaker, "Task Force Baum and the Hammelburg Raid," *Armor* (Sept.–Oct. 1996): 20+; diary, Manton Eddy, XII Corp CG, March 26, 1945, FCP, MHI (*Patton ordered XII Corps*); Alexander C. Stiller, ts, n.d., GSP, LOC MS Div, box 49, folder 13; Blumenson, "The Hammelburg Affair," *Army* (Oct. 1965): 16+ ("*thrills and laughs*").

Patton had proposed sending: OH, Abraham Baum, "Interview by Mr. Lake, War Correspondent," n.d., NARA RG 407, E 427; OH, Abraham J. Baum, Apr. 10, 1945, D. G. Dayton and S. J. Tobin, JT, LOC MS Div, *LHD*, box 1 (*fifteen maps*); *PP*, 668–70; Blumenson, *Patton: The Man Behind the Legend, 1885–1945*, 260–61 (*east of a corps driving north*); Sorley, *Thunderbolt*, 92–93 ("*What the hell*"); corr, GSP to Beatrice, March 27, 1945, GSP, LOC MS Div, box 13 (" *nervous as a cat*"); *PP*, 666 ("*I do not believe*").

After skirmishes near Aschaffenburg: Baron et al., *Raid!*, 99–109. A meticulous contemporary effort by Peter Domes to reconstruct the raid can be found under "US Schedule," http://taskforcebaum.de/schedule/schedule%20us.html.

American tank and machine-gun fire: Margry, "The Hammelburg Raid," *AB*, no. 91 (1996): 1+; Alexander C. Stiller, ts, n.d., GSP, MS Div, box 49, folder 13 ("*scattered like quail*"); Baron et al., *Raid!*, 118–19, 133 ("*Mazel tov*"); "Notes on Task Force Baum, Narrative of Capt. Baum," n.d., NWWIIM.

Here trouble awaited them: Alexander C. Stiller, ts, n.d., GSP, MS Div, box 49, folder 13; Margry, "The Hammelburg Raid," *AB*, no.

91 (1996): 1+.

Drumfire and coiling black smoke: Herndon Inge, Jr., untitled memoir, n.d., MHI, 711–17; *LHD*, 292 (*offered absolution*), 294 ("*No smoking*").

With consent from a German commandant: corr, John K. Waters to Harry H. Semmes, Sept. 15, 1953, JT, LOC MS Div, *LHD*, box 1; OH, John K. Waters, 1980, William C. Parnell, III, 277–79; Baron et al., *Raid!*, 156–57 (*coccyx*); Margry, "The Hammelburg Raid," *AB*, no. 91 (1996): 1+ (*paper bandages*).

Baum's tanks meanwhile: Alexander C. Stiller, ts, n.d., GSP, MS Div, box 49, folder 13; Herndon Inge, Jr., untitled memoir, n.d., MHI, 711–17; OH, Col. Paul R. Goode, May 17, 1945, JT, LOC MS Div, *LHD*, box 2 (*he confronted 1,291*).

It was now 6:30 P.M.: Baron et al., *Raid!*, 162–64.

Evening's first stars glittered: OH, Col. Paul R. Goode, May 17, 1945, JT, LOC MS Div, *LHD*, box 2; OH, R. S. Garner, 707th Tank Bn, 28th ID, May 4, 1945, NARA RG 407, Miscl AG records, ML 857, box 19133 (*a few compasses*).

Scouts reported ambushes and roadblocks: "Notes on Task Force Baum," 4th AD, Apr. 10, 1945, NARA RG 407, E 427, file 604-0.3.0, box 12337; OH, R. S. Gardner, 28th ID, May 4, 1945, 707th Tank Bn, 28th ID, May 4, 1945, NARA RG 407, Miscl AG records, ML 857, box 19133.

"*A sheet of hell*": Baron et al., *Raid!*, 202–3; Alexander C. Stiller, ts, n.d., GSP, MS Div, box 49, folder 13 ("*they destroyed us*").

"*Every man for himself*": Baron et al., *Raid!*, 202–3; Margry, "The Hammelburg Raid," *AB*, no. 91 (1996): 1+; OH, Brooks Kleber, June 27, 1989, William A. Young, III, Kleber papers, MHI, 21–22 ("*Get a good sleep*").

"March 27*: 'Shot'*": John K. Waters, "Remembrances," a.p., courtesy George Patton "Pat" Waters.

Not for some days: Baron et al., *Raid!*, 250.

Patton both evaded responsibility: Phillips, *The Making of a Professional*, 184 (*undersized force*); *PP*, 667 ("*I felt by hazarding"*); D'Este, *Patton: A Genius for War*, 717 (*long after the raid*).

"*I had known of the camp*": corr, GSP to Beatrice, March 31, 1945, GSP, LOC MS Div, box 13.

"*They are trying to make an incident*": corr, GSP to Beatrice, Apr. 13, 1945, GSP, LOC MS Div, box 13.

Ten days after the raid: Margry, "The Hammelburg Raid," *AB*, no. 91 (1996): 1+; Baron et al., *Raid!*, 244–49 ("*courageous devotion*").

Patton had abused his authority: Hirshson, *General Patton: A Soldier's Life*, 623; Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 542–43 ("*Failure itself*"); Chandler, 2616–17 ("*crackpot actions*").

Lovers' Quarrels Are a Part of Love

Eisenhower's office in Reims: Williams, "Supreme Headquarters for D-Day," *AB*, no. 84 (1994): 1+; Kessler, *The Battle of the Ruhr Pocket*, 49 (*Military convoys crawled*); *SC*, 420 (*more than five thousand*); Joseph R. Darnall, "Powdered Eggs and Purple Hearts," 1946, MHUC, group 1, box 24, 180 (*jitterbugging soldiers*).

"*France smells wonderful*": corr, Howard J. Silbar to family, Apr. 15, 1945, Silbar papers, MHI, box 1.

Eisenhower "looked terrible": Bradley and Blair, *A General's Life*, 410; Morgan, *Past Forgetting*, 216–17 ("*physical and mental condition*"); Crosswell, *Beetle*, 878–89 ("*Ike shouts and rants*").

The supreme commander needed rest: Morgan, *Past Forgetting*, 217–18; Thomas W. Mattingly and Olive F. G. Marsh, "A Compilation of the General Health System of Dwight D. Eisenhower," Mattingly papers, DDE Lib, box 1; D'Este, *Eisenhower: A Soldier's Life*, 679–81 ("*Those of us*").

"*Ike has learnt his lesson*": Roberts, *Masters and Commanders*, 560.

"*As soon as you have joined hands*": Chandler, 2552, 2593 ("*simplicity itself*").

"*I get tired of trying to arrange"*: ibid., 2521; "Strategy of the Campaign in Western Europe, 1944–1945," n.d., USFET, General Board study no. 1, 97 (*ten thousand German soldiers*); OH, John Whiteley, May 15, 1963, CJR, box 44, folder 3 ("*if anything was to be done*").

Montgomery was gobsmacked: *VW*, vol. 2, 299–301; Crosswell, *Beetle*, 887 ("*blow from Ike"*); Hamilton, *Monty: Final Years of the Field-Marshal, 1944–1976*, 446 ("*violent, pro-American*"), 458 ("*prolong the war"*); Roberts, *Masters and Commanders*, 564 ("*only himself to blame*").

Allied planners had presumed that Berlin: Chandler, 2561, 2568 ("*In none of this do I mention Berlin*").

The Red Army was thirty miles from Berlin: *LO,* 340–41; *GS* VI, 132–33; Murphy, *Diplomat Among Warriors*, 229; OH, Arthur Nevins, Aug. 15, 1972, Maclyn P. Burg and John E. Wickman, Nevins papers, DDE Lib, 60; *SC,* 445; Chandler, 2553n ("*unfortunate incidents*").

On a single day in early April: That aircraft incident occurred on April 2 (Chandler, 2602).

Postwar occupation zones already: Greenfield, ed., *Command Decisions*, 387; Kershaw, *Hitler, 1936–45: Nemesis*, 786 ("*Destructive Measures*"); Ambrose, *Eisenhower and Berlin, 1945*, 29–30, 42; OH, John Whiteley, May 15, 1963, CJR, box 44, folder 3; OH, DDE, n.d., CJR, box 43, file 7, 26 ("*What would you have done*").

None of this went down easily: Kimball, ed., *Churchill & Roosevelt: The Complete Correspondence*, vol. 3, 604; *SC,* 442 ("*The commander in the field*").

"*We might be condemned*": Greenfield, ed., *Command Decisions*, 380.

"*Berlin remains*": Kimball, ed., *Churchill & Roosevelt: The Complete Correspondence*, vol. 3, 604–5.

"*very logical objectives*": ibid., 608.

"*I shall not attempt any move*": *SC,* 468.

The Allied juggernaut in the west had grown: More than two-thirds of the divisions were American (*LO,* 322).

They faced a tatterdemalion enemy: 12th AG, G-2 summary no. 43, March 25, 1945, NARA RG 498, ETO HD, UD 603, box 3.

Gasoline had grown precious: German gasoline production was less than one-tenth what it had been a year earlier ("Target Priorities of the Eighth Air Force," May 15, 1945, Carl A. Spaatz papers, LOC MS Div, box 326, folder VIII A.F., 23); Robert J. C. Osborne et al., "The 9th Armored Division in the Exploitation of Remagen Bridgehead," March 1950, AS, Ft. K, 9 ("*fifty-man panzer crew*").

Montgomery had not quite yielded: Chandler, 2594; *SC,* 446 ("*It is quite clear*").

Lovers' quarrels: War Department translation. Kimball, ed., *Churchill & Roosevelt: The Complete Correspondence*, vol. 3, 604, 612.

With Armed Forces Radio playing: Knickerbocker et al., *Danger Forward*, 380 ("*Last Round-up*"); Robert J. C. Osborne et al., "The 9th Armored Division in the Exploitation of Remagen Bridgehead," March 1950, AS, Ft. K, 30; Schrijvers, *The Crash of Ruin*, 141 ("*dream roads*"); Triplet, *A Colonel in the Armored Regiments*, 232–33 (*cloverleaf ramps*); Jack A. Marshall, "Once Upon a War," 2009, a.p., 131–32 ("*Onward, Christian Soldiers*"); OH, Andrew J. Boyle, 1971, Frank Walton, SOOHP, MHI, 11–14 (*mobile microfilm teams*).

Towns fell quickly: Sylvan, 351 (*box of cigars*); corr, Gerald Ritchie, 6th Airborne Div, to Elspeth, Apr. 10, 1945, IWM, P. 182 ("*Alice in Wonderland*"); Patton, *War as I Knew It*, 282; *LO*, 350 (*false rumors*); Graham, *No Name on the Bullet*, 95 ("*How I want*").

The hour had come to cinch: *LO*, 351–52; Friedrich, *The Fire*, 139 (*the very air had first turned yellow*); Zumbro, *Battle for the Ruhr*, 225–26 (*motley brigade*).

General Collins's VII Corps: Ossad and Marsh, *Major General Maurice Rose*, 22–23, 33–34; Cooper, *Death Traps*, 277–79 (*roadside ditch*).

Flame, smoke, and percussive gunfire: OH, JLC, Jan. 25, 1954, CBM, NARA RG 319, OCMH, 2-3.7, *SLC* background files, box 184; OH, JLC, 1972, Charles C. Sperow, SOOHP, MHI, 202; Cooper, *Death Traps*, 191 (*nearly four hundred tanks*); Ossad and Marsh, *Major General Maurice Rose*, 38, 46, 49; memo, Col. E. V. Freeman, memorial division, Office of the Quartermaster General, Nov. 16, 1949, M. Rose individual deceased personnel file, obtained under FOIA, U.S. Army Human Resources Command, July 2008 (*repeatedly declared himself*); Heinz, *When We Were One*, 154 ("*I have a son*").

"*We're in a hell of a fix*": corr, George G. Garton, CO, 391st Armored FA Bn, to JT, Apr. 13, 1963, JT, LOC MS Div, box 2 ("*they have us*"); Ossad and Marsh, *Major General Maurice Rose*, 28–35, 312–24, 343.

"*It can't be him*": Heinz, *When We Were One*, 154.

Rose would be interred: memo to Brig. Gen. J. R. Ranck, QM, COMZ, Orleans, France, Dec. 4, 1959, M. Rose individual deceased personnel file, obtained under FOIA, U.S. Army Human Resources Command, July 2008; Palmer and Zaid, eds., *The GI's Rabbi*, 162 (*Kaddish*).

A war-crimes investigation: Ossad and Marsh, *Major General Maurice Rose*, 339; Zumbro, *Battle for the Ruhr*, 227 (*Feral American troops*).

Fanatical resistance in Paderborn: Albert R. Cupello et al., "Armored Encirclement of the Ruhr," May 1949, AS, Ft. K, NARA RG

337, 78–79; Kessler, *The Battle of the Ruhr Pocket*, 107–8, 117–18; Zumbro, *Battle for the Ruhr*, 249–58 (*blood group tattoos*).

Easter Sunday dawned: corr, Paul M. McGuire to JT, Sept. 6, 1963, JT, LOC MS Div, *LHD*, box 3 ("*Every time a battery*"); Kessler, *The Battle of the Ruhr Pocket*, 107; Zumbro, *Battle for the Ruhr*, 251–54 (*bicycles*).

At noon, observation planes: *LO*, 359; Kessler, *The Battle of the Ruhr Pocket*, 118 (*Werner Osthelmer*).

Shortly after four P.M. *the columns met*: The official Army history put the rendezvous at one P.M., but that appears to be several hours too early (Albert R. Cupello et al., "Armored Encirclement of the Ruhr," May 1949, AS, Ft. K, NARA RG 337, 78–79); Zumbro, *Battle for the Ruhr*, 260; Kessler, *The Battle of the Ruhr Pocket*, 119 (*hundred-mark notes*).

"*largest double envelopment*": *SC*, 438; Zumbro, *Battle for the Ruhr*, 260; *LO*, 353 (*Hitler forbade withdrawal*); Francis Daugherty et al., "7th Armored Division's Part in the Reduction of the Ruhr Pocket," May 1950, AS, Ft. K, NARA RG 337, 63–66 (*imaginary Twelfth Army*); Kessler, *The Battle of the Ruhr Pocket*, 114–15 ("*All fear comes*").

To bring that day closer: *LO*, 363–66; AAR, "Operations in the Ruhr Valley," 75th ID, n.d., CARL, N-13095 (*thermite grenades*); OH, "Crushing the Rose Pocket," 97th ID, Apr. 7–19, 1945, NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, box 19066, folder 208 (*fifty flamethrowers*); corr, Robert W. Hasbrouck to wife, Apr. 16, 1945, Maurice Delaval papers, MHI, box 9 (" *so many interruptions*"); Francis Daugherty et al., "7th Armored Division's Part in the Reduction of the Ruhr Pocket," May 1950, AS, Ft. K, NARA RG 337, 85.

"*What is there left?*": Carl Wagener, "Army Group B," n.d., FMS, #B-593, MHI, 34–47.

"*Eighty years ago this month*": Ridgway, *Soldier*, 139–40.

Moscow had accused Model: Barnett, ed., *Hitler's Generals*, 329; *LO*, 369–72 ("*Have we done everything*").

"*I sincerely believe*": A decade later, Model's son exhumed his remains in a moldering field marshal's uniform; he was reburied in the German cemetery at Vossenack (Zumbro, *Battle for the Ruhr*, 375–79, 412; Kessler, *The Battle of the Ruhr Pocket*, 3, 206–10); Barnett, ed., *Hitler's Generals*, 329 (*Walther service revolver*).

"*a dark plowed field*": Hastings, *Armageddon*, 419.

Allied intelligence originally estimated: Frank A. Osmanski, "Critical Analysis of the Planning and Execution of the Logistic Support of the Normandy Invasion," Dec. 1949, Armed Forces Staff College, Osmanski papers, MHI, 45; Benjamin A. Dickson, "G-2 Journal: Algiers to the Elbe," MHI, 203–12 (*125,000*); Chandler, 2587 ("*at least 100,000*").

Those figures proved far too modest: "Consumption Rates U.S. Forces from the Rhine to the Elbe," May 11, 1945, NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin history #27; *LO*, 359 (*seven corps and nineteen divisions*), 372 (*Stalingrad or Tunis*); *SC*, 440 (*dry-shod admiral*); Spayd, *Bayerlein*, 222–23 ("*I had some nice days*").

"*We have prisoners like some people*": Fauntleroy, *The General and His Daughter*, 181; *LO*, 370; Spayd, *Bayerlein*, 218 (*groomed their teams*).

"*Young men, old men*": *LO*, 370–71.

GI sentries cradled their carbines: OH, "Crushing the Rose Pocket," 97th ID, Apr. 7–19, 1945, NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, box 19066, folder 208.

CHAPTER 12: VICTORY

Mark of the Beast

For the final destruction: *Stars and Stripes*, March 27, 1945, CBH letters, MHI ("*Omar the Warmaker*"); Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 539 (*Eisenhower joined him*); diary, Third Army chief of staff, Feb. 9, 1945, Hobart Gay papers, MHI, box 2, 866–69; Hirshson, *General Patton: A Soldier's Life*, 627–28 (*five-star rank insignia*); Ziemke, *The U.S. Army in the Occupation of Germany, 1944–1946*, 228–29 (*GIs had made a discovery*). Patton's official date of rank as a four-star was April 14.

A photograph of the Führer: Stafford, *Endgame 1945*, 74; White, *Conquerors' Road* , 68 ("*Thy Strength*"); Codman, *Drive*, 281 ("*If that clothesline*"); Ziemke, *The U.S. Army in the Occupation of Germany, 1944–1946*, 229–31 ("*Jesus Christ!*"); Bradsher, "Nazi Gold: The Merkers Mine Treasure," *Prologue* 31, no. 1 (spring 1999): 7+ ("*meeting payrolls*").

Treasures already had been discovered : "Civil Affairs and Military Government Activities in Connection with Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives," NARA RG 407, E 427, USFET General Board study no. 36, 97-USF5-0.3.0, 27–29; Edsel, *The Monuments Men*, 281–83.

Here in "Room No. 8": Bradsher, "Nazi Gold: The Merkers Mine Treasure," *Prologue* 31, no. 1 (spring 1999): 7+ (*concentration-camp victims* and "*richest man in the world*"); Tooze, *The Wages of Destruction*, 654 (*double-decker buses*); Nicholas, *The Rape of*

Europa, 312, 333–36; Holland and Rothbart, "The Merkers and Buchenwald Treasure Troves," *AB*, no. 93 (1996): 1+; Ziemke, *The U.S. Army in the Occupation of Germany, 1944–1946*, 231 (*each sack worth $25,000*); Slany, *U.S. and Allied Efforts to Recover and Restore Gold and Other Assets Stolen or Hidden by Germany During World War II*, 159–61; memo, Col. B. Bernstein to Brig. Gen. F. J. McSherry, "Contents of Mines in Merkers Area," Apr. 18, 1945, Frank J. McSherry papers, MHI, box 53 (*galleries and shafts nearby*).

Patton facetiously proposed: memo, Brig. Gen. Frank J. McSherry to DDE, "Gold and Art Treasure Found at Meikers [*sic*]," Apr. 10, 1945, McSherry papers, MHI, box 53 (*250 tons*); Crosswell, *Beetle*, 899 ("*every son of a bitch*").

Eventually valued by SHAEF: Bradsher, "Nazi Gold: The Merkers Mine Treasure," *Prologue* 37, no. 1 (spring 1999): 7+; Ziemke, *The U.S. Army in the Occupation of Germany, 1944–1946*, 229–31 (*ten-ton trucks*).

Similar removals were under way: William F. Heimlich, "The Eagle and the Bear: Berlin, 1945–1950," n.d., HIA, 46–52 (*AIRMAIL*); OH, Andrew J. Boyle, 1971, Frank Walton, SOOHP, MHI, 13–17; corr, DDE to Harry S. Truman, Aug. 8 and Sept. 24, 1945, NARA RG 498, ETO, secretary general staff, 333.5, box 35. In response to a Soviet protest, Eisenhower told Truman in a top-secret note, "I believe it may be granted that the Russian report is correct. Actually, equipment, documents and personnel exceeding the claims made were evacuated."

Other swag included ground-to-air missile: William F. Heimlich, "The Eagle and the Bear: Berlin, 1945–1950," n.d., HIA, 46–52; Rudolf Lusar, "The German Weapons and Secret Weapons of World War II and Their Subsequent Development," 1956, CMH (*patents*); Longmate, *Hitler's Rockets*, 375–76 (*seventy-five rockets*). For details of Soviet removals see Dobbs, *Six Months in 1945*, 242–47.

Patton had one more discovery: diary, Third Army chief of staff, Feb. 9, 1945, Hobart Gay papers, MHI, box 2, 866–69; *LO*, 375–78; Allen, *Lucky Forward*, 279 (*flush toilets*).

the Americans liberated a concentration camp: Robert H. Abzug, "The Liberation of the Concentration Camps," in *Liberation 1945*, 33; case file, Buchenwald KZ, n.d., Donald McClure papers, HIA, box 1 (*eighty satellite camps*).

"*We passed through the stockade*": Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 539.

An inmate pointed out a gallows: Ziemke, *The U.S. Army in the Occupation of Germany, 1944–1946*, 231; *PP*, 684 ("*mammoth griddle*"); James J. Weingartner, "Early War Crimes Trials," in *Liberation 1945*, 82–83 (*vengeful inmates*); Thompson, *Men Under Fire*, 138 ("*mark of the beast*"); White, *Conquerors' Road*, 91–92 ("*ash and human debris*"); Schudel, "General Witnessed History at Nazi camp, Panama Canal," *WP*, Aug. 7, 2012, B6.

"*Still having trouble*": Codman, *Drive*, 282–83.

Eisenhower and Bradley agreed to spend: Ziemke, *The U.S. Army in the Occupation of Germany, 1944–1946*, 232–33 (*125 miles*); MacDonald, *The Mighty Endeavor*, 476–77; *LO*, 380.

Despite great bounds: Ryan, *The Last Battle*, 314 (*226 miles*); *LO*, 384.

"*Ike, I don't know*": diary, Third Army chief of staff, Feb. 9, 1945, Hobart Gay papers, MHI, box 2, 866–69; Weintraub, *15 Stars*, 331 (*hordes of refugees*).

Another anxiety weighed: *LO*, 407.

How did a police state perish?: Timothy Naftali, "Creating the Myth of the *Alpenfestung*," in Bischof and Pelinka, eds., *Austrian Memory & National Identity*, 203–46.

As early as the fall of 1943: Jenkins, "The Battle of the National Redoubt," *Military Review* (Dec. 1946): 3+; Crosswell, *Beetle*, 883 ("*bitter guerrilla warfare*"); memo, DDE to ONB, "Security of Troops," Feb. 20, 1945, NARA RG 331, E 1, SHAEF SGS, file 371.2, box 65 ("*nests of guerrillas*"); Hinsley, 613; Timothy Naftali, "Creating the Myth of the *Alpenfestung*," in Bischof and Pelinka, eds., *Austrian Memory & National Identity*, 213, 236n (*quarter-million Ultra intercepts*); Pogue, *George C. Marshall*, 557 ("*no indications*").

Far more credulous: Strong, *Intelligence at the Top*, 255 ("*no more chances*"); OH, Kenneth Strong, May 15, 1963, CJR, box 95, folder 5, 1–2 ("*die together*"); *VW*, vol. 2, 302–4 ("*most important ministries*"); Minott, *The Fortress That Never Was*, 29, 88–94 (*more obdurate than Cassino*).

An OSS psychological portrait: Walter C. Langer, "A Psychological Analysis of Adolf Hitler—His Life and Legend," n.d., OSS, NARA RG 226, 190/3/6/01, box 1, 244–49; OSS, "Report from Switzerland," March 1, 1945, NARA RG 226, M 1642, R-83, frame 333 (*150 trucks*); memo, R&A London to Chandler Morse, Harold Barger, "Subject: Pickaninny—Economic Capabilities of the Alpine Area," March 29, 1945, OSS, NARA RG 226, E 73, box 3 ("*absence of sugar*"); OSS Berne to OSS director, "Official Dispatch," March 16, 1945, NARA RG 226, M 142, R-30, frames 99–100 (*antitank guns*); memo, William J. Donovan to FDR, March 26, 1945, NARA RG 226, M-1642, R-25, frames 441–42 ("*go underground*").

The correspondent William L. Shirer: Miller, *Ike the Soldier*, 761 ("*mystery writers*"); memo, "Study of the German National Redoubt," March 25, 1945, HQ, Seventh Army, G-2, NARA RG 226, M 1642, R-52, frames 253–59 ("*Vast stores*" and "*Messerschmitt*" and "*imbued with the Nazi spirit*"); Ryan, *The Last Battle*, 213 (*long freight trains*); AAR, *The Seventh United States Army in France and Germany*, vol. 3, 808–10; Minott, *The Fortress That Never Was*, 54 (*hydro-powered*).

The truth was less flamboyant: Hinsley, 613; Hans [*sic*] Hofer, Lower Alps gauleiter, n.d., FMS #B-458, ETHINT, vol. 24, MHI, 9–11, 23 (*wall map*); Georg Ritter von Hengl, Apr. 25, 1946, FMS #B-459, 3–11, and #B-461, n.d., 1–3, ETHINT, vol. 24, MHI (*not until spring*); Kesselring, *The Memoirs of Field-Marshal Kesselring*, 277 ("*make-believe*").

Werewolf movement: Timothy Naftali, "Creating the Myth of the *Alpenfestung*," in Bischof and Pelinka, eds., *Austrian Memory & National Identity*, 203–46; Beevor, *Berlin: The Downfall, 1945*, 175 ("*Werewolf is watching*"); Whiting, *The Home Front: Germany*, 179–80 (*mayor of Aachen*); Brown, *The Last Hero*, 738–40 (*Basque assassins*).

Yet at SHAEF the myth: press conference, W. B. Smith, Apr. 21, 1945, in "Operations of the Approach to the Rhine and Across the Rhine," n.d., Sidney H. Negrotto papers, MHI; D'Este, *Eisenhower: A Soldier's Life*, 696–98; Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 536 ("*We may be fighting*"); Crosswell, *Beetle*, 90 ("*possibly 100 to 125*"); memo, "Location of Caves in Germany," SHAEF G-2, Apr. 16, 1945, and memo, "Photographic Cover of National Redoubt," SHAEF G-2, Apr. 14, 1945, NARA RG 331, E 240B, 6th Army Group, files 452.2 and "National Redoubt," boxes 3 and 5 (*two hundred caves*); Jenkins, "The Battle of the National Redoubt," *Military Review* (Dec. 1946): 3+ (*ordered Devers's army group*); Hinsley, 613 (*First Allied Airborne Army*); *LO*, 422.

"*no less than 70 examples*": SHAEF weekly intelligence summary no. 57, Apr. 22, 1945, Robert D. Burhans papers, HIA, box 14; "Strategy of the Campaign in Western Europe, 1944–1945," USFET General Board study no. 1, n.d., 102 (*one hundred divisions*); *VW*, vol. 2, 429–31 ("*fanatical resistance*"); Georg Ritter von Hengl, Apr. 25, 1946, FMS #B-459, ETHINT, vol. 24, MHI, 11 ("*run its course*").

Shortly after midnight on Friday: Ayer, *Before the Colors Fade*, 210 ("*hot air*"); *PP*, 694 ("*a figment*"); diary, Apr. 11, 1945, GSP, LOC MS Div, box 3, folder 11 (*carbine by his cot*); corr, GSP to Beatrice, Apr. 17, 1945, GSP, LOC MS Div, box 13 ("*end of this life*"); corr, March 16, 1945, GSP, LOC MS Div, box 74, folder 5 ("*hot furnace*").

"*War for me*": corr, GSP to Robert Howe Fletcher, Apr. 25, 1945, GSP, LOC MS Div, box 13.

Glancing at his wristwatch: diary, Third Army chief of staff, Feb. 9, 1945, Hobart Gay papers, MHI, box 2, 866–69. International News Service broke the story at 5:47 P.M. Washington time in a terse flash: "FDR DEAD."

Franklin D. Roosevelt, a man who: Goodman, ed., *While You Were Gone*, 116; Larrabee, *Commander in Chief*, 627 (*transcendent cause*); Taylor and Taylor, eds., *The War Diaries*, 159 (*sob like a child*); Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 716–17 ("*altered decisively*"); Leahy, *I Was There*, 346 ("*How could a man*").

His passing came: Kennedy, *Freedom from Fear*, 808; Tully, *F.D.R. My Boss*, 359 (*stamp collection*); Hassett, *Off the Record with F.D.R.*, 332–35 (*signed into law*); Bruenn, "Clinical Notes on the Illness and Death of President Franklin D. Roosevelt," *Annals of Internal Medicine* 72, no. 4 (Apr. 1, 1970): 579+; Altman, "For F.D.R. Sleuths, New Focus on an Old Spot," *NYT*, Jan. 5, 2010, D1 (*blood pressure*); Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932–1945*, 527–33; Goodwin, *No Ordinary Time*, 603, 611–12 ("*that was it*"); Reilly, *Reilly of the White House*, 234 (*poison*). The portrait artist Elizabeth Shoumatoff denied measuring Roosevelt's nose and later wrote that the president said nothing before he collapsed (Shoumatoff, *FDR's Unfinished Portrait*, 115–18; Franklin D. Roosevelt American Heritage Center, http://www.fdrheritage.org/shoumatoff.htm).

J. Austin Dillon: memo, J. Austin Dillon, n.d., Small Collections: FDRL Miscellaneous Documents: Roosevelt, Franklin D.—Health, FDR Lib.

On Friday, the daily casualty list: MacDonald, *The Mighty Endeavor*, 484; Seventh Army war diary, Apr. 13, 1945, MHI, 653 ("*mourning badges*"); Toole, *Battle Diary*, 132 ("*This is a shock*").

Dragon Country

To an American pilot: Ryan, *The Last Battle*, 127 ("*very crust*"); *The Seventh United States Army in France and Germany*, vol. 3, 820 ("*molten mass*"); corr, Waldo Heinrichs, Jr., May 8, 1945, Heinrichs papers, MHI, box 1 ("*running to the rear*").

This was Dragon Country: Thompson, *Men Under Fire*, 132–33; *LO*, 410 ("*Sixty-one Roadblocks*"), 386 (*Hanover's defenses*), 404–5 ("*a conglomeration*"); *The Seventh United States Army in France and Germany*, vol. 3, 822 (*wooden sticks*); Marshall, *A Ramble Through My War*, 220; Holt, *The Deceivers*, 662 (*geraniums*); Ziemke, *The U.S. Army in the Occupation of Germany, 1944–1946*, 244–47.

"*The shame of German defeat*": Carpenter, *No Woman's World*, 261.

"*What right had they*": Schrijvers, *The Crash of Ruin*, 146.

Alfried Krupp, an industrialist: Bourke-White, *Portrait of Myself*, 265–70 (*said to have wept*); Manchester, *The Arms of Krupp, 1587–*

1966, 521, 674–81. Arrested in April, Krupp would be formally charged in August; Manchester writes that he was dry-eyed upon being detained.

"*Brilliant spring sunshine*": Thompson, *Men Under Fire*, 132–33.

"*old men leaning on sticks*": White, *Conquerors' Road*, 17.

And yet dragons lurked: Murray and Millett, *A War to Be Won*, 480 (*10,677 U.S. soldiers*); Lubrich, ed., *Travels in the Reich, 1933–1945*, 328 ("*plague bacteria*"); Howarth, ed., *Men of War*, 205–6; Read and Fisher, *The Fall of Berlin*, 334; *Germany IX*, 459 ("*If we lose the war*"); Friedrich, *The Fire*, 306 ("*Negro brothels*").

Some Luftwaffe pilots: Rudolf Lusar, "The German Weapons and Secret Weapons of World War II and Their Subsequent Development," 1956, CMH, 78; Ninth AF, intelligence summary no. 130, Apr. 30, 1945, NARA RG 334, E 315, ANSCOL, box 116 (*political indoctrination*); "History of U.S. Strategic Air Force Europe vs. German Air Force," Sept. 1945, NARA RG 457, E 9002, NSA, SRH-013, 342 ("*staking your lives*"); Muller, "Losing Air Superiority: A Case Study from the Second World War," *Air & Space Power Journal* (winter 2003): 55+ ("*total commitment missions*"); Seventh Army, G-2 bulletin no. 63, May 22, 1945, NARA RG 498, ETO G-3, Col. C. Hilldebrand, VI Corps, OR, box 1458 (*several young boys*); Lubrich, ed., *Travels in the Reich, 1933–1945*, 320 ("*heartbreaking sight*").

"*women and children lined the rooftops*": Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 530; *LO*, 410.

In Heilbronn, on the Neckar: *LO*, 417–18; "Attack on Heilbronn," 100th ID, July 1945, Seventh Army narratives, MHI, 4, 33; Turner and Jackson, *Destination Berchtesgaden*, 160–61; Yeide and Stout, *First to the Rhine*, 357–59; Ziemke, *The U.S. Army in the Occupation of Germany, 1944–1946*, 247 ("*noticeable stench*").

"*Why don't the silly bastards*": Arthur, *Forgotten Voices of World War II* , 414; Horst Boog, "Invasion to Surrender: The Defense of Germany," in Brower, ed., *World War II in Europe: The Final Year*, 131.

"*Mother, you asked me*": "Jack's Letters," March 22, March 24, and April 3, 1945, a.p., courtesy of Rick Perry.

"*Half the nationalities of Europe*": Moorehead, *Eclipse*, 254–55; Gilbert, *The Day the War Ended*, 64 ("*moving frieze*"); "Civil Affairs and Military Government Organizations and Operations," n.d., NARA RG 407, E 427, USFET General Board study no. 32, 97-USF5-0.3.0 (*4.2 million*); Abraham J. Peck, "A Continent in Chaos," in *Liberation 1945*, 101 (*eleven million unmoored*).

Some were on forced marches: diary, Darrell William Coates, Apr. 1945, HIA; http://www.b24.net/pow/stalag17.htm.

"*Everyone is yelling*": Vining, ed., *American Diaries of World War II*, 417–18.

"*Smaller wounds were covered*": Wandrey, *Bedpan Commando*, 181–82; Moorehead, *Eclipse*, 256 ("*jeep looks like*"); "After WWII, Economist Devoted Life," obit, *WP*, July 8, 2009, B4 (*cheered wildly*).

Of the shambling millions: "Activities and Organization of COMZ," June 11, 1945, NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #89, 11; Foreign Workers Programs, Apr. 25, 1945, Radio Luxembourg collection, HIA, box 1 (*SHAEF broadcasts*).

"*tractable, grateful, and powerless*": "Displaced Persons, Refugees, and Recovered Allied Military Personnel," n.d., NARA RG 407, E 427, USFET General Board study no. 35, 97-USF5-0.3.0.

Freed laborers plundered houses : Zumbro, *Battle for the Ruhr*, 329–30; "Concentration Camp Train," G-2 Periodic Report No. 304, 30th ID, Apr. 17, 1945, NARA RG 407, ETO G-3 OR (*licked flour*); Urquhart, *A Life in Peace and War*, 79, 86 ("*rampageous*" and *Hanover cellar*); Botting, *From the Ruins of the Reich*, 26.

Thousands of refugees carried: "History of Medical Service in the European Theater," tape transcript, Oct. 1962, MHI, II-69; OH, Philip Carlquist, Sept. 1, 1978, Emory University; "The Disease Potential in Germany," in OH, Albert W. Kenner, SHAEF chief medical officer, May 27, 1948, FCP, MHI; "Displaced Persons, Refugees, and Recovered Allied Military Personnel," n.d., NARA RG 407, E 427, USFET General Board study no. 35, 97-USF5-0.3.0 (*roadblocks*); Botting, *From the Ruins of the Reich*, 29 ("*Alleluia!*).

Some went barefoot: White, *Conquerors' Road*, 100–103.

"*One died taking a drink*": Leonard C. Barney, 315th Medical Bn, 90th ID, "Inmates of Concentration Camps," 1985, Columbus WWII Round Table Collection, MHI, 3–4.

"*It's too big*": Leh, "World War II from One Enlisted Man's Point of View," *Proceedings of the Lehigh County Historical Society* 39 (1990): 89+.

"*a kind of dull satisfaction*": Sevareid, *Not So Wild a Dream*, 504–6.

"*If the heavens were paper*": Collier, *Fighting Words*, 188.

Nordhausen was overrun: OH, Col. D. B. Hardin, VII Corps, "Concentration Camp at Nordhausen," Apr. 14, 1944, NARA RG 407, ETO ML #1028, box 19152, 1–4; *LO*, 391–92 ("*Men lay*"); Kessler, *The Battle of the Ruhr Pocket*, 156–57 (*beat up a captured German scientist*); Collins, *Lightning Joe*, 324; Carpenter, *No Woman's World*, 293–95 ("*no greater shame*").

"*There was no fat*": Ingersoll, *Top Secret*, 333.

At the Wöbbelin camp: Nordyke, *All American All the Way*, 756; "Wöbbelin," Holocaust Encyclopedia, USHMM, http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10006160; McNally, *As Ever, John*, 65–67 ("*Each body was pulled*"); Booth and Spencer, *Paratrooper*, 294 (*never failed to weep*); Stafford, *Endgame 1945*, 311 ("*defining moment*").

"*We came into a smell*": Stafford, *Endgame 1945*, 83; Hitchcock, *The Bitter Road to Freedom*, 300–302 ("*simian throng*"), 341 (*watery soup*); "Early Measures at Belsen," lecture, June 4, 1945, Royal Society of Medicine, UK NA, WO 219/3944A (*designed for eight thousand*); Thompson, *The Imperial War Museum Book of Victory in Europe* , 252–55 (*hearts, livers, and kidneys*), 264 ("*woman squatting*"); "What the Army Did at Belsen Concentration Camp," n.d., UK NA, WO 219/3944A, 3 ("*continuous carpet*"), 16–17; "Bergen-Belsen," Holocaust Encyclopedia, USHMM, http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005224; Collier, *Fighting Words*, 188 ("*peeping through fingers*").

The living resembled "*polished skeletons*": Stafford, *Endgame 1945*, 83; "What the Army Did at Belsen Concentration Camp," n.d., UK NA, WO 219/3944A, 20–23 (*medics tallied*); Davis, *Soldier of Democracy*, 535–36 ("*he fell dead*"); Robert H. Abzug, "The Liberation of the Concentration Camps," in *Liberation 1945*, 33–34, 43; Arthur, *Forgotten Voices of World War II* , 419–21 (*clubbed with rifle butts*).

An estimated quarter-million: Blatman, *The Death Marches*, 11–12, 278, 310–21, 332–47; Margry, "The Gardelegen Massacre," *AB*, no. 111 (2001): 2+; "Gardelegen Massacre 13 April 1945," www.scrapbookpages.com/GerhardThiele*.

For the U.S. Army, the camp at Buchenwald: investigative papers, "Buchenwald KZ," Donald McClure papers, HIA, box 1; Hackett, ed., *The Buchenwald Report*, 330–33.

An hour later, outriders: Brig. Gen. Eric F. Wood et al., "Inspection of German Concentration Camp for Political Prisoners Located at Buckenwal [*sic*]," Apr. 16, 1945, Frank J. McSherry papers, MHI, box 53; Ziemke, *The U.S. Army in the Occupation of Germany, 1944–1946*, 236–38; "Civil Affairs and Military Government Organizations and Operations," n.d., NARA RG 407, E 427, USFET General Board study no. 32, 97-USF5-0.3.0 (*six hundred calories*).

"*They were so thin*": Robert H. Abzug, "The Liberation of the Concentration Camps," in *Liberation 1945*, 40.

An intricate, awful world: Brig. Gen. Eric F. Wood et al., "Inspection of German Concentration Camp for Political Prisoners Located at Buckenwal [*sic*]," Apr. 16, 1945, Frank J. McSherry papers, MHI, box 53; investigative papers, "Buchenwald KZ," Donald McClure papers, HIA, box 1.

The SS had murdered: "Buchenwald," Holocaust Encyclopedia, USHMM, http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005198; Ziemke, *The U.S. Army in the Occupation of Germany, 1944–1946*, 236–38 (*brick ovens*).

A verse in gold and black: White, *Conquerors' Road*, 82.

Patton marched the burghers: *PP*, 687, 692; Edward R. Murrow, CBS radio broadcast, Apr. 15, 1945, in *Reporting World War II*, vol. 2, 681–85 ("*The stink was beyond*").

Shocking evidence of German torture: Kimball, *Forged in War*, 278 (*Breedonck*); Ziemke, *The U.S. Army in the Occupation of Germany, 1944–1946*, 220 ("*legacy of skepticism*"); Robert H. Abzug, "The Liberation of the Concentration Camps," in *Liberation 1945*, 56 (*barely one-third*), 66; Gilbert, *The Day the War Ended*, 17.

"*What kind of people*": Tapert, ed., *Lines of Battle*, 269.

"*Hardly any boy infantryman*": Fussell, *The Boys' Crusade*, 157.

"*I've been in the Army*": "History, 157th Inf Regt, Apr 1945," NARA RG 405, E 427, WWII Ops Reports, 345-INF (157)-0.3.

Berliners received an extra allocation: Ryan, *The Last Battle*, 409–10, 417–18 (*Karstadt*); Klemperer, *To the Bitter End*, 209 ("*We are defending Europe*"); Read and Fisher, *The Fall of Berlin*, 335 (*birthday salute*).

"*All transportation is at a standstill*": Moorhouse, *Berlin at War*, 359–60, 371–72 ("*pastor shot himself*").

"*Lift our banners*": ibid., 359–60.

The man himself took the passing: Kershaw, *Hitler, 1936–45: Nemesis*, 798; "Hitler's Höllenfahrt," *Der Spiegel* (Apr. 10, 1995): 172+ (*thirty-seven steps*).

Back behind three steel doors: Fest, *Hitler*, 764–65; Read and Fisher, *The Fall of Berlin*, 340 ("*I shall fight*"); Moorhouse, *Berlin at War*, 358–59 ("*birthday atmosphere*"); Kershaw, *Hitler, 1936–45: Nemesis*, 801 (Blutrote Rosen).

The U.S. Seventh Army marked the day: Stafford, *Endgame 1945*, 27; AAR, XV Corps, June 1, 1945, Wade H. Haislip papers, HIA, box 1; *LO*, 425; Yeide and Stout, *First to the Rhine*, 359 (*two thousand last-ditch soldiers*).

"*alluvial fans of rubble*": Wyant, *Sandy Patch*, 191; Taggart, ed., *History of the Third Infantry Division*, 354–62 ("*Dog-Faced Soldier*"); White, *From Fedala to Berchtesgaden*, 265–66 ("*Casablanca. Palermo*").

A quieter commemoration: White, *From Fedala to Berchtesgaden*, 265–66; Even, *The Tenth Engineers*, 49 (*wreath*); Palmer and Zaid, eds., *The GI's Rabbi*, 173–74; Stafford, *Endgame 1945*, 28 ("*Stars and Stripes Forever*").

"God, Where Are You?"

War correspondents had begun offering odds: Heinz, *When We Were One*, 188–89 ("*GIvans*"); *LO*, 446–48 (*welcome signs* and *recognition signals*); Forrest C. Pogue, "The Meeting with the Russians," n.d., NARA RG 407, E 427, ML #2249, box 19185, 1 (*brigands in Cossack attire*); OH, 69th ID, NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI 136-A, box 19050, folder #137 (*grassy hummock*).

East of Leipzig: *LO*, 446–48; Ryan, *The Last Battle*, 472; OH, 69th ID, NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, folder #137 (*confused Strehla with Groba*).

Twenty miles north and two hours later: OH, 69th ID, NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI, folder #137; *LO*, 455–56; Margry, "The U.S.-Soviet Link-Up," *AB*, no. 88 (1995): 1+.

After a brief, unnerving riposte: OH, William D. Robertson, 69th ID, NARA RG 407, E 427-A, CI 136-A, box 19050, folder #137;

LO, 455–56 (*carrying four soldiers*). After the war Robertson became a neurosurgeon in California.

Thursday morning brought the full, overwrought merger: Forrest C. Pogue, "The Meeting with the Russians," n.d., NARA RG 407, E 427, ML #2249, box 19185, 2–3; narrative, Thor Smith, n.d., Thor Smith papers, HIA, box 1 ("*Iowa picnic*"); Heinz, *When We Were One*, 189–92 (*varnished shells*); Pogue, *Pogue's War*, 368–70 (*black bread and apples*).

"*The Russians all looked*": Martha Gellhorn, "The Russians," *Collier's*, June 30, 1945, in *Reporting World War II*, vol. 2, 701–6; Heinz, *When We Were One*, 189–92 (*GIs traded*).

"*Get that woman off*": Heinz, *When We Were One*, 189–92; Pogue, *Pogue's War*, 372–73 (*Soviet general*).

An unbroken Allied line: Biddle, *Rhetoric and Reality in Air Warfare*, 260 (*last bombing raid*); Bessel, *Germany 1945*, 112 (*met at Ketzin*).

Nothing now could thwart: Bessel, *Germany 1945*, 104–5, 405 (*two and a half million troops*); Erickson, *The Road to Berlin*, 539–41, 622 (*three hundred thousand casualties*); "Hitler's Höllenfahrt," *Der Spiegel* (Apr. 4, 1995): 170+; Beevor, *Berlin: The Downfall, 1945*, 123, 410–13 (*typhus*); Steinhoff et al., *Voices from the Third Reich*, 454–57; interview, Rosemarie Meitzner, Apr. 1995, author, Berlin; Ryan, *The Last Battle*, 494 (*lightbulbs*), 371 ("Bleib übrig"); Sebald, *On the Natural History of Destruction*, 43 ("*hilly landscape*").

In the south, the Reich: *LO*, 454, 425–26 (*bridge over the Danube*); Ziemke, *The U.S. Army in the Occupation of Germany, 1944–1946*, 249 (*twenty-eight towns*).

"*We are constantly suffering*": memo, F. E. Morgan to G-1, Feb. 10, 1945, NARA RG 331, E 1, SHAEF SGS, file 211, box 20; *LO*, 427–30; De Lattre de Tassigny, *The History of the French First Army*, 458–59; OH, JLD, Aug. 1971, Thomas E. Griess, YCHT, box 110, 26–27.

General de Gaulle had other ideas: De Gaulle, *The Complete Memoirs of Charles de Gaulle*, 860; Clayton, *Three Marshals of France*, 114–15 (*Holding a large tract*).

With Deux Mètres urging him on: *LO*, 427–30; De Lattre de Tassigny, *The History of the French First Army*, 458–64, 491 ("*merry-go-round*"); *SC*, 460–61 ("*national interest of France*"); Wyant, *Sandy Patch*, 193 ("*Penny politics*").

"*The good and upright Devers*": Salisbury-Jones, *So Full a Glory*, 197; Yeide and Stout, *First to the Rhine*, 365–68 (*seventeen thousand men*); Reuben E. Jenkins, "The Battle of the National Redoubt," n.d., Jenkins papers, MHI, box 1, 15; Willis, *The French in Germany*, 20–21; memo, JLD, Apr. 27, 1945, JLD papers, MHI ("*an absurdity*"); *LO*, 430–31; OH, JLD, Aug. 1971, Thomas E. Griess, YCHT, box 110, 26–27 ("*trying to be Napoleon*").

This opéra bouffe: *LO*, 430–31; Seventh Army war diary, Apr. 26, 1945, MHI, 678 (*predatory French colonial troops*); Botting, *From the Ruins of the Reich*, 22–23 ("*Hens and women*"); Wyant, *Sandy Patch*, 193 ("*Situation in Stuttgart*"); memo, JLD, Apr. 27, 1945, JLD papers, MHI ("*What can you do*").

"*Stuttgart is chaotic*": De Lattre de Tassigny, *The History of the French First Army*, 491.

Devers drove into the city: diary, JLD, 6th AG, Apr. 27, 1945, MHI; *LO*, 432–33. Clinics in nearby Tübingen reported treating hundreds of rape victims, and a substantial number of women in Konstanz sought abortions for pregnancies resulting from French assaults (Bessel, *Germany 1945*, 117).

"*French procedure in occupying*": Wyant, *Sandy Patch*, 193.

Eisenhower now intervened: *LO*, 432–33; Chandler, 2657–59; Yeide and Stout, *First to the Rhine*, 366.

But with a war to finish: OH, Philippe de Camas, French First Army, Oct.–Dec. 1948, Marcel Vigneras, NARA RG 319, E P-100, *RR* background files, FRC 5; Yeide and Stout, *First to the Rhine*, 365 (*execution of a few rapists*); diary, JLD, 6th AG, Apr. 27, 1945, MHI ("*much better*").

Patch's legions meanwhile pressed south: *LO*, 427–30; Walker, *German National Socialism and the Quest for Nuclear Power, 1939–49*, 158; Rhodes, *The Making of the Atomic Bomb*, 609–10.

Bickering over the French occupation zone: Willis, *The French in Germany*, 20–21; Porch, *The Path to Victory*, 601 ("*often on the same side*"). De Gaulle would write after these disagreements, "The roses of glory cannot be without thorns"; Truman said of the French leader, "I don't like the son of a bitch" (Fenby, *The General*, 746).

Ten miles northwest of Munich: Mollo, "Dachau," *AB*, no. 27, 1980, 1+; KZ-Gedenkstätte Dachau, Stiftung Bayerische Gedenkstätten, http://www.kz-gedenkstaette-dachau.de/index-e.html (*200,000 prisoners*); Gellately, *Backing Hitler*, 217 (*170 subcamps*); corr, JLD to SHAEF, May 4 and 6, 1945, NARA RG 498, ETO SGS classified gen'l corr, file 383.6/9, box 88 (*thirteen thousand had died*).

On a chilly, sunless Sunday: "History, 157th Inf Regt, Apr 1945," NARA RG 405, E 427, WWII Ops Reports, 345-INF (157)-0.3; Robert H. Abzug, "The Liberation of the Concentration Camps," in *Liberation 1945*, 38 ("*flower beds and trees*"); Joseph M. Whitaker, asst. IG, Seventh Army, "Investigation of Alleged Mistreatment of German Guards at Dachau," June 8, 1945, NARA RG 338, box 7; "The Train Ride into Hell," 1998, Pierre C. T. Verheye papers, HIA; Whitlock, *The Rock of Anzio*, 357–64 ("*sons of bitches*").

"*That's the only thing the guy owns*": Flint Whitlock, "Liberating Dachau," in *The World War II Reader*, 368–69.

Howling inmates pursued: *The Seventh United States Army in France and Germany*, vol. 2, 832.

"*They tore the Germans apart*": Garland, *Unknown Soldiers*, 393.

"*We stood aside and watched*": Palmer and Zaid, eds., *The GI's Rabbi*, 178; Carroll, ed., *War Letters*, 275–77 (*sticks and rocks*); Joseph M. Whitaker, asst. IG, Seventh Army, "Investigation of Alleged Mistreatment of German Guards at Dachau," June 8, 1945, NARA RG 338, box 7 (*crushing skulls* and *battalion surgeon refused*); OH, John A. Heintges, 1974, Jack A. Pellici, SOOHP, MHI, 370 ("*strewn all over*").

At the same hour, the vanguard: Brig. Gen. John H. Linden, 42nd ID, "Report on Surrender of Dachau Concentration Camp," May 2, 1945, and 1st Lt. William J. Cowling, III, 42nd ID, "Report on Surrender of the German Concentration Camp at Dachau," May 2, 1945, John H. Linden papers, HIA, box 1; Flint Whitlock, "Liberating Dachau," in *The World War II Reader*, 368–69; Howard Cowan, Associated Press, "32,000 Liberated from Dachau Prison Camp," Apr. 1945, John H. Linden papers, HIA, box 1 ("*amidst a roar*").

"*I haven't the words*": Eliach and Gurewitsch, eds., *The Liberators*, vol. 1, 45; Palmer and Zaid, eds., *The GI's Rabbi*, 178–83 (*dusted with DDT*); OH, Paul D. Adams, 1975, Irving Monclova and Marlin Lang, SOOHP, MHI ("*I wouldn't bother*").

The Seventh Army inspector general: memo, DDE, "Mistreatment of Prisoners of War," July 18, 1945, NARA RG 498, ETO SGS classified gen'l corr, 383.6, box 51.

At least twenty-eight SS men: Joseph M. Whitaker, asst. IG, Seventh Army, "Investigation of Alleged Mistreatment of German Guards at Dachau," June 8, 1945, NARA RG 338, box 7; Whitlock, *The Rock of Anzio*, 388–89 (*four U.S. soldiers*); Garland, *Unknown Soldiers*, 395–97 (*Others believed*); memo, Charles D. Decker, "Report on Results of Investigation into Mistreatment of Prisoners of War by U.S. Forces," Dec. 31, 1945, NARA RG 498, ETO SGS classified gen'l corr, 383.6, box 51 ("*violation of the letter*"). The 45th Division would be transferred to Third Army; beginning in Sicily, Patton had evinced no zeal for war crimes prosecution of U.S. soldiers.

"*I'm on night duty*": Wandrey, *Bedpan Commando*, 204–5.

As a specially designated "Führer City": Stafford, *Endgame 1945*, 242; *SC*, 456 ("*Nazi beast*"); AAR, XV Corps, June 1, 1945, Wade H. Haislip papers, HIA, box 1. Commanding the 20th Armored Division in the assault on Munich was Maj. Gen. Orlando Ward, rehabilitated after being relieved by Patton of division command in Tunisia two years earlier.

"*Window by window" shelling*: *The Seventh United States Army in France and Germany*, vol. 2, 834–37; *LO*, 437; Kershaw, *Hitler, 1936–45: Nemesis*, 840 ("*I am ashamed*").

Three hundred miles north: OH, Vasily Ustyugov, Apr. 1995, Fred Hiatt, Moscow, a.p. (*Iron Crosses*); Read and Fisher, *The Fall of Berlin*, 465 (*roasting an ox*); OH, Hans-Jürgen Habenicht, Apr. 1995, author, Berlin (*excrement and urine*); Beevor, *Berlin: The Downfall, 1945*, 388–92 ("*post-mortal*").

Far below the Reich Chancellery: Read and Fisher, *The Fall of Berlin*, 290; Kershaw, *Hitler, 1936–45: Nemesis*, 827–28; Fest, *Hitler*, 778–79.

Twelve years and four months: Kershaw, *Hitler, 1936–45: Nemesis*, 841; Erickson, *The Road to Berlin*, 609 ("*that's the end*").

Henchmen wrapped the two bodies: Toland, *Adolf Hitler*, 890; Beevor, *Berlin: The Downfall, 1945*, 358–60 ("*chief's on fire*"); Ryan, *The Last Battle*, 498 ("*burning bacon*").

"*binding for all soldiers*": Bessell, *Germany 1945*, 121.

Fifty miles due west along the Elbe: Stenbuck, ed., *Typewriter Battalion*, 34–47; OH, Alvan C. Gillem, Jr., XIII Corps, n.d., CJR, box 44, folder 18, 5–7.

Simpson agreed to accept: Stenbuck, ed., *Typewriter Battalion*, 34–47; *LO*, 465; OH, Alvan C. Gillem, Jr., 1972, Eugene Miller, SOOHP, MHI, box 1, 69–70; Beevor, *Berlin: The Downfall, 1945*, 397 ("*quite a few people*").

In Italy, an offensive: Willmott, *The Great Crusade*, 429–30; Weinberg, *A World at Arms*, 818 (*Po River*); Philip Hamburger, "Letter from Rome," May 8, 1945, in *The New Yorker Book of War Pieces*, 479; Fisher, *Cassino to the Alps*, 524; *GS* VI, 121 (*Army Group*

C).

Along the Continent's northern lip: In the final two months of the war, Canadian troops used flamethrowers in three thousand operations (Brig. Gen. Alden H. Waitt, chemical warfare service, "Summary Report of Situation in ETO," July 5, 1945, NARA RG 337, E 16, OR, 210.684, GHQ AGF G-3, box 2).

the starving Dutch had been reduced: Hastings, *Armageddon*, 411–14; Gander, *After These Many Quests*, 315 ("*hinged-bottom coffins*").

Allied engineers also feared: historical report, SHAEF G-5 mission in Netherlands, July 14, 1945, NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #219, 4–14; "Brief Historical Outline of the Occupation of N.W. Holland by 1 Canadian Corps," n.d., NARA RG 319, 2-3.7 CB 8, *SC* background files; corr, Brig. Sir Geoffrey Hardy-Roberts, May 6, 1945, LHC ("*five years of repression*").

"*They left like tramps*": Gander, *After These Many Quests*, 314, 324–25.

Farther east, where four British divisions: *VW*, vol. 2, 316, 337–38 (*quarter of a million prisoners*), 353; Stafford, *Endgame 1945*, 280 ("*looting, drinking*"); Chandler, 2652; *LO*, 464 (*two hours before the Red Army*).

"*Welcome Americans*": Stanhope Mason, "Reminiscences and Anecdotes of World War II," 1988, MRC FDM, 1994.126, 250; *VW*, vol. 2, 332 ("*situation in Czechoslovakia*"); *LO*, 456–58 (*between Pilzen and Karlsbad*); *SC*, 454.

Austrian partisans seized Innsbruck: Marshall, *A Ramble Through My War*, 259 (*Viennese orchestra*); *LO*, 469–71; Royce L. Thompson, "Military Surrenders in the European Theater," June 30, 1955, CMH, 2-3.7, AE.P-28, 58 (*positioning of flags*); Martin, *Blow, Bugle, Blow*, 167 ("*internal security*").

At almost the same hour, Devers: memo, R. E. Jenkins, May 7, 1945, Reuben E. Jenkins papers, MHI, box 1; *LO*, 471–72.

Few locales were more freighted: David Ian Hall, review of *Hitler's Mountain*, *JMH* (Jan. 2009): 310+; "Obersalzburg," *AB*, no. 9 (1975): 1+ (*beehives*).

As a gift for the Führer's fiftieth: Beierl, *History of the Eagle's Nest*, 103; "Das Kehlsteinhaus," http://www.kehlsteinhaus.com/ (*Otis elevator*).

RAF bombers on April 25: "Obersalzburg," *AB*, no. 9 (1975): 1+; Osborne, "Return to the Berghof," *AB*, no. 60 (1988): 50+; Walden, http://www.thirdreichruins.com/obersalzberg.htm; Nicholas, *The Rape of Europa*, 320 (*Bormann's collection*); Mitchell, *Hitler's Mountain*, 120–21 (*set fire to the house*).

Flames still licked: OH, John A. Heintges, 7th Inf, 1974, Jack A. Pellici, SOOHP, MHI, 379–85; White, *From Fedala to Berchtesgaden*, 278–80; Mitchell, *Hitler's Mountain*, 127 ("*You've had Paris*"). Both French troops and U.S. paratroopers soon found a way into the town.

Despite bombing, arson, and plunder: Osborne, "Return to the Berghof," *AB*, no. 60 (1988): 50+; Philip Hamburger, "Letter from Berchtesgaden," June 9, 1945, in *The New Yorker Book of War Pieces*, 497–99 (*ice cream tubs*); Mitchell, *Hitler's Mountain*, 132 (*toilet seat*); Rapport and Northwood, *Rendezvous with Destiny*, 747 (*light fixtures*); AAR, T-Force, n.d., 6th AG, G-2, Boris T. Pash papers, HIA, box 4, file 6 (*situation maps*); Strong, *Intelligence at the Top*, 291–95 ("*coat hangers*").

RAF bombs had spared: Philip Hamburger, "Letter from Berchtesgaden," June 9, 1945, in *The New Yorker Book of War Pieces*, 500–501; Beierl, *History of the Eagle's Nest*, 116, 144–48; White, *Conquerors' Road*, 61–62 ("*on the spit*"); Rapport and Northwood, *Rendezvous with Destiny*, 747 (*guides*).

Göring's booty proved: OH, John A. Heintges, 7th Inf, 1974, Jack A. Pellici, SOOHP, MHI, 394–95, 406–7; White, *From Fedala to Berchtesgaden*, 278–80 (*eighteen thousand bottles*); "The Goering Collection," OSS, Art Looting Investigation Unit, Consolidated Interrogation Report no. 2, Sept. 15, 1945, Hermann Goering papers, HIA, box 1, 171–73; Rapport and Northwood, *Rendezvous with Destiny*, 749; Nicholas, *The Rape of Europa*, 314, 344 (*$500 million*); White, *Conquerors' Road*, 74 ("*Ah, war!*").

The Reichsmarschall *himself*: AAR, Robert C. Stack, 36th ID, n.d., Texas MFM (*entourage*); diary, John E. Dahlquist, May 9, 1945, and scrapbook; A. I. Goldberg, Associated Press report, May 9, 1945; *Life*, May 28, 1945, 30+, all in Dahlquist papers, MHI; corr, Alexander M. Patch, Jr., Oct. 16, 1945, Patch papers, USMA Arch, box 1 (*marshal's baton*).

"*Well, bugger me*": Collier, *Fighting Words*, 194–95.

An American major subsequently invited: Kesselring, *The Memoirs of Field-Marshal Kesselring*, 291; Taylor, *Swords and Plowshares*, 107 ("*historical character*").

A Great Silence

"*The lovely colors of the countryside*": Moorehead, *Eclipse*, 259–62, 285.

Tommies fished unconventionally: Thompson, *Men Under Fire*, 148–51; Stafford, *Endgame 1945*, 11 (*hospitals*); Col. T. G. Lindsay,

"Operation Overlord Plus," n.d., LHC, 66–69 (*fine maps*).

At 11:30 A.M. on Thursday: "Surrender Negotiations," n.d., UK NA, CAB 101/330, 4–5.

"*I have never heard of you*": Hamilton, *Monty: Final Years of the Field-Marshal, 1944–1976*, 501–2; John Keegan, "The German Surrender," in Hollinshead and Rabb, eds., *I Wish I'd Been There*, vol. 2, 307 ("*rehearsing this*").

Undaunted, Friedeburg: Moorehead, *Eclipse*, 282–84; "Surrender Negotiations," n.d., UK NA, CAB 101/330, 6 ("*usual way*"); *VW*, vol. 2, 339.

Calling for a map: Moorehead, *Eclipse*, 284; Hamilton, *Monty: Final Years of the Field-Marshal, 1944–1976*, 501–4 (*tongue-lashing*); Francis de Guingand, "Notes for the Chief of Staff," May 3, 1945, LHC, 2/4/2 ("*delighted to continue*"); De Guingand, *Operation Victory*, 453–55.

At five P.M. on a rainy Friday: Thompson, *Men Under Fire*, 148–51; John Keegan, "The German Surrender," in Hollinshead and Rabb, eds., *I Wish I'd Been There*, vol. 2, 311 ("*with the doings*"); Moorehead, *Eclipse*, 285–86 ("*We will go and see*").

The answer was yes: diary entry, May 7, 1945, Harold S. Frum, "The Soldier Must Write," 1984, GCM Lib (*Donuts*); Moorehead, *Montgomery*, 223 ("*a good likeness*").

"*It was a grey evening*": Moorehead, *Eclipse*, 286–87.

Friedeburg and his comrades rose: Hamilton, *Monty: Final Years of the Field-Marshal, 1944–1976*, 512–13.

Once all German signatures: Moorehead, *Eclipse*, 288–89; "Surrender Negotiations," n.d., UK NA, CAB 101/330, 6–7; Thompson, *Men Under Fire*, 152–53 ("*concludes*").

"*The tent flaps*": "German Surrenders," *AB*, no. 48 (1985): 1+; *VW*, vol. 2, 340 ("*It looks as if*").

Foul weather on Saturday: *SC*, 486–87; Strong, *Intelligence at the Top*, 273 (*fresh collar*); *Three Years*, 825–26 (*twenty minutes*).

Smith and Major General Strong: Crosswell, *Beetle*, 918.

Smith walked down the hall: *Three Years*, 825–28, 834; Summersby, *Eisenhower Was My Boss*, 237 ("*let-down*").

"*I really expected*": Eisenhower, *Letters to Mamie*, 250.

A new negotiator arrived: Doenitz, *Memoirs*, 462–63; OH, Kenneth Strong, May 15, 1963, CJR, box 95, folder 5, 2 ("*fight the Russians*").

"*You tell them*": *Three Years*, 830–31. Dönitz's stalling was credited with allowing 1.8 million German soldiers to surrender to the Western Allies rather than the Soviets. A substantial majority of the 10 million total German prisoners-of-war ended up being held by the West (Bessel, *Germany 1945*, 124–25).

"*Eisenhower insists that we sign*": Doenitz, *Memoirs*, 462–63; *SC*, 487 ("*Full power*").

SHAEF typists for days: Crosswell, *Beetle*, 921–22.

In the absence of firm instructions: ibid., 916–17; Mosely, "Dismemberment of Germany," *Foreign Affairs* (Apr. 1950): 487+; OH, Philip E. Mosely, n.d., CJR, box 43, folder 10, 3–4. The diplomat Robert Murphy asserted that Smith had simply forgotten about the EAC version (*Diplomat Among Warriors*, 240–41).

He opted instead for a third, abridged document: Counsell, *Counsell's Opinion*, 149–50, 151–53 (*pecking at a typewriter*); memoir, John Counsell, n.d., CJR, box 43, folder 3, 110–16; Ziemke, *The U.S. Army in the Occupation of Germany, 1944–1946*, 257–58; Mosely, "Dismemberment of Germany," *Foreign Affairs* (Apr. 1950): 487+ ("*enabling clause*").

"*Get ready, gentlemen*": White, *Conquerors' Road*, 115.

"*The effect of make-believe*": Crosswell, *Beetle*, 922. Some of the nameplates can be found in the Sidney H. Negrotto papers, MHI.

Strong laid a copy: *SC*, 488.

Purple circles rimmed his eyes: White, *Conquerors' Road*, 115; Summersby, *Eisenhower Was My Boss*, 240 ("Ja. Ja"); Strong, *Intelligence at the Top*, 282 ("*You will officially*").

"*I suppose this calls*": Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Soldier, General of the Army, President-Elect, 1890–1952*, vol. 1, 407.

"*The mission of this Allied force*": Chandler, 2696.

The sharp odors of soap: narrative, end of war, CBH, n.d., and diary, May 7, 1945, CBH, MHI.

Bradley climbed from the bed: Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 554 ("*D*+335"); narrative, end of war, CBH, n.d., and diary, May 7, 1945, CBH, MHI ("*our troubles*").

"*For the first time*": "Reports by U.S. Army Ultra Representatives with Army Field Commands in the European Theater of Operations," NARA RG 457, E 9002, NSA, SRH-023, box 14; Wheeler, *The Big Red One*, 381–82 (*21,000 Purple Hearts*); Clay, *Blood and Sacrifice*, 238 ("*It's about goddamn time"*); *PP*, 696 (*Peace still held*); Allen, *Lucky Forward*, 394 ("*rivers in Japan*"); Codman, *Drive*, 299 (*strode from the command post*).

As word spread: Linderman, *The World Within War*, 231 ("*mad, dangerous"*); Mitchell, *Hitler's Mountain*, 135 ("*like a hailstorm*"); "Personal Diary," May 6, 1945, JMG, MHI, box 10 ("*This is it*"); Heinz, *When We Were One*, 152 (*drank a toast*).

"*curiously flat*": Moorehead, *Eclipse*, 305.

"*I should be completely joyous*": Christen T. Jonassen, "Letter Written on V-E Day 1945," n.d., Columbus WWII Round Table collection, MHI, box 1.

"*I am in a let-down mood*": diary, JLD, May 5, 1945, MHI.

"*We did not know*": Heinz, *When We Were One*, 150, 157.

"*Lights scintillated*": Robert E. Walker, "With the Stonewallers," n.d., MMD, 118.

Darkness enfolded: Forrest Pogue wrote, "We knew the war in Europe was over … because the lights came on in Pilzen and in every village near us" (*Pogue's War*, 381).

EPILOGUE

The Daily Mail *in London*: Gilbert, *The Day the War Ended*, 88.

No matter that word of the Reims ceremony: "Infractions of Press Censorship," telephone transcript, SHAEF and WD, May 7, 1945, 4 P.M., NARA RG 331, E 1, SGS, file 000.73, box 4 (*ticker tape*); *SC*, 527–28; Voss, *Reporting the War*, 193–96.

But Stalin remained adamant: Gilbert, *The Day the War Ended*, 92–98; *SC*, 491–92 (*Eisenhower dispatched*); OH, Arthur Tedder, Feb. 13, 1947, FCP, MHI (*noisy haggling*); Summersby, *Eisenhower Was My Boss*, 250–52; De Lattre de Tassigny, *The History of the French First Army*, 518; Clayton, *Three Marshals of France*, 119; author visits, Karlshorst, Nov. 1995 and Sept. 2009; *Three Years*, 836 ("*easier to start*").

Notwithstanding a BBC announcement: Botting, *From the Ruins of the Reich*, 94; Gilbert, *The Day the War Ended*, 98 ("*Move along*").

In Paris, a celebration: Beevor and Cooper, *Paris After the Liberation, 1944–1949*, 195–97, (*Garde Républicaine*); Helen Van Zonneveld, "A Time to Every Purpose," n.d., HIA, 401–2 ("Salut!"); Cooper, *Old Men Forget*, 352 (*all clear*); Gilbert, *The Day the War Ended*, 220–22 ("*anywhere to anywhere"*); corr, P. B. Rogers to family, May 10, 1945, Pleas B. Rogers papers, MHI (" *Battle Hymn*"); OH, Richard Collins, 1976, Donald Bowman, SOOHP, MHI, III-26 (*Avenue de Paris*).

The rest of the world: Sulzberger, *A Long Row of Candles*, 259 (*U.S. embassy*); Dobbs, *Six Months in 1945*, 203 (*tossed into the air*); Brinkley, *Washington Goes to War*, 275 (*lights bathed the Capitol*); Gilbert, *The Day the War Ended*, 293–94 ("*treacherous Japanese*").

V-E Day dawned in London: Ziegler, *London at War, 1939–1945*, 324 ("*Wagnerian rain*"), 325 (*cymbals*), 328 ("*Not to Be Sold*"); Mollie Panter-Downes, "Letter from London," May 19, 1945, in *The New Yorker Book of War Pieces*, 472–76; Gilbert, *The Day the War Ended*, 211 ("*We want the king!*"); Lewis, *The Mammoth Book of Eyewitness World War II*, 461 (*Hitler effigy*).

Early in the afternoon Churchill left: D'Este, *Warlord*, 692–93; Pawle, *The War and Colonel Warden*, 381; Mollie Panter-Downes, "Letter from London," May 19, 1945, in *The New Yorker Book of War Pieces*, 472–76; Gilbert, *The Day the War Ended*, 199 ("*roared ourselves*"); Thompson, *I Was Churchill's Shadow*, 157–58 ("*They expect it*").

Searchlights at dusk: Ziegler, *London at War, 1939–1945*, 327; Gilbert, *The Day the War Ended*, 211 ("*your hour*"); D'Este, *Warlord*, 692–93 ("*ancient land*"); Taylor and Taylor, eds., *The War Diaries*, 195 ("*Hope and Glory*"). Churchill would be turned from office less than two months later when his Conservatives took a drubbing at the polls; in 1951, he again became prime minister for nearly four years.

By the time Japan surrendered: Weinberg, *A World at Arms*, 894 (*Sixty million had died*); Hitchcock, *The Bitter Road to Freedom*, 131 (*one-third of them soldiers*); Snyder, "Walter Bedell Smith: Eisenhower's Chief of Staff," *Military Affairs* (Jan. 1984): 6+ ("*great and terrible*"); Rosenbaum, "Explaining Hitler," *New Yorker* (May 1, 1995): 50+ ("*genocide*"); Fussell, *Wartime*, 132, 139 ("*unmitigated misfortune*"), 268 ("*tragic and ironic*").

"*a God all-powerful*": Danchev, 689.

In Europe, the Western Allies: Battle Itinerary Study, USFET G-3, Aug. 1946, NARA RG 498, UD 583, box 4017, 5; Gerhard L. Weinberg, "D-Day: Analysis of Costs and Benefits," in Wilson, ed., *D-Day 1944*, 337.

A British military maxim: Weigley, *Eisenhower's Lieutenants*, 730; Overy, *Why the Allies Won*, 281 ("*centralized, unified*").

Allied leadership included checks: Overy, *Why the Allies Won*, 278–81; Roberts, *Masters and Commanders*, 580–81; Biddle, "Leveraging Strength: The Pillars of American Grand Strategy in World War II," *Orbis* (winter 2011): 4+.

"*Our resolution to preserve*": Overy, *Why the Allies Won*, 324; *LO*, 477–78; Mansoor, *The GI Offensive in Europe*, 4–6, 252; "Report of Activities: Army Ground Forces, World War II," Jan. 1946, NARA RG 334, E 315, ANSCOL, AGF RTC, box 150; http://www.minneapolisfed.org/ (*roughly $4 trillion*); Stephen Daggett, "Cost of Major U.S. Wars," June 29, 2010, Congressional Research Service, 2; Montgomery, "The Cost of War, Unnoticed," *WP*, May 8, 2007, D1 (*42 million*); Millett and Murray, *Military Effectiveness*, vol. 3, *The Second World War*, 47, 62; Bynell, "Logistical Planning and Operations—Europe," lecture, March 16, 1945, NARA RG 334, E 315, ANSCOL, box 207, 14 ("*digging the Panama Canal*").

"*prodigy of organization*": Weigley, *History of the United States Army*, 475; "Supply and Maintenance on the European Continent," n.d., NARA RG 407, E 427, USFET General Board, AG WWII operations reports, 97-USF5-0.30, no. 130, 42 (*18 million tons*); "Ordnance Diary," Dec. 1, 1945, NARA RG 498, ETOUSA HD, UD 586, box 1 (*vehicles*); "Clothing and Footwear," chapter 56, PIR, Robert M. Littlejohn papers, HIA, 2 (*footwear*); "U.S. Army in WWII," 1952, CMH, cited in "Statistical Review," RefBib, MHI (*munitions plants*); "Statistical Review," RefBib, MHI, citing *Cavalry Journal*, March–Apr. 1946, 21+ (*500 million machine-gun bullets*); Goodman, ed., *While You Were Gone*, 23 ("*American taxpayer*"); Ambrose, *Eisenhower and Berlin, 1945*, 63 (*two-thirds of all ships*).

The enemy was crushed by logistical brilliance: At its peak, the war accounted for 35.8 percent of GDP (Stephen Daggett, "Cost of Major U.S. Wars," June 29, 2010, Congressional Research Service, 2); Gropman, *Mobilizing U.S. Industry in World War II*, 107 (*smaller proportion*), 133; Ellis, *Brute Force*, 348–49.

"*Warfare like yours is easy*": German POW survey, Dec. 7, 1944, SHAEF, Psychological Warfare Division, RG 331, E 87, 23 782.

There was nothing easy: Stoler, *Allies in War*, 227; Willmott, *The Great Crusade*, 352 ("*European supremacy*"); Larrabee, *Commander in Chief*, 631 ("*American century*"); Brower, ed., *World War II in Europe: The Final Year*, 63 ("*great soul*").

The war was a potent catalyst: Weinberg, *A World at Arms*, 915; Weinberg, "The Place of World War II in History," lecture, 1995, U.S. Air Force Academy, Colorado Spring, Colo., 11 (*GI Bill*); Kennedy, *Freedom from Fear*, 779 (*antebellum roles*); MacGregor, *Integration of the Armed Forces*, 51–53, 56; "The Utilization of Negro Infantry Platoons in White Companies," NARA RG 330, E 94, soldier surveys, report no. ETO 82, 4–12.

"*Glad to be home*": Reynolds, *Rich Relations*, 444.

In battered Europe, enormous tasks: Pyle, *Brave Men*, 320 ("*broken world*"); *SC*, 508–10 (*Norway*), 499; Margry, "The Flensburg Government," *AB*, no. 128 (2005): 2+; J. B. Churcher, "A Soldier's Story," n.d., LHC, 80–81 ("*Any word*"); *SC*, 512–15; "Activities and Organization of COMZ," U.S. Senate hearing, May 28, 1945, NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #89, 29 (*three million strong*); Brig. Gen. Alden H. Waitt, "Summary Report of Situation in ETO," July 5, 1945, NARA RG 337, E 16, GHQ AGF G-3, OR, 210.684, box 2 (*poisonous gas munitions*).

"*On the continent of Europe*": Churchill, *Triumph and Tragedy*, 549–50.

Part of that cleansing: Gill, *The Journey Back from Hell*, 24; pamphlets, "The Courthouse in Nuremberg" and "The International Military Tribunal," Oberlandgericht, Nuremberg, author visit, Feb. 13, 1996; Lewis, ed., *The Mammoth Book of Eyewitness World War II*, 561–66.

Individual Allied governments: Weingartner, "Otto Skorzeny and the Laws of War," *JMH* (Apr. 1991): 207+; Tooze, *The Wages of Destruction*, 674 (*200,000 suspected culprits*); "Bergen Belsen," Holocaust Encyclopedia, USHMM, http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005224. Additional Bergen-Belsen defendants were tried subsequently (Margry, "Bergen-Belsen," *AB*, no. 89 [1995]: 1+).

From 1945 to 1948: James J. Weingartner, "Early War Crimes Trials," in *Liberation 1945*, 84.

The path to justice often proved: "Malmedy Massacre Investigation," Senate Armed Services Committee, Oct. 1949, 4–16, 22–32; memo, judge advocate, European Command, March 28, 1949, CMH, LAW 2–7, 1, 26–30. During Senate hearings into the Malmédy prosecutions, Senator Joseph McCarthy accused the Army of using "Gestapo tactics" (*TT*, 623).

Released from Landsberg prison: Weingartner, *Crossroads of Death*, 238–50, 262–63; "The Death of Joachim Peiper," *AB*, no. 40 (1983): 47+; Bauserman, *The Malmédy Massacre*, 32 (*slashed the hoses*).

Eisenhower's avowed "number 1 plan": *Three Years*, 820; Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 573n ("*I owe much*").

"*You have completed your mission*": Pogue, *George C. Marshall*, 583; Ferrell, ed., *The Eisenhower Diaries*, 221.

Ahead lay fifteen more years: Lyon, *Eisenhower: Portrait of the Hero*, 23 ("*Ike!*"); Summersby, *Eisenhower Was My Boss*, 254–59 ("*almost speak*").

On Tuesday, June 12: Miller, *Ike the Soldier*, 780; Striner, "Eisenhower's Triumph: The Guildhall Address of 1945," American Veterans Center, http://www.americanveteranscenter.org/magazine/avq/issue-vi-springsummer-2009/eisenhower%e2%80%99s-triumph-the-guildhall-address-of-1945/*; Fraser, *Alanbrooke*, 468 ("*I had never realized*"); http://www.eisenhower.archives.gov/education/bsa/citizenship_merit_badge/speeches_national_historical_importance/guildhall_addre

Blood there had surely been: *VW*, vol. 2, 407; *LO*, 478; "The Normandy Invasion," statistical appendix, June 10, 1945, SHAEF, Harold R. Bull papers, DDE Lib, box 1 (*12,000 Allied planes*). Official casualty figures from various governments rarely agree.

British, Canadian, Polish: "The Operations of 21 Army Group," 1946, CARL, N-133331.

French battle casualties: *SC*, 544. During the occupation and liberation, more than six hundred thousand French men were killed (Aron, *France Reborn*, 464).

Of all German boys: Tooze, *The Wages of Destruction*, 672. The number of German military deaths has long remained in dispute. John Ellis puts the dead and missing at 3.25 million, a widely cited figure (Ellis, *World War II: A Statistical Survey*, 253). Another recent analysis puts the number at 5.3 million (Rüdiger Overmans, *Deutsche militärische Verluste im Zweiten Weltkrieg*, cited in http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_II_casualties#cite_note-R.C5.B1diger_Overmans_2000-4).

Some 14 percent of the Soviet population: Hitchcock, *The Bitter Road to Freedom*, 131; Stoler, "The Second World War in U.S. History and Memory," International Historical Congress, Oslo, Aug. 12, 2000; Hastings, *Inferno*, 427 (*killed roughly nine times more Germans*). Seventeen hundred Soviet towns were destroyed, plus seventy thousand villages (Dobbs, *Six Months in 1945*, 225).

American soldiers bore the brunt: *LO*, 478; *SC*, 543; Hynes, *The Soldier's Tale*, 281 ("*left index finger*"); Reister, ed., *Medical Statistics in World War II*, 23 (*1,700 left blind*); Fisher, *Legacy of Heroes*, 8–10 (*18,000 amputations*), 20 ("*their stump*"); Cowdrey, *Fighting for Life*, 321 (*hospital in Michigan*).

Seventy-five thousand Americans had been listed: *VW*, vol. 2, 543; Steere and Boardman, *Final Disposition of World War II Dead, 1945–51*, 120–21 (*isolated graves*); Litoff and Smith, eds., *Since You Went Away*, 236–37 ("*Darling, come to me*"); Myra Strachner Gershkoff Papers, New York State Library, manuscripts and special collections, SC 20575, http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/msscfa/sc20575.htm.

No sooner had the ink dried: Steere and Boardman, *Final Disposition of World War II Dead, 1945–51*, 178–79; L. R. Talbot, "Graves Registration in the European Theater of Operations," 1955, chapter 26, PIR, MHI. A total of seventy-eight thousand American dead were never recovered; of remains recovered, less than 4 percent could not be identified (Risch and Kieffer, *The Quartermaster Corps*, vol. 2, 404).

Within weeks, seven hundred bodies: Steere and Boardman, *Final Disposition of World War II Dead, 1945–51*, 175, 186–204, 247.

Even as this search began: L. R. Talbot, "Graves Registration in the European Theater of Operations," 1955, chapter 26, PIR, MHI; Joseph T. Layne and Glenn D. Barquest, "Margraten: U.S. Ninth Army Military Cemetery," 1994, 172nd Engineer Combat Bn, NWWIIM, 9 (*Dutch citizens*).

"*I cried for the joy*": Babcock, *War Stories*, 212; "4ID Update," vol. 5, no. 47, June 6, 2011, http://parentsofdeployed.homestead.com/2011Jun06.html.

In 1947, the next of kin: Joseph T. Layne and Glenn D. Barquest, "Margraten: U.S. Ninth Army Military Cemetery," 1994, 172nd Engineer Combat Bn, NWWIIM, 11–12. Congress appropriated $191 million for the task, which resulted in 279,869 interments overseas and at home; just under 110,000 of those remained in cemeteries abroad (Risch and Kieffer, *The Quartermaster Corps*, vol. 2, 404).

In Europe the exhumations: Joseph T. Layne and Glenn D. Barquest, "Margraten: U.S. Ninth Army Military Cemetery," 1994, 172nd Engineer Combat Bn, NWWIIM, 13.

Labor strikes in the United States: Risch and Kieffer, *The Quartermaster Corps*, vol. 2, 402; Steere and Boardman, *Final Disposition of World War II Dead, 1945–51*, 351–54 ("*tombs*"). More than one thousand additional bodies were loaded aboard *Connolly* in subsequent European ports before she crossed the Atlantic (L. R. Talbot, "Graves Registration in the European Theater of Operations," 1955, chapter 26, PIR, MHI, 42–43).

Among those waiting was Henry A. Wright: Steere and Boardman, *Final Disposition of World War II Dead, 1945–51*, 682.

Thus did the fallen return: L. R. Talbot, "Graves Registration in the European Theater of Operations," 1955, chapter 26, PIR, MHI, 42–43; Schuyler Dean Hoslett, "The Army Effects Bureau of the Kansas City Quartermaster Depot," 1946, CMH, 4-10.8 AA.

Hour after hour, day after day: Eddy, "Treasure of Our Heroes," *American Magazine* (Apr. 1944): 44+, in Schuyler Dean Hoslett, "The Army Effects Bureau of the Kansas City Quartermaster Depot," 1946, CMH, 4-10.8 AA, appendix, 268–70; "Honoring Those Fallen Who Served," Aurora (Ill.) *Beacon News*, Apr. 12, 2005, B2. Horton, in the 32nd Infantry Division, died in December 1942. After reading his final words, his mother, Odessa J. Horton, wrote, "To me the war can never be over and you may know, this letter to us is Gethsemane" (*Congressional Record*, Nov. 24, 1943, A 5114).

"*The times were full of certainty*": Liebling, *Mollie & Other War Pieces*, foreword.

"*Never did I feel*": Fussell, *Doing Battle*, 174.

"*What we had together*": Linderman, *The World Within War*, 264.

"*We are certainly no smaller*": Fauntleroy, *The General and His Daughter*, 151–52.

"*The anti-aircraft gunner in a raid*": Moorehead, *Eclipse*, 305.

"*the living have the cause*": White, *Conquerors' Road*, ix.

"*No war is really over*": Kotlowitz, *Before Their Time*, 192; Atkinson, "What Is Lost?" *World War II* (Nov. 2009): 32+ (*By the year 2036*).

Montgomery later asserted: OH, BLM, Oct. 1, 1966, John S. D. Eisenhower, CBM, MHI, box 6, 7; Bolger, "Zero Defects: Command Climate in First U.S. Army, 1944–1945," *Military Review* (May 1991): 61+ (*preferred the more conservative route*); Sylvan, 241 ("*Hodges has had enough*").

Delayed by fog, snowbanks, and further reports: Hamilton, *Monty: Final Years of the Field-Marshal, 1944–1976*, 259–63; Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, 360; *TT*, 609 (*Montgomery sketched the plan*).

Yet the field marshal was vague: Hamilton, *Monty: Final Years of the Field-Marshal, 1944–1976*, 222 ("*gallopers*"), 259–63 (*a* "*master plan*"); Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 605 ("*one more full-blooded attack*"); *TSC*, 385n.

With this ancient theme again resurrected : *TSC*, 385. Eisenhower glosses over this episode in his memoir (Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, 360–61).

"*definitely in a somewhat humble frame of mind*": Hamilton, *Monty: Final Years of the Field-Marshal, 1944–1976*, 265, 246–48 ("*such a decent fellow*" and "*You are far better informed*"); Hastings, *Armageddon*, 223 ("*We have tidied up the mess*").

"*We have had one very definite failure*": Chandler, 2387.

"*I put this matter up to you again*": corr, BLM to DDE, Dec. 29, 1944, DDE Lib, PP-pres, box 83.

"*Under no circumstances make any concessions"*: corr, GCM to DDE, Dec. 30, 1944, Eyes Only Message, Walter B. Smith collection, DDE Lib, WWII documents, box 27; *TSC*, 385–86.

"*They are all mad at Monty*": diary, Kay Summersby, Dec. 29 and 31, 1944, DDE Lib, PP-pres, box 140.

"*knowing Monty, the last thing he would do"*: notes, James Robb, SHAEF, Dec. 31, 1944, NARA RG 319, *SC* background files, 2-3.7 CB 8.

"*All right, Beetle*": OH, DDE, n.d., CJR, box 43, file 7, 33.

Now fully alive to Montgomery's peril: Chandler, 2387n.

"*All right, Freddie*": OH, DDE, n.d., CJR, box 43, file 7, 34.

"*I do not agree that one army group commander*": corr, DDE to BLM, Dec. 31, 1944, DDE Lib, PP-pres, box 83.

Already in fragile health: OH, Alan Moorehead, Jan. 21, 1947, FCP, MHI ("*one of you will have to go*"); *AAAD*, 425 (*Mareth*); Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Soldier, General of the Army, President-Elect, 1890–1952*, vol. 1, 376 ("*What shall I do*").

"*Dear Ike … Whatever your decision*": corr, BLM to DDE, Dec. 31, 1944, DDE Lib, PP-pres, box 83.

"*The general tendency at SHAEF*": Hamilton, *Monty: Final Years of the Field-Marshal, 1944–1976*, 288–89; Chandler, 2389 ("*very fine telegram*"), xxiii ("*He's just a little man*"); OH, John Whiteley, May 15, 1963, CR, box 44, folder 3 (*kept him awake*).

Although he commanded ten French and eight American divisions: *RR*, 462–63, 482–83, 492; Garland, *Unknown Soldiers*, 346 ("*Shit on Hitler's Home*").

The Colmar Pocket, as wide as the Bulge: OH, Paul D. Adams, 1975, Irving Monclova and Marlin Lang, SOOHP, MHI; diary, Dec. 12, 1944, John E. Dahlquist papers, MHI, box 3 ("*enemy attacked on three fronts*"); corr, J. E. Dahlquist to Homer Case, June 5, 1945, John E. Dahlquist papers, MHI, box 1 ("*holding the bag*"); corr, JLD to DDE, Dec. 18, 1944, NARA RG 319, *RR* background files, FRC 5; diary, JLD, Dec. 15, 1944, MHI; Franklin L. Gurley, "The Relationship Between Jean de Lattre de Tassigny and Jacob L. Devers," March 26, 1994, Sorbonne, NARA RG 319, *RR* background files, FRC 4 ("*two problem children*").

At Verdun on December 19: *RR*, 486–89, 495–97, 511, 533; notes, Dec. 26, 1944, SHAEF main, James M. Robb corr, DDE Lib, PP-pres, box 98 (*brought Devers a map*); Gurley, "Policy Versus Strategy: The Defense of Strasbourg in Dec. 1944," NARA RG 319, *RR* background files, FRC 5 (*abandoning Strasbourg and the Alsatian plain*); memo, DDE to JLD, Dec. 28, 1944, 1024 hrs, NARA RG 498, ETOUSA HD, UD 584 (*SHAEF reserve west of the Vosges*).

"*The Germans undoubtedly will attack me*": diary, JLD, Dec. 26, 28, 29, 1944, MHI.

De Gaulle thought so too: *DOB*, 401 (*left-handed salute*); Gurley, "Policy Versus Strategy," NARA RG 319, *RR* background files, FRC 5 ("*They are up to something*").

While Smith prevaricated: John W. Price, "The Strasbourg Incident," 1967, OCMH, NARA RG 319, *RR* background files, FRC 5, 3–5 (*fallback positions*); OH, Russell L. Vittrup, 1989, Henry E. Fitzgerald, SOOHP, MHI, 125–26 ("*Ain't going to do it*"); De Lattre de Tassigny, *The History of the French First Army*, 303–4 ("*psychosis of retreat*"); Gurley, "Policy Versus Strategy," NARA RG 319, *RR* background files, FRC 5 ("*integrity of the present front*").

"*Call up Devers and tell him*": notes, Jan. 1, 1945, SHAEF main, James M. Robb corr, DDE Lib, PP-pres, box 98.

"*I won't go to him with that story*": Gurley, "Policy Versus Strategy," NARA RG 319, *RR* background files, FRC 5.

"*The political pressure to retain French soil*": corr, DDE to JLD, Jan. 1, 1945, JLD papers, MHI.

Devers capitulated: diary, JLD, Jan. 1, 1945, MHI ("*no alternative*"); Franklin L. Gurley, "The Relationship Between Jean de Lattre de Tassigny and Jacob L. Devers," March 26, 1994, Sorbonne, NARA RG 319, *RR* background files, FRC 4; Gurley, "Policy Versus Strategy," *JMH* (July 1994): 481+.

"*You can kill a willing horse*": diary, JLD, Dec. 30, 1944, MHI.

"*make it a Stalingrad*": diary, JLD, Jan. 1, 1945, MHI.

The final day of the year ticked by: war diary, Seventh Army, Dec. 31, 1944, MHI; Cochran, "Protecting the Ultimate Advantage," *Military History* (June 1985): 45+; Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 483 ("*Never was the world plagued*"); diary, JLD, Dec. 31, 1944, MHI ("*Patch called me*").

The attack indeed fell that night: *RR*, 493–97, 499–500 (*Seventh Army was overextended*); Bonn, *When the Odds Were Even*, 181–83; Rickard, *Advance and Destroy*, 173, 241 (*force Patton to withdraw*).

The Americans were also alert and entrenched: Cochran, "Protecting the Ultimate Advantage," *Military History* (June 1985): 45+; Donald S. Bussey, "Ultra and the U.S. Seventh Army," May 12, 1945, SRH-022, and "Reports by U.S. Army Ultra Representatives," 6th Army Group, n.d., SRH-023, NARA RG 457, E 022 (*Patch had little doubt*).

"*German offensive began*": Wyant, *Sandy Patch*, 9–11 ("*Murdered them*"); Bonn, *When the Odds Were Even*, 197, 200, 203–4 ("*Gained only insignificant ground*"); *RR*, 504–5; Yeide and Stout, *First to the Rhine*, 275 ("*Morgue Valley*").

The most flamboyant German sally: *TT*, 608 (*Hangover Raid*); Miller, *Masters of the Air*, 374 (*white gloves*); *VW*, vol. 2 190. Richard G. Davis puts the tally of destroyed Allied planes at nearly two hundred, including three dozen American aircraft (*Carl A. Spaatz and the Air War in Europe*, 535).

But German losses approached 300 planes: *Germany VII*, 693–94; Miller, *Masters of the Air*, 374 ("*our last substance*"). Miller puts Allied losses at more than 450 planes and German losses at over 400.

Even as NORDWIND *collapsed*: *RR*, 505–9; "The Psychological Warfare Division," 1945, CMH, 8-3.6 BA, 78–79 (*Radio Stuttgart*): Gurley, "Policy Versus Strategy," NARA RG 319, *RR* background files, FRC 5 ("*caused a general panic*").

Lowered tricolors and the sight of official sedans: Gurley, "Policy Versus Strategy," NARA RG 319, *RR* background files, FRC 5; memo, "Misleading Briefing Data," Frank A. Allen, Jr., to JLD, Jan. 16, 1945, and memo, 6th Army Group, Jan. 21, 1945, NARA RG 331, E 240P, SHAEF public relations section, box 38 ("*women pushing baby carriages*"); Fussell, *Doing Battle*, 129 (*inverted dinner plates*).

Charles de Gaulle, once again referring to himself: De Gaulle, *The Complete War Memoirs of Charles de Gaulle*, 834. De Gaulle's message, written on January 1, took twenty-seven hours to reach De Lattre (OH, Philippe de Camas, asst G-3, French First Army, Oct.–Dec. 1948, Miguel Vigneras, Paris, NARA RG 319, *RR* background files, FRC 5).

"*a bomb-like effect*": OH, Philippe de Camas, asst G-3, French First Army, Oct.–Dec. 1948, Miguel Vigneras, Paris, NARA RG 319, *RR* background files, FRC 5; Salisbury-Jones, *So Full a Glory*, 171 ("Ça, non!"); Gurley, "Policy Versus Strategy," NARA RG 319, *RR* background files, FRC 5 ("*problem of conscience*").

De Gaulle saw no dilemma: De Gaulle, *The Complete War Memoirs of Charles de Gaulle*, 834–37; Gurley, "Policy Versus Strategy," NARA RG 319, *RR* background files, FRC 5 (*snubbed Madame De Lattre*); De Lattre de Tassigny, *The History of the French First Army*, 311 ("*our last hope*").

At nine P.M. *on Tuesday, General Juin*: Gurley, "Policy Versus Strategy," NARA RG 319, *RR* background files, FRC 5 ("*extremely grave consequences*" and "*they are dependent on us*"); corr, David G. Barr to JLD, Aug. 15, 1967, NARA RG 319, *RR* background files, FRC 5 (*pulled from his pocket*).

"*Juin said things to me last night*": notes, Jan. 3, 1945, DDE office and W. B. Smith office, James M. Robb corr, DDE Lib, PP-pres, box 98; "Summary of Directions in Chronological Order Concerning Holding Strasbourg or Not Holding Strasbourg," Jan. 3, 1945, JLD papers, MHI ("*forget Strasbourg*"); John W. Price, "The Strasbourg Incident," 1967, OCMH, NARA RG 319, *RR* background files, FRC 5, 26 ("*ineradicable shame*"); Seventh Army war diary, Jan. 3, 1945, MHI ("*terrible reprisals*"); Gurley, "Policy Versus Strategy," NARA RG 319, *RR* background files, FRC 5 (*Evacuation plans*); memo, "Misleading Briefing Data," Frank A. Allen, Jr., to JLD, Jan. 16, 1945, and memo, 6th Army Group, Jan. 21, 1945, NARA RG 331, E 240P, SHAEF public relations section, box 38 (*only two hundred rail cars*).

"*Next to the weather*": Chandler, 2491.

Smith phoned Devers to ask: "Summary of Directions in Chronological Order Concerning Holding Strasbourg or Not Holding Strasbourg," Jan. 3, 1945, JLD papers, MHI.

The crowded stage in this melodrama: John W. Price, "The Strasbourg Incident," 1967, OCMH, NARA RG 319, *RR* background files, FRC 5, 21–22; Danchev, 642 (*Eisenhower whisked them*); Chandler, 2396n (*a copy of his letter*).

Eisenhower gestured to the map: De Gaulle, *The Complete War Memoirs of Charles de Gaulle*, 834–37 ("*In Alsace, where the enemy*").

"*a state bordering on anarchy*": memo, DDE to GCM, Jan. 6, 1945, NARA RG 319, *RR* background files, FRC 5.

"All my life," Churchill said: De Gaulle, *The Complete War Memoirs of Charles de Gaulle*, 837–39; Porch, *The Path to Victory*, 603 (*asked for a total of fifty*).

By now the supreme commander's face: Gurley, "Policy Versus Strategy," NARA RG 319, *RR* background files, FRC 5 ("*If you carry out the withdrawal*"); De Gaulle, *The Complete War Memoirs of Charles de Gaulle*, 837–39 ("*I am having a lot of trouble*").

"*I think you've done the wise and proper*": Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, 384.

"*not always aware of the political consequences*": Kersaudy, *Churchill and De Gaulle*, 300; De Gaulle, *The Complete War Memoirs of Charles de Gaulle*, 838–39 ("*Glory has its price*"); Gurley, "Policy Versus Strategy," NARA RG 319, *RR* background files, FRC 5 ("*Imagine, asking us to withdraw*"); Porch, *The Path to Victory*, 610 ("*equate politics with sentiment*").

As the happy news of salvation: Gurley, "Policy Versus Strategy," NARA RG 319, *RR* background files, FRC 5; msg, DDE to JLD, Jan. 7, 1945, and "Summary of Directions in Chronological Order Concerning Holding Strasbourg or Not Holding Strasbourg," Jan. 3, 1945, JLD papers, MHI ("*as strongly as possible*").

NORDWIND *would drag on*: *RR*, 505–9, 513, 527, 564; *VW*, vol. 2, 249 (*enemy troops ferried across the river*); MEB, "Army Group G," Dec. 1956, OCMH, NARA RG 319, R-91, box 14, 18; Giziowski, *The Enigma of General Blaskowitz*, 373 (*Hitler denounced as* "*pessimistic*"), 371 ("*Whipped Cream Division*"); Bonn, *When the Odds Were Even*, 219 (*recruits from eastern Europe*).

"*We must believe in the ultimate purposes*": Eisenhower, *Letters to Mamie*, 229.

He had new worries, too: office diary, Jan. 5, 1945, Kay Summersby, DDE Lib, PP-pres, box 140 (*developing a ray*); Gardner, "The Death of Admiral Ramsay," *AB*, no. 87 (1995): 44+; Woodward, *Ramsay at War*, 194; Chalmers, *Full Cycle*, 267.

"*E. leaves office early*": desk calendar, Jan. 7, 1945, Barbara Wyden papers, DDE Lib, box 1.

The Agony Grapevine

SHAEF on January 5 confirmed: office diary, Jan. 5, 1945, Kay Summersby, DDE Lib, PP-pres, box 140; Weigley, *Eisenhower's Lieutenants*, 565 ("*by instant agreement*"); Eisenhower, *The Bitter Woods*, 465.

"*We have nothing to apologize for*": diary, Jan. 1, 5 and 6, 1945, CBH, MHI, box 5. Even *Stars and Stripes* referred to GIs as "Monty's troops" (Hamilton, *Monty: Final Years of the Field-Marshal, 1944–1976*, 302).

"*I shall show how the whole Allied team*": msg, BLM to WSC, Jan. 6, 1945, UK NA, CAB 120/867.

"*The real trouble with the Yanks*": Hamilton, *Monty: Final Years of the Field-Marshal, 1944–1976*, 411.

When Brigadier Williams, the intelligence chief, asked why: OH, E. T. Williams, May 30–31, 1947, FCP, MHI; Hamilton, *Monty: Final Years of the Field-Marshal, 1944–1976*, 304 ("*Please don't*"); OH, David Belchem, Feb. 20, 1947, FCP, MHI (*smelling condescension*); OH, Alan Moorehead, Jan. 21, 1947, FCP, MHI ("*some bloody awful mistake*").

In a double-badged maroon beret: OH, Alan Moorehead, Jan. 21, 1947, FCP, MHI ("*dressed like a clown*"); *VW*, vol. 2, 425–27 ("*a brave fighting man*"); Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 610–11 (*No mention was made of Bradley*); *TT*, 611 (*British troops were* "*fighting hard*").

"*The first thing I did*": Davis, *Soldier of Democracy*, 530.

"*Let us have done with the destructive criticism*": *VW*, vol. 2, 425–27.

"Oh, God, why didn't you stop him?": Hamilton, *Monty: Final Years of the Field-Marshal, 1944–1976*, 303; Colville, *The Fringes of Power*, 551 ("*indecently exultant*" and "*exceedingly self-satisfied*"); Weigley, *Eisenhower's Lieutenants*, 565 ("*what a good boy am I*"); Richardson, *Send for Freddie*, 172 ("*cock on a dunghill*"); Bradley and Blair, *A General's Life*, 382 ("*Montgomery Foresaw Attack*"); *VW*, vol. 2, 428 ("'*somewhat bewildered*'").

"*He sees fit to assume*": war diary, Ninth Army, Jan. 19, 1945, William H. Simpson papers, "Personal Calendar," MHI, box 11; OH, Frederick E. Morgan, n.d., FCP, MHI ("*active hatred*"); "Excerpt from Diary, D/SAC," Jan. 31, 1945, NARA RG 319, *SC* background papers, 2-3.7 CB 8 ("*out of the question*").

Bradley twice called Versailles: office diary, Jan. 9, 1945, Kay Summersby, DDE Lib, PP-pres, box 140. The "calculated risk" explanation first emerged from 12th Army Group on Dec. 21 and was widely cited long after the war (Royce L. Thompson, "American Intelligence on the German Counteroffensive," vol. 1, Nov. 1949, CMH, 2-3.7 AE P-1).

"*attempt to discredit me*": Bradley Commentaries, CBH collection, MHI, box 41.

"*I cannot serve under Montgomery*": Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 487–88; diary, Jan. 8, 1945, CBH, MHI, box 5.

"*No single incident that I have encountered*": Chandler, 2481.

Heading off, seeing off, and writing off: Rickard, *Advance and Destroy*, 200–203 ("*must take care of itself*"); *Ardennes*, 650–51 (*twice as many tanks*); Weigley, *Eisenhower's Lieutenants*, 572 ("*Desertions few*").

Yet many enemy commanders had been killed: *Ardennes*, 615; MEB, "The German Withdrawal from the Ardennes," May 1955, NARA RG 319, OCMH, R-series #59, 20 (*combed the countryside for gasoline*); Rickard, *Advance and Destroy*, 319 (*traveled by bicycle*); Roger S. Durham, "The Past Is Present: The World War II Service of George E. Durham," 1996, a.p., 124 ("*pants-crapper*").

"*Ten shells for their one*": White, *Conquerors' Road*, 7, 14 ("*Get along there*"); *PP*, 615 ("*unfortunate incidents*"); *TT*, 226 (*Skorzeny's saboteurs*); FUSA G-2, Operation GREIF, n.d., NARA RG 407, E 429, ML #994 ("*musketry*"); Heinz, "The Morning They Shot the Spies," *True* (Dec. 1949): 28+ ("*We had to stop them*"); "W.C. Heinz, 93, Writing Craftsman, Dies," *NYT*, Feb. 28, 2008.

A final German lunge at Bastogne: Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 607–8; Cirillo, "Ardennes-Alsace," 45 (*increased from three to nine*); "Allied Air Power and the Ardennes Offensive," n.d., director of intelligence, USSAFE, NARA RG 498, ETOUSA HD, UD 584, box 1 (*Dreadful weather*); *Ardennes*, 628–29 (*blowtorches and pinch bars*); Rickard, *Advance and Destroy*, 216, 314 (*barely a mile a day*); *LO*, 26–33 (*five thousand casualties*), 39–42 (*must halt at the West Wall*).

At 11:40 A.M. *on Tuesday, January 16*: *LO*, 42–43; Weigley, *Eisenhower's Lieutenants*, 561; author visit, Houffalize, June 4, 2009, signage; "Allied Air Power and the Ardennes Offensive," n.d., director of intelligence, USSAFE, NARA RG 498, ETOUSA HD, UD 584, box 1 (*One thousand tons*); *PP*, 632 ("*I have never seen anything like it*"). Of the nearly two hundred civilians killed in Houffalize, almost all died "at the hands of their liberators" (Hitchcock, *The Bitter Road to Freedom*, 87).

"*Little town of Houffalize*": D'Este, *Patton: A Genius for War*, 696–97.

A day later, Eisenhower returned First Army: Sylvan, 262; Benjamin A. Dickson, "G-2 Journal: Algiers to the Elbe," MHI, 203 (*Hôtel Britannique*); Hogan, *A Command Post at War*, 239 ("*tilting drunkenly*"); war diary, Ninth Army, Jan. 30, 1945, William H. Simpson papers, "Personal Calendar," MHI, box 11; Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 502 ("*Whore's Camp*").

Village by village, croft by croft: Fussell, *Wartime*, 122 ("*Kraut disinfected*"); "The Defense of St. Vith, Belgium," n.d., AS, Ft., K, NARA RG 407, E 427, Miscl AG records, #2280, 42 ("*The battle noises*"); *LO*, 51.

Hitler had already decamped: Raiber, "The Führerhauptquartiere," *AB*, no. 19 (1977): 1+; Kershaw, *Hitler, 1936–45: Nemesis*, 747 ("*I know the war is lost*"); Rickard, *Advance and Destroy*, 290–92 (*five bridges thrown over the Our*); Chandler, 2439 ("*probably*

manage to withdraw"). A U.S. Army history estimated that "perhaps one-third" of German armor committed to the Bulge escaped (Cirillo, "Ardennes-Alsace," 52).

The Red Army had massed more than 180 divisions: *GS*, vol. 4, 80; Warlimont, *Inside Hitler's Headquarters*, 499; *LO*, 51; MEB, "The German Withdrawal from the Ardennes," May 1955, NARA RG 319, OCMH, R-series #59, 1–2, 20; Josef "Sepp" Dietrich, Aug. 8–9, 1945, ETHINT 15, MHI, 22; Percy E. Schramm, "The Course of Events in the German Offensive in the Ardennes," n.d., FMS, #A-858, MHI, 18–21 ("*suction pump*").

In the west the war receded: Lewis, *The Mammoth Book of Eyewitness World War II*, 444 (*Thunderbolt cannons*); Moorehead, *Eclipse*, 228 ("*Are you sure?*").

The dead "*lay thick*": Gellhorn, *The Face of War*, 194; Bagnulo, ed., *Nothing But Praise*, 48 (*precluded burials*); Schrijvers, *The Unknown Dead*, 27 (*blankets*), 359. The National Museum of Military History in Diekirch put total civilian dead and wounded in Belgium and Luxembourg at 3,800 (Hitchcock, *The Bitter Road to Freedom*, 385n).

At the American cemetery in Henri-Chapelle: Joseph T. Layne and Glenn D. Barquest, "Margraten: U.S. Ninth Army Military Cemetery," 1994, NWWIIM, 7–13; Joseph James Shomon, *Crosses in the Wind*, 91–98, 109; "Third U.S. Army After Action Report," chapter 21, CMH (*morgue tent for photographs*).

Among the dead gathered by Graves Registration teams: Bauserman, *The Malmédy Massacre*, 100–101.

An Army tally long after the war: The figures included losses from 6th Army Group. *TSC*, 402. Corr, D. G. Gilbert, chief, Army historical services division, to JT, Jan. 28, 1959, JT, LOC MS Div, box 38. About three-quarters of U.S. casualties were suffered by 12th Army Group; a 1952 monograph put the figure at 71,000 through January 19, 1945 (Royce L. Thompson, "Ardennes Campaign Statistics," Apr. 28, 1952, CMH, 2-3.7 AE P-15).

Thousands more suffered from trench foot, frostbite: Morelock, *Generals of the Ardennes*, 20.

More than 23,000 were taken prisoner: OH, William R. Desobry, 1978, Ted S. Chesney, SOOHP, MHI ("*so foul we used to bathe*").

organized the "*Agony Grapevine*": Frank, "The Glorious Collapse of the 106th," *Saturday Evening Post* (Nov. 9, 1946).

Of more than sixty thousand wounded and injured: Cowdrey, *Fighting for* Life, 263 ("*ledge of a skyscraper*"); Fussell, *Doing Battle*, 146 ("*Battle of Atlanta*"); Carroll, ed., *War Letters*, 267–68 ("*I looked down*").

German losses would be difficult to count: *AAAD*, 484; Sylvan, 262; Rickard, *Advance and Destroy*, 316 (*120,000 enemy losses*); Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 492 (*more than a quarter-million*); Percy E. Schramm, "The Course of Events in the German Offensive in the Ardennes," FMS, #A-851, MHI, 20; *Germany VII*, 694 (*official German history*). Other German historians put total casualties at approximately 68,000, plus the 23,000 in Alsace (Rickard, *Advance and Destroy*, 316; Cirillo, "Ardennes-Alsace," 53).

Model's success: Rickard, *Advance and Destroy*, 322 (*289 divisions*); OH, Hasso von Manteuffel, Oct. 12, 1966, John S. D. Eisenhower, CBM, MHI, box 6, 7 ("*He bent the bow*"); Greenfield, ed., *Command Decisions*, 356 (*virtually no fuel*); MEB, "Effects of the Ardennes Offensive: Germany's Remaining War Potential," May 1955, OCMH, Foreign Studies Branch, NARA RG 338, R-series, #61, 28 ("*rabbit hunt*"); Zaloga, *Armored Thunderbolt*, 258 (*seven hundred armored vehicles*); Davis, *Carl A. Spaatz and the Air War in Europe*, 537 (*freight shipments were banned*); *LO*, 8 (*four million German soldiers*). A 1950 study put total German military losses through January 31, 1945, at 8.3 million (MEB, "Overall View of Germany's Economic, Political, and Military Situation at the Beginning of 1945," May 1950, CMH, 2-3.7 EC, 12).

"*When you catch a carp*": transcript, GSP press conference, Jan. 1, 1945, GSP, LOC MS Div, box 12, folder 18.

"*a corporal's war*": Liddell Hart, *The Other Side of the Hill*, 464.

Few U.S. generals had enhanced their reputations: Millett and Murray, *Military Effectiveness*, vol. 3, *The Second World War*, 80; Rickard, *Advance and Destroy*, 193, 291, 320 (*Patton proved the most distinguished*); ONB, 1945 efficiency report on GSP, DDE Lib, PP pres, box 91.

Churchill sought to repair: *TSC*, 389; Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 488; Colville, *The Fringes of Power*, 583 ("*no greater exhibition of power*"); *TSC*, 395 ("*What a great honor*"); diary, Jan. 24, 1945, GSP, LOC MS Div, box 3, folder 9 ("*Why isn't Ike a man?*").

"*had in no sense achieved anything decisive*": "Biennial Report of the Chief of Staff of the Army," Oct. 1945, NARA RG 498, ETOUSA HD, UD 584, box 2; Franz Kurowski in Barnett, ed., *Hitler's Generals*, 432 ("*godsend for the Red Army*"); Ehlers, *Targeting the Reich*, 292, 311–14 (*lack of gasoline*); Erickson, *The Road to Berlin*, 447–48, 460–62; Cooper, *The German Army, 1933–1945*, 525–26; Gerhard L. Weinberg, "D-Day: Analysis of Costs and Benefits," in Wilson, ed., *D-Day 1944*, 336 (*within fifty miles of Berlin*).

With the German tide receding: Rickard, *Advance and Destroy*, 314 (*timetable had been disrupted*).

his basic scheme for ending the war remained unaltered: Chandler, 2450–54; Weigley, *Eisenhower's Lieutenants*, 547. One SHAEF study, dated December 23, put the number of divisions that could be supported in the north at just twenty-five until rail bridges were built, a figure Montgomery himself considered plausible (ALH, 155–56; *TSC*, 410).

At present the Western Allies mustered 3.7 million: *LO*, 5–7; *LSA*, vol. 2, 288; MEB, "Effects of the Ardennes Offensive: Germany's Remaining War Potential," May 1955, OCMH, Foreign Studies Branch, NARA RG 338, R-series, #61, 46 (*729-mile front*); *TSC*, 392–93 ("*plenty of fat meat*").

So desperate was the need for rifle platoon leaders: "History, 1945," Ground Forces Training Center, n.d., Harold E. Potter papers, MHI, box 1; corr, Congressional Research Service to Rep. Adam Benjamin, Jan. 1981, a.p. (*thirty thousand U.S. enlisted*); D. M. Giangreco, "Spinning the Casualties: Media Strategies During the Roosevelt Administration," *Passport*, newsletter, Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations, Dec. 2004, 22+ (*ninety thousand men a month*); Chandler, 2453 (*85 divisions*).

That would have to suffice: "Major Problems Encountered by Ground Force Reinforcement Command," chapter 6, NARA RG 498, ETO HD, admin file #571F, 291–95 ("*almost depleted*"); *TSC*, 392–93 (*a hundred thousand Marines*); corr, David T. Griggs to Edward L. Bowles, adviser to secretary of war, Feb. 22, 1945, AFHRA, 519.161-7 ("*twenty more divisions*"); Kirkpatrick, *An Unknown Future and a Doubtful Present: Writing the Victory Plan of 1941*, CMH, 1990, 113–14

"*Everybody shares the same universals*": Carroll, ed., *War Letters*, 266; *Ardennes*, 99; Cirillo, "Ardennes-Alsace," 20 (*thirty-two recognizing*).

Affixed to a wall: "Monty's Wartime Caravans," *AB*, no. 20 (1978): 32+; *VW*, vol. 2, 357.

CHAPTER 10: ARGONAUTS

Citizens of the World

Morning sun and a tranquil breeze: Dilks, ed., *The Diaries of Sir Alexander Cadogan*, 700–701; Eden, *The Reckoning*, 592 ("*Star-Spangled Banner*"); *DOB*, 46–51 (*invasion of Sicily*).

Sixteen thousand tons: "Argonaut," No. AR/2, n.d., UK NA, CAB 120/172 ("*rumors and gossip*"); "Operation Argonaut," n.d., Frederick L. Anderson papers, HIA, box 95, folder 14 (*Lascaris Bastion*); Kuter, *Airman at Yalta*, 69 ("*cold-storage vaults*"); King and Whitehill, *Fleet Admiral King*, 587 (*wrapped in a dressing gown*); Norwich, *The Middle Sea*, 303 ("*astonishing natural anchorage*"); Cherpak, ed., *The Memoirs of Admiral H. Kent Hewitt*, 213–14 (*floating garage*).

To compensate for any discomfort: Kuter, *Airman at Yalta*, 70–71, 72–73 (*local librarian*); John E. Hull, "Unpublished Autobiography," n.d., MHI, 14-3 ("*shine he put on my shoes*"); Charles H. Donnelly, "Autobiography," May 1979, MHI, 706–10 (*bars opened punctually*); Roberts, *Masters and Commanders*, 540 (*twenty-piece orchestra*); Pawle, *The War and Colonel Warden*, 357 (*marble scrolls*); Norwich, *The Middle Sea*, 302–7; "Argonaut," No. AR/2, n.d., UK NA, CAB 120/172.

At 9:30 A.M. on Friday: Stettinius, *Roosevelt and the Russians*, 68; notes, Feb. 2, 1945, Anna Roosevelt Halsted papers, FDR Lib, box 84 ("*entrance to the harbor*").

As the cruiser crept at four knots: "Trips of the President," FDR Lib, container 21, file 6-1; Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, 642 (ADMIRAL Q); Bishop, *FDR's Last Year*, 292 (*slow salute*).

"*The sun was glistening*": Bohlen, *Witness to History, 1929–1969*, 171.

Across the harbor, on the quarterdeck: Moran, *Churchill: Taken from the Diaries of Lord Moran*, 234; Bishop, *FDR's Last Year*, 292 ("*Through with engines*"); Eden, *The Reckoning*, 592 ("*one of those moments*"); William M. Rigdon, log, "The President's Trip to the Crimea Conference and Great Bitter Lake, Egypt," Averill Harriman papers, LOC MS Div, 14 (*Berth 9*).

Since leaving Washington: Guy H. Spaman, "President's Trip," July 5, 1945, Secret Service records, FDR Lib, container 4, file 103-1; Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly*, 22. The physician with Roosevelt aboard *Quincy* reported that he rested well and slept late on the voyage (Bruenn, "Clinical Notes on the Illness and Death of President Franklin D. Roosevelt," *Annals of Internal Medicine* 72, no. 4 (Apr. 1, 1970): 579+).

He devoted little time: William M. Rigdon, log, "The President's Trip to the Crimea Conference and Great Bitter Lake, Egypt," Averill Harriman papers, LOC MS Div, 1–3 (Laura and *sixty-one degrees*); book list, official files, Yalta trip, FDR Lib, box 3 (Death Defies the Doctor); Bishop, *FDR's Last Year*, 271–72 (*agent stood near*); notes, Jan. 27, 1945, Anna Roosevelt Halsted papers, FDR Lib, box 84 (*half a penny a point*); Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932–1945*, 481; Brinkley, *Washington Goes to War*, 264 (*thirteen of his grandchildren*).

To celebrate the president's sixty-third birthday: corr, E. J. Flynn to Helen, Feb. 2, 1945, Edward J. Flynn papers, FDR Lib, box 25; Goodwin, *No Ordinary Time*, 574–75 (*brass ashtray*).

With Quincy *made fast*: William M. Rigdon, log, "The President's Trip to the Crimea Conference and Great Bitter Lake, Egypt,"

Averill Harriman papers, LOC MS Div, 14–18; King and Whitehill, *Fleet Admiral King*, 587 (*violet circles*); Bohlen, *Witness to History, 1929–1969*, 172–73 (“*I was shocked”*).

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*Please note that some of the links referenced in this work are no longer active.



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