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HISTORY of WAR

THE FIGHTING BRADLEY

Inside the US Army's hardy IFV

HITLER'S HANGMAN

How Reinhard Heydrich went from SS henchman to the 'Butcher of Prague' and chief architect of the Holocaust

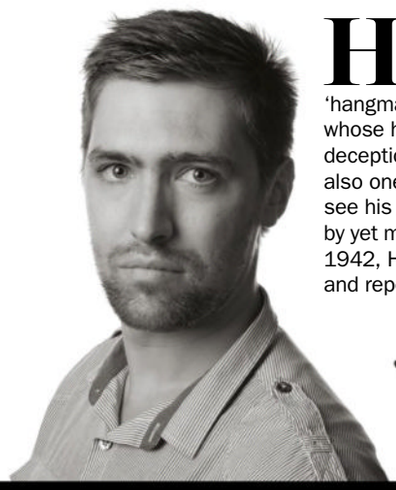
WINGED HUSSARS
The real history behind Poland's legendary cavalry

TRENCH ASSAULTS
What WWI generals learned about breaking static battles

FUTURE
ISSUE 124

Above: Heydrich (second from left) was one of the chief architects of the Holocaust

Welcome



Hitler reportedly described Reinhard Heydrich as "the man with the iron heart" – this coming from the Nazi leader himself gives an awful sense of the man also known as the 'butcher' and 'hangman'. However, even these brutal epithets don't fully represent a man whose horrific rise through the Nazi ranks was laced with underhanded deceptions, shadowy dealings and calculated power plays. Heydrich was also one of the chief architects of the Holocaust, though he did not live to see his genocidal plans carried out, and his death was tragically followed by yet more slaughter. When Heydrich was assassinated by SOE agents in 1942, Hitler ordered widespread reprisals, massacring two entire villages and reportedly murdering thousands of resistance fighters and civilians.

Tim Williamson
Editor-in-Chief

CONTRIBUTORS

MICHAEL HASKEW

In this issue's *Operator's Handbook* Mike takes a look inside the Bradley Fighting Vehicle (p66). Conceived in the 1980s, it has seen combat across most of the USA's major conflicts, and more recently in the Ukraine War.

JACKSON VAN UDEN

In this issue's *Frontline*, Jackson recounts the complex conflicts that accompanied the break-up of Yugoslavia (p12). And on page 48 he gives a blow-by-blow account of the only Medal of Honor action caught on camera.

DAVID SMITH

The Battle of Dettingen (1743) might be a lesser-known engagement from the Wars of Austrian Succession, but for fans of the royal family it is notable as the last time a British monarch led their army on the battlefield. On page 40 David recounts how the battle went down.

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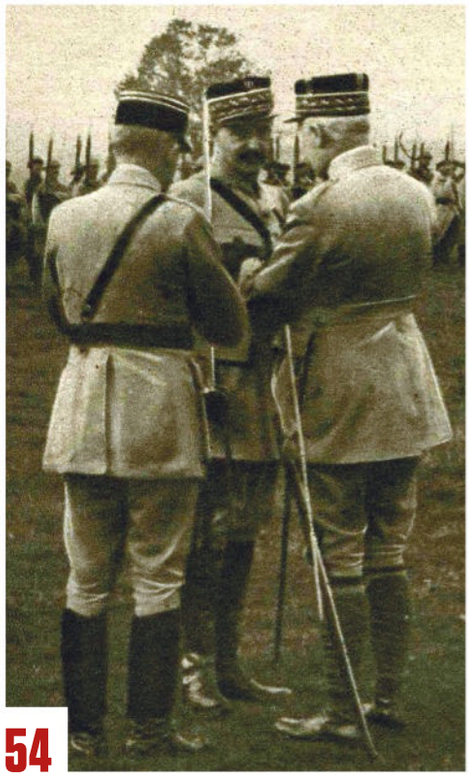

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WAR in FOCUS

HARLEM'S 'BLACK EAGLE'

September 1934

Aviator Hubert Julian poses with his biplane, named after the Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia. A pioneering pilot from Trinidad, Julian became an honorary colonel in the Ethiopian Air Force after impressing the emperor with his skills in the cockpit. Forced to leave the country after crashing the emperor's De Havilland Gipsy Moth, Julian returned after the Italian invasion in 1935, assisting in the country's brave but brief defence. With the Second World War looming, Julian read Hermann Göring's racist views of Black Americans and challenged the Reichsmarschall to a dogfight over the English Channel – the offer was not accepted. Julian's piloting career came to an end with brief service in the Finnish Air Force during the Winter War, after which he returned to the USA.

WAR in FOCUS

AFGHAN RETREAT

May 1988

Soviet armoured personnel vehicles cross into Termez, Uzbekistan, during the withdrawal from Afghanistan. Beginning in 1979, the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan had sought to prop up Babrak Karmal's communist regime in Kabul, which was opposed by mujahideen rebels. Over the nine-year insurgency around 15,000 Soviet soldiers were killed, and as many as a million Afghan civilians caught in the crossfire. Increasingly unpopular among the Soviet general public, the war was also not supported by Mikhail Gorbachev who came to power in 1985 and began plans for the gradual withdrawal of Soviet forces.

WAR in FOCUS

GUARD OF HONOUR

June 1945

An injured French soldier is repatriated after the end of the war in Europe, helped by members of the French Red Cross and greeted by a guard of honour, at Le Bourget Airport, Paris. After the fall of France in 1940 the French Red Cross remained active, working through the government-in-exile to support French POWs and Free French forces still fighting. After the war the Red Cross was tasked with helping to repatriate thousands of deportees and prisoners of war.

TIMELINE OF THE...

YUGOSLAV WARS

With the Soviet Union declining and eventually falling, war breaks out in Europe as Yugoslavia fractures

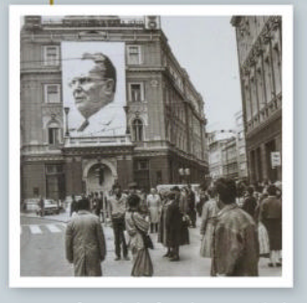
CROATIAN WAR BEGINS 03

After it becomes clear Croatia is on a path toward independence, a number of Croatian Serbs who have established SAO Krajina (Serbian Autonomous Oblast of Krajina) announce their separation from Croatia and attempt to join Serbia. This move leads to war between the Croatians and Serbs, who are later joined by the Yugoslavian army in July.

4 May 1980 | **12 November 1989** | **23 December 1990** | **31 March 1991**

TITO'S DEATH 01

The leader of Yugoslavia, Josip Tito, dies in Ljubljana. He had held together the Yugoslav republics of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia (including Kosovo and Vojvodina) and Slovenia through suppression of the republics' nationalist movements. His death leads to economic collapse and the rise of nationalism, and the tensions between republics move into the open.



Crowds in Sarajevo pay their respects after Tito's death was announced, 4 May 1980

SERBIA ELECTS MILOSEVIC 02

Outspoken Serbian nationalist Slobodan Miloševic is elected president of Serbia. This position grants Miloševic the power to mobilise Serbs in other Yugoslavian republics and promote Serb nationalism, which exacerbates pre-existing tensions within Yugoslavia.

Miloševic campaigning to remove Kosovo's autonomous status in 1988 – a stance that led him to the presidency

SLOVENIA INDEPENDENCE REFERENDUM

Slovenia holds a referendum on independence from Yugoslavia. The independence vote wins a resounding victory with 88.5 percent of the vote, leading Slovenia to officially declare independence on 25 June 1991. The Yugoslavian government sends forces into Slovenia to regain control.

Federal Yugoslavian soldiers pictured prior to the federal intervention in Slovenia, which triggers civil war

A militiaman pictured during the conflict between Yugoslav and Croatian forces, near the city of Karlovac

A Slovenian soldier mans a defensive position close to Ljubljana

TEN-DAY WAR 04

Yugoslavia launches an attack on Slovenia to prevent the country's independence. After ten days of staunch armed resistance from Slovenia's defence force and its citizens, the Yugoslavian army is forced to agree to a ceasefire on 5 July 1991, accepting Slovenian independence.

19 May 1991 — **27 June 1991** — **18 September 1991**

CROATIAN INDEPENDENCE

Croatians choose independence with a 93.2 percent majority of the vote in a referendum. The country declares independence along with Slovenia on 25 June 1991, which leads to Yugoslavia launching an invasion of Croatia.

Croatia's first president, Franjo Tudjman, in 1991 at a meeting of the Yugoslavian republics' heads of states before Independence

MACEDONIAN INDEPENDENCE 05

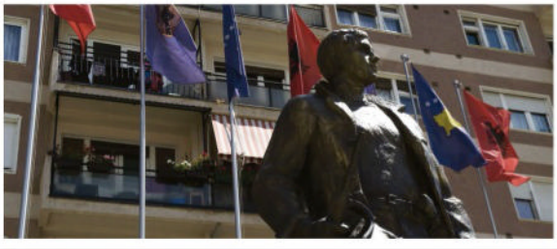
Macedonia holds an independence referendum, which results in 96.5 percent majority vote in favour – however, ethnic Albanians refuse to take part in the vote. Despite this, Macedonia becomes the first republic to leave Yugoslavia peacefully.

A demonstration in Toronto, Canada, in support of Macedonian independence

22 September 1991

KOSOVO DECLARES INDEPENDENCE 06

The Kosovan government, not officially recognised but acting as an 'underground regime', holds an independence referendum in which Albanian Kosovans vote in favour of separation from Yugoslavia. The legality of this referendum is contested, but it demonstrates the intentions of Kosovo to stand up to Yugoslavia and determine its own future.



6 April 1992

BOSNIAN WAR 07

The results of Bosnia and Herzegovina's independence referendum, conducted on 1 March, are declared, with the independence vote receiving 99.7 percent support. Differing views on independence lead to a war between the Bosnians and Serbs that lasts until 1995. Emerging from the Croatian War of Independence, the Bosnian wars see the Bosniak and Croatian forces fight against the Yugoslavian army and the Serbs in order to protect Bosnian independence. The conflict leads to horrific war crimes, such as the Srebrenica genocide in July 1995, and the Siege of Sarajevo.

12 December 1995

DAYTON AGREEMENT

A peace formally ending the Bosnian War is agreed in Ohio, and signed in Paris. The agreement also sets the borders for Bosnia and Herzegovina in a way that ensures the protection and rights of the Serbs who reside there. This agreement temporarily ceases the conflict in Yugoslavia.

MILOŠEVIC ON TRIAL

Miloševic is placed on trial at The Hague in Holland as part of the UN's International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, for crimes against humanity. The charges against him include murder, persecution and genocide during the Yugoslav Wars. However, Miloševic dies before the trial's conclusion.

Miloševic in July 2001 at his initial hearing at The Hague ahead of his trial

KOSOVO WAR 08

The recently formed Kosovo Liberation Army begins attacks on Serbian forces as early as 1996 and in 1998 escalates its campaign, attacking Serbian police and security forces. Serbian forces respond with a brutal crackdown and carry out massacres, including in the village of Prekaz, where over 50 people including women and children are killed. Fear of a genocide of Albanians is so high that it prompts the involvement of NATO, which conducts a bombing campaign against Yugoslavia.

Serb security forces positioned close to the village of Prekaz, home of prominent KLA officer Adem Jashari

Albanians and Macedonians interacting during one of the many ceasefires during the conflict

CONFLICT IN MACEDONIA 09

The Albanian minority within Macedonia begins fighting to establish their own autonomous region within Macedonia. Their armed insurgency group, the National Liberation Army, is an offshoot of Kosovo's KLA, and this conflict intensifies due to the influx of Albanian refugees from Kosovo.

15 July 1997 — 28 February 1998 — 22 January 2001 — 13 August 2001 — 12 February 2002

YUGOSLAVIA ELECTS MILOŠEVIC

Miloševic ascends to the office of the president of Yugoslavia after being elected to the position by the Yugoslavian Federal Parliament. This comes after Montenegro refuses a popular election. Becoming Yugoslavian president formalises many of the powers Miloševic was already wielding.

On his first overseas trip as president, Miloševic visits China to meet President Jiang Zemin

OHRID FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT 10

A framework for peace is agreed upon between Macedonian and Albanian leaders. This agreement ends one of the last conflicts in the Yugoslavian wars and brings an equitable, but only temporary, peace to Macedonia.

Albanian troops on their way to surrender their weapons after the signing of the Ohrid Framework

BREAKDOWN & BREAK-UP

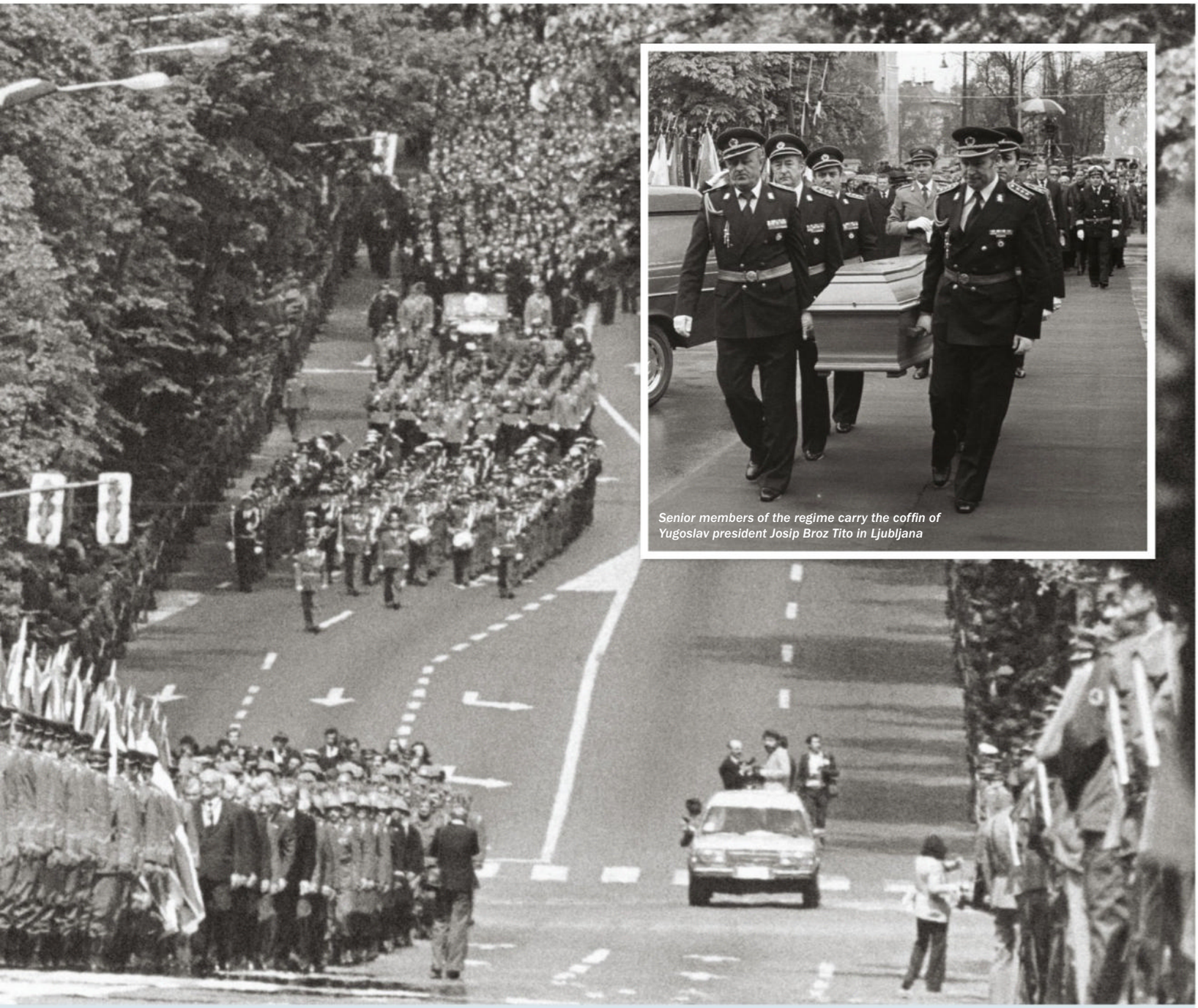
Death, animosity, financial ruin and the struggle for autonomy set the scene for the dissolution of Yugoslavia. The ensuing decade witnesses several conflicts, claims thousands of lives and reshapes the region

On 4 May 1980 Josip Broz Tito took his final breath at the Medical Centre in Ljubljana. He had been a brutal and oppressive leader whose tight control of the regime and suppression of nationalism within Yugoslavia had held the country together, to a large extent. Those politicians who followed were unable or unwilling to deal with the ethnic, national and financial tensions that Tito had suppressed. After his death, many of these would rise to the surface and explode.

Though Yugoslavia was technically one nation, it contained at least five major ethnicities and six nationalities, as well as four languages and three major religions. These different groups had also held a variety of goals and aspirations for their populations and territories, and they also harboured long-standing animosity. Without the oppressive presence of Tito, militant nationalism within the republics grew more confident, weakening the central government's power and undermining the Yugoslavian nationalism that Tito had built.

These tensions were also exacerbated by economic factors. During the 1970s Tito initiated a new economic policy that sought to expand the Yugoslavian economy, minimise unemployment and raise living standards for people across the country. To achieve this the Yugoslavian government borrowed a large amount of money from foreign nations and organisations. However, in the early 1980s the National Bank of Yugoslavia stopped offering foreign exchange. This forced banks to start short-term borrowing from Western banks that they were unable to repay, and in 1982 the West stopped lending money to Yugoslavian banks. Yugoslavian leaders could not reform the financial system to properly recover from economic collapse.

Financial assistance and debt relief from the International Monetary Fund and Western banks were also unable to ease



Senior members of the regime carry the coffin of Yugoslav president Josip Broz Tito in Ljubljana

rising inflation, placing even more pressure on the government. Tensions also began to build between the regions, with Croatia and Slovenia refusing to share resources with the poorer regions and republics of Yugoslavia. Kosovo also felt the pinch during this time and riots broke out as Kosovans demanded access to external resources. This caused further division between the republics and threatened Serbian dominance, setting the scene for future conflict.

It was during this period of unrest that Slobodan Miloševic became increasingly influential. Emulating Tito's ruthless, hardline approach, Miloševic became president of the League of Communists of Serbia in 1986, making him the most powerful politician in the republic. While in power, Miloševic stoked nationalist tensions between the republics and continually pushed Serbian nationalism, particularly in Kosovo where there was a large concentration of Serbians. This undermined the Kosovans and pushed the republics closer toward conflict. Miloševic shunned potential diplomatic resolutions in order to push Serbians to look to him for protection. Once he managed to bring the Serb-dominated Yugoslavian army onto his side, civil war was inevitable.

In January 1990, at the Congress of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, the Serbians ensured that the single-party system was abolished, and Miloševic used his power to block interventions by the Slovenian and Croatian delegates, prompting them to walk out – a very visual representation of the end of a united Yugoslavia.

After this congress, free elections were held in Slovenia and Croatia, in which the populations overwhelmingly voted for democratic and independence parties. These were followed by similar votes in Bosnia and Herzegovina, demonstrating a clear political bloc had formed against Miloševic, who wanted to keep the confederation together. However, the republics' aims were incompatible, and Slovenia and Croatia held and passed referendums for independence from Yugoslavia in December 1990 and May 1991 respectively. Miloševic launched a military intervention to prevent their independence, beginning the Yugoslav Wars. These interventions had a domino effect, with Macedonia declaring itself independent in September 1991 after a referendum, and Bosnia and Herzegovina declaring independence in May 1992. This left Serbia and Montenegro under the influence of Miloševic, and they formed the short-lived Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

***Above:** Tito's funeral procession in Belgrade, Serbia, 8 May 1980*

Images: Getty

THE TEN-DAY WAR

A Slovenian defence force – under-gunned, outmanned and under-resourced – valiantly held back the Yugoslav People's Army as it sent waves of attacks to try and prevent Slovenian independence

On 25 June 1991, after six months of waiting to negotiate a peaceful independence, the results of Slovenia's independence referendum were passed into law and added to the constitution. Across this newly established nation, Yugoslavian flags were now proudly swapped out for the Slovenian flag, and new signs that read "REPUBLIKA SLOVENIJA" were put up in place of the old "SFR JUGOSLAVIA – SR SLOVENIJA" signs. This was a definitive moment in the emergence of a country free from the overlordship of Yugoslavia. At this same moment in Belgrade, Serbia, Slobodan Miloševic gave his approval for the Yugoslav People's Army (YPA) to invade Slovenia to prevent its breakaway. The YPA, with its vastly superior resources, was under the impression that the Slovenians would be easily defeated.

At around 1am on 27 June, a convoy of YPA tanks and anti-aircraft vehicles crossed the Slovenian border: war had begun. The YPA convoy was moving to secure Brnik Airport but its advance was slowed by barricades constructed by locals. After word spread that such barricades were an effective method to hinder the YPA, the Slovenian people began to construct roadblocks across the country. Yet despite its progress being slowed, the convoy reached Brnik Airport at around 5pm. Several other YPA convoys simultaneously moved into Slovenia, and although Slovenian armed forces inflicted a few casualties and captured some YPA units, the YPA achieved most of its objectives.

Now under siege, the Slovenian military responded, and its defence force swelled in size with reservists and civilians arming themselves. Meanwhile, the Slovenian Ministry of Defence ordered a new offensive strategy that focused on the surrender of YPA forces and the seizing of YPA equipment.

During the following days Slovenian forces attacked the YPA as it moved through villages across the country, slowing its advance and inflicting damage on YPA resources. The Slovenians recorded several victories that raised their morale, such as capturing the Holmec border crossing facility and forcing 91 YPA soldiers to surrender. In addition, several YPA weapons caches were captured, which helped improve the effectiveness of the Slovenian defence. Several YPA tanks were also destroyed.

The YPA was bewildered by the tenacity of the Slovenian forces. In response, over the next few days the YPA issued two demands for surrender, and then withdrew to near the Croatian border to regroup as it readied an air assault.

On 2 July, fighting restarted. The YPA, under the belief that it was now better prepared, crossed the border back into Slovenia but once again came under fire from defence forces. The Slovenians marshalled the YPA down a rural road directly into an ambush, with a barricade preventing their escape. Gunfire turned this once quiet spot into a fierce battlefield, with anti-tank weaponry destroying a YPA tank and a sniper killing a YPA commander. Chaos and confusion reigned as the YPA forces once again retreated. It was another stunning victory for the Slovenians.

The YPA now attempted to stem its losses by ordering its air support to attack the Slovenian fighters as its ground forces prepared to fight again. However, this was largely ineffective and Slovenian forces across the border repelled the new YPA advances, captured more weaponry and secured the border. The YPA offensive was collapsing in the face of a relentless defence that had embarrassed the larger army.

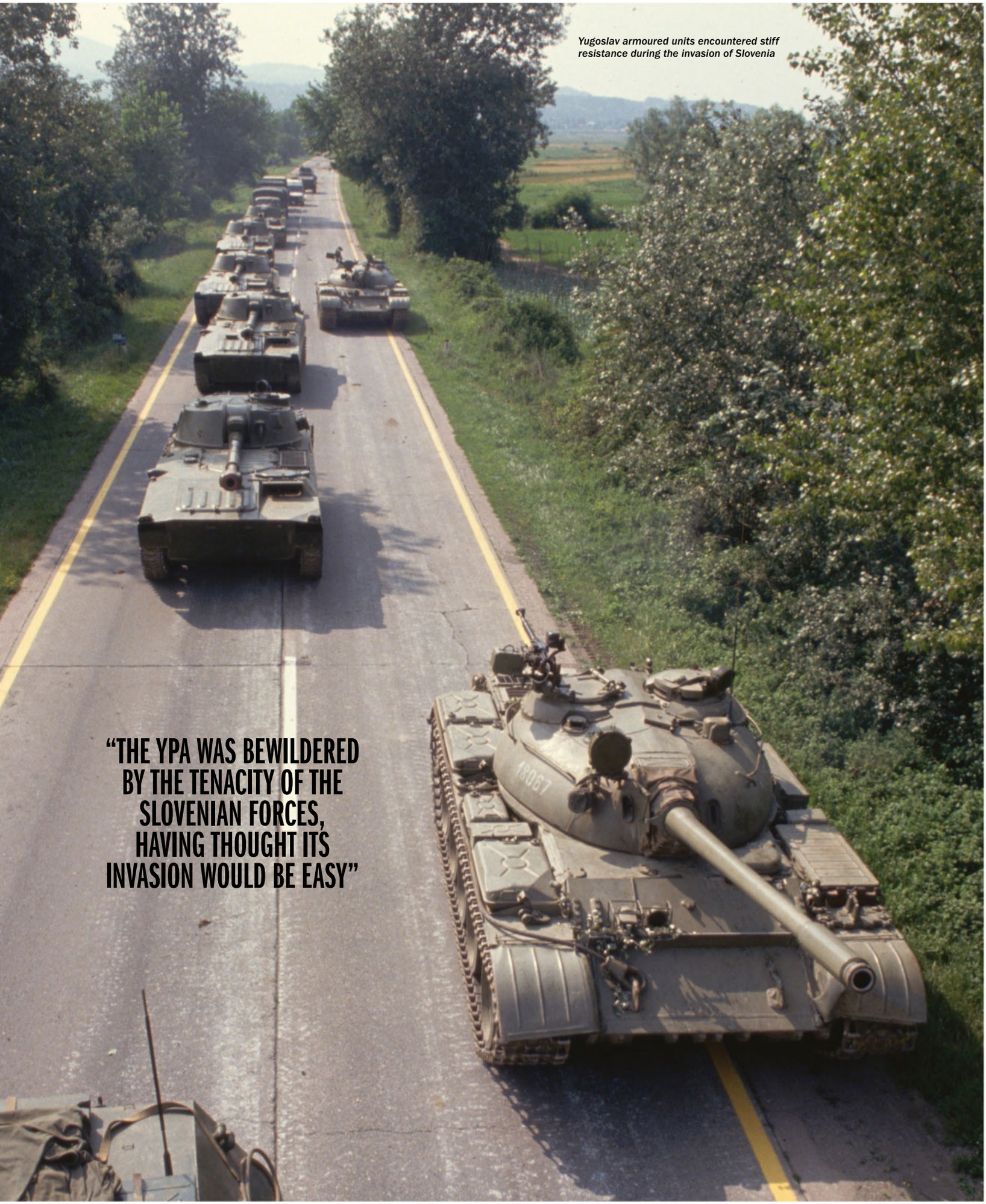
At 9pm on 2 July, the president of Slovenia agreed to a unilateral ceasefire and negotiated the complete withdrawal of the YPA from Slovenia. However, despite Slovenia securing military victory, the YPA leadership continued belligerently declaring that it would continue in its efforts to defeat Slovenia. This aggressive tone seeped through into the Yugoslavian withdrawal the next day as the remaining forces made it clear that they would have to be dragged out of Slovenia kicking and screaming. Slovenian forces captured several convoys and units of soldiers, including an armoured unit that had begun an attack near the Croatian border.

The YPA finally agreed to a ceasefire on 4 July. Both sides met with the European community three days later, which resulted in the acceptance of Slovenian independence and the complete withdrawal of the YPA from Slovenia. Overnight on 25 and 26 October 1991, the final YPA soldiers left Slovenia. Finally, the freedom and independence that the Slovenian people had fought for meant their country was now firmly under their control. Perhaps more significantly, the Slovenian victory demonstrated to the other republics that although the YPA was prepared to attack, the military might of Yugoslavia could be defeated.

***Below:** A border patrol agent at the Slovenian border, January 1991*

***Below:** Slovenian soldiers pictured during the conflict*

Images: Getty



Yugoslav armoured units encountered stiff resistance during the invasion of Slovenia

“THE YPA WAS BEWILDERED BY THE TENACITY OF THE SLOVENIAN FORCES, HAVING THOUGHT ITS INVASION WOULD BE EASY”

TERROR IN CROATIA

The Croatian War of Independence saw both sides embark on a campaign of terror, with war crimes committed against innocent civilians

Croatia in the 1980s and early 1990s had a sizeable Serbian minority living in the republic. Politically, many of these Serbians did not side with the Croatian government and erred more toward the Serbian government under Slobodan Miloševic. In early 1991 it was clear that the new Croatian government under Franjo Tudman was working toward Croatian independence, triggering an internal conflict. Many Serbs living within Croatia rebelled, wanting their parts of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, mainly the Serbian Autonomous Region Krajina, to be part of Serbia.

In May 1991 Croatia declared its independence from Yugoslavia after a referendum, and in response the Serbians in Krajina declared that they were to remain part of Serbia and Yugoslavia, establishing their government under Milan Babic. The Croatians, trying to increase their power in Serbian regions, dismissed Croatian-Serbians from positions of power, particularly in the police, leading to small-scale skirmishes between the Croatians and the Serbians in these areas.

In reply to Croatian independence and fighting between Croatians and Serbians, Serbia sent the Yugoslav People's Army (YPA) into Croatia to protect the Serbians and end Croatian independence. This action officially started a war between the two nations. The invading YPA, under the orders of Miloševic, began to ethnically cleanse and commit atrocities against Croatians in Serbian territories within Croatia. Throughout 1991 several atrocities were carried out targeting ethnic groups, with the YPA massacring Croatian civilians, young and old, in several

villages and towns. This slaughter was carried out using horrific methods, such as minefield clearing, mass extra judicial executions and burning. Survivors of these atrocities reported that they had previously had good relations with their Serbian neighbours until paramilitary forces arrived.

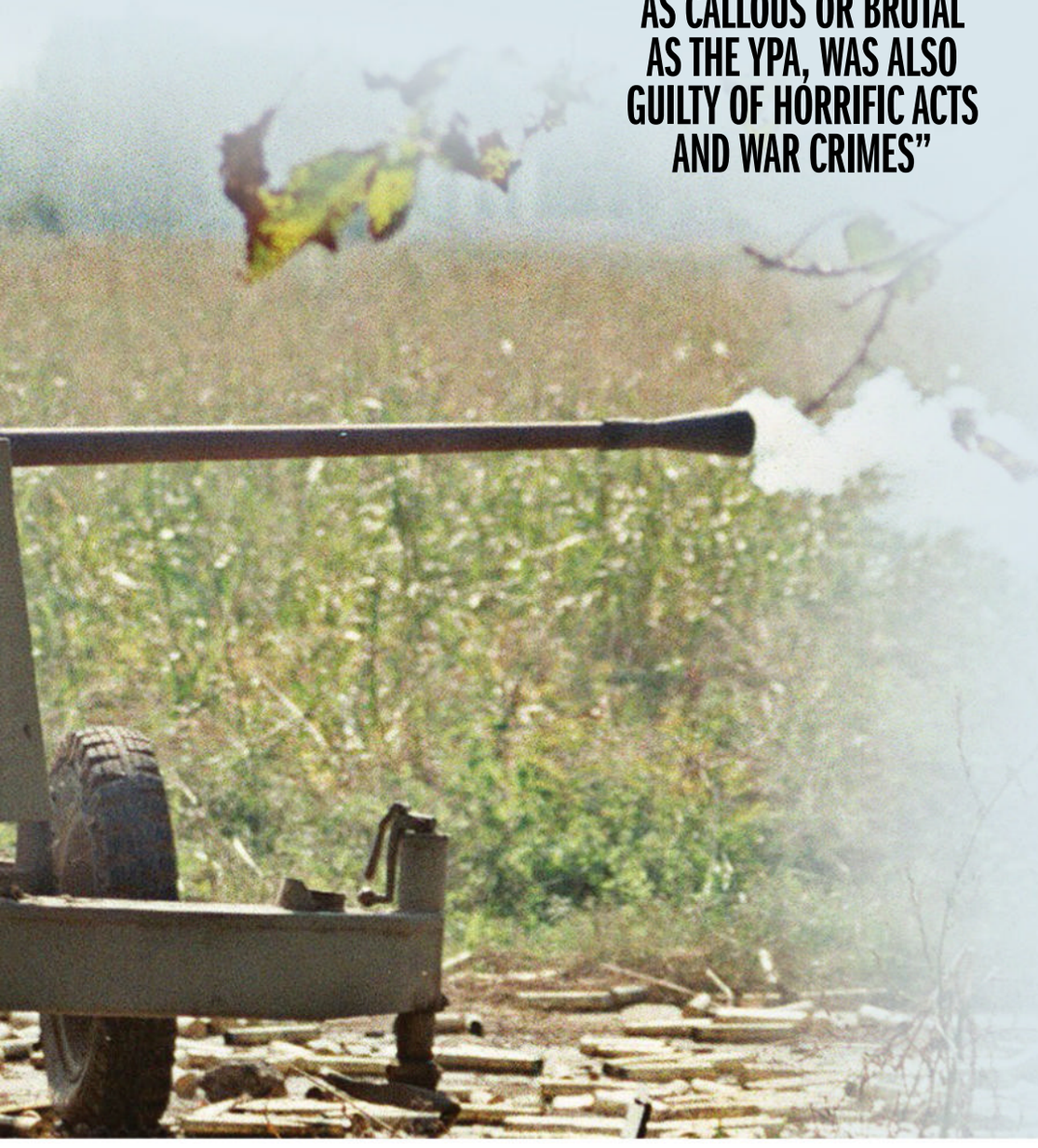
As the war continued, focus fell onto cities of particular strategic value, such as Vukovar, which the YPA besieged for three months. Once they took the city, the YPA then forcefully removed patients from its main hospital, beating and murdering them, before placing their bodies in a mass grave. The YPA also worked to systematically destroy cities that were historically significant to Croatians without occupying them, as shown by the shelling of Dubrovnik. The YPA's aim in this campaign of terror was to cause pain, suffering and humiliation in an attempt to destroy the Croatians' morale and willingness to fight.

The Croatian military under Tudman, while not as callous or brutal as the YPA, was also guilty of horrific acts and war crimes. To gain international political capital against Serbia and the YPA, Croatian forces were ordered not to provide support to the civilians under siege in Vukovar. In addition, Croatian forces relentlessly shelled the Serbian quarter in the city, killing many Serbs.

"THE CROATIAN MILITARY UNDER TUDMAN, WHILE NOT AS CALLOUS OR BRUTAL AS THE YPA, WAS ALSO GUILTY OF HORRIFIC ACTS AND WAR CRIMES"

***Above:** Croatian militia fighters pictured in Vukovar, which was besieged by the YPA for three months*

***Below-left:** Serbian volunteers on the front line during the fighting for Vukovar, October 1991*



Croatian authorities also held Serbian prisoners of war in poor conditions, with stories of prisoners being starved and succumbing to disease while in captivity. The Croatian authorities also abducted former YPA officers and imprisoned them without trial. Any Croatians who opposed this were often killed, and the same policy was undertaken on the other side.

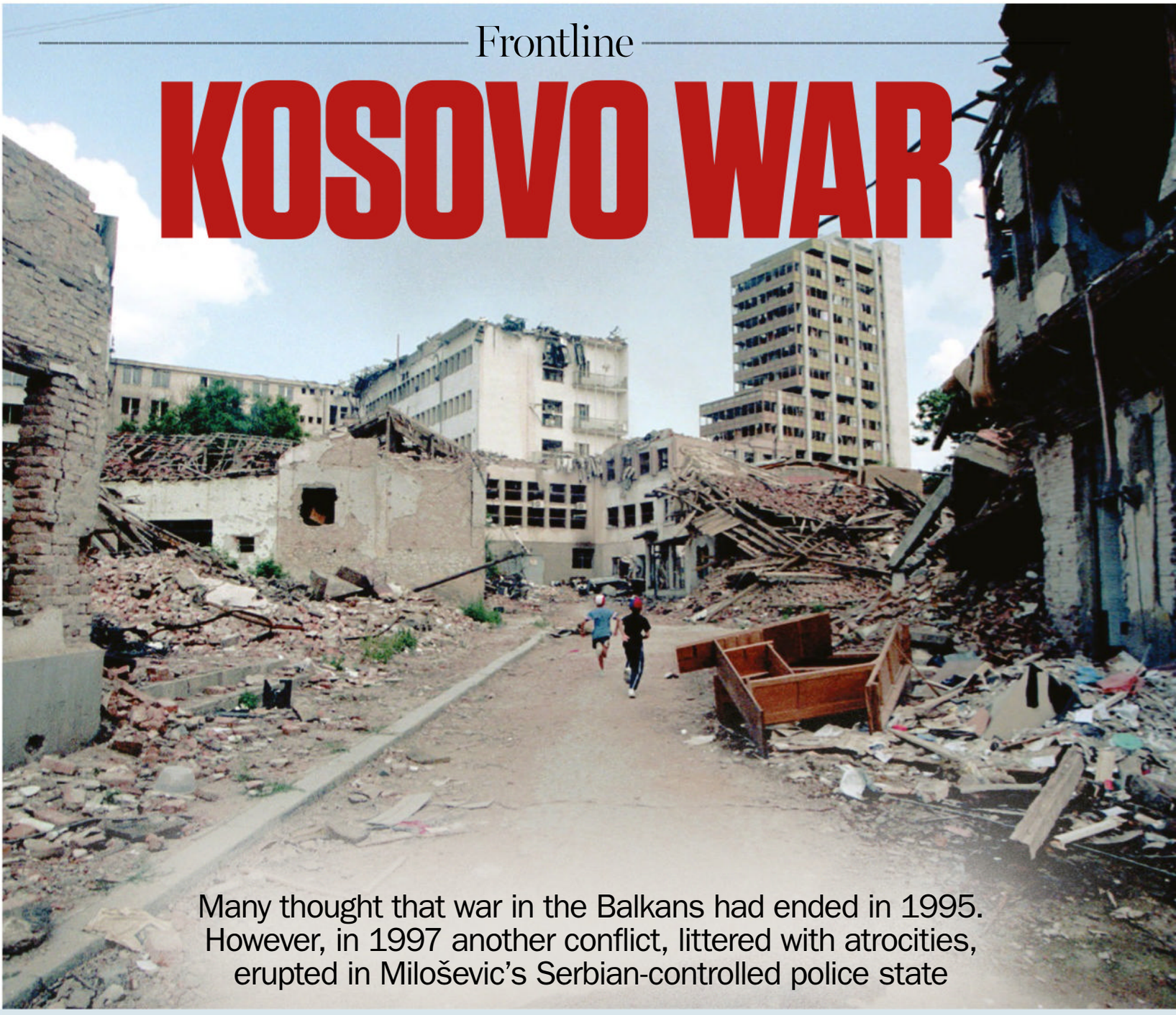
On 2 January 1992 a UN-sponsored ceasefire agreement was signed, ending hostilities. This ceasefire created four Serbian-protected areas and led to the YPA withdrawal. However, at this point the Serbians controlled a large amount of what was considered Croatian territory, which angered Croatia. In addition, far from withdrawing and standing down, the YPA headed into Bosnia to start another conflict. Despite there being a ceasefire agreement in place, violence still flared up and several more ceasefire deals attempted – unsuccessfully– to stop the fighting.

From 1993 onwards Croatia began efforts to retake Serbian-controlled territories, and from 1994 was supported by the Bosnian muslims. During this phase of the war, the UN maintained a presence in Croatia as it attempted to bring both sides to the table for peace negotiations, with limited success. The UN's presence also led to a greater international awareness of the war crimes being committed by both sides. In the summer of 1995, Croatia finally regained most of its territory after Serbia had withdrawn its support for Krajina in May.

In November 1995 Serbians in Croatia finally signed the Erdut Agreement, which ended the war between the two sides and led to the peaceful reintegration of Serbian territories into Croatia. A month later, peace was reached between Croatia and Yugoslavia when the two nations, alongside Bosnia and Herzegovina, signed the Dayton Agreement.

Images: Getty

KOSOVO WAR



Many thought that war in the Balkans had ended in 1995. However, in 1997 another conflict, littered with atrocities, erupted in Miloševic's Serbian-controlled police state

Serbia had long felt that the existence of Kosovo threatened its sovereignty and power in Yugoslavia, but former Yugoslav dictator Josip Broz Tito had been able to suppress this discontent. After Tito's death in 1980 tensions between Serbia and Kosovo intensified after the Yugoslav state ruthlessly put down Kosovan independence protests in the republic.

Throughout the 1980s future Serbian president Slobodan Miloševic fanned the flames by preying on the Kosovan-Serbian fears of an Albanian uprising and Kosovan independence. He used this trepidation to his advantage as he removed Kosovo's autonomy, dissolved its legislative assembly and fired the majority of ethnic Albanians from state employment. Feeling mistreated and persecuted, the former members of the Kosovo Assembly set up a shadow government, which ran a referendum in September 1991. The result: ethnic Albanians voted overwhelmingly for independence.

During the wars between Yugoslavia, Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia under Miloševic effectively turned Kosovo into a Serbian-run police state, as repressive and discriminatory policies were imposed on the region. The police were empowered to commit arbitrary arrests, imprisonment and torture of Albanians simply for their ethnicity, or for having connections to a political organisation, or any organisation that the Serbian government disliked. To further dilute the Albanian influence, Serbians were encouraged to move to Kosovo and have large families. The education system of the ethnic Albanians was also brought to its knees as the Serbian government tried to remove any trace of Albanian heritage in an attempt to thwart the rise of Albanian nationalism.

While this system of oppression was in place in Kosovo, the shadow government, operating underground under President Ibrahim Rugova, attempted peaceful resistance; it worked to finance and empower itself by collecting taxes from the people and donations from Albanians living abroad. However, in 1997 the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), which had been set up in the early 1990s to provide military resistance against Serbian oppression, started to conduct risky quick-strike attacks against the Serbian police force and Yugoslav People's Army (YPA) bases in Kosovo.

This KLA insurgency was successful and by mid-1998 it had captured around one-third of Kosovo. During these attacks, the KLA committed war crimes as it took hostages and conducted summary executions of Serbian police

British troops, part of the NATO-led peacekeeping force, land at the Macedonian border with Kosovo, June 1999

***Left:** Serb forces en route to Pec in the western part of Kosovo*

and army officers. The KLA also undertook acts of violence against Serbian and Romani civilians in Kosovo to try and drive them out of the region, with Serbians and Romanies being victims of abductions, executions, rape and the destruction of property. Similar acts of violence were inflicted on ethnic Albanians whom the KLA believed had collaborated with the Yugoslav government.

In response to the KLA attacks, Miloševic ordered a fresh counter-insurgency campaign. As the KLA was a guerrilla group, its members were often indistinguishable from civilians and as a result this move against it was more akin to a campaign of indiscriminate terror. The YPA attacked villages that were linked to the KLA, killing suspected members and displacing over 200,000 people. After international pressure and negotiations, Miloševic eased his campaign against Kosovo in late-1998, until the KLA regrouped and attacked again. These KLA attacks enraged Miloševic and fresh atrocities were ordered. One of these occurred on 16 January in Recak where Yugoslav forces murdered 45 farmers and their children by shooting them in the head and neck, then mutilating their corpses.

The YPA and Serbian secret police, on their ruthless mission to destroy the KLA, committed many such atrocities. Reports of these crimes against humanity caused shock and anger within NATO, particularly the US. On 22 March the American government sent US Special Envoy Richard Holbrooke to the Balkans to meet Miloševic. In their tense meeting Holbrooke asked Miloševic: “Look, are you absolutely clear in your own mind what will happen when I get up and walk out of this palace that we’re now sitting in?” Miloševic responded: “You’re going to bomb us.”

Holbrooke had made NATO’s position clear to Yugoslavia and on 24 March 1999, to prevent a potential genocide of ethnic Albanians, NATO bypassed the UN and began an air assault against Yugoslavia to support the KLA. These air strikes targeted YPA military bases and infrastructure to weaken its ability to carry out further atrocities. After 78 days of bombing, Yugoslavia was defeated and submitted to NATO by signing the Kumanovo Agreement (also referred to as the Military Technical Agreement) on 9 June 1999. This resulted in the full withdrawal of Yugoslav forces from Kosovo, the end of NATO bombing and the establishment of a NATO peacekeeping force in Kosovo to protect civilians. It also led to Kosovo becoming an autonomous province within Yugoslavia until it declared independence in 2008.

Images: Alamy / Getty

A member of the Macedonian special forces pictured in Tetovo, Macedonia

THE END: MACEDONIA

After years of discrimination, underrepresentation and marginalisation at the hands of the Macedonian government, the Albanian population made their stand

Macedonia in the 1980s contained two main ethnic groups: a majority of ethnic Macedonians and a minority of Albanians. After Tito's death, and the subsequent rise in nationalism across Yugoslavia, tensions in Macedonia rose as Albanian groups sought to split off from Macedonia and join Kosovo. This was to become the foundation of conflict in the late 1990s.

Already bloodied by the internal struggles of the 1980s, to prevent its constituent republics breaking away, during the 1990s Yugoslavia was once more faced with further fragmentation. An independence referendum was held, which led to Macedonia declaring its independence in September 1991. However, many ethnic Albanians refused to vote in this referendum.

After independence, Albanians in Macedonia were included in the processes of government at a national and local level, but many Albanians still felt underrepresented and marginalised by the government as there were very few Albanians in positions of power, such as the police force and high office. In addition, institutions of power such as the police, military and judiciary discriminated against Albanians in their hiring process and policies, with the police even being accused of torturing Albanians during investigations.

The Macedonian government also worked to suppress the Albanian language and culture. This was done through the restriction of the Albanian language in education institutions, and when the Albanians attempted to resolve the issue themselves by creating the University of Tetovo in 1995, which taught in Albanian, the university was declared illegal. This increased tensions between the Macedonians and Albanians.

In the late 1990s the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) began to support Albanian nationalism in Macedonia, and after the collapse of Albania in 1997 vast amounts of weapons were transported into Macedonia to support the nationalist movement. With this newfound firepower the nationalist movements in Macedonia began to use the same insurgency methods that were effective in Kosovo, bombing police stations to try and weaken the Macedonian powers of enforcement.

At the same time, large numbers of Kosovan-Albanian refugees, equating to 12 percent of the Macedonian population, began entering Macedonia to escape the war in Kosovo. Some of these refugees were KLA veterans who were eager to support their kin in their new country and in 1999 they came together to form the National Liberation Army (NLA) under leader Ali Ahmeti. They demanded autonomy, Albanian as a state language and equal legal status for Albanians. This group adopted the KLA's insurgency and terrorist methods of bombing Macedonian centres of power in the Albanian areas, more specifically the Kumanovo and Tetovo regions.

After several attacks, bombings and deaths the NLA and the Macedonian government found themselves in open conflict as the Macedonian armed forces launched a series of offensives to take NLA-held land and towns around Tetovo. The Macedonian army was initially successful, capturing land with ease. However, the conflict continuously stopped and started as both sides' leadership, with the guidance of the EU and NATO, reached a ceasefire agreement. These ceasefires would then be quickly broken by a fresh offensive by either side.

During this conflict the NLA, with its guerrilla forces, would often come down from the hills and successfully attack Macedonian convoys. These guerrilla tactics were difficult to counter, so the Macedonian armed forces deployed their helicopter gunships and assaulted the rebels from the air. This effective use of air power led to desertions from the NLA, strengthening Macedonia's position. However, the fighting escalated and moved closer to towns and cities, becoming a more urban conflict. To destroy the NLA in this urban phase Macedonia resorted to bombing Albanian towns and villages. The Macedonian military was also accused of murdering ethnic Albanian civilians, which prompted fears of a possible ethnic cleansing of Albanians by Macedonia.

In June, peace talks between Macedonia President Boris Trajkovski and NLA leaders, Ahmeti included, began. These negotiations were slow to begin with but after Trajkovski requested the involvement of the EU, NATO and the US, the peace process sped up. Talks continuously stalled after fresh attacks, but after relocating to Ohrid, a peace deal, the Ohrid Framework Agreement, was finally signed on 13 August 2001. This framework led to the end of the fighting, the NLA being disarmed, and a pathway toward devolved political power and equal representation for Albanians in Macedonia.

***Below, left:** Ethnic Albanian guerrillas patrol the frontier between Kosovo and Macedonia, March 2001*

***Below:** Macedonian security forces fire on Albanian guerrilla positions in Tetovo, March 2001*

Images: Getty

Reinhard Heydrich, c.1939, who Hitler called "the man with the iron heart". Others called him "the Butcher" or "the Hangman"

"A DISGRACED NAVAL OFFICER, HIS RISE THROUGH THE RANKS OF THE NAZI PARTY AND THE SS WAS METEORIC"

HITLER'S HANGMAN

Reinhard Heydrich began as an SS henchman and later cruelly ruled over the Czech people and planned the Nazis' 'Final Solution' for Europe's Jews

WORDS **MARK SIMNER**

Reinhard Heydrich is considered one of the most evil men in history. A disgraced naval officer, his rise through the ranks of the Nazi party and the SS was meteoric. Heydrich was capable of the most brutal acts and went on to become one of the key architects of the Holocaust. Countless thousands died by his indirect hand, both during his life and even after his death. With a twisted affection, Adolf Hitler described Heydrich as "the man with the iron heart". Others more aptly called him "the Butcher" or "the Hangman".

Early life

Reinhard Tristan Eugen Heydrich was born in 1904 in Halle an der Saale in Saxony. His patriotic and nationalist father, Richard Bruno, was a musical director and opera singer who held a fanatical interest in the life of the German composer Richard Wagner. Throughout his childhood Heydrich was exposed to this 'Cult of Wagner' as well as his father's overbearing patriotism. His mother, Elizabeth, was a strict disciplinarian.

Author Robert Gerwarth, in his book *Hitler's Hangman*, highlights the influence of music on Heydrich's parents: "In naming their first-born son, they took inspiration from the world of music that surrounded them: 'Reinhard' was the name of the tragic hero of Bruno's first opera… 'Tristan' paid tribute to Richard Wagner's opera *Tristan and Isolde*… 'Eugen' was the name of his late maternal grandfather, Professor Eugen Krantz, the director of… the Royal Dresden Conservatory."

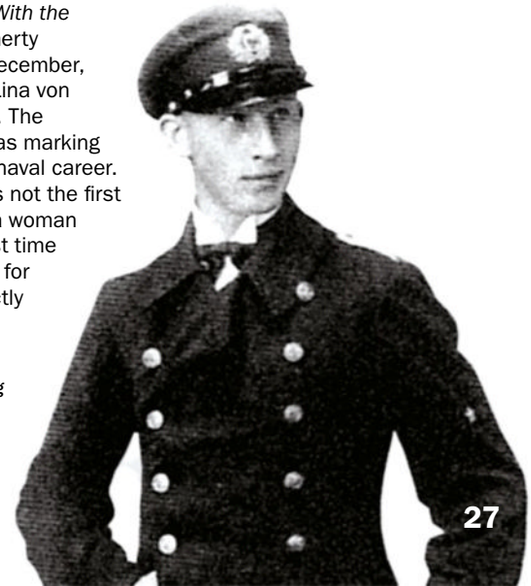
Heydrich was a sickly child who took up exercise to strengthen himself. He excelled at school, but remained meek and was bullied by his classmates for his high-pitched voice and alleged (but false) Jewish ancestry. During the upheavals in post-First World War Germany, the 15-year-old Heydrich joined the right-wing Maercker's Volunteer Rifles paramilitary group, although it is unclear how active with the unit he was. Like many young Germans during this period, Heydrich developed ideas and opinions based on racist (völkisch) nationalism that would influence his later life.

Naval career

In 1922, Heydrich joined the Reichsmarine, specialising in signals and communications. Rumours of his supposed Jewish ancestry followed him, and his fellow cadets did not let him forget it. By mid-1924, he was promoted to oberfähnrich zur see and attended the Naval Academy Mürwik. By 1926 he was a leutnant zur see aboard the battleship SMS Schleswig-Holstein. Further promotion followed in 1928.

Heydrich was known for his unsavoury sexual affairs. In late 1930, he met Lina von Osten, whom he married the following year. However, he had been engaged to a daughter of a senior naval officer before he met Lina, and the Reichsmarine was unhappy he broke his promise to this woman.

In her book *The Man With the Iron Heart*, Nancy Dougherty writes: "On the 9th of December, Reinhard Heydrich and Lina von Osten became engaged. The date can also be taken as marking the effective end of his naval career. For, unfortunately, it was not the first time Heydrich had met a woman at a ball, or even the first time he had gotten in trouble for doing so. While not exactly



***Right:** Heydrich, c.1922. His career in the Reichsmarine ended abruptly after breaking his promise of marriage to a senior officer's daughter*

a ladies' man, he had an interest in the sexual charms of the opposite sex that may fairly be described as insistent, consistent, and intense."

The Reichsmarine charged Heydrich with "conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman" and he was dismissed from the service.

The Nazi Party and the SS

Lina was already a fanatical Nazi before she met Heydrich, and he would join the party following his departure from the Reichsmarine. Within weeks, Heydrich also joined the Schutzstaffel (SS). Following a chance meeting with Heinrich Himmler, Heydrich was tasked with developing the Sicherheitsdienst (SD), an intelligence and security service within the SS. Within a couple of years, the SD would become the most significant intelligence agency within the Nazi system, which would freely use intimidation and terror as a means of dealing with its victims.

When Hitler came to power in 1933, Heydrich became head of the political wing of the Munich police. He worked on bringing the disparate political police forces across Germany under his and Himmler's control. The Geheime Staatspolizei (Secret State Police; Gestapo), set up by Hermann Göring in Prussia in 1933, was also transferred to Himmler's control. Following the purge of Ernst Röhm and the SA in 1934, Himmler appointed Heydrich head of the Gestapo, while also remaining head of the SD.

In June 1936, Himmler was appointed Reichsführer SS and chief of German Police. In turn, Himmler appointed Heydrich chief of the newly established Hauptamt Sicherheitspolizei (Security Police Main Office), under which the Sicherheitspolizei (Security Police; SiPo), Gestapo and Kriminalpolizei (Criminal Police; Kripo) fell. So, by 1936, Heydrich oversaw the SD, the SIPo, the Gestapo and the Kripo, making him a powerful figure within the Nazi state.

Heydrich's power continued to grow in the years leading up to the Second World War. In September 1939, the SD, SIPo, Gestapo and Kripo would come under the newly established Reichssicherheitshauptamt (Reich Security Main Office; RSHA), all under Heydrich's control. He was given the title chef der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD (chief of Security Police and SD) the following month.

***Above:** The transmitter at Gleiwitz, where Heydrich manufactured a false flag border incident with Poland prior to the German invasion*

Throughout this period, Heydrich worked to suppress internal and external enemies of the Nazi state. He put particular focus on Jews, Marxists, Freemasons, political activists, and other nationalist opponents. Political opponents were arrested by the Gestapo and interned in one of the concentration camps being established across Germany.

Meanwhile, the Kripo was also used to deal with non-political acts. Known criminals were targeted, but they also focussed on homosexuals and members of the Roma and Sinti. As with political opponents, people who suffered the attention of the Kripo often found themselves arrested and indefinitely incarcerated.

Heydrich was also concerned about 'invisible' enemies. He wrote: "Effective struggle against the enemy must derive from recognition of the fact that all visible, apparent enemies are but the tip of the iceberg of eternal, unchanging dangerous spiritual forces." By this he meant international Jewry, communists, Freemasons, liberals and those who championed the rights of minorities.

This led to the involvement of the leadership of the SIPo and SD in 'solving the Jewish Question'. An example can

***Left:** The ambitious Heydrich joined the SS within weeks of being dismissed from the Reichsmarine in disgrace*

***Below:** Members of the Einsatzgruppen carrying out the mass murder of Jews in Eastern Europe in the wake of Operation Barbarossa*

be seen in the establishment of a group of SD 'experts' led by Adolf Eichmann, who set up an office in Vienna called the Zentralstelle für jüdische Auswanderung (Central Office for Jewish Emigration). It sought to encourage the forced emigration of Jews from Austria, while funding its operations by extorting money from its victims.

Both the SS and police actively involved themselves in Kristallnacht. Following the pogrom, they facilitated the roundup of thousands of Jews and interned many into concentration camps. Heydrich hoped this would encourage the Jews to leave Germany.

Stalin's purges

It is believed Heydrich played a role in Stalin's purges of the Red Army in 1936, although it is unclear to what extent. The SD received information that a high-ranking Soviet officer was working to overthrow the Soviet dictator. Heydrich seized on this as an opportunity to hurt the Soviets and informed Himmler. The two went to see Hitler, who told them to act on the information by revealing to the Soviets the identity of the senior officer.

It appears the information Heydrich received was false, and possibly a deception devised by Stalin himself. Stalin was already planning a purge of the Red Army and was likely seeking justifications. Nevertheless, Heydrich ordered false documentation to be made to implicate Marshal Mikhail Tukhachevsky as the person behind the plot. The falsified documents were passed to the NKVD and the subsequent purge took place. However, it is believed the Soviets never used the documents in the trials of the purged. As such, to what extent, if any, Heydrich influenced the purge is unknown.

Gleiwitz and Poland

With the German invasion of Poland imminent, Hitler was keen to carry out a false flag operation aimed at portraying Germany as the victim of Polish aggression to justify the invasion. Heydrich was selected to formulate a plan.

In early August, Heydrich met with several SS officers. He told them they would be implementing border incidents with Poland. When German forces were poised to invade, the intention was to attack a customs house at Hochlinden, where six prisoners from the Sachsenhausen concentration camp were to be dressed in Polish uniforms and shot. Another similar operation was planned for the Pitschen forestry lodge.

However, it is the particularly brutal incident at Gleiwitz that is perhaps the best remembered. Then a German border town, Gleiwitz was the location of a transmission tower that had been constructed in the early 1930s. On

"PEOPLE WHO SUFFERED THE ATTENTION OF THE KRIPO OFTEN FOUND THEMSELVES ARRESTED AND INDEFINITELY INCARCERATED"

***Above:** Before the outbreak of WWII, Heydrich played a key role in suppressing internal and external enemies of Nazi Germany*

***Below:** The Wannsee villa, where Heydrich chaired the meeting that discussed the 'Final Solution of the Jewish Question' in January 1942*

***Below:** Heydrich (left) and Governor General of Poland Karl Hermann Frank pictured on the entrance steps to Prague Castle, September 1941*

the night of 31 August 1939, a small unit of SS dressed in Polish uniforms attacked the station and, as the German staff watched on, made an announcement in Polish saying something along the lines of "Attention! This is Gliwice. The broadcasting station is in Polish hands."

To make the 'attack' look more authentic, the SS seized a local German farmer by the name of Franciszek Honiok, a known Polish sympathiser. They murdered him and left his body at the station to look like he was a saboteur killed during the operation. Several prisoners from the Dachau concentration camp were also shot dead at the station, their faces disfigured to hinder their identification. Such were the lengths to which Heydrich was prepared to go, that he had an innocent German citizen murdered. News of the incident was broadcast around the world.

Following the German invasion of Poland, Heydrich played an active part in Operation Tannenberg and the Intelligenzaktion. Tannenberg was aimed at arresting and eliminating a list of over 61,000 members of the Polish elite. The list, known as Sonderfahndungsbuch Polen (Special Prosecution Book-Poland) had been compiled by the Gestapo prior to the invasion.

The Intelligenzaktion was the mass extermination of Poland's intelligentsia, and included victims such as teachers, university professors, members of the clergy and other individuals deemed a threat to the German occupation. These actions were coordinated by the Zentralstelle IIP Polen (Central Unit IIP-Poland), a unit created within the Gestapo by Heydrich.

Einsatzgruppen

During the invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941, Himmler and Heydrich were responsible for the organisation of the Einsatzgruppen (Deployment Groups). Einsatzgruppe had been deployed in Poland in 1939, but it would be those deployed during Operation Barbarossa that carried out unthinkable operations that ranged from murdering a handful of people to tens of thousands. The purpose of the Einsatzgruppen was to follow in the wake of the German army and conduct 'special tasks', which included the execution of communists and Soviet political commissars, as well as Jewish men, women and even children.

***Below:** Heydrich (left) and Governor General of Poland Karl Hermann Frank in Prague, September 1941*

***Below:** Reinhard with Emil Hácha, President of Bohemia and Moravia, over which Reinhard became Deputy Protector in 1941*

Heydrich with Himmler, c.1938. Heydrich had ambitions of becoming a major figure in shaping the destiny of the new Europe

***Above:** Heinrich Himmler (front row, third from right) poses with SS leaders, including Heydrich (third row, second from right), c.1933*

As Dougherty writes: "The action groups were monstrous, bastard children of modern war, borne of the unholy marriage of so-called political necessity with more classical military strategy. They were thus a transitional stage of great historical significance between the 'normal' atrocities of war and the radical species of killing we now call genocide. To study Heydrich's Einsatzgruppen is to observe the Nazi system sliding over the abyss into unprecedented evil."

The Einsatzgruppen was organised into four Einsatzgruppe, labelled A to D. Each would be made up of smaller units known as Einsatzkommandos or Sonderkommandos. Einsatzgruppe A operated in the Baltic States under the command of Franz Walter Stahlecker; Einsatzgruppe B in Belarus under Arthur Nebe; Einsatzgruppe C in Ukraine under Otto Rasch; and Einsatzgruppe D in Bessarabia, Southern Ukraine, Crimea and the Caucasus under Otto Ohlendorf.

The strength of each ranged from 500 to 1,000 men, recruits being drawn from the SD, the Gestapo, the Kripo, the Orpo and the Waffen-SS, who received brief training at a school in Pretzsch. The Einsatzgruppen came under the direct operational control of the RSHA, of which Heydrich was chief, and received logistical support from the German army.

During its time of operation, it's believed the Einsatzgruppen murdered an estimated 1.5 million people in the East, most of whom were Jewish. Among some of their most infamous actions include the Babi Yar massacre in Ukraine, during which the Einsatzgruppen murdered over 33,000 Jews in a two-day period in September 1941; and the Rumbula massacre in Latvia, during which 25,000 Jews were murdered over several days in November and December.

Nacht und Nebel

Heydrich would be tasked with carrying out the Nacht und Nebel (Night and Fog) decree, which had been issued by Hitler on 7 December 1941. The decree instructed that people who posed a threat to German security were to be dealt with in a discreet way. Those targeted included political activists and those resisting the Nazi state in the occupied territories. When the decree was carried out, people simply vanished.

Another purpose of the decree was to terrorise local populations into cooperation. After the war, some SD records relating to Nacht und Nebel were discovered, but they only listed names and gave little clues to the fate of those murdered. It remains unknown how many people fell victim to the Nacht und Nebel decree.

Wannsee

Although Heydrich was already a central figure in the unfolding Holocaust, he was to become one of its principal architects when he called a conference of prominent Nazi administrative leaders. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the implementation of what the Nazis chillingly termed the Endlösung der Judenfrage (the Final Solution

to the Jewish Question). For this, Heydrich required the cooperation of leading Nazi administrators.

The conference was held at a luxury villa in the Berlin suburb of Wannsee, an idyllic location overlooking the Großer Wannsee. As Peter Longerich writes in his book *Wannsee: The Road to the Final Solution*: "The beautiful location contrasts starkly, however, with the purpose of that meeting… the meeting was called to discuss the 'final solution to the Jewish question'. The surviving minutes of the meeting record that the aim was to discuss precisely who was to be targeted and how to deport a total of 11 million people, subject them to extremely harsh forced labour, and kill those who survived or were no longer capable of work by some other method."

The conference took place on the 20 January 1942, and Heydrich chaired the meeting of the 14 individuals invited. Attendees included high-ranking representatives from the Department of Justice, the Foreign Ministry, the Gestapo, the SS, the Race and Resettlement Office, and a representative of the General Government in Poland. These men were the elite of the Reich, with more than half holding university doctorates.

Minutes of the meeting were taken by Ingeburg Werlemann, Eichmann's secretary, although they would be later written up by Eichmann. Despite being a highly secretive meeting, a version of the minutes was discovered in 1947, which would later be used as evidence at the Nuremberg trials.

The Wannsee Conference is considered a turning point in Nazi policy in dealing with the Jews. Several previous ideas, such as mass deportation to the island of Madagascar, had been deemed impossible in wartime. Instead, the decision was made to deport the Jews to the east to meet their fate.

Heydrich is recorded as opening the agenda of the meeting by saying: "Another possible solution of the [Jewish] problem has now taken the place of emigration – ie, evacuation of the Jews to the east… Such activities are, however, to be considered as provisional actions, but practical experience is already being collected which is of greatest importance in relation to the future final solution of the Jewish problem."

Those attending the conference were clear about what terms like 'evacuation to the east' meant, and what part they would play in this. According to Gerwarth: "Wannsee had unambiguously affirmed Heydrich's overall authority in relation to the final solution. The Ministry of the Interior, the General Government and the Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories had all fallen into line, and had even occasionally proposed more radical solutions than Heydrich had initially deemed acceptable."

"THOSE ATTENDING THE CONFERENCE WERE CLEAR ABOUT WHAT TERMS LIKE 'EVACUATION TO THE EAST' MEANT"

In this way, the term 'Final Solution' meant the systematic destruction of Europe's Jews, although surviving documentation from the conference carefully avoided using any language indicating such. Nevertheless, within a few months of the meeting, the first extermination camps in Poland were being built.

Bohemia and Moravia

In September 1941, Heydrich was appointed deputy Reichsprotektor of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. Although deputy, he was effectively the head Reichsprotektor, since the person who held this position, Konstantin von Neurath, had been placed on leave by Hitler, who thought his methods too 'soft'.

In his book *The Assassination of Reinhard Heydrich*, author Callum Macdonald noted: "Heydrich began to think of his future in a new Nazi empire stretching from the Atlantic to the Urals. For him it was no longer enough to be head of the security police. He wanted to be more than 'the dustbin of the Reich', the man who did the dirty work for others… Heydrich planned to emerge from Himmler's shadow and become a major figure in shaping the destiny of the new Europe." The appointment to Reichsprotektor became Heydrich's chance to realise his dark ambitions.

Heydrich arrived in Prague and immediately set to work. He was determined to put an end to Czech resistance and ensure industry supporting the German war effort was working efficiently. Heydrich's racist ideas were also enacted, with work carried out as to which Czechs were deemed fit for Germanisation and which were not. Within days of his arrival, he had declared martial law and ordered the execution of more than 140 accused of working in the resistance. More arrests followed, with thousands incarcerated into concentration camps, while hundreds more were murdered.

***Below:** Heydrich's damaged Mercedes-Benz 320 Convertible, in which he was riding during the assassination attempt against him in Prague*

***Below:** Memorial to the children of Lidice, who were murdered in the wake of Heydrich's assassination. The village was completely levelled*

The methods employed by Heydrich against the Czech people were savage. Any acts of resistance against the German occupation were met with severe reprisals. Torture was regularly used against resisters, criminals and other troublemakers. Heydrich's unrelenting savagery soon earned him the nickname 'the Butcher of Prague'.

Conversely, he also acted to reward those 'worthy' Czechs with better provision of food, clothing, and the introduction of unemployment benefits. Heydrich also saw that events for workers were organised to keep them entertained. Of course, this mix of brutality and false kindness was calculated to establish control over the population.

The Czech people remained at the mercy of the Nazi authorities. Many would find themselves as conscript labour, not only within their own land but also transported to work throughout the Reich. Discontent amongst the Czechs grew.

Heydrich also established the infamous Theresienstadt concentration camp at Terezín. From here, 14,000 German and Austrian Jews and 20,000 Czech Jews were deported to the Łódz (Litzmannstadt) Ghetto in Poland before they were murdered in one of the extermination camps.

Assassination

So powerful and successful did Heydrich grow in his personal kingdom of Bohemia and Moravia, he became recklessly overconfident with his own security. He took to travelling from his home to his office in an open-topped Mercedes-Benz 320 Convertible, using the same route most days.

Heydrich's brutal methods and disregard for his own safety prompted the Czechoslovak government-in-exile in London to order his assassination. In what is known as Operation Anthropoid, two Czechoslovak Army soldiers, Jan Kubiš and Jozef Gabcík, who had been trained by the British Special Operations Executive, parachuted into the Protectorate on the 28 December 1941.

The two men remained in hiding until their assassination attempt on 27 May 1942. As Heydrich travelled in his Mercedes-Benz, the agents struck. When Gabcík's gun jammed, Kubiš hurled a grenade at the vehicle, which leaving Heydrich mortally wounded. Fragments from the grenade entered his leg and lower back, later causing an infection. It would be from this infection that Heydrich, the Butcher of Prague, died on 4 June.

Following their attack, Kubiš and Gabcík sought refuge in the Saints Cyril and Methodius Cathedral in Prague. They were surrounded by the SS and Gestapo, but the two refused to surrender and killed themselves after the SS cornered them in the church's crypt.

Hitler was furious with Heydrich's assassination. As a reprisal, the Gestapo falsely linked the small village of Lidice, situated 14 miles (22km) north-west of Prague, as a place used by Kubiš and Gabcík to hide prior to the assassination. On 9 June, the Germans entered the village and shot 172 males aged between 14 to 84. The women were deported to Ravensbrück concentration camp, many of whom later perished at the Chełmno extermination camp. Similar reprisals were made against the village of Ležáky, where the Gestapo claimed to have found a radio transmitter used by the resistance. Both villages were burned, while Lidice was later completely levelled.

Legacy

Macdonald sums up Heydrich's life as an ambitious and brutal Nazi: "When he died at the early age of thirty-eight, he had killed thousands but was regarded as a success in the murderous game of Nazi politics. Within the security police it was assumed that he was destined for the highest office and that ultimately he aimed at nothing less than succeeding Hitler as Führer of the thousand-year Reich."

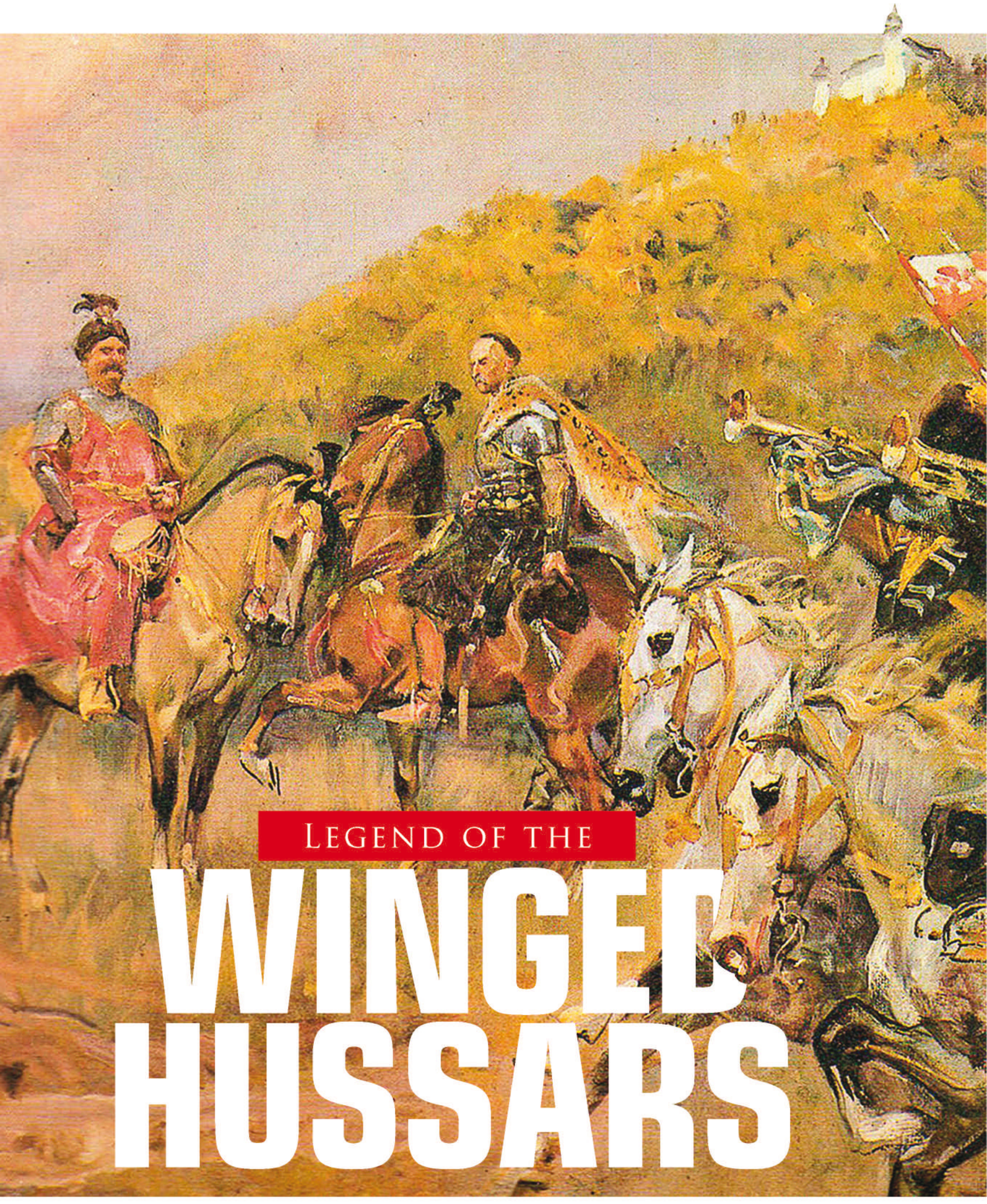
Thousands died and suffered at Heydrich's indirect hand. Even after his death, others paid the price. His rapid rise through the ranks of both the Nazi party and the SS made him a wartime hero to many in Germany at the time. However, history rightly places him as one of the most evil men of an evil regime. His reprehensible crimes continue to be felt to this day.

FURTHER READING

- Dougherty, Nancy, *The Man With the Iron Heart: The Definitive Biography of Reinhard Heydrich, Architect of the Holocaust* (London: Wellbeck. 2022)
- Gerwarth, Robert, *Hitler's Hangman: The Life of Heydrich* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2011)
- Longerich, Peter, *Wannsee: The Road to the Final Solution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021)

In retaliation for the killing of Heydrich, German forces destroyed the Czech village Lidice

Images: Alamy, Getty



Legend of the

WINGED HUSSARS

Winged hussars depicted saluting King John III Sobieski of Poland

Considered one of the most effective elite cavalry units in history, Poland's mounted warriors were renowned for their distinctive armour, fierce tactics and unwavering bravery

WORDS **MAREK SOBIERALSKI**

Formed in 1503, Poland's hussars were made up of the nobility of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. One of their most distinctive features were wings that were attached to various parts of the riders' armour or saddle. Their task during battle was to crash into the enemy and break up its ranks, which enabled other lighter formations of cavalry to then enter the fray. The hussars' specific armaments, tactics and training enabled the Commonwealth to win a number of victories in battles with Russia, Sweden and the Ottomans.

Though a strong symbol of Polish martial prowess, the original hussars were in fact medieval Serbs, who, after their defeat at Kosovo Pole in 1389, fled to Poland in order to continue the fight against the Turks. The original Serb and Hungarian 'Usars' were light cavalry, and their main weapon was the lance. They did not use any protective armour and carried only wooden oval shields. After the reforms of King Stefan Batory, the hussars began to transform into slightly heavier cavalry: they began to use half-armour with reinforced 'bones' in the centre of the breastplate, and a larger burgonet or morion helmet with a neck-guard of several plates secured by sliding rivets, and an adjustable leaf-shaped visor.

Arms and armour

The armour usually only weighed around 33lb (15kg), which gave the hussar plenty of manoeuvrability. The oblong shield was replaced by a round Turkish kalkan, which fell out of use in the 17th century. Towards the end of the 1600s, karacena armour appeared in hussar and other armoured formations in Poland. Karacena was a Polish design, based on Sarmatian or Scythian armour, and consisted of iron scales riveted on leather.

It was heavier and more expensive than plate armour, yet at the same time provided less protection, so it was used mainly by commanders and as parade armour. In addition, the hussars usually wore an exotic leopard, tiger or lion pelt over their left shoulder, or (as often depicted in surviving paintings) underneath the saddle or wrapped around the hips. Wolf, brown bear and lynx pelts were reserved for leaders and veterans.

***Above:** A depiction of nobleman Stanisław Zółkiewski with Hussars by Wojciech Kossak*

***Left:** An etching of a winged hussar from Figures on Horseback, c1648-53*

Testaments to the Hussars

During the Siege of Vienna in 1683, English officer John Beaumont observed the Polish hussars charging the Ottoman lines and noted their "extraordinary courage" and the "amazing sight" of their wings. There are many other accounts from contemporary spectators of the 16th and 17th centuries who saw the Polish winged hussars in battle...

"THE POLES HAVE THE MOST SPLENDID AND WELL-ORDERED CAVALRY IN THE WORLD, AND THEIR LANCES ARE OF A PRODIGIOUS LENGTH. THEY RIDE WITH INCREDIBLE SWIFTNESS, AND WHEN THEY CHARGE, IT IS WITH SUCH IMPETUOSITY THAT THEY BREAK THROUGH EVERYTHING."

Sir Paul Rycaut, English diplomat who witnessed the Polish army in action, 1663

***Above:** A 19th century illustration of hussars mounting one of their ferocious charges*

***Below:** Their relatively light armour gave hussars plenty of manoeuvrability*

A hussar's main weapon was a particularly long lance that measured between 14.8-20.3ft (4.5-6.2m). It was hollowed out in the middle, making it light to wield. A characteristic element was a 6.6-9.8ft (2-3m) pennant in the colours of a given troop. These lances were made by selecting suitable wood and wrapping it with leather (with the use of hardening glue) to obtain a very light yet perfectly rigid weapon with a significant range. The centre of gravity of the lance was shifted back by a heavy ball-counterweight, which also served as a guard for the soldier's hand and made it easier to manoeuvre the weapon.

The tip of the lance was extended by two steel 'whiskers' about 24in (60cm) long, which strengthened the shaft and prevented the tip from being hacked off. The idea was to make this single-use weapon as uniform as possible. When the lance was broken during battle, a sword called a koncerz that was up to 63in (160cm) long could be drawn. This narrow and long thrusting blade was optimised to penetrate body armour, either by piercing directly through mail links or between the gaps in plate armour. Military registers also mention pistols, and earlier (in the 16th century), bows and horseman's picks.

Winged warriors

As noted by military historian Radosław Sikor, there are numerous sources that confirm the use of feathers or wings, and they are also depicted on various paintings. They were also used in battle, and not just parades, although they were not used by all hussars or in every battle. In a 1576 letter to Captain Stefan Bielawski, who was in the process of forming a hussar unit, he was instructed to include "feathers and adornments for show, and to put fear into the enemy".

The horses used by the winged hussars were a crucial part of their success on the battlefield. They were highly prized and carefully bred, with strict regulations governing their ownership and use. Local breeds were mixed with eastern types, and by the mid-16th century there developed a variety from which the hussar horses originated. These horses were tall, resistant, manoeuvrable, fast and could, after a long march and carrying a rider with weapons, enter battle almost straightaway and

"THE POLES ARE THE FINEST HORSEMEN IN EUROPE. THEIR HORSES ARE LARGE AND STRONG, AND THEY RIDE THEM WITH GREAT SKILL AND GRACE. THEIR ARMOUR IS SO BRIGHT AND POLISHED THAT IT SHINES LIKE GOLD, AND THEIR BANNERS AND PENNANTS FLUTTER IN THE WIND. WHEN THEY CHARGE, IT IS LIKE A THUNDERBOLT, AND THE ENEMY IS SHATTERED AND THROWN INTO CONFUSION."

Paolo Giovio, Italian historian, 1550

"I HAVE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING AS IMPRESSIVE AS THE POLISH HUSSARS. THEIR ARMOUR IS MAGNIFICENT, THEIR HORSES ARE STRONG, AND THEY RIDE WITH SUCH SPEED AND POWER THAT IT IS TRULY A SIGHT TO BEHOLD. WHEN THEY CHARGE, IT IS AS IF THE GROUND SHAKES BENEATH YOUR FEET."

Jacob de la Gardie, Swedish general, 1626

John III Sobieski dispatches news of his victory to Pope Innocent XI after the Battle of Vienna in 1683

John III Sobieski led a force that included winged hussars against the Ottomans

strike at a gallop. There were severe penalties for anyone caught trying to export these horses out of Poland, which included confiscation of the horse, fines and imprisonment – and in extreme cases, death.

A hussar's training was rigorous and demanding, and designed to develop their skills in horsemanship, weapon handling and tactics. They were required to be skilled in the use of the lance, sabre and other weapons, as well as in horse riding and manoeuvring. They were also trained in the use of firearms, which became increasingly important in the later years of their existence. Training began at a young age and included a strict regimen of physical exercise, combat drills and strategy sessions. Hussars were also required to maintain high levels of discipline and loyalty to their country and their comrades, which were considered essential qualities for success on the battlefield.

Their tactics were aggressive and daring, with the unit charging at speed straight into enemy lines to break their formations and sow chaos and confusion. This was repeated if the initial charge didn't manage to break the enemy lines. They were highly skilled horsemen, able to manoeuvre their horses with great speed and agility, and they used this skill to devastating effect on the battlefield. Their charges were often accompanied by loud battle cries and the sound of trumpets, which added to the fear and confusion of their enemies. Various sources have reported a hussar being able to impale up to six enemy soldiers on one lance, a so-called 'hussar kebab'.

The first known major use of hussars dates back to 1514 at the Battle of Orsza, where the army was divided into three ranks: the first was occupied by artillery, infantry and cavalry armed with lances; the second by light Lithuanian cavalry; and the third by the king, who was supported on his flanks by 500 hussars. During the Battle of Mogilev in 1581, the hussars showed their worth when they defended themselves against a Russian army many times more numerous, which attacked the outskirts of Mogilev. Kazanowski's hussar banner came to their rescue with about 200 hussars and 314 light cavalry, along with the city's garrison. The Russian side had 30,000-40,000 Muscovite, Cossack and Tatar troops. The city was defended for seven hours, until relief arrived. A rumour spread among the Russian ranks that the entire royal army was on its way, and panic broke out. Muscovite forces retreated to the other bank of the Dnieper.

Another famous victory came at the Battle of Kircholm in 1605, when a small Polish force, including the winged hussars, defeated a much larger Swedish army. The victory was largely due to the skill and bravery of the hussars, who charged straight into the Swedish lines and disrupted their formations. During the Battle of Kłuszyn, the disproportion of forces was even greater, at 5:1 (35,000 Russians and mercenaries against about 6,800 Polish troops, commanded by Stanisław Zółkiewski). It was in this battle that the combat value of the hussars was most evident. Some companies had to charge 8-10 times to beat the enemy, and the battle ended with victory for the Polish army. The number of losses on the Polish side amounted to 300 men, while on the opposite side it was over 8,000. The Poles showed their versatility, being able to deal with light Eastern as well as heavy Western European cavalry.

Vienna and decline

The hussars' most famous victory was at the Battle of Vienna in 1683, which was a decisive military engagement between the Ottoman Empire and a coalition of Christian forces, the overall command of which was held by the king of Poland and grand duke of Lithuania, John III Sobieski. The Ottomans had besieged Vienna for two months and were on the verge of capturing the city. However, the arrival of a relief force led by the Polish king, including his famous winged hussars, turned the tide of the battle. The Polish cavalry charged into the Ottoman lines with great force, breaking their formations and causing panic and confusion.

"THE POLISH HUSSARS ARE THE MOST MAGNIFICENT AND TERRIBLE CAVALRY IN THE WORLD. THEIR ARMOUR IS LIKE THAT OF ANCIENT KNIGHTS, AND THEIR HORSES ARE LIKE THUNDERBOLTS. THEY CHARGE WITH SUCH FORCE THAT THEY CAN BREAK THROUGH WALLS, AND THEIR LANCES ARE SO LONG THAT THEY CAN STRIKE AN ENEMY FROM A GREAT DISTANCE."

Johann Matthias von der Schulenburg, German general, 1697

"THE POLISH HORSEMEN ARE THE BRAVEST AND MOST EXPERT THAT I HAVE EVER SEEN, AND IN MY OPINION, THEY ARE INVINCIBLE IN THE FIELD."

George Lisle, English soldier who fought against the Winged Hussars in the Thirty Years' War, 1630

An outnumbered Polish force defeated the Swedes at the Battle of Kircholm (1605) after a devastating charge from the winged hussars

Sobieski had 70,000-80,000 soldiers under his command, and was facing an army of 150,000. The remaining Holy Roman forces, inspired by the Polish charge, counterattacked and routed the Ottoman army, ending the siege and marking the beginning of the decline of the Ottoman Empire. The battle was a turning point in the history of Europe, as it stopped the Ottoman advance into the continent.

The first symptoms of the decline of the hussars were seen in the second half of the 17th century, when their number fell sharply. The high costs associated with the armour, weapons and horses limited the mobilisation base of the hussars to only the richest nobility. At the beginning of the 18th century, the nobility focused its activity more on politics, as opposed to the previously cultivated knightly ethos. Former military exercises were abandoned, which resulted in a sharp decline in the level of training of hussars. Initially being transformed into a lighter cavalry, they eventually became a parade army, used only at military shows or funerals of kings or senators. They were eventually disbanded in 1776. During the heyday of their 273-year existence, they were one of the most fearsome and effective cavalry units in existence, renowned for their skill, bravery, tactics and unique appearance. They were a force to be reckoned with on the battlefield, and their greatest victories are still remembered and celebrated today.

Images: Alamy, Getty

"THE POLES ARE THE BEST CAVALRY IN EUROPE, AND THEIR REPUTATION IS WELL DESERVED. THEIR EQUIPMENT IS OF THE HIGHEST QUALITY, AND THEY FIGHT WITH THE COURAGE AND FEROCITY OF LIONS."

Henry Wotton, English ambassador to Venice, 1610

"THE POLISH CAVALRY, WHICH WAS COMPOSED OF THE BRAVEST AND MOST EXPERIENCED WARRIORS OF EUROPE, CHARGED WITH SUCH FURY THAT THE TURKS WERE DRIVEN BACK IN DISORDER. IT WAS AN INCREDIBLE SIGHT TO SEE THOSE HORSEMEN, WITH THEIR WINGS AND THEIR SHINING ARMOUR, GALLOPING ACROSS THE PLAIN LIKE A THUNDERBOLT."

Marco d'Aviano, Capuchin friar and chaplain to the Holy Roman Emperor

DETTINGEN (MODERN-DAY KARLSTEIN AM MAIN), 27 JUNE 1743

DETTINGEN

The last time a British monarch led an army into battle, the results were nearly disastrous

WORDS **DAVID SMITH**

King George II at the Battle of Dettingen

The origins of the War of the Austrian Succession (1740-48) are labyrinthine, complex and easily fill several book. Triggered by the death of Emperor Charles VI, it was essentially a conflict between two coalitions, each supporting a different potential inheritor of the emperor's throne.

The Pragmatic Allies took their name from a proclamation issued by Charles in 1713. This Pragmatic Sanction insisted that a daughter could inherit all his titles, including that of Holy Roman Emperor, which had never previously been held by a woman. Upon his death, his daughter, Maria Theresa, was supported by the Habsburg Empire itself (often referred to as Austria), Britain, the Dutch Republic and Hanover. The Pragmatic Allies were opposed by France, Prussia and Bavaria, who wanted to break the Habsburg's grip on Charles' titles. Their preferred candidate was Charles Albert of Bavaria.

The first move of the war saw Prussia invade Silesia in 1740, and by 1742 Austria had accepted the loss of this territory, freeing its forces to leave Silesia and join other elements of the Pragmatic Allies for offensive action elsewhere. The shift in the deployment of power threw the French onto the defensive and they were now in a position where they had to wait for the Pragmatic Allies to make the first move rather than taking the initiative themselves.

France on the defensive

The commander of France's forces, Marshal Adrien Maurice de Noailles, had the almost impossible task of protecting France's ally, Bavaria, as well as French territory. He did not have the manpower for such an immense challenge and was wrestling with the two possible responses – a chain of small positions or a massing of force that might turn out to be in the wrong area – when the Allies made a move.

Marshal Adrien Maurice de Noailles came from a distinguished line of French military aristocrats

Austrian forces were marching on Luxembourg, with a combined British-Hanoverian army following. This at least gave Noailles something on which to focus his attention, and he carefully followed the progress of the Allies.

The military and diplomatic situation was complicated by the death of the Prince-Archbishop of Mainz (one of the electors of the Holy Roman Emperor) and the arrival of George II in Hanover (of which he was elector as well as being the British monarch). The Pragmatic Army was under the command of Field Marshal John Dalrymple, the 2nd Earl of Stair, but the king would take at least nominal command when he arrived from Hanover.

As the progress of the Allies was shadowed by Noailles, the problem of supply, always a critical element in campaigning, soon became an issue. As Stair marched along the eastern bank of the Main River, supplies had to either follow the land route he was taking or be shipped along the river. Either route was susceptible to French interference and each mile advanced made his line of communications more vulnerable. Aware of this, Noailles had hopes of securing a decisive victory.

Setting a trap for an opponent always relies on them doing exactly as you predicted, and in this case Noailles was to prove lucky. The Pragmatic Army was about to be paralysed for several days, allowing him to spin his web without interference.

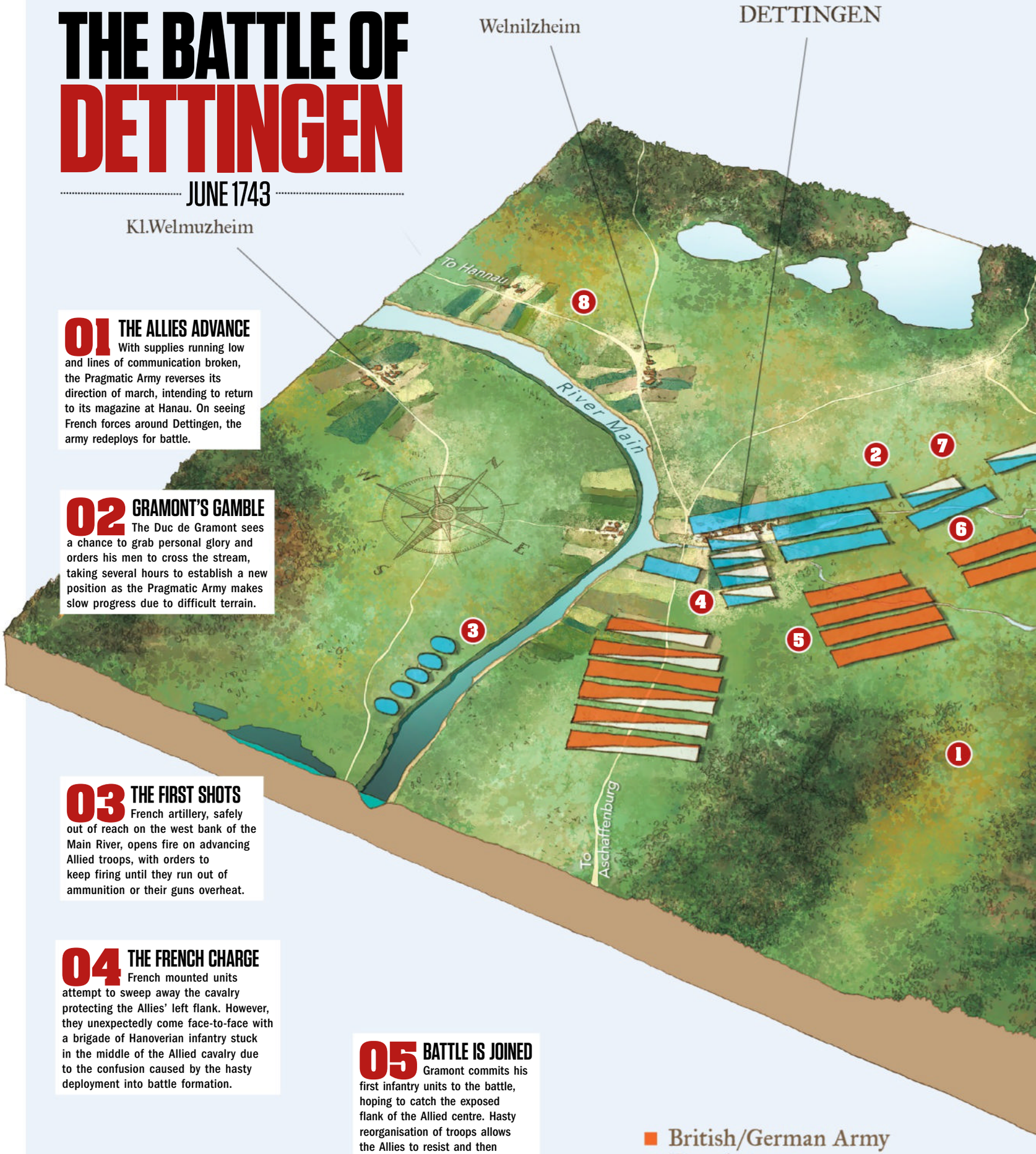
The opposing forces

The French commander had significantly more troops on hand than his enemy, around 70,000 compared to just 35,000 under Stair. The Pragmatic Army, on paper at least, had a superiority in artillery, but this was misleading. The vast bulk of their artillery train was comprised of three-pounders – effective in infantry support but unlikely to make any difference on the battlefield. Noailles had fewer guns, but 40 of his were far heavier 12-pounders. With greater range and vastly superior hitting power, batteries of these guns could indeed tip the balance of a battle.

Images: Alamy

THE BATTLE OF DETTINGEN

JUNE 1743



01 THE ALLIES ADVANCE

With supplies running low and lines of communication broken, the Pragmatic Army reverses its direction of march, intending to return to its magazine at Hanau. On seeing French forces around Dettingen, the army redeploys for battle.

02 GRAMONT'S GAMBLE

The Duc de Gramont sees a chance to grab personal glory and orders his men to cross the stream, taking several hours to establish a new position as the Pragmatic Army makes slow progress due to difficult terrain.

03 THE FIRST SHOTS

French artillery, safely out of reach on the west bank of the Main River, opens fire on advancing Allied troops, with orders to keep firing until they run out of ammunition or their guns overheat.

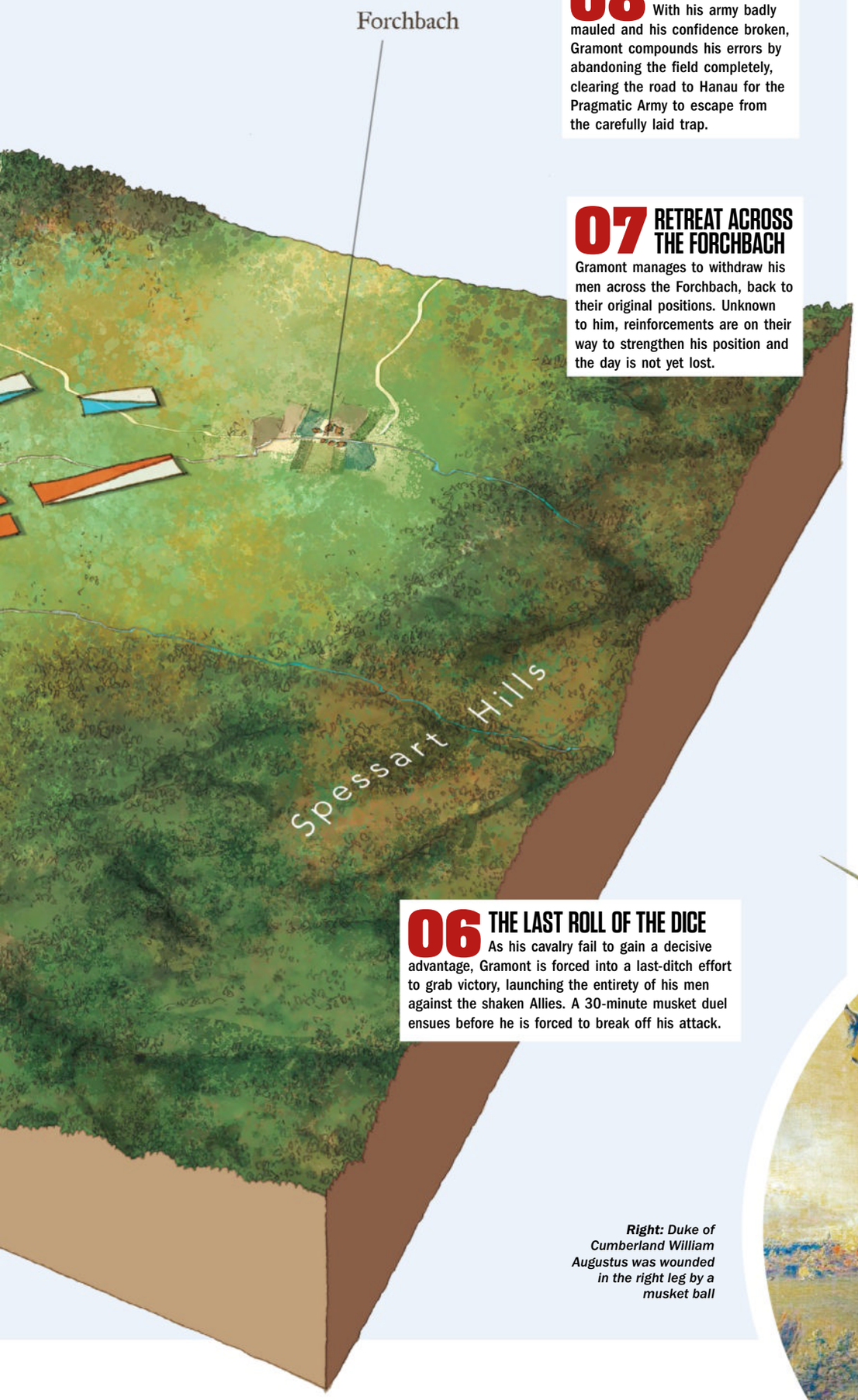
04 THE FRENCH CHARGE

French mounted units attempt to sweep away the cavalry protecting the Allies' left flank. However, they unexpectedly come face-to-face with a brigade of Hanoverian infantry stuck in the middle of the Allied cavalry due to the confusion caused by the hasty deployment into battle formation.

05 BATTLE IS JOINED

Gramont commits his first infantry units to the battle, hoping to catch the exposed flank of the Allied centre. Hasty reorganisation of troops allows the Allies to resist and then repulse the French attack.

“WHAT HAD APPEARED TO BE AN ALMOST CERTAIN FRENCH VICTORY NOW HUNG IN THE BALANCE”



Map illustration: Rocio Espin Piñar

08 THE LAST MOVES
With his army badly mauled and his confidence broken, Gramont compounds his errors by abandoning the field completely, clearing the road to Hanau for the Pragmatic Army to escape from the carefully laid trap.

07 RETREAT ACROSS THE FORCHBACH
Gramont manages to withdraw his men across the Forchbach, back to their original positions. Unknown to him, reinforcements are on their way to strengthen his position and the day is not yet lost.

06 THE LAST ROLL OF THE DICE
As his cavalry fail to gain a decisive advantage, Gramont is forced into a last-ditch effort to grab victory, launching the entirety of his men against the shaken Allies. A 30-minute musket duel ensues before he is forced to break off his attack.

The wealth of options open to him, along with his numerical advantage, allowed Noailles to be creative in his thinking and he drew up a plan to not just defeat his enemy but completely destroy them. The fact that George II was on his way to join the Pragmatic Army gave Noailles the added prospect of capturing a monarch – a very enticing prize.

Critical to the success of the plan was that his opponents remained passive and allowed him to move his pieces into place. In this respect, the approach of the king played directly into his hands.

Stair had intended to link up his army with that of Prince Charles of Lorraine in Upper Bavaria, but the imminent arrival of the king forced him to halt his march. His advanced units, comprising British regiments, made their camp around Aschaffenburg, while his rearmost units were positioned around six miles (10km) to the northwest. A few units, Austrian dragoons, were left at Dettingen to keep an eye on enemy movements and the road back towards Hanau.

The stone bridge at Aschaffenburg, offering the easiest way of crossing the Main, was obviously important but Stair neglected to secure it, instead remaining inactive in a string of camps that could hardly have been in a more dangerous position.

The land on the east bank of the Main was exceedingly marshy in parts, and was cut through by two sizeable streams, running roughly east to west. The stream nearest to Dettingen, the Forchbach, could be crossed easily only at two causeways. Further to the east was a ridge of heavily wooded hills. The Pragmatic Army was therefore penned in between impassable hills and an uncrossable river, on ground that was severely waterlogged close to the river and impeded by tall crops in the centre. Stair may have been relieved by the arrival of the king, which took the weight of responsibility off his shoulders. By now he was well aware how precarious his situation was, but the king’s arrival did nothing to change the picture because the Pragmatic Army did nothing but eat its way through its supplies for the week after George II’s arrival.

Images: Alamy

***Right:** Duke of Cumberland William Augustus was wounded in the right leg by a musket ball*

Despite his lack of martial prowess, George II led his forces in the battle, though this is a highly fanciful depiction of the King

Noailles' trap

The baffling inactivity gave Noailles all the time he needed to prepare his trap. The bridge over the Aschaffenburg had already been secured and now a bridgehead across the Main was taken at Stockstadt, cutting off another potential avenue of escape for the Allies.

At Seligenstadt, across the river from Dettingen, he positioned a sizeable force of infantry and cavalry under his nephew the Duc De Gramont. Two pontoon bridges had been constructed and were ready to swing across the river to allow Gramont to take up a position behind the Forchbach and block the Allies' retreat.

Noailles had one more wrinkle to his plan. He placed his 40 12-pounders in five batteries near Mainflingen, from where they could fire into the ranks of the advancing Allies as they attempted to get past Gramont. The remainder of his army was held ready to cross at Stockstadt and bottle up the Allies.

It was a sophisticated plan, and one that had every chance of succeeding, but the rogue factor of human misjudgement can never be accounted for and it was to be Noailles' undoing.

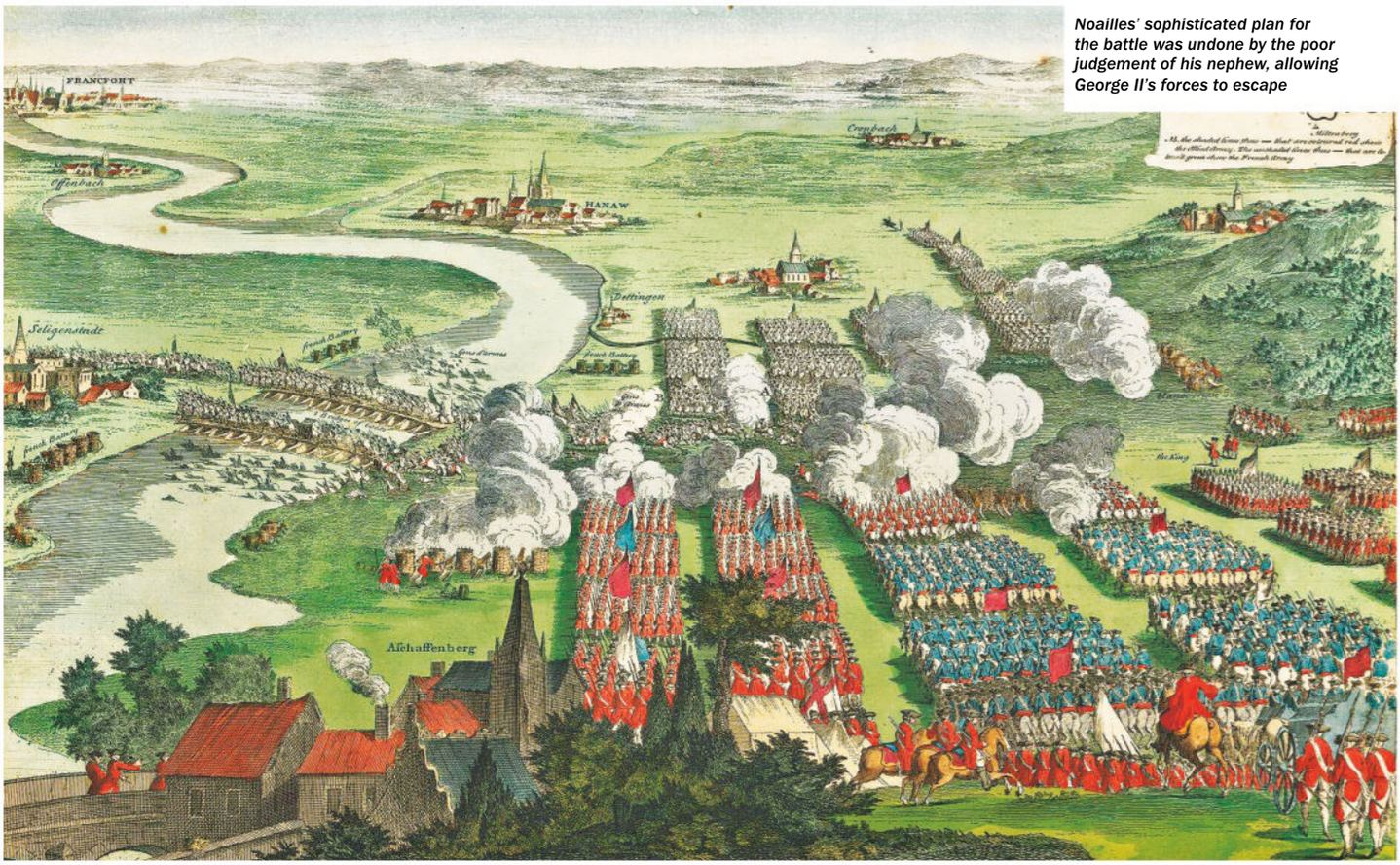
Ironically, though, it was the Allies who first suffered due to misjudgement. Having decided that the only sensible course of action was to retreat back to their supply base at Hanau, George II insisted that the British occupy the position of honour at the front of the march – this despite the fact that they had marched to their current camp at the front of the army and would therefore be at the rear if the army reversed its direction of march. Considerable time would be lost manoeuvring the British regiments through the ranks of Hanoverian and Austrian troops to get to the front, but the decision was not disastrous because, as it turned out, retreat was no longer an option.

Bottled up

In the early hours of 27 June, Noailles had reinforced his contingent at Seligenstadt and ordered it to start crossing the Main. The trap had been sprung, and Noailles made it clear to his officers that they were to hold their position and allow the Allies to break themselves trying to cross the Forchbach.

Artillery was positioned to cover the causeways across the stream and if the Allies did manage to cross, they would be in such a state of disarray that a bayonet charge from the 23,000 infantry under Gramont would surely send them reeling back.

Noailles, confident that his orders were understood, moved to his main force at Stockstadt, where he issued orders for the Prince de Tingry to send troops across the bridge at Aschaffenburg, link up with the bridgehead at Stockstadt and then command the men (mostly infantry, but with around 3,000 mounted troops) who would cut off the other route out of the trap. The Pragmatic Army would be well and truly bottled up.



Noailles' sophisticated plan for the battle was undone by the poor judgement of his nephew, allowing George II's forces to escape

Once aware that rather than undertaking a march they would instead be waging a battle, the Pragmatic Army began to deploy accordingly, constricted by the difficult terrain on which they were manoeuvring. Confusion among their ranks was inevitable considering the changing nature of the situation, and it appears that this confusion led to a serious problem in the left wing, where the bulk of the cavalry would be massed. Five ranks of cavalry units were mistakenly mixed with a line of infantry, making it impossible for all of the Allies' cavalry to be deployed at the same time.

In one of those strange quirks of war, the first result of the Allies' obvious confusion was to tip the odds of success back in their favour. Viewed by Gramont, impatiently awaiting his enemy's approach, the turmoil in the Allied ranks appeared terminal. Seeing a chance of personal glory, he abandoned his orders and his defensive position, ordering his men to cross the stream that was their primary line of defence. Gramont was going to attack the Pragmatic Army head on.

The opening move

The Pragmatic Army was advancing slowly, infantry pushing through chest-high stalks of unripe crops, trampling them down and moving on. Progress was slow, as frequent stops had to be made to reorganise. This progress was being carefully watched by a 74-year-old artillery officer, Jean-Florent de la Vallière, commanding the five batteries of 12-pounders on the opposite bank of the Main. At midday, he decided it was time to join the fight.

The situation now faced by the Pragmatic Army could hardly have been more dire. With limited room for manoeuvre, forced to move slowly due to the thick crops and tormented by 40 pieces of artillery (out of range of effective counter-battery fire), they grimly pushed forward. The intervention of de la Vallière might have tipped the balance, but final reports of the battle show a surprisingly low number of casualties inflicted by artillery. It is not quite so surprising, however, when the reason is understood. The French artillery had to cease fire when Gramont's cavalry forces, under the Duc d'Harcourt, were hurled into an attack they were never intended to have made. There was at least some sense in the move, though. If they could destroy the British cavalry facing them, the entire Allied position would be compromised.

What had appeared to be an almost certain victory now hung in the balance. Gramont had changed the nature of the battle from one where the French held an overwhelming superiority of numbers to one where they actually had fewer men engaged than the Allies.

Three lines of French cavalry were committed to the attack, breaking through the first two lines of British horsemen but not routing them. In full cry, the French rushed on, only to come upon dense ranks of Hanoverian infantry, out of place but perfectly suited to stopping a cavalry charge. Harcourt's men had no choice but to withdraw, fighting their way through the reformed ranks of British cavalry to regain the safety of their lines.

The Ducks of the Main

The cavalry attack, though ultimately unsuccessful, had prised open a gap between the left wing and the centre of the Pragmatic Army, and Gramont sent in infantry to exploit it. The six battalions of the Gardes Françaises, however, were repulsed by combined British and Austrian infantry and forced to retreat. Some of them, perhaps the more inexperienced troops in the brigade, fled all the way to the river and some drowned attempting to cross it, earning the guards the cruel nickname 'Les Canards du Mein' (the Ducks of the Main).

Still Gramont saw a chance for victory. Ordering the rest of his force forward, he hoped to tip the shaken Pragmatic Army into a retreat, onto the muskets and bayonets awaiting in their rear. Fighting now erupted along the entire line, but the Allies refused to crack. Upon receiving word that the cavalry action on his flank had descended into a slugfest, with no hope of securing a decisive advantage, Gramont was forced to withdraw.

He now faced exactly the problem he was meant to have imposed upon his enemy – crossing the Forchbach under fire. A combination of his men's steadiness while withdrawing, a sacrificial charge by the elite Brigade de Cuirassiers and fatigue in the enemy ranks saw Gramont pull off an effective retreat, but he had also cost his army a potentially crushing victory.

Noailles still believed the day could be saved, and was rushing men to reinforce Gramont, who could still hold his initial position and fight the battle that had been intended all along. Gramont, though, now concluded his woeful performance by ordering his men to abandon their defensive position altogether and cross the Main, ending the battle and opening the path for the Pragmatic Army to march back on Hanau.

Images: Alamy

***Right:** A map of the battle, allegedly produced by the priest of the church at Seligenstadt*

George II's desire to pursue the defeated French after the battle was thwarted by his forces' fatigue and dwindling supplies

A miraculous escape

The Battle of Dettingen saw the French army suffer around 4,000 casualties, including around 900 dead and 1,500 taken prisoner. The Pragmatic Army claimed to have lost just 2,000 men.

Any thoughts of pursuing the defeated French were unrealistic (legend has it that George II pushed for this, which would be characteristic of his distinct lack of martial awareness), as the Allies were tired and short on supplies. The cavalry, especially, had suffered during the battle and were in no condition for a pursuit. Instead, the army marched away from the death trap it had so narrowly avoided and made camp for the night.

Noailles could take some comfort in succeeding in his initial aim, preventing the Pragmatic Army from marching further into Bavaria. He had sent them back from where they came, but the tantalising possibility of a decisive victory had somehow slipped through his fingers.

FURTHER READING

- Michael McNally, *Dettingen 1743: Miracle on the Main* (Osprey Publishing)
- James Grant, *British Battles of the War of Austrian Succession & Seven Years' War* (Leonaur)

Images: Alamy

Heroes of the Medal of Honor

JOHN A CHAPMAN

High up on the mountain of Takur Ghar in Afghanistan, this soldier bravely fought through mortal injury to save the lives of over 20 men

WORDS **JACKSON VAN UDEN**

President Trump presents John Chapman's Medal of Honor to Valerie Nessel, John's widow, in 2018

In August 2018, 16 years after John A Chapman's heroic last stand in Afghanistan, Valerie Nessel, his widow, stood in the East Room of the White House surrounded by family members as they accepted Chapman's Medal of Honor. Upon the awarding of this medal, President Donald Trump remarked: "Our nation is rich with blessings, but our greatest blessings of all are the patriots like John… who… carry our freedom on their shoulders, march into the face of evil, and fight to their very last breath so that we can live in freedom, and safety, and peace."

Chapman was always known as a man who put others before himself, and it was in that spirit that he enlisted in the US Air Force on 27 September 1985, being assigned soon after as an information systems operator. However, he had always wanted to be a combat controller, and after four years behind a desk Chapman volunteered to train as one, passing his courses in 1989 and later becoming an expert in immediate deployment and reconnaissance operations, among other roles. One of his trainers recalled that Chapman used to smirk during training as it was "too easy", and the trainer agreed that it was "too easy for John".

Secretary of the US Air Force Heather Wilson said in 2018: "John Chapman never talked about how good he was at what he did. He didn't have to." His ability to make difficult tasks look easy quickly led to his peers recognising him as one of the best in his field. In the late-1990s he went on a three-year tour in Okinawa, Japan, before being deployed to Afghanistan in 2002 as part of Operation Enduring Freedom. This was America's "necessary war of self-defence" after al-Qaeda, Ayman al-Zawahiri and Osama bin Laden's 9/11 terror attacks.

In the early hours of 4 March 2002, Chapman and his company, alongside Army Rangers and Navy SEALs, took part in Operation Anaconda, which formed part of

Chapman pictured in early 2002, shortly after his deployment to Afghanistan

Images: Alamy,

the early days of the 'War on Terror'. This mission aimed to establish reconnaissance outposts at Takur Ghar Mountain to monitor enemy activity in the surrounding valley, and to kill or capture al-Qaeda forces in the region. Taking Takur Ghar was of high strategic importance for the US as it would enable them control and oversight over a remote area that was a stronghold of both the Taliban and al-Qaeda.

US commanders concluded that due to the mountainous and remote nature of the area, and the potential threat from high-altitude enemy lookouts, a night-time approach via helicopter was the best option for Operation Anaconda. Chapman's superior, Brigadier General Davidson, recalls Chapman telling him when he heard about the operation: "Sir, this is the best Navy SEAL team they have, and they're about to head out. Because they'll get the hardest missions, they need the most experienced combat controller with them. I need to go with them."

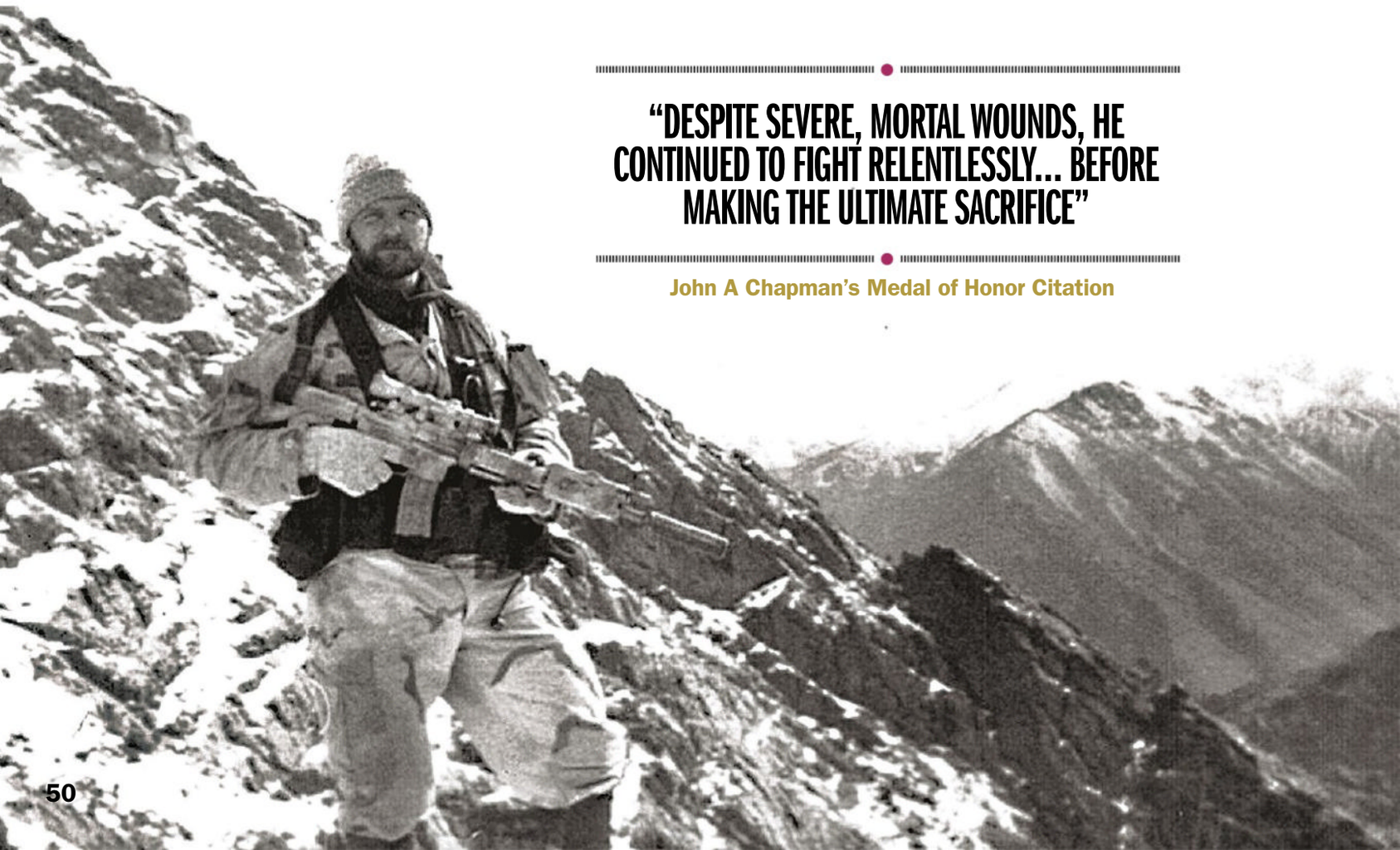
So, on 4 March under the cover of darkness, the Navy SEAL team and Chapman made their way through the Zurmat region of Afghanistan, navigating around the Arma Mountains in US Army helicopter MH-47E. At around 2:45am the helicopter approached the top of Takur Ghar so the team could disembark and establish an outpost. However, unknown to the team, the enemy had already established their position at the top of the mountain, and the noise of the helicopter that reverberated around the valley and mountains had alerted them to the American forces' arrival.

Chapman, a man who was renowned for always putting others before him, with an Afghan baby

As the helicopter began its descent to the top of Takur Ghar the night sky was lit up by gunfire and the flash of RPG rounds. An RPG round struck the helicopter's fuselage, seriously damaging the electrics and hydraulics. The crew realised they could not land due to the incoming fire, so they began to ascend and withdraw. However, as the helicopter began its ascent, Navy SEAL Neil C Roberts, who was ready to disembark the vehicle, fell out into the snow on the mountain peak. The damaged helicopter completed a controlled emergency landing a few miles away. After landing, Chapman contacted a nearby AC-130 gunship and requested that it secure the area and help locate Roberts. He then co-ordinated a helicopter to extract the rest of the team. Chapman and some team members, including Navy SEAL Britt Slabinski, then volunteered to go back and rescue Roberts. Another helicopter dropped them off further up the mountain at around 4:57am, and they were immediately attacked as they waded their way through knee-high snow in a bid to rescue their lost comrade.

While heading uphill through the thick snow, Chapman moved ahead on his own, towards two enemy bunkers. Under fire, he charged and cleared the first bunker, enabling the rest of the men to enter safely as they secured Roberts, who by now had been fatally wounded by enemy fire. While the Americans regrouped, more al-Qaeda fighters from the second bunker began to rain down machine gun fire on them. Outnumbered, the US forces were in a desperate battle for survival. Several of them were wounded by grenades, and amid the constant battering by PKM machine guns Chapman was struck twice in the torso and he hit the floor. Believing Chapman to be dead, Slabinski called for uncontrolled air support from the nearby AC-130 and ordered his men to withdraw to a safer position further down the mountain, being forced to leave Chapman behind. The

Chapman pictured at Takur Ghar one month before he died during a firefight at the summit



"DESPITE SEVERE, MORTAL WOUNDS, HE CONTINUED TO FIGHT RELENTLESSLY... BEFORE MAKING THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE"

John A Chapman's Medal of Honor Citation

Images: Alamy

Chapman's Medal of Honor Plaque at Airmen's Heritage Park in San Antonio, Texas

enemy onslaught was so violent, intense and unrelenting that the Americans suffered two more causalities as they withdrew.

As 105mm howitzer rounds pounded Takur Ghar Mountain the seriously wounded Chapman, thought by his comrades to be dead, was still in the fight. At about 5:20am, despite being in shock and suffering severe blood loss, he once again began to engage the 24 al-Qaeda fighters. Chapman fought alone at the summit for nearly an hour, sustaining more injuries as he exchanged gunfire and engaged in hand-to-hand combat with his enemy.

Regarding these actions, Chapman's Medal of Honor Citation reads: "Despite severe, mortal wounds, he continued to fight relentlessly, sustaining a violent engagement with multiple enemy personnel before making the ultimate sacrifice." This ultimate sacrifice came at about 6am as another helicopter arrived at the summit. Aware of what awaited this helicopter if he hunkered down for safety, Chapman climbed out of the bunker he was in with the last of his strength and made his final stand to draw the enemy's attention away from the helicopter, perhaps aware that he was already dying. As the helicopter was hit and conducted a controlled landing, Chapman continued to provide covering fire as the men on board disembarked, and eventually after 16 bullet and shrapnel wounds Chapman was shot through the heart. His actions that day saved the lives of 23 men.

Chapman was posthumously awarded the Air Force Cross for his initial set of actions that enabled the safe withdrawal of Slabinski and the rest of the rescue team, with the US Air Force remarking that "Sergeant Chapman reflected the highest credit upon himself and the United States Air Force". However, over ten years after Chapman was awarded the Air Force Cross, new technology enabled the US Air Force to enhance the video footage from the Predator drone that had recorded the Battle of Takur Ghar. This enhanced footage supported evidence from his autopsy that he had not died in the first bunker and showed Chapman's valiant last stand to protect his comrades. Off the back of this new evidence, which is widely believed to be the first Medal of Honor actions ever recorded on video, the US Air Force pushed for Chapman to be posthumously awarded the country's highest decoration for valour.

Chapman and his actions were recognised at the White House on 22 August 2018, with Chapman becoming the first airman to be awarded the Medal of Honor since the Vietnam War. The following day US Air Force leaders gathered at the Pentagon as Chapman was inducted into the Hall of Heroes. Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force Kaleth Wright, Chief of Staff General Dave Goldfein and Secretary of the Air Force Heather Wilson all spoke about Chapman and his heroism, invoking Ancient Greek ideas of character and telling stories from his childhood. Wilson finished with perhaps the most profound remark: "For his generation of Americans, John Chapman was the answer to that lingering question. Our nation endures, and continues to be the land of the free because of brave men. Because of John Chapman."

Chapman was awarded the Medal of Honor thanks to drone footage of the deadly battle

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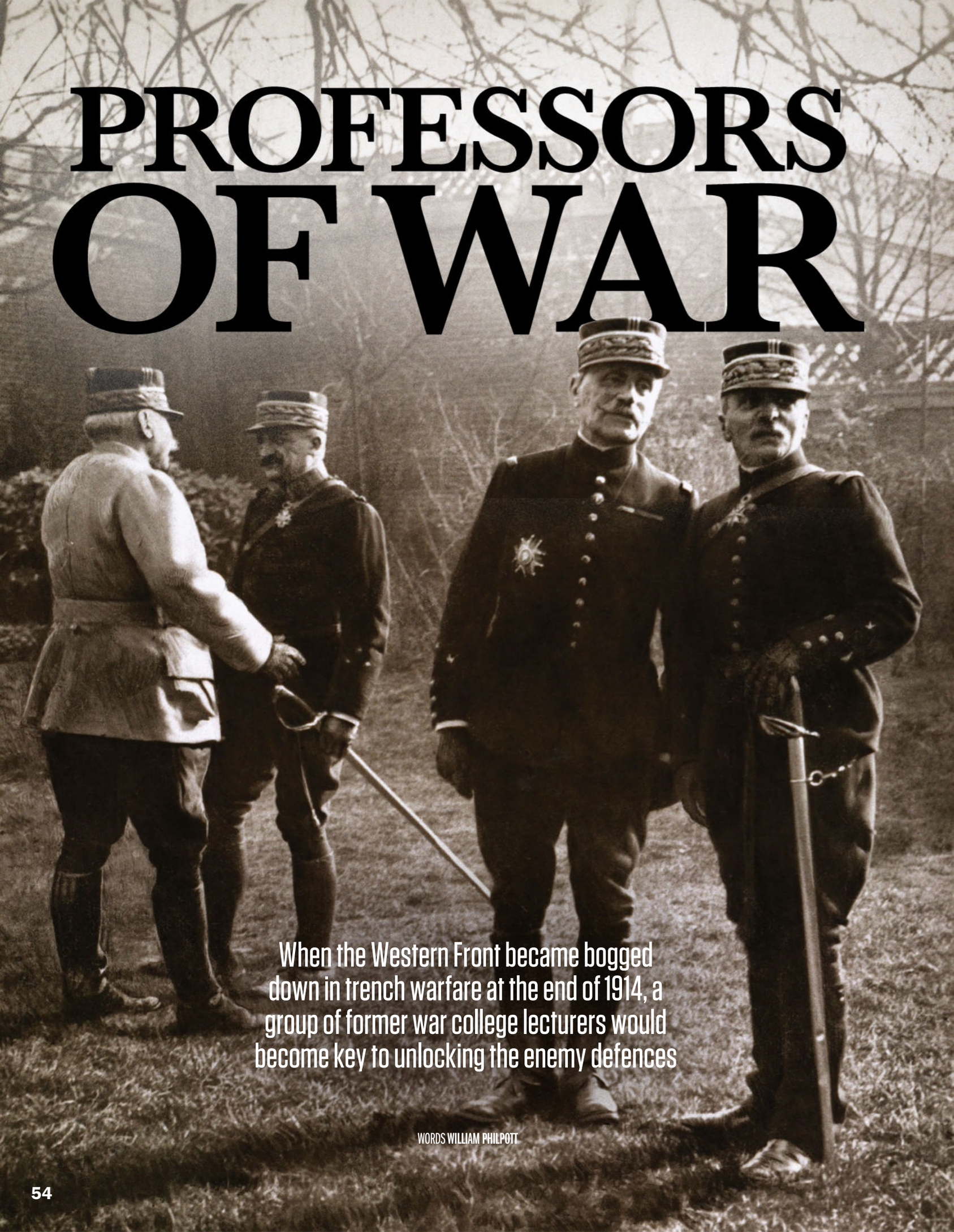


When the Western Front became bogged down in trench warfare at the end of 1914, a group of former war college lecturers would become key to unlocking the enemy defences

WORDS WILLIAM PHILPOTT

During the First World War, a conflict not noted for its generalship, one group of individuals stands out. Five of the senior leaders of the French army in 1918 had one thing in common – they had all taught at the army's staff college before the war. This small group of fighting professors, ably supported by senior and mid-ranking officers, many of whom had been their pupils, led the French army to victory in 1918.

At Morhange in August 1914 Ferdinand Foch, then a 62-year-old army corps commander, directed troops in battle for the first time. It was, potentially, the climax of a career in which he had studied and taught war while a lecturer in strategy and tactics at the École supérieure de guerre, France's staff college and, subsequently, become its head. If he had failed, like so many French generals in the 1914 campaign, he would have been assigned to a desk job or prematurely retired. As things turned out, Foch pushed his XX Corps forwards confidently, only for its flanks to be left in the air. The corps had to be pulled back hastily, but in good order. Although his actions at Morhange were to spark controversy, Foch got lucky. His audacity got him promoted to command an army, with dynamism if not total control in the forthcoming Battle of the Marne. Covering XX Corps' retreat were the guns of 70th Reserve Division. These just happened to be the instructional batteries of the French army's artillery school, expertly directed by their divisional commander, Marie-Émile Fayolle, who had lectured alongside Foch on artillery tactics, and was putting his theories into practice. He noted of his first experience of battle: "I will attack with the greatest care, with all the artillery and the fewest infantry necessary."

By the end of the year, trench warfare would set in. Fixed systems of field defences, growing deeper and more complex as the war went on, are seen to be at the heart of the tactical and operational problems that faced commanders from 1915. If only there was a 'breakthrough' then normal warfare could resume. The problem was not with the trenches as such but, as Fayolle hinted, one of the relationship between firepower that dominated ground and the ability to manoeuvre on the fortified battlefield. Trenches were the early and obvious solution to the dominance of modern firepower – they were dug to protect vulnerable human flesh from quick-fire weapons such as the famous 'soixante-quinze', the French army's 75mm field gun, that Fayolle's gunners had demonstrated so effectively. Not

Far left: *Ferdinand Foch with Joseph Joffre, Paul Maistre and Louis Ernest de Maud'huy*

Above, left: *A section of the Hindenburg Line, a series of German trenches across northern France*

Above: *Dogs such as the ones seen here were used by the French to help find wounded men, c.1916*

Below: *French troops watch as an artillery piece fires on German positions, 1918*

***Above:** Extensive barbed wire defences were just one of the many hazards faced by troops on the Western Front*

***Above, right:** General Émile Fayolle pictured with his staff during the 1916 Somme campaign*

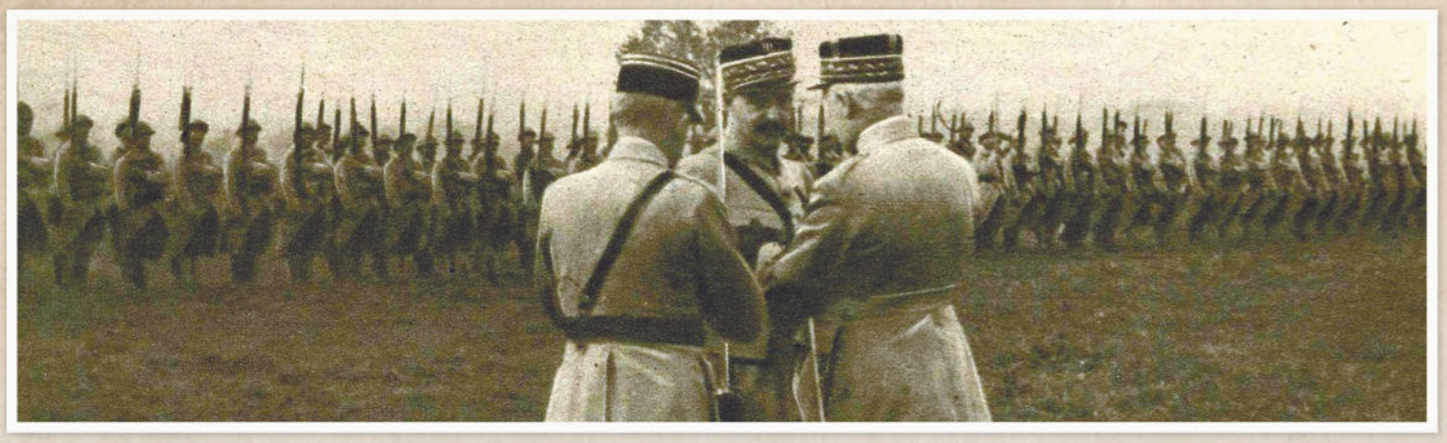
only quick-firing artillery pieces, but also machine guns and magazine rifles made the battlespace a murderous fire-swept zone. Following on from pre-war professional debates in which they had been active participants, Foch, Fayolle and others would engage with the problem of fighting in such an environment: if guns controlled the battlespace, how then to manoeuvre and break the deadlock?

Foch and Fayolle were both gunners, so understood the significance of material and the importance of effective fire-control in the tactical equation. But the guns had to work with the infantry. When Fayolle and Foch came together again in the first sustained offensive under the new conditions, the Second Battle of Artois in May-June 1915, they would be reunited with two former colleagues who appreciated the infantry's problems. Now an army group commander, Foch was to direct the offensive. Two army corps would make the main attack in the centre: XXI Corps led by Paul Maistre who had for a time been Foch's assistant professor at the staff college, and XXXIII Corps (that included Fayolle's 70th Division) commanded by Philippe Pétain, a former professor of infantry tactics.

The immediate tactical challenge was how to seize, hold and progress beyond the enemy's defensive trench systems. Maistre, whose battalions had been making very slow progress along the crest of the Notre-Dame-de-Lorette ridge over the winter, came to appreciate that men's bodies were no substitute for firepower that would sweep the enemy's defences before the infantry attacked.

There were also questions of command and control to address: Foch had got lucky again on the Marne while not having real control of his subordinate formations. In May, concentrated artillery support would clear a way through the German positions. Attacking en masse rather than with piecemeal infantry assaults, XXI Corps would finally take the Notre-Dame-de-Lorette feature. Further south, Petain's assault divisions swept onto the crest of Vimy Ridge. Between them Fayolle's division, covering XXXIII Corps' left flank and linking it with Maistre's corps, fought a different sort of battle, securing the ruined village of Ablain-Saint-Nazaire street by ruined street over five days of heavy fighting.

"THERE HAD TO BE EFFECTIVE COMMAND AND CONTROL AT ALL LEVELS IF A BATTLE WERE NOT TO COLLAPSE INTO CHAOS"



This experience vindicated Fayolle's belief in "the methodical capture of enemy lines successively". What happened to the rest of XXXIII Corps reinforced this point. Thrust out way ahead of the troops making slower progress on their flanks, Pétain's assault troops were isolated, could not be reinforced, and with command and control breaking down were forced out of their advanced positions that were targeted by German firepower from three sides.

The Second Battle of Artois was a success of sorts. It showed that German defences were vulnerable to systematic offensive methods. Two lessons were apparent. Effective artillery-infantry cooperation enabled progress – "the artillery conquers, the infantry occupies" as Pétain identified. However, rushing forwards, although spectacular, was potentially counter-productive, especially if friendly artillery could not protect the troops. Maistre and Fayolle had occupied and consolidated the ground in front of them – the tactical principle of 'bite and hold' was emerging – but Pétain had lost control of his battle and the result had proved temporary. Still, with the higher command still fixated on breaking the enemy's defences, it would be Pétain whose fortunes would prosper after the battle. Foch learned, most importantly, that there had to be effective command and control at all levels if a battle were not to collapse into chaos. Warfare should be systematic rather than dynamic, a method he dubbed "scientific battle". Rather than aiming to breach or smash the enemy's defensive positions, the French army should take on and defeat the enemy's soldiers within them by superior method and cohesion.

Reflecting in his diary on the lessons of 1915, Fayolle noted: "We have understood that we cannot run around like madmen in the successive enemy positions. Doctrine is taking shape. For every position there must be a battle, following each other as rapidly as possible. Each one needs a new plan, a new artillery preparation. If one goes too quickly, one risks being checked; too slowly and the enemy has time to make more positions. That is the problem; and it is serious."

This material-intensive method imposed a steady, undynamic rhythm on offensive operations through the middle years of the war, epitomised in Fayolle's next battle, the Somme offensive, June-November 1916, in which he commanded Sixth Army. Under Foch's general direction the French army made steady progress forwards, wearing down German resistance towards a point at which they hoped it would collapse. Although Fayolle's troops broke the German lines twice during the offensive, on 2 July south of the River Somme and on 12 September at the village of

***Above:** General Marie-Eugène Debeney, pictured with Philippe Pétain (right) and Émile Fayolle (left)*

***Below:** A section of the Hindenburg Line featuring deep layers of barbed wire, 1918*

“UNABLE ANY LONGER TO HOLD THEIR DEFENSIVE POSITIONS AGAINST SUCH METHODS, THE GERMANS LAUNCHED A FINAL DESPERATE OFFENSIVE”

Bouchavesnes on the Bapaume-Péronne road (where Foch’s statue now stands), nothing came of it. Such breakthroughs were narrow and could easily be contained by flanking fire while reserves deployed to seal the breach.

Maistre led his army corps very successfully in the second phase of the offensive south of the river, using the tactics developed in 1915 to seize and hold Ablaincourt village in September. So striking was that success that commander-in-chief Joseph Joffre would single it out in his memoirs: “XXI Corps, commanded by General Maistre, captured Ablaincourt with astonishing ease, the battalion which took the village having had only two men wounded, while the enemy left in our hands 1,200 prisoners.”

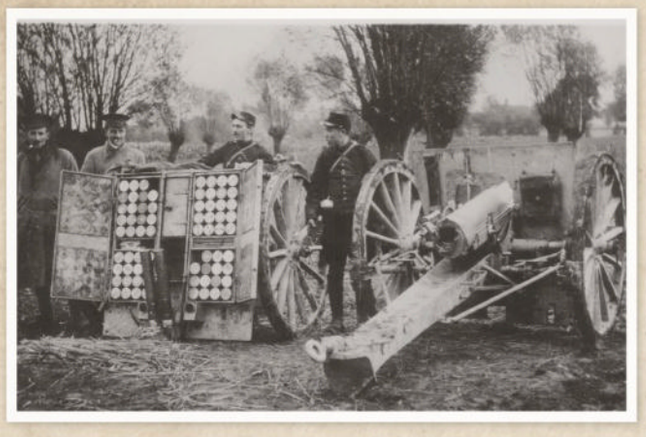
North of the river Marie-Éugene Debeney, who had succeeded Pétain as professor of infantry tactics at the staff college before the war (and who, like Pétain, came from France’s elite chasseur à pied light-infantry), commanded XXXII Corps with aplomb. On 25 September his troops captured Rancourt village advancing under a curtain of supporting fire “as if on exercise” in the opinion of one observer. Debeney’s staff college lectures had stressed that firepower was the mainstay of effective infantry tactics, and by this point in the war it had become standard operational practice. When, in May 1917, Pétain became head of the French army after General Robert Nivelle’s disappointing spring offensive, Debeney would come to GHQ as his chief of staff. Pétain had commanded the defence of Verdun in 1916, crowning that battle with two striking, limited advances masterminded by Nivelle. Nivelle was not a professor and, despite his claim of innovation that brought him over-promotion, his methods, as Fayolle dismissed them, were merely “the methods used on the Somme reconfigured”.

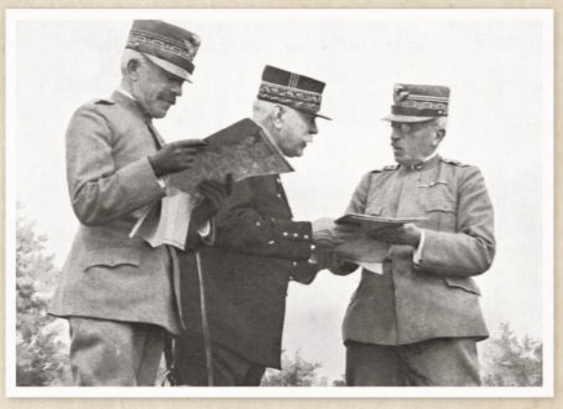
Although the Somme offensive was ultimately unsuccessful, useful lessons were apparent. These new tactical and operational methods would become standard after Pétain and Debeney retrained the army in ‘bite and hold’ tactics during 1917. New strategic concepts were also emerging. “Manoeuvre by movement [along the front] is the only way on a front on which one cannot turn the flanks and can be managed against an enemy with inferior numbers. The enemy command will be uncertain and worried and will be demoralised rapidly the more its reserves are committed and it suffers partial defeats. Finally, the last blow struck will find them materially and morally powerless” – so noted Maxime Weygand, Foch’s chief of staff (himself a former lecturer at the army’s cavalry school), in early 1917.

In 1916 the French had insufficient material to attack in breadth, so they were obliged to push forwards in one location, losing momentum and suffering heavy casualties when faced with an alert, reinforced and determined defence. Lateral exploitation, done on a small scale on the Somme in September 1916, would speed up operations and multiply effects in the future. Maistre, now commanding Sixth Army, demonstrated the new methods in the short, sharp and smashing Battle of Malmaison at the end of October. Now largely forgotten since it does not conform to the stereotype of a First World War battle, Malmaison was in the judgement of historian Cyril Falls “the perfect offensive”. Maistre seized one end of the Chemin des Dames ridge in a couple of days with relatively light casualties, forcing the now-enfiladed Germans to give up the rest of it – high ground they had held since 1914.

Unable any longer to hold their defensive positions against such methods, the Germans launched a final desperate offensive in spring 1918. In response, Foch was raised to the position of allied generalissimo. Understanding from the Somme that deep advances ran out of momentum sooner or later – “the waves decrease” as he phrased

***Below:** The ‘bite and hold’ tactic, ensuring formations did not become isolated but were properly supported, was highly successful later in the war*





it – Foch was confident that he could contain the enemy's blows. His subordinates could be trusted to stop the enemy. Fayolle and Debeney took command of the defence against the first attack in the Somme region in March, while Maistre was hurried into battle to block the biggest penetration on the Marne in June.

Even though Erich Ludendorff's blows were more powerful than anything seen since 1914, since he was still pursuing the false goal of 'breakthrough' they simply reshaped the defensive front and drew the German army into vulnerable salients. Against these, Foch put into effect the grand offensive scheme he had been nurturing since the Somme offensive. Then he had concluded, in future "we should not just [fight] a battle like we did on… the Somme, but [organise] an offensive system against the enemy's defensive system. In our offensive we begin well and then slow down as we find it difficult to get on and the enemy organises the defensive. One must find the means to make the commencement more successful and go deeper (tanks, armoured cars etc)… One must find the way to produce them in sufficient numbers to engage them at a number of points on the front and repeat on a new sector when the others have been checked." Foch would do exactly that to end the war.

Between the battles of Amiens and Montdidier, 8-11 August, in which armour including new Renault FT17 fast, light tanks were deployed en masse, and the armistice on 11 November, Foch delivered a series of co-ordinated blows all along the Western Front that pushed the enemy back, all the while wearing out their powers of resistance, in a high-tempo, sustained attritional offensive. "These actions must succeed each other at brief intervals, so as to embarrass the enemy in the utilisation of his reserves and not allow him sufficient time to fill his units," he had instructed the allied army commanders before the offensive commenced. His system was more modern that Ludendorff's, as the result showed: by the armistice the German army had all but collapsed as a fighting force.

Pétain directed the French element of the offensive. Fayolle and Maistre were his subordinate army group commanders coordinating distinct army-sized offensives. Debeney was in command of First Army, the principal French striking force in the centre of the front, working with the British on his left. Debeney described the final phase of his war as a "victorious offensive, which rolled out in fits and starts as was dictated by modern tactics and the intensive use of material". In three months' fighting, he conducted three successful set-piece battles – Montdidier, St Quentin and Guise – with pursuit operations in between. Toughest was engaging and reducing the Hindenburg Line defences around St Quentin. The supposedly impregnable defensive system the Germans had constructed after their mauling on the Somme proved obsolescent by 1918. Systematic yet unshowy, material-intensive and sparing of lives, Debeney's methods – the French army's methods – were appropriate and effective to surmount any defensive challenge the Germans posed; "the firing line that marches forwards", as he would call it when he was head of the staff college after the war. It was fitting that Germany's armistice plenipotentiaries should cross his front lines on 10 November – he and his fellow professors had relearnt and mastered war.

Historians writing about the French army's adaptation to modern warfare between 1914 and 1918 have generally emphasised Pétain's contribution over Foch's. Pétain certainly had a great influence over tactics, doctrine and training; Foch's input was at the higher operational and strategic levels. The origins of the controlled all-arms battle, the foundation of French military effectiveness (and in time other armies' – the French were great proselytisers) can be seen in Pétain's tactics and Foch's operational system of late 1915 and 1916. These came together in the 'Hundred Days' Offensive in 1918. By then they could rely on skilled subordinates, who had learned their trade on the battlefield, reflecting on and adapting the military principles they had been taught before the war at the staff college. A remarkable, unique group of professors, and their pupils, won France her greatest military victory of modern times.

***Top left:** A French 75mm artillery piece on the front line*

***Top right:** a France's military college in Paris, pictured in 1914*

***Above left:** Philippe Pétain stated that "the artillery conquers, the infantry occupies"*

***Above right:** General Joffre confers with Italian generals Carlo Porro (left), and Luigi Cadorna (right) September 1915*

Images: Alamy, Getty

GUDERIAN

THE MAN BEHIND THE GENERAL

Hailed as the fearless spearhead of Germany's armoured forces, Heinz Guderian's private letters home reveal a more fragile truth

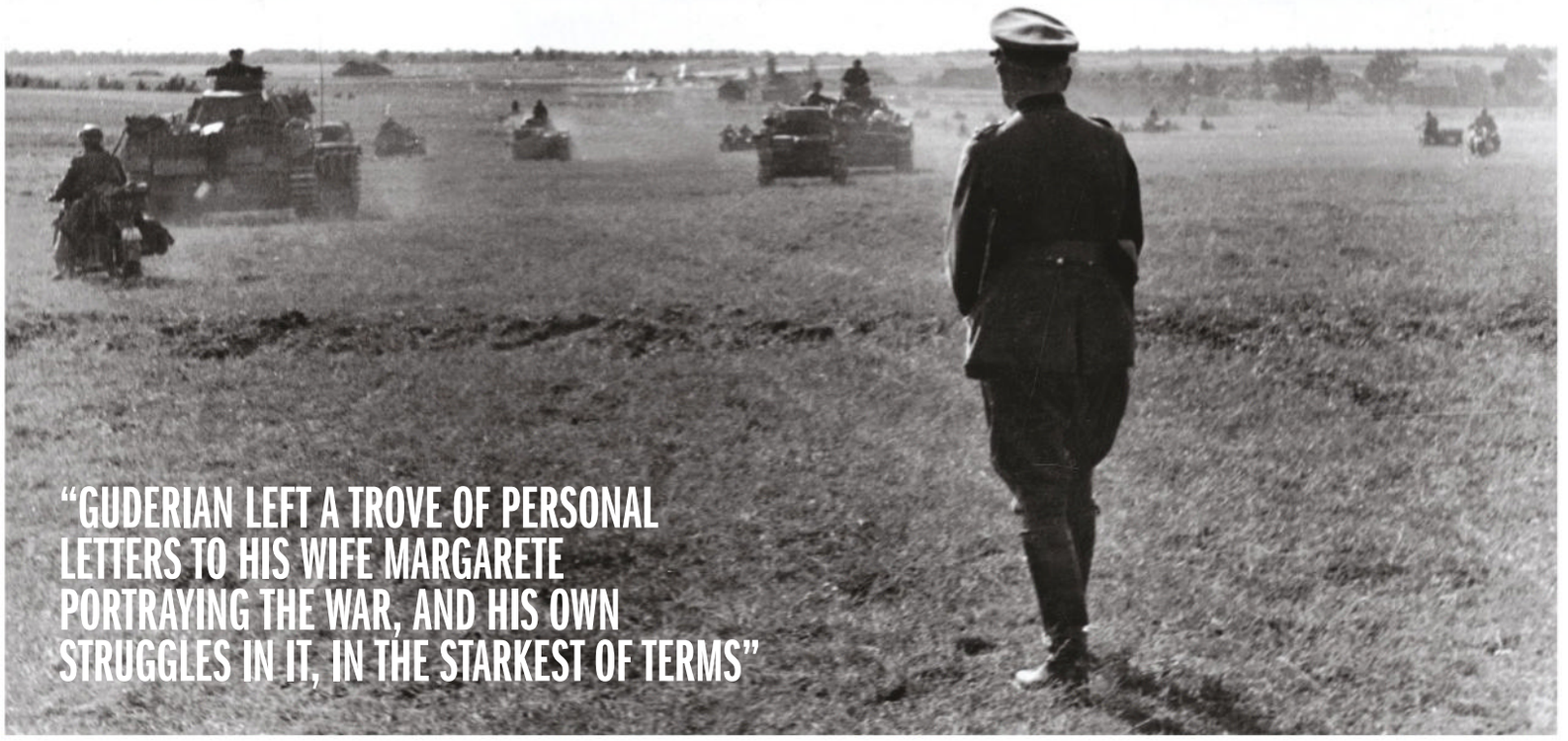
WORDS **DAVID STAHEL**

The picture of Heinz Guderian, like Erwin Rommel or Walter Model, probably evokes an image of a steely eyed man leading from the front and, almost invariably, striking a commanding pose. This is no accident. The leading panzer generals were accompanied by so-called 'propaganda companies', who took thousands of images and framed the war around bold and dashing commanders triumphing over the enemy by guile, intellect and sheer force of personality. The published images of National Socialism's warrior leaders had to reflect this stylised man, and Guderian was uniquely skilled at performing the part, while also understanding the difference between war in reality and war in the public imagination. Yet if the stoic man with a confident smile was a front for the camera, who was the real Guderian? Who was the man behind the general?

For most German generals, questions like this would be impossible to answer, but Guderian left a trove of personal letters to his wife Margarete portraying the war, and his own struggles in it, in the starkest of terms. The contrast between the Guderian of German propaganda and the man who has appeared in our history books is not as great as one might imagine. In fact, those two men bear little resemblance to the one privately writing letters home from the front, especially in 1941 as his Panzer Group 2 unsuccessfully attempted to subdue the Soviet Union.

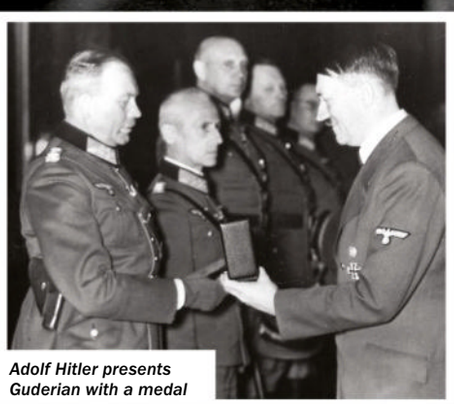
There is no question that Guderian was bold and brave, and in the early weeks of the invasion of the Soviet Union it looked as though the key commanders in the East were headed for another sweeping victory followed by a new set of accolades and public rewards. On 12 July 1941 Guderian's confidence was sky-high as he believed an end to Soviet resistance was at hand, writing Margarete: "I hope to defeat them in the coming days […] and achieve in the process a success that will decide the campaign in our favour."

On 17 July Guderian was awarded the Oak Leaves to the Knight's Cross (only the 24th man in the army to receive this distinction). His beaming smile was the public face of the victories at Smolensk and Kiev with the cinema



"GUDERIAN LEFT A TROVE OF PERSONAL LETTERS TO HIS WIFE MARGARETE PORTRAYING THE WAR, AND HIS OWN STRUGGLES IN IT, IN THE STARKEST OF TERMS"

Heinz Wilhelm Guderian
(June 1888 – May 1954)



Adolf Hitler presents Guderian with a medal

A contemplative Guderian looks out the window while onboard an aircraft during World War II

German tanks line up to cross the Meuse River in the Ardennes as the Wehrmacht pours into France, 1940

Images © Alamy, Getty

German Mark III tanks cross a river on the Eastern Front

Fire rages through a village outside the besieged city of Leningrad, 1941. In the foreground villagers can be seen saving their possessions

Field Marshal Walter Model discusses the Germans' progress in the early stages of Operation Barbarossa, 1941

newsreel series, *Die Deutsche Wochenschau*, focusing on Guderian as the principal German commander. Yet his victories were by no means bloodless and his panzer group was suffering dramatic losses in vehicles and tanks, partly as a result of combat but mainly as a result of the vast distances it was being asked to travel on extremely poor roads. At the beginning of the campaign Guderian's panzer group numbered some 953 tanks of all models, but five weeks later, on July 29, only 286 tanks remained – a 70 per cent loss of its original strength. As the panzer group's war diary noted, "this figure is exceedingly low". More worrying still, of the remaining total only 135 tanks consisted of the modern Mark III and Mark IV designs; the other 128 tanks consisted of the obsolete Mark II.

The cost of the campaign was also measured in the enormous psychological strain it exacted on commanders like Guderian, something he revealed to Margarete in early August: "Your loving compliments on the Oak Leaves did me good, especially as the gruelling irritations are not yet over [...] I don't know how long my heart and nerves will be able to endure it. Right now, I'm running on empty." Guderian concluded his letter: "My mood is fluctuating a lot; at present, I'm at a low point."

Just how much the stress of command impacted Guderian's psychological well-being was captured in another letter at the end of August when he wrote: "My health is good, but I'm otherwise unwell." In parallel to Germany's waning offensive strength, Guderian's mental

"HIS UNCOMPROMISING ATTITUDES POLARISED OPINIONS, MAKING HIM LOVED AND HATED THROUGHOUT THE CHAIN OF COMMAND"

health was in steep decline and his letters from the autumn and winter would reflect just how far the deterioration extended.

There is no doubt that Guderian was a strong-willed personality, but his uncompromising attitudes polarised opinions, making him both loved and hated throughout the army's chain of command. Publicly, however, he was venerated as one of Germany's most loved 'celebrity' commanders, and even the media of foreign adversaries singled him out with a degree of respect and foreboding. Yet the war in the East rapidly wore down even the toughest men, and by 11 October he wrote to Margarete of his need to "unburden my heart to another human being". Although Guderian appears to have enjoyed positive relations among his staff, he noted: "As an older person – I am ever more isolated and the young people increasingly keep their distance. In spite of the very nice way of life in my staff, I feel this more and more." Four days later, Guderian admitted to experiencing "many emotions" and reminiscing about "lovelier and generally carefree times". Yet Guderian was fighting the impulse for melancholy because, as he told Margarete, "I don't want to give you a heavy heart" and because he was worried about the state of his men, for whom "one must be a good example [...] and bring himself to merriment, a daily new struggle".

Shortly thereafter Guderian came down with a terrible cold, writing that it "must also be endured in good spirits". Privately, however, his letters were drifting more and more into fantasies of home life, writing at length on 21 October about his envy for Margarete's life of "peace and the contentment" and concluding: "My longing for a reunion and our happy, blissfully sweet life together becomes ever stronger." It was a stark contrast with his portrayal of life at the front: "Here there is no personal touch, no spirit, no contentment. In this country, the beauty is just as tramped down as the spirit. Everything has become a bleak, mechanic, heartless machinery, hideous and squalid, indescribably feeble. One has to have seen it to know what it's like."

Guderian's downcast outlook was not only a notable contrast from his earlier letters in June and July but a source of growing concern for Margarete. Writing on 5 November, she observed: "Your report sounds very wistful and, unfortunately, not very hopeful and confident [...] I'm very troubled by that."

Remarkably, on 12 November Guderian suddenly wrote to Margarete that he had tried to leave the front and return home for

a visit but was prevented by snowstorms. He said he would try again on 13 November, but this attempt would also prove unsuccessful. Granting oneself a leave of absence, however short, in the midst of operations was certainly an extraordinary liberty that, on the one hand, speaks to Guderian's disconsolate frame of mind, but on the other it highlights the hypocrisy of generals who expected and demanded so much more of their men. Only days before Guderian had described the morning frosts and viscous mud as "torture for the troops", but his emerging depression had become evident in every letter. "Hopefully, I can soon adopt somewhat happier tones. Complaining does not come naturally to me. But at present it is difficult to be in good spirits." Compounding his psychological angst, or perhaps as a physiological manifestation of his emotional state, Guderian's health suddenly declined. In addition to a worsening of his long-standing sciatic condition, his stomach was upset and he also noted that he was suffering from "severe headaches".

A German soldier assaults a Soviet bunker with a flamethrower

Not surprisingly, Guderian's thoughts again turned to home and he began speculating about whether some of his divisions might be sent back to Germany for replenishment. "I don't yet know whether I'll stay here or receive another task; hopefully the latter." Given that the overwhelming bulk of Germany's armoured forces were deployed in the East and Guderian had always styled himself as the preeminent panzer leader, it was a telling admission. The sluggish progress of the campaign by the end of November and the unending hardships weighed tremendously on Guderian, and his letters of despair telegraphed his mood. On 21 November he admitted to Margarete: "Yesterday I was on the brink of despair and a bag of nerves. Today, the unexpected combat success of the brave tank divisions provided me with a new ray of hope; whether it can be sustained will become clear over the coming days." More and more, Margarete's own letters were responding to her husbands's emotional state, seeking to counter his dejection and boost his waning

Crouching beside a tank, a German anti-tank crew man their gun on the outskirts of a blazing Soviet village

self-esteem because she alone recognised the depths to which he was sinking.

Her letter of 27 November read: "Your last letter saddened me again, because I cannot help you in your present situation or even care for you. Your concerns for your loyal, brave men are no doubt very oppressive and can scarcely be remedied. […] I hear from all sides that you possess the hearts of your soldiers. You can feel happy and proud of this! […] If only I could give you the same feeling!"

When Colonel General Wolfram von Richthofen, commanding the VIII Air Corps, which provided aerial support for Guderian, visited him on 7 December, he alluded afterwards in his diary to the shattered man he encountered: "To Guderian. Very open discussion. He is only externally hard, otherwise made of jelly. I actually wanted to be consoled by him and instead had to do it myself for him! Bitter and difficult."

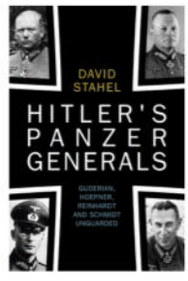
No longer was Guderian's thinly disguised depression hidden from view by the façade of a once indomitable reputation for towering self-confidence. His state of mind mimicked the steady disintegration of his panzer forces as the casualty lists grew ever longer. Writing again on 10 December, as the Soviet winter offensive was only just beginning, Guderian lamented: "I naturally make the greatest effort to do my duty, but it greatly aggrieves me not to be able to better remedy the hardship of the troops."

The extent of that helplessness was explained in a letter written on 16 December: "During the night I often lay sleepless and rack my brains for what else I could do to help my poor men, who must remain outside, unprotected in this winter weather. It is terrible, inconceivable. […] The feeling of not being understood and being helplessly at the mercy of the circumstances is simply nerve-wracking."

Finally, Guderian admitted to Margarete that he had reached an unprecedented low point: "How we are supposed to come out of this again, I don't yet know myself. […] I cannot recall having ever been so anxious for professional reasons as I am now and I only hope that I can endure it." Days later, on 19 December, the commander of the Second Army, General of Panzer Troops Rudolf Schmidt, met with Guderian and observed that the once "great optimist" had reached "the end of his hopes".

Guderian was soon dismissed from his post and sent home to Germany for repeatedly ordering unauthorised withdrawals. Without his letters informing historians about his fragile mental state, the analysis of these events has been represented simply as Guderian's firebrand independence and resolute rejection of higher authority. Yet it cannot be ignored that his actions directly led to his own dismissal and therefore gave him his much-desired release from the torments of command. Given his flagrant acts of insubordination, Guderian may well have been consciously or unconsciously complicit in manufacturing his own departure from the Eastern Front, thereby avoiding the shame of deserting his post at a time of crisis.

Such new insights underline the importance that private letter collections by Guderian, and other senior generals, constitute for historians. They offer an invaluable glimpse into the men who commanded Hitler's armies, revealing how wartime propaganda and self-styled post-war memoirs often allowed corrupted images to pervade even the best histories of the Second World War.



David Stahel is the senior lecturer in History at the University of New South Wales. His new book, *Hitler's Panzer Generals: Guderian, Hoepner, Reinhardt and Schmidt Unguarded* (Cambridge University Press), is now available to purchase.

“HE MAY HAVE BEEN COMPLICIT IN MANUFACTURING HIS DEPARTURE FROM THE FRONT, THEREBY AVOIDING THE SHAME OF ABANDONING HIS POST AT A TIME OF CRISIS”

Guderian gazes out from his command car, a radio- equipped model of an Sd Kfz 251 Funk, during the battle at Baturin, September 1941

A German armoured column stops on a road outside of Moscow. The failure to capture the city spelled doom for Operation Barbarossa

M3 BRADLEY

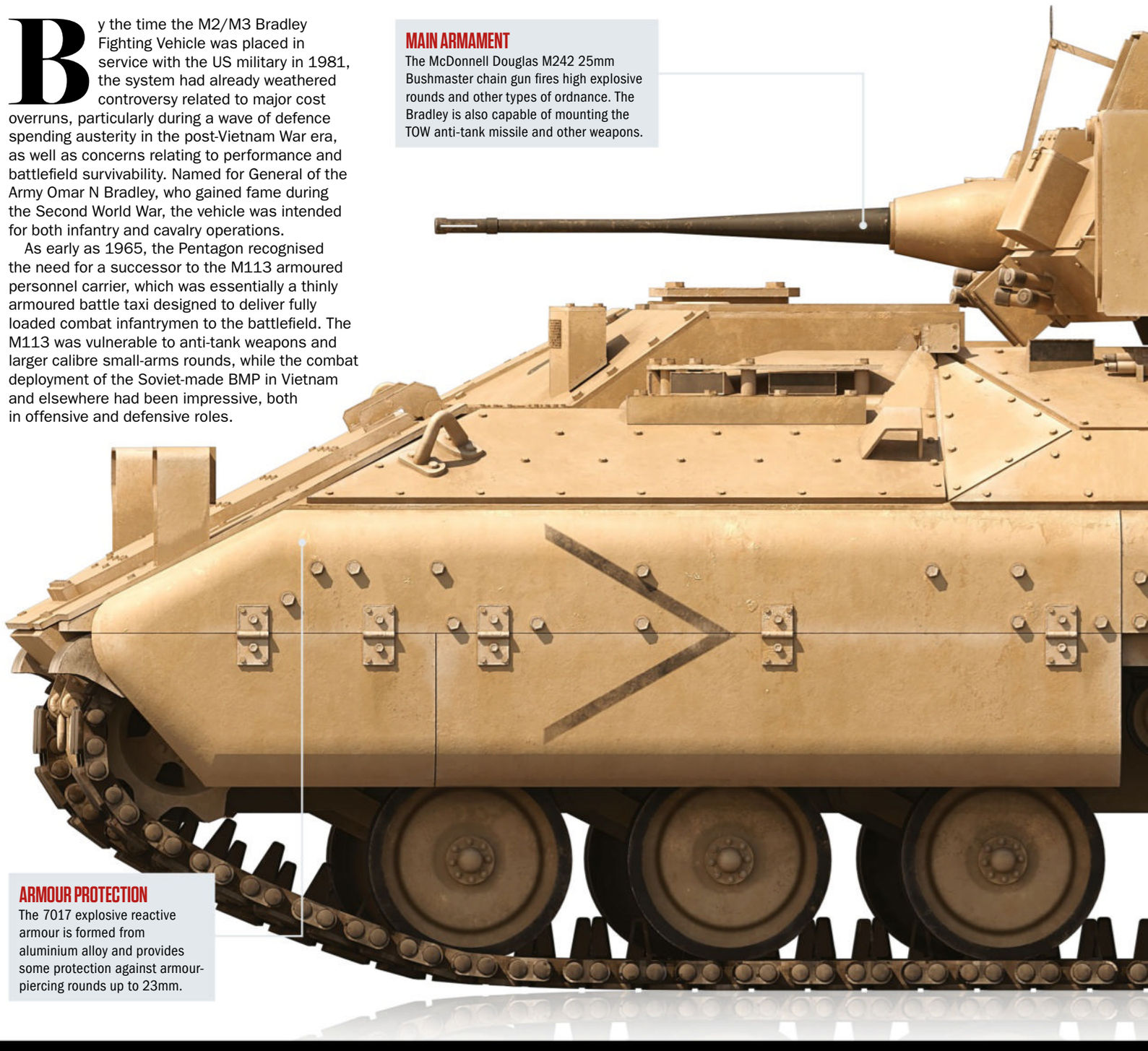
The product of years of development controversy, the Bradley Fighting Vehicle is proven in battle

WORDS **MICHAEL E HASKEW**

By the time the M2/M3 Bradley Fighting Vehicle was placed in service with the US military in 1981, the system had already weathered controversy related to major cost overruns, particularly during a wave of defence spending austerity in the post-Vietnam War era, as well as concerns relating to performance and battlefield survivability. Named for General of the Army Omar N Bradley, who gained fame during the Second World War, the vehicle was intended for both infantry and cavalry operations.

As early as 1965, the Pentagon recognised the need for a successor to the M113 armoured personnel carrier, which was essentially a thinly armoured battle taxi designed to deliver fully loaded combat infantrymen to the battlefield. The M113 was vulnerable to anti-tank weapons and larger calibre small-arms rounds, while the combat deployment of the Soviet-made BMP in Vietnam and elsewhere had been impressive, both in offensive and defensive roles.

MAIN ARMAMENT
The McDonnell Douglas M242 25mm Bushmaster chain gun fires high explosive rounds and other types of ordnance. The Bradley is also capable of mounting the TOW anti-tank missile and other weapons.



ARMOUR PROTECTION
The 7017 explosive reactive armour is formed from aluminium alloy and provides some protection against armour-piercing rounds up to 23mm.

In addition to transporting infantry safely into combat zones, the Bradley was intended to provide fire support during the operations of dismounted infantry and to destroy enemy tanks and armoured vehicles that might threaten those troops. One specific requirement emerged during the course of Bradley development – enough speed to keep pace on the road and in open country with the modern M1 Abrams main battle tank.

Overcoming its detractors, the Bradley has become a stalwart of the US armed forces and those of several other countries. Its service longevity is demonstrated by its recent shipment to Ukraine and its adaptability amid ongoing research and development of a viable replacement.

ENGINE

The early M2 Bradley was powered by a 500hp, eight cylinder, supercharged diesel engine. This engine was later upgraded to a 600hp, eight cylinder Cummins VTA-903T diesel.

CAPACITY/ACCESS

The early Bradley carried up to seven infantry, while later models transported six, with access via a rear ramp door or roof hatch.

M2/M3 BRADLEY FV

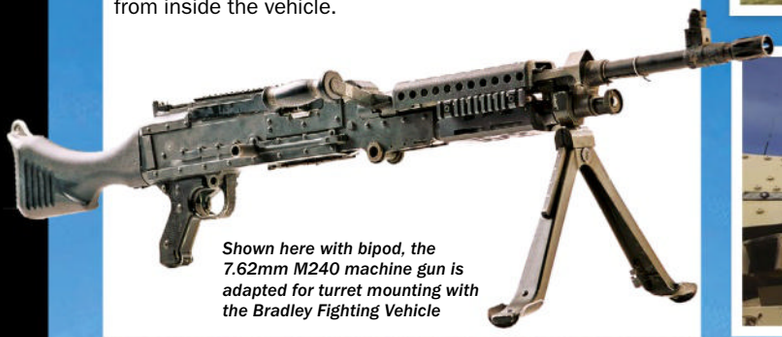
COMMISSIONED	1981
ORIGIN	USA
LENGTH	21.5FT (6.5M)
RANGE	250 MILES (402KM)
ENGINE	600HP CUMMINS VTA-903T DIESEL
CREW	3
PRIMARY WEAPON	MCDONNELL DOUGLAS M242 25MM CHAIN GUN; TOW MISSILE
SECONDARY WEAPON	7.62MM M240C MACHINE GUN
ARMOUR	ALUMINIUM ALLOY EXPLOSIVE REACTIVE; LAMINATE; APPLIQUÉ

"THE BRADLEY HAS BECOME A STALWART OF THE US ARMED FORCES"

Illustration: Nicholas Forder

ARMAMENT

The main armament of the M2/M3 Bradley Fighting Vehicle is the McDonnell Douglas M242 Bushmaster 25mm chain gun, which fires high-explosive or armour-piercing ammunition at a rate of up to 200 rounds per minute and effective range of 2,187 yards (2,000m). The Bradley is also armed with the Hughes Aircraft TOW or TOW II anti-tank missile that is fired from a tube launcher adjacent to the turret and is capable of defeating enemy main battle tanks. Later upgrades accommodate the Dragon or Javelin anti-tank missiles as well. A secondary 7.62mm machine gun is mounted coaxially in the turret, while firing slits in the crew compartment enable infantrymen to engage the enemy from inside the vehicle.



Shown here with bipod, the 7.62mm M240 machine gun is adapted for turret mounting with the Bradley Fighting Vehicle

***Above:** An M2 Bradley Fighting Vehicle fires a TOW anti-tank missile during exercises*

***Left:** The 25mm M242 Bushmaster chain gun fires at a rate of up to 200 rounds per minute*

"SLITS IN THE CREW COMPARTMENT ENABLE INFANTRYMEN TO ENGAGE THE ENEMY FROM INSIDE THE VEHICLE"

The missile launch system is clearly visible adjacent to the turret of this M3 Bradley Fighting Vehicle

DESIGN

The M2/M3 Bradley Fighting Vehicle is designed both for infantry and cavalry operations. The M2 infantry version, originally designed to carry a crew of three and seven fully equipped infantrymen into battle and provide fire support, was reconfigured to carry six infantrymen in a rear compartment accessed by hatch or rear ramp. The M3 cavalry variant accommodates two scout infantrymen along with enhanced communications capability to serve as a command or reconnaissance vehicle. The only major design difference between the M2 and M3 is the absence of firing slits in the M3 rear compartment. The T-BAT-II (TOW-Bushmaster Armoured Turret-Two Man) turret houses a computerised integrated sight unit (ISU) for the M242 chain gun and TOW missile package.

ENGINE

The original powerplant of the M2/M3 Bradley Fighting Vehicle was a 500hp, eight-cylinder supercharged diesel engine. This was later upgraded to the 600hp, eight-cylinder Cummins VTA903T diesel engine capable of producing a top speed of 41mph (66kp/h). The engine upgrade gives the Bradley the ability to maintain speed and advance in company with the M1 Abrams series of main battle tanks. The Cummins diesel was originally designed to heavy truck specifications and was first delivered for installation with upgraded Bradley Fighting Vehicles in 1991. During the decade that followed, more than 11,000 examples of the VTA903T series engine were provided.

***Above:** The Cummins VTA903T diesel engine powers both the M2 and M3 Bradley Fighting Vehicle variants*

***Above:** US soldiers board an M2 Bradley Fighting Vehicle via the rear loading ramp during operations in Iraq*

***Below:** An M3 Bradley Fighting Vehicle fires its M242 25mm chain gun during exercises in Slovakia*

SERVICE HISTORY

The M2/M3 Bradley Fighting Vehicle has been in service with the US military for more than 40 years, and nearly 7,000 were constructed between 1980 and 1995. Numerous upgrades involving enhanced armour protection, diverse missile systems, urban combat and other packages have been completed at regular intervals.

In 2023, the United States supplied Ukraine with 109 M2 Bradleys for deployment in that country's ongoing war with Russia. Reports from the battlefield indicate that at least 15 Bradleys were destroyed or damaged during the Ukrainian offensive that began in June 2023; however, these claims are subject to revision, and it is expected that the Bradley can provide the Ukrainian armed forces with the mobility, protection and firepower needed to sustain combat operations.

The service record of the M2/M3 Bradley Fighting Vehicle provides a riposte to early detractors. As well as Ukraine, it has been successfully deployed in hotspots and combat zones around the world with the armed forces of the United States, Saudi Arabia, Greece, Lebanon and Croatia. Its armament has, on more than one occasion, proven decisive in combat with Soviet-era main battle tanks.

Most famously, the Bradley participated in the Gulf War of 1990-91 and contributed to the destruction of the Medina and Tawakalna Divisions of the elite Iraqi Republican Guard. In fact, some post-war assessments credit the Bradley with the destruction of more Soviet-made T-54/55, export T-72 and Chinese Type 69 tanks than the M1A1 Abrams main battle tank.

Replacement designs are in the works, but the Bradley has proven an adaptable combat platform in the Balkans, the Middle East and Europe.

An M2 Bradley Fighting Vehicle provides fire support to deployed combat infantrymen during joint exercises with German soldiers

An M2 Bradley Fighting Vehicle kicks up a cloud of dust during operations in Iraq in 2004

***Above:** The Bradley has been successfully deployed in many conflicts around the world*

"EARLY REPORTS FROM THE BATTLEFIELD INDICATE THAT AT LEAST 15 BRADLEYS HAVE BEEN DESTROYED OR DAMAGED DURING THE UKRAINIAN OFFENSIVE"

INTERIOR

The interior of the M2/M3 Bradley Fighting vehicle is divided into the crew compartment forward, the rear compartment housing up to six fully equipped combat infantrymen, and the T-BAT-II (TOW-Bushmaster Armoured Turret-Two Man) turret. The driver is seated forward and to the left in the hull with the engine to his right, while the commander and driver are housed in the turret. The three-man crew trains as an integrated team. The six infantrymen are seated on benches in the rear compartment of the M2, while two scout infantrymen occupy the space in the M3 along with additional communication equipment and ammunition.

***Above:** The interior of the M2/M3 Bradley Fighting Vehicle is compact but functional in either infantry or cavalry configuration*

***Below:** US infantrymen stand outside the open rear ramp of an M3 Bradley Fighting Vehicle. The M3 is the cavalry variant*

Images Alamy, Getty, Wiki / PD / Gov

HITLER'S DREAM OF POWER REQUIRED LOYAL COMMANDERS AND KILLER MACHINES

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74 WWII THIS MONTH

The invasion of mainland Italy begins with multiple amphibious landings

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WWII THIS MONTH...

SEPTEMBER 1943

To commemorate 80 years since the Second World War, **History of War** will be taking a look at some of the key events taking place during each month of the conflict

OPERATION AVALANCHE

After the successful invasion of Sicily in July 1943, the Allies turned their attention to the Italian mainland to gain a larger foothold in southern Europe. The aim was to push back German forces and the remnants of the Italian Army after the fall of Mussolini's regime on 25 July. The invasion of Italy comprised of three separate landings made by British, Canadian and American troops. Operation Avalanche was the largest of the landings, taking place at Salerno. A combined American and British force landed on the beaches at Salerno, with support from the Royal Navy and US Navy.

NADZAB AIRPORT SEIZED

On 5 September 1943, a combined American and Australian operation to capture the Japanese-held airport at Nadzab in the east of New Guinea was launched. General Douglas MacArthur heralded the operation as the first major parachute jump in the Pacific Theatre. The 503rd Parachute Infantry Regiment and the Australian 2/4th Field Regiment took part, with Australian artillery dropped by parachute along with their crews to support the paratroopers. In all, 6,000 men were involved in seizing the airport in an attack which was described as "probably the text-book airborne operation of World War II" by Lieutenant Colonel John J Tolson, who commanded the 503rd during the battle.

American and Australian paratroopers dropped in unopposed at Nadzab, New Guinea, in September 1943

Allied troops land at Salerno during Operation Avalanche

BY SEA, NOT AIR

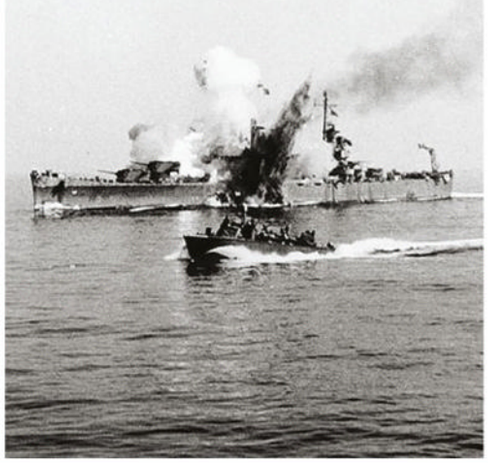
The heel of Italy was invaded by the men of the 1st Airborne Division in September 1943. However, there were insufficient numbers of transport aircraft available for an airborne drop and the paratroopers were taken to the Italian coast by vessels from the Royal Navy. One of the ships, HMS Abdiel, was sunk on 10 September by two sea mines laid by German torpedo boats – 58 men were lost. The Taranto landings, codenamed Operation Slapstick, saw no loses to the British airborne forces on the ground, and upon entering Taranto itself the paratroopers were welcomed in unopposed by the Italian garrison as the German forces had pulled back earlier in the day.

British airborne troops aboard an LCA (Landing Craft Assault) head to Taranto as part of reinforcements during Operation Slapstick, 14 September 1943

FRITZ-X STRIKES

Light cruiser USS Savannah was part of the fleet aiding the invasion of Salerno and had assisted the landings by firing its deck guns at coastal positions. At 10am on 11 September the vessel was struck on turret 3 by a Fritz-X guided anti-ship bomb. The bomb was used to attack Allied shipping during the invasion with devastating effect. The Royal Navy cruiser HMS Uganda was also hit by a Fritz-X three days later. The attack on the Savannah cost the lives of 197 sailors and forced the ship to be taken to Malta for emergency repairs.

USS Savannah is hit by a German guided bomb off the coast of Salerno, 11 September 1943



SKORZENY'S GRAN SASSO RAID

After being ousted from power on 25 July, and following the subsequent Italian armistice on 3 September, Benito Mussolini had been arrested and was being held in a hotel on the Gran Sasso d'Italia mountain range. A raid to rescue him, codenamed Operation Oak, was personally ordered by Hitler, and consisted of a team of Waffen SS and Fallschirmjägers led by Otto Skorzeny. The German troops glided into the hotel grounds and subdued the 200-man Italian garrison without a shot being fired. Mussolini was flown out of the mountains just 20 minutes after the raid had begun.

"GERMAN TROOPS GLIDED INTO THE HOTEL GROUNDS AND SUBDUED THE 200-MAN ITALIAN GARRISON WITHOUT A SHOT BEING FIRED"

Benito Mussolini poses alongside the German commandos who rescued him from the Hotel Campo Imperatore, 12 September 1943

REVIEWS

Our pick of the latest military history books

LUCK OF THE DRAW

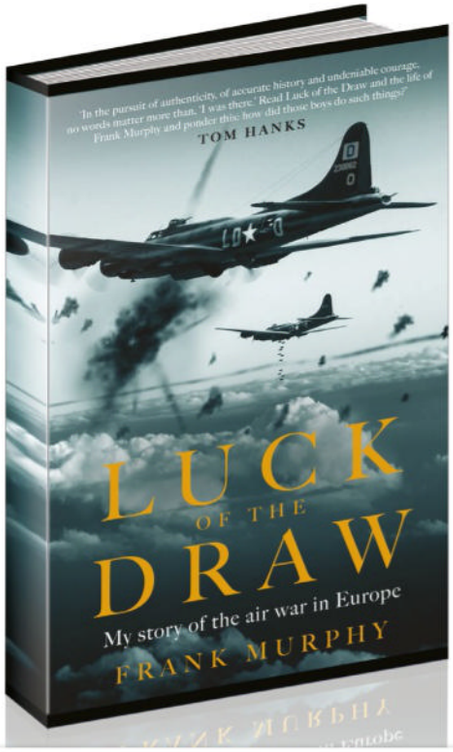
ONE US AIRMAN'S EXPERIENCE OVER NAZI-OCCUPIED EUROPE PROVIDES REAL INSIGHT

Author: Frank Murphy **Publisher:** Elliott & Thompson **Price:** £20.29 (Hardback) £15.99 (Kindle) **Released:** 5 October

"Our fighter support was nowhere in sight as we approached the German border and saw the first German fighter aircraft climbing to intercept us. Within minutes we were viciously attacked."

So wrote Frank Murphy, a former captain and navigator of Crew No31, 418th Bombardment Squadron, 100th Bomb Group, US Eighth Air Force during the Allied bombing campaign against Nazi Germany in the Second World War. The mission he recalled was one of the most difficult of the air war, and he relied on a fellow airman to describe the day more fully.

"Much has been written about the tremendous air battle at Regensburg, but Beirne Lay perhaps said it best: 'The sight was fantastic and surpassed fiction. Emergency hatches, exit doors, prematurely opened parachutes, bodies, and assorted fragments of B-17s and Hun fighters breezed past us in the slipstream. On we flew through the strewn wake of a desperate air battle, where disintegrating aircraft were commonplace and 60 parachutes in the air at one time were hardly worth a second look.'"



This vivid description of the costly raid against manufacturing infrastructure in the city of Regensburg, Germany, on 17 August 1943 reveals the harrowing nature of combat in the clouds. Frank Murphy and his B-17 Flying Fortress bomber, and fellow crewmen, survived that pulse-pounding experience, but Murphy's bomber was later shot down during a raid on the city of Münster, and he endured the privations of captivity as a German prisoner of war at Stalag Luft III from October 1943 until the end of the conflict.

A few years after Murphy's death at the age of 85 on 16 June 2007, his daughter and granddaughter revisited the manuscript recounting his experiences as a member of the US Army Air Forces' 100th Bomb Group, which had been nicknamed the 'Bloody Hundredth'. And they were gratified to see his memoir reach a wide audience with the book's publication in the USA. Murphy's painstaking preparation makes *Luck of the Draw* highly readable, as he completed exhaustive research, poring over records and interviewing veterans of both the US Army Air Forces and the Luftwaffe, men who

The docks and shipbuilding yards of Bremen are pounded by US bombers in one of the many raids against Nazi infrastructure

Images: Getty

“ALTHOUGH I DID MY BEST TO KILL HIM, I NOW HOPE HE SURVIVED THE WAR AND, LIKE ME, BECAME A FATHER AND A GRANDFATHER”

decades earlier had been determined to shoot down his bomber.

Murphy’s compelling impressions and gripping narrative caught the attention of filmmakers Steven Spielberg and Tom Hanks as well. His story is woven into their upcoming Apple TV+ drama series *Masters of the Air*. “In pursuit of authenticity, of accurate history and undeniable courage, no words matter more than: ‘I was there,’” commented Hanks. “Read *Luck of the Draw* and the life of Frank Murphy and ponder this: how did those boys do such a thing?”

During that same memorable mission over Regensburg, Murphy fired a .50-calibre machine gun at his enemy. He remembered: “The only instance in all my combat missions in which I knew positively that my bullets were hitting home was during this battle. An elegant, mottled-gray Me 109 fighter had made a pass at us from the rear and foolishly flew straight through our formation instead of rolling over and diving. He was travelling only slightly faster than we were and was making a slow climbing left turn about one hundred yards to our left when he came into view.

“He gave me an easy deflection shot, and I poured it on with my left nose gun. I could see my tracers ricocheting from the bottom of his aircraft as he disappeared behind us. I have no idea what happened to him, but I have often wondered. Although I did my best to kill him, I now hope he survived the war and, like me, became a father and a grandfather.”

Therein lies a remarkable aspect of Murphy’s experience in war so many years ago. After such a fiery trial he managed to hold onto a perspective, never losing his humanity. **MH**

B-17 Flying Fortress bombers attack a German fighter base at Amiens-Glisy aerodrome in France, September 1943

THE WEIMAR YEARS RISE AND FALL 1918-1933

A MAGISTERIAL AND AUTHORITATIVE DISSECTION OF THE WEIMAR REPUBLIC THAT ANALYSES WHAT LED TO ADOLF HITLER’S RISE TO POWER IN GERMANY

Author: Frank McDonough **Publisher:** Head of Zeus
Price: £35 (Hardback) **Released:** 31 August

Frank McDonough has now completed his very impressive trilogy on the troubled history of Germany in the first half of the 20th century. His latest book *The Weimar Years* brings his tale full circle following his two well-received volumes *The Hitler Years: Triumph 1933-39* and *Disaster 1940-1945*. McDonough, as you would expect from such an accomplished author, expertly guides the reader through the complex and heady events that led to the rise of Nazi Germany. This is compelling history writ large but with a judicious eye for detail.

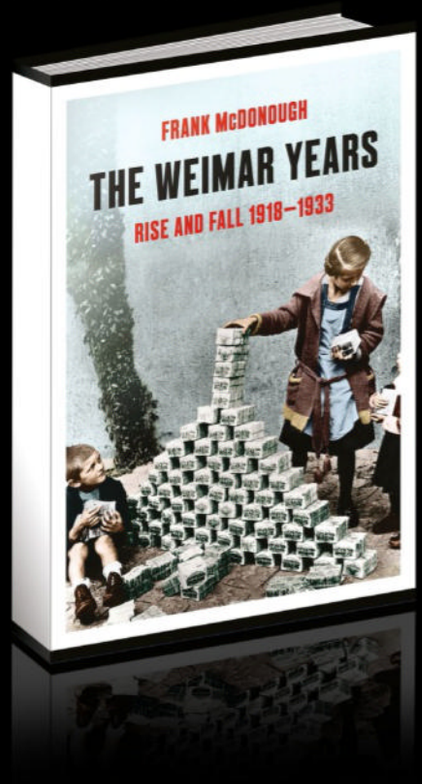
As the author recounts, after the First World War the Weimar Republic appeared to initially offer so much. It seemed to present the chance for rebirth following such a calamitous war in Europe. Germany briefly became a land of democracy, opportunity and inclusion. Berlin emerged as a place of hedonism and tolerance where anything went. The arts and cinema flourished, particularly expressionism. But all this ultimately floundered on the rocks of economic hardship and the polarisation of the political left and right. The latter would rise and coalesce on a tide of anti-communism and anti-Semitism. The Weimar Republic singularly failed to stop this corrosive process.

Weimar never managed to heal the national sense of betrayal after the Treaty of Versailles. McDonough recounts that as far as many Germans were concerned they did not lose the First World War, rather they were stabbed in the back by the terms of an unequitable armistice. The inclusion of the ‘war guilt clause’ in the treaty did little to ward off such notions. It was Versailles that held back Germany’s recovery and this perception became a festering national sore, which fuelled a terrible sense of grievance.

The breadth of McDonough’s research is impressive. This all-encompassing book, though, is not just a political study. It also examines the cultural and social factors that contributed to Germany becoming an abhorrent totalitarian state that would bring ruin and misery to the rest of Europe. The Nazis understood how to harness the power of the media to their nationalist cause and give it seductive mass appeal.

Like McDonough’s previous volumes *The Weimar Years* is lavishly illustrated throughout in black and white, and colour, for which the publisher Head of Zeus must be commended.

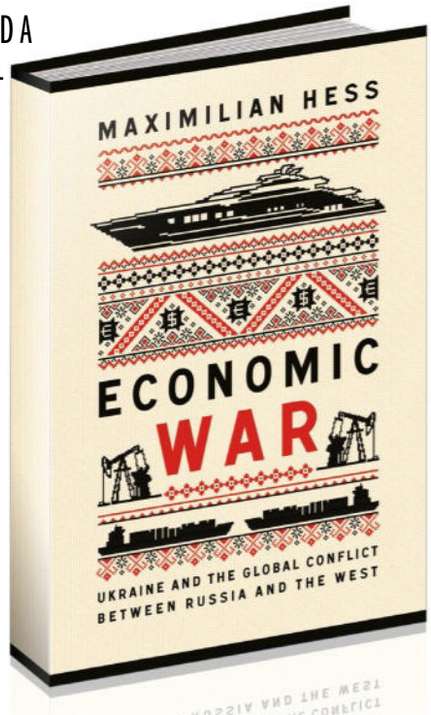
McDonough has written a vibrant and vital study of an era vastly overshadowed by subsequent events. It serves as a timely and sobering reminder not to take democracy for granted. He convincingly argues that proportional representation in Germany did not work because it led to increasingly weak coalition governments. He concludes that it was not the financial disaster of the Great Depression that brought down the Weimar Republic, rather Germany’s growing indifference to democratic values and the growing appeal of Hitler’s Nazi Party. Weimar tragically proved to be the road to disaster. **ATJ**



ECONOMIC WAR

HOW THE RUSSIAN INVASION OF UKRAINE IGNITED A GLOBAL ECONOMIC CONFLICT THAT AFFECTS US ALL

Author: Maximilian Hess
Publisher: Hurst
Price: £30 (Hardback)
Released: Out now



Russia's military assault on Ukraine has been capturing headlines since Vladimir Putin's army invaded the country in February 2022. However, it should not be forgotten that Russian intervention is not a new phenomenon for the Ukrainian people. They have suffered the Kremlin's aggression for nearly a decade, starting with the annexation of Crimea in 2014. Maximilian Hess' incisive book focuses on how the largest war in Europe since 1945 has transformed tensions between Russia and the West into an economic conflict with global repercussions.

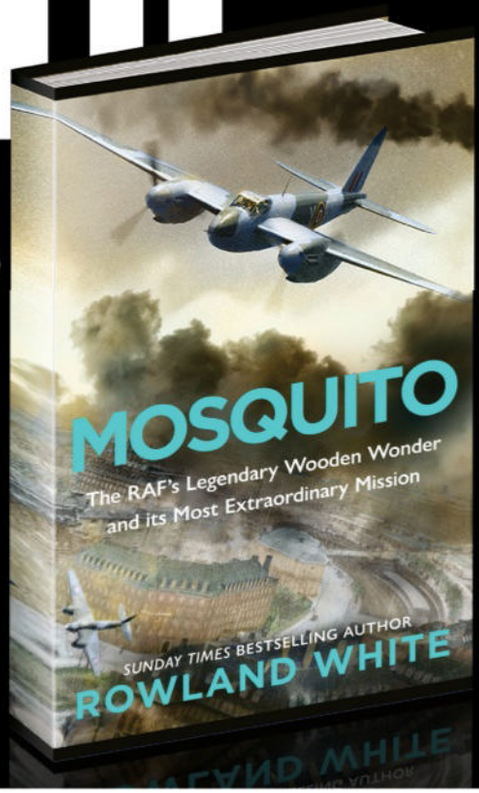
The author examines the economic impact of the war on Ukraine as well as the West's sanctions offensive against Russia, launched from the day hostilities began. This started with a direct assault on the banking system by freezing the assets of oligarchs, with the knock-on effect of pushing some of their business interests to the brink. The narrative then takes the readers into the fightback and Putin's commodities-based economic war strategy, and how the Russians blockaded Ukraine's ports and attempted to lay waste to Ukrainian agricultural and industrial production.

The economic war is far from over, says Hess, who puts forward the widely shared view that it is not likely to end while Putin remains in the Kremlin. "Its outcome," he stresses, "will be decisive factor in determining Ukraine's future." Regardless of whether Kyiv sweeps to victory on the battlefield, if Russia retains the economic wherewithal to regroup and renew its attack, it will. On the political front, Putin's full-scale invasion of Ukraine and the ensuing economic war should prompt consideration about how to strengthen the West's security and economic alliances. Looking ahead, Hess believes that Putin's failures in the economic war is certain to be the beginning of the end of his regime. **JS**

MOSQUITO

LEARN ABOUT THE RENOWNED AIRCRAFT AND ONE OF ITS REMARKABLE MISSIONS

Author: Rowland White **Publisher:** Transworld **Price:** £20 (Hardback)



The RAF's de Havilland Mosquito was one of the greatest and most versatile aircraft of the Second World War. Fast and manoeuvrable (partly due to its wooden construction) it saw service as a day and night fighter, bomber, strike aircraft over land and sea, and as a reconnaissance platform – and it excelled in all of those roles. Designed initially as a private venture by the de Havilland Aircraft Company, it first flew in November 1940 and entered service 12 months later. In 1942 the bomber version of the aircraft began the first of what would become a long series of legendary, extremely precise daylight raids on high-value targets, ranging from Gestapo headquarters and prisons to strategically important factories.

It is these precision daylight raids, carried out by No 140 Wing RAF, that form the focus of White's book, in particular the final major precision raid, on the Gestapo headquarters in the Shellhus in the heart of Copenhagen on 21 February 1945. With his usual deft touch and highly readable style, White weaves together the stories of the development of the Mosquito, the daylight raids and their crews, the development (with the aid of SOE) of the resistance network in Denmark, and the lives of the Danes who were involved on the ground. This is by no means a comprehensive history of the Mosquito, but instead a fascinating insight into one of the aircraft's most dramatic episodes while also drawing in the heroes who opposed the German occupation of Denmark. **SH**

Nazi troops in a destroyed village on the outskirts of Leningrad stand next to belongings left by retreating Russians

TO BESIEGE A CITY
LENINGRAD 1941-42

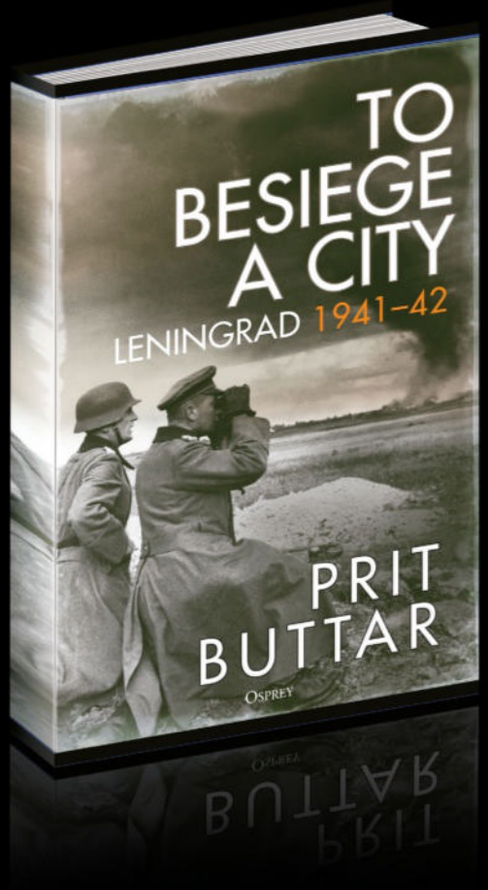
A SEARING AND THOROUGH ACCOUNT OF ONE OF THE MOST BRUTAL SIEGES IN HISTORY

Authors: Prit Buttar **Publisher:** Osprey **Price:** £30 (Hardback) **Released:** 14 September

Highly respected Eastern Front historian Prit Buttar has joined the ranks of the likes of David Glantz, Michael Jones and Harrison Salisbury in tackling the heroic and bloody defence of the city of Leningrad. Its geography, probably more than any other Soviet city, was to shape and influence the nature and ultimately the outcome of the fighting. Notably Buttar, although the siege lasted 900 days before it was lifted, has opted to focus purely on the first year. He argues that this was the decisive period in which Hitler came very close to capturing the heart of Bolshevism and Lenin's namesake.

Buttar opens by explaining how the intoxicating headlong rush of Hitler's Blitzkrieg through the Baltic States and towards Leningrad soon degenerated into a battlefield more reminiscent of the First World War. The landscape was one of dense forests, lakes, swamps and waterways, all ideal for defensive warfare. Furthermore, Hitler's ever changing strategic priorities meant that his Army Group North did not have sufficient resources to overwhelm the city's extensive defences. It was his decision to bombard and starve Leningrad into submission that consigned it to the full depravities of modern siege warfare.

Fortunately for the Red Army and the volunteer defenders the city was protected by a large surrounding defensive buffer. This encompassed Lake Ladoga to the northeast and the Gulf of Finland to the west. The heavily fortified, and heavily bombed, Kronstadt naval base helped defend the western approaches. Army Group North, despite its numerous devastating hammer blows delivered against the Red Army, was never able to completely cut off Leningrad from outside help. Lake Ladoga proved to be a particularly precious lifeline despite the best efforts of the Luftwaffe and the weather. Crucially, Hitler's Finnish allies also failed to come far enough south.



This dramatic book, which is the first major study in over a decade, is peppered with firsthand accounts. These vividly bring to life the terrible suffering endured by both sides. In the case of the Leningraders this included resorting to cannibalism, such were the food shortages during that first terrible winter. Although the Red Army's counteroffensives and relief efforts were continually thwarted the defenders never gave up.

Buttar's meticulous and even-handed research leaves no stone unturned, covering both sides with aplomb. Lesser-known elements are brought to the fore. For example, he recounts how a fascist Spanish volunteer division fought on the Leningrad front side-by-side with the Germans, with great distinction. Its losses were horrific. Also he recounts how Hitler foolishly threw away the element of surprise with his new Tiger tank. In his rush to commit it to battle it was deployed on terrain wholly unsuited for armoured warfare and inevitably a number fell intact into Russian hands. And it is through the tragic experiences of the ordinary people that the author really brings things alive. On the basis of this finely crafted book it is hoped that Buttar will continue chronicling the Siege of Leningrad to its bloody conclusion. **JS**

Image: Getty

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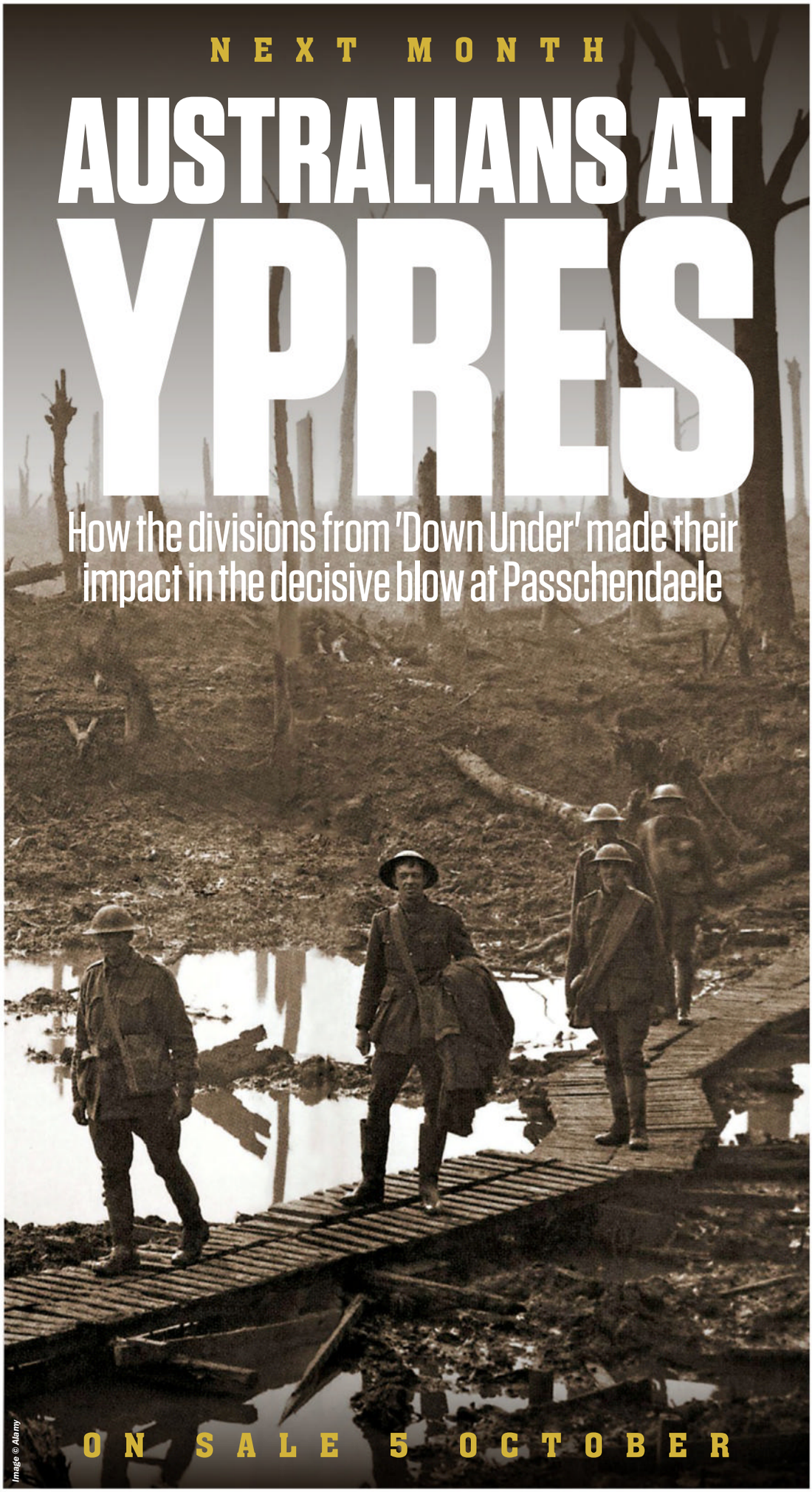

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DÖENITZ'S BATON

After Allied victory in Europe, Hitler's successor Grand Admiral Karl Döenitz was arrested – but how did his staff make its way to Shrewsbury?

By May 1945 the Second World War war in Europe had entered its final days. The Allies had successfully invaded Germany in March and Adolf Hitler committed suicide on 30 April. He was succeeded by Grand Admiral Karl Döenitz on 1 May. The remnants of the German government would attempt to remain in control of Germany into the immediate post-war era, but the Allies were staunchly opposed to this. Döenitz was arrested on 23 May in Flensburg close to Germany's border with Denmark.

During his arrest he was taken aboard the SS Patria in the town's harbour and his personal possessions were looted by British troops while aboard. Among the items taken was a ceremonial Admiralstab (German Imperial Admiralty Staff) that had been presented to him earlier in the war. Weighing 900g, it's made of silver and features Reichsadler (German Imperial Eagle) emblems made from solid gold. The top of the staff is decorated with a platinum depiction of a U-boat under a gold Reichsadler. The U-Boat was added at the request of Döenitz himself to symbolise his career within the Kriegsmarine. The staff was made by German jeweller HJ Wilm, who produced many items for high-ranking Nazi officials, including Hermann Göring.

At Flensburg a brigade of the 11th Armoured Division rounded up nearly 5,000 German troops and officers, and 756 arrests were made. This action was known as Operation Blackout and served to dismantle what remained of the German government and begin the process of prosecuting those responsible for war crimes. Men from the 1st Battalion Hereford Regiment arrested Döentiz and his staff was presented to Brigadier JB Churcher, who had commanded the operation. In 1964 he donated the staff to the King's Shropshire Light Infantry Museum in Shrewsbury – now called the Soldiers of Shropshire Museum.

Döenitz's Admiralstab is one of only two produced for members of the German high command. The platinum U-boat on the hilt was added at the request of Döenitz

Images: Alamy, Getty

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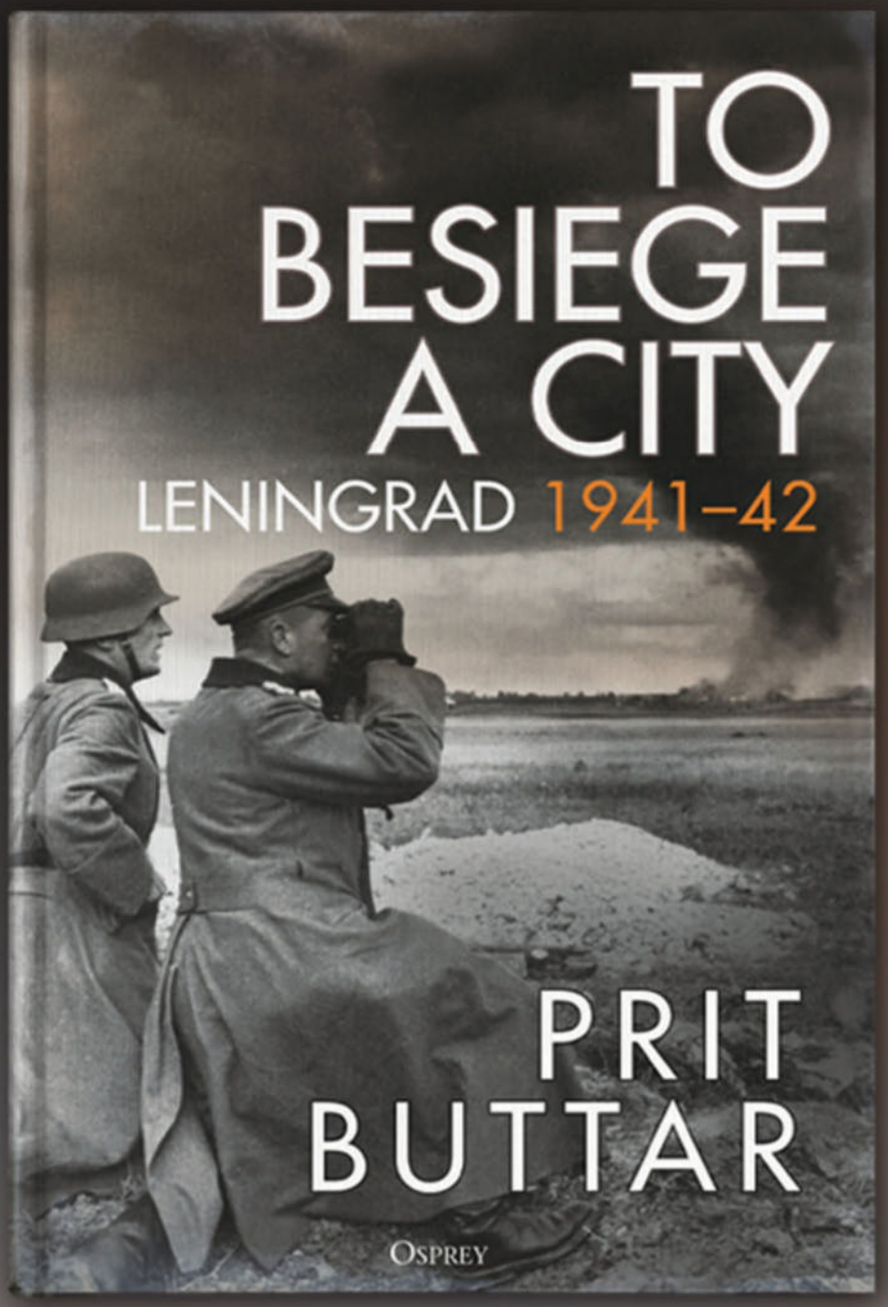

In the first major history of the siege of Leningrad in over a decade, *To Besiege a City* transports the reader into the furnace of battle.

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